

## In search of Ned Kelly through...

# Other images of him



The way that different people have represented Ned Kelly over time can be very useful in helping us consider who he was. Here are some of those representations. Read Source A and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 What is the image of the Kelly gang that it promotes?
- 2 How does it achieve that?
- 3 Would you say that it was probably a contemporary ballad (that is, made up and sung at the time the Kelly gang was active), or one made up during a later period? Explain your reasons.

## A A ballad: Kellys Byrne and Hart

(Sung to the tune 'The Wearing of the Green')

It was in November, seventy-eight, when the Kelly Gang came down  
Just after shooting Kennedy in famed Euroa town  
Blood horses they were all upon, revolvers in their hand  
They took the township by surprise, and gold was their demand

Ned Kelly walked into the bank, a cheque all in his hand  
For to have it changed for money, now of Scott he did demand  
And when that he refused him, he looking at him straight  
Said, "See here, my name's Ned Kelly, and this here man's my mate"

They rode into Jerilderie town at twelve o'clock at night  
Aroused the troopers from their beds and gave them an awful fright  
They took them in their nightshirts, ashamed I am to tell  
They covered them with revolvers and locked them in a cell

They next acquainted the women-folk that they were going to stay  
And take possession of the camp until the following day  
They fed their horses in the stalls, without the slightest fear  
Then went to rest their weary limbs till daylight did appear

Next morning being Sunday morn, of course they must be good  
They dressed themselves in troopers' clothes, and Ned he chopped some wood  
Now no-one there suspected them, as troopers they did pass  
And Dan, the most religious, took the troopers wife to Mass

They spent the day most pleasantly, had plenty of good cheer  
With fried beef steak and onions, tomato sauce and beer  
The ladies in attendance indulged in pleasant talk  
And just to ease the troopers' minds, they took them for a walk

It was when they robbed Euroa bank you said they'd be run down  
But now they've robbed another one that's in Jerilderie town  
That's in Jerilderie town, my boys, and we're here to take their part  
And shout again "Long may they reign - the Kellys, Byrne and Hart"

As high above the mountains so beautiful and grand  
Our young Australian heroes in bold defiance stand  
In bold defiance stand, my boys, the heroes of today  
So let us stand together boys, and shout again, "Hurray"

## B Now look at Source B and answer question 4. Four contemporary drawings



Melbourne Punch 1880



Illustrated Australian News 28 August 1880



Frearson's Weekly 9 August 1879



Illustrated Sydney News July 1880

- 4 Select one of these drawings, and decide:
  - a What the main message is
  - b How the artist gets this message across
  - c Whether it is likely to be an effective image.

## Some evaluations of the Kellys

[Kelly] belongs to the true Australia ... the Australian that sweats and suffers and fights, the Australian that, however bewildered, however betrayed, is, we like to think, still as game as Ned Kelly.  
**Kelly biographer Clive Turnbull (1942)**

The best thing I could say about the [Kellys] was that they undoubtedly had ample courage ... At the same time their crimes were callous and cowardly murders. This contrast is a characteristic of the predestined habitual criminal.  
**Victorian Supreme Court Justice Dunphy (1968)**

I suspect that behind the name of evil given these young men was a certain worth little understood then or now, which, in a perverse way, put the seal of manhood on our young Australian nation.  
**Kelly biographer Max Brown (1956)**

The Kellys, in spite of a few successful enterprises, were as poor and unheroic as any of their kind.  
**Inspector Sadleir, involved in trying to capture Kelly (1913)**

[The] Australian legend, fashioned and sustained by the people, favours as its national hero, a bearded, braggart, brawling Irishman; horse-thief, bank-robber, bush-ranger and murderer; the loud-mouthed, law-breaking, swaggering son of an Irish convict, Ned Kelly – who spent most of his life being warned, hunted or jailed by the Law, and ended up twitching for four minutes from the end of the hangman's rope in Old Melbourne Jail.  
**Educator Colin Cave (1968)**

That he had a commanding presence, a tough physique, a handsome appearance, an ability to capture an audience, and a certain charm with the ladies, cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that he was clever and capable of executing well organized raids against the community. But if we look at his record and examine his activities purely in the light of his inability to live within the law, we find that he also has most of the attributes of a cunning, scheming, vicious criminal equal to the worst of his kind today.  
**Police Sergeant K. Holden (1968)**

A lop-sided, pro-Irish view ... saw these murderers and criminals of the worst type hailed as colonial heroes ... a classic example of this type of thinking was expressed by Professor Manning Clark, who commented that Ned Kelly was an Australian 'hero' who 'had three glorious years of defiance of law and order'. Personally I find it disgusting that a Professor should push this line in our education system.  
**Weapons historian Edgar F. Penzig (1988)**

Considering his environment [Kelly] was a superior man. He possessed great natural ability, and under favourable circumstances would probably have become a leader of men in good society.  
**Police constable Alexander Fitzpatrick, whose complaint against Kelly made him an outlaw (1911)**

A vicious arch-bully with dingo eyes.  
**Historian M.H. Ellis (1966)**

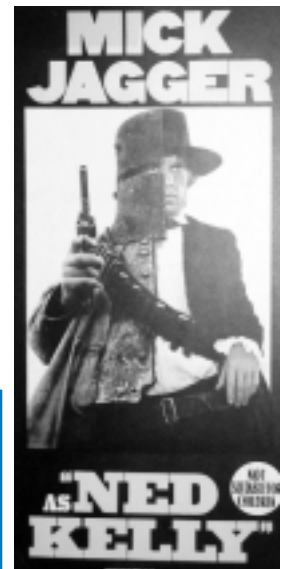
Quotes taken from Wendy Morgan, 1992, *The Example of Ned Kelly*, VATE, Melbourne, p. 1 and Colin Cave, 1988, *Ned Kelly: Man and Myth*, Cassell, Melbourne, passim.

## D Ned as icon



Kelly and Horse, Sidney Nolan (1946), Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, Canberra

Film Poster, Mick Jagger as Ned Kelly (1970)



- 5 Sort these into pro- and anti-Kelly statements.
- 6 What elements do the pro-Kelly statements stress?
- 7 What elements do the anti-Kelly statements stress?
- 8 Discuss what image or message each of these representations of Kelly is trying to stress.
- 9 How does each achieve that image or message?
- 10 Mick Jagger, who played Ned Kelly in the 1970 film (Source D), was a slightly-built, effeminate rock singer with the anti-establishment band the Rolling Stones. Why do you think he might have been chosen to play Ned Kelly in the film?
- 11 Is Ned Kelly the best-known, and maybe even the only Australian bushranger known to most people today? You could test this idea by designing and carrying out a survey.
- 12 Why do you think Ned Kelly still excites controversy and interest today? Consider whether it might be to do with:
  - his character
  - his actions
  - his ideas and aspirations
  - his image (especially the helmet and armour)
  - his 'Robin Hood' qualities
  - or some other element.

Discuss your ideas.

## CONCLUSION

- 1 Imagine that you have been asked to design a memorial about the Kelly gang for display in the centre of Melbourne. Explain what you would show, and what words you would use to get your ideas across.

You have now looked at Ned Kelly through a variety of evidence in this unit. Perhaps it is time to look at the single most important incident in the Kelly story, the killing of the police at Stringybark Creek.

What really happened there? Do Kelly's actions show him as a heroic figure harassed unfairly by police and fighting in self-defence, or as a murderous villain?

**Why not put Kelly on trial? Present the evidence of the witnesses for and against him, and come to your own decision. To do this, see the Ned Kelly unit in *Australian HISTORY MYSTERIES*. (See page 39 for details).**

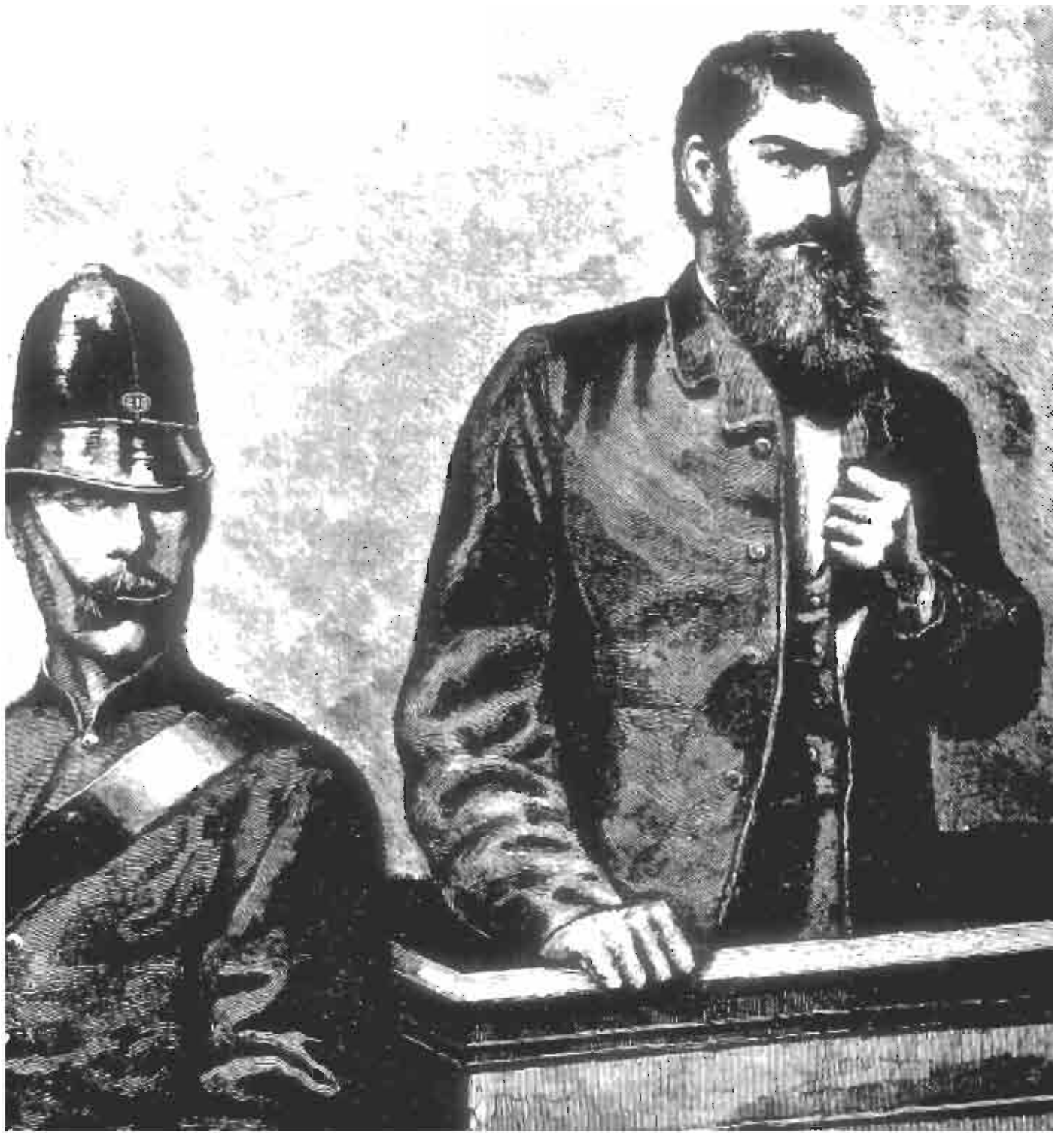
The correct chronological order of the photographs of Ned Kelly on page 41 is: C, A/F, B, D, E. Image F is an altered version of photograph A.

The false Ned Kelly photo is D. This was only recently decided when the photograph was auctioned for \$19 000. The key aspects to consider are the ears and the eyebrows.



SOONER OR LATER.

THE UNERRING ARM OF JUSTICE.









# MICK JAGGER



## AS "NED KELLY"

NOT  
SUITABLE FOR  
CHILDREN

WOODFALL presents

**A TONY RICHARDSON FILM**

Screenplay by TONY RICHARDSON and LAN JONES

Produced by NEIL HARTLEY Directed by TONY RICHARDSON

Music and Lyrics by BILL SILVERSTEIN Songs sung by WAYLON JENNINGS

TECHNICOLOR

United Artists