

Meredith & district News

Our FREE Community Newsletter



DECEMBER 2023



Have a Great
Festive Season
& a Safe
SUMMER



inside...

- Tips for Your Family to Survive Christmas & the Holidays
- Our regular school garden report
- Local Golden Plate Award

.....and much more!

COMBINED CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
PRESENTS

**MEREDITH
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
AND
TWILIGHT MARKET
17TH DECEMBER
4PM TO 8PM**

SHARING SHED / COMMUNITY GARDEN
10 WALLACE STREET, MEREDITH



**LOCAL MAKERS AND PROVIDERS
LIVE MUSIC AND CAROLS
SAUSAGE SIZZLE
AND MORE!**



SCAN THE QR
CODE TO
REGISTER AS
A VENDOR



Buy Local

THIS FESTIVE SEASON



Golden Plains Shire Council is proud to support the local business community and encourages residents to keep their money in the Shire to help the economic recovery this festive season.

For more on Council's *Buy Local This Festive Season* campaign, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

ARLO'S

WATER CARTAGE

SERVICING MEREDITH & SURROUNDS



FRESH DRINKING WATER!

0419 113 630

Meredith & district News



The Meredith and District News is published by a volunteer sub-committee of the Meredith Community Centre comprising: Jim Elvey, (general editor and chair) Stefania Parkinson, Ian Penna, Sue Higgs, Alex Hyatt, Nerida Anderson and Ian Leighton. Production is undertaken by Peter Boer, Don Atherton, Marlene Johnson and Jim Elvey.

NEWS & VIEWS

Appropriate contributions accompanied by the contributor's name (which will also be published) and contact details, are most welcome. Please email to news@meredithnews.com.au or deliver to the Meredith Post Office or Meredith Hub

DATES AND DEADLINES

The Newsletter is distributed on the **first Thursday** of the month (except January). All ads and submissions must be lodged by 9.00 am on the **last Thursday** of the preceding month, but earlier is **really** appreciated.

ADVERTISING

Advertising in the M&D Newsletter is a great way to let district residents know about your business. RATES: excluding GST, are as follows:

	B&W / Colour
Business Card	\$20
Quarter page	\$30
Half page	\$50 / \$110
Full page	\$100 / \$200

Community Groups can have a 1/4 page ad for free or a \$30.00 discount on larger ads. (conditions apply).

A \$20 loading applies for preferred position. Please submit in jpeg format, if available.

Classified ads cost \$7.50 on invoice or \$5.00 if paid on lodgement.

Classifieds are **FREE** for small, personal notices from residents.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you are outside our delivery area you can subscribe for \$35.00 p.a. plus GST (11 issues) and get the Meredith and District News posted to you anywhere in Australia.

CONTACT US

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advertising@are.com.au

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accounts@meredithnews.com.au

Editorial: Jim: 0409 163169

news@meredithnews.com.au

WEB

You can check back copies and lodge comments at meredithnews.com.au

ONLINE PHOTOS

We do not publish children's photos online. If you would like any other photo that you appear in withheld from the online edition, let us know in writing by the second Thursday of the month of publication.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publishers. The publishers may edit or reject contributions and accept no responsibility for errors or omissions

FEEDBACK

Yes please! Send it to news@meredithnews.com.au

Issue Production: Don Atherton and Marlene Johnson

connect

ADVANCE
MEREDITH
0409 027 359

ANGLING CLUB
0419 248 660

B'BURN ART
GROUP
0410 808 483

BLUE LIGHT
DISCO
5286 1222

BOOK CLUB
5286 8201

CFA
000 for fire calls
Elaine
0409 861 296
Meredith
0433 714 017
Morrison's
0417 770 765

CHILDCARE
5286 0700

COMMUNITY
CENTRE
5286 0700

CRICKET
Elaine
0448 291074
Junior
(U16,U14,13)
0448 291074
Meredith
5286 1434

CUBS &
SCOUTS
Lethbridge
0435 042077

ELAINE HALL
elainetownhall@gmail.com

FOOTBALL
Seniors 0408 545246
Juniors 0430 587 674

GOLF CLUB
0407 795 342

HISTORY GROUP
5286 8201

LANDCARE
0409 862 326

MEMORIAL HALL
0409 662106

MEREDITH SEWING
GROUP
0491 184 999

MOTORCYCLE
CLUB
0437 009 250

PLAYGROUP
5286 0700

POLICE
PADDOCKS
0409 163169

RSL - 5286 1452

SENIOR
CITIZENS
5286 8232

TENNIS
Elaine
0448 291 074
Lethbridge
52 817 321
Meredith
0424 754 179

SEW 'N' SEWS
5286 0700

FRIENDS OF THE
BRISBANE
RANGES
5286 1252

emergency

Police, Ambulance, Fire (from mobile phone)	000 000 or 112
Meredith Police Station	5286 1222
Police non emergency	131 444
Power Failure	132 412
Nurse-On-Call	1300 606 024
Mental Health Advice	1300 280 737
Poisons Information	13 11 26
Barwon Water	1300 656 007
SES Emergency - flood & storm	132 500
24 Hour Helpline	1800 629 572
24 Hour Drug & Alcohol Counselling	1800 888 236
Kids Help Line	
24hr 5-18yo	1800 551 800
Golden Plains Shire	1300 363 036
a/h emergency	0408 508 635
Ranger	5220 7111
	or 0409 830 223
Bannockburn Vet	5281 1221
Golden Plains Animal	5281 2226
Pets and Horses 24/7	0421 617 238

Justices of the Peace

Mr Don Atherton. 0409 869 960

Mr Paul Ryan Elaine 0409 861 296

services

CEMETERY TRUST

5286 1550

HALL HIRE

Meredith Memorial

5286 1545

Elaine Mechanics

elainetownhall@gmail.com

Elaine Rec Res

5341 5703

LIBRARY VAN

5272 6010

MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

5220 7230

PRE-SCHOOL

5286 0722

PRIMARY SCHOOL

5286 1313

RECREATION RESERVE

0429 315 575

..or start something.

If you have a special interest you would like to share with like minded people, let us know



Faith makes all things possible. Hope makes all things work. Love makes all things beautiful. May you have all three for this Christmas. Merry Christmas!

Check out the mural

Meredith Community Garden

Scarecrow Competition
Winner Announced!

OPEN DAY

You are invited to celebrate the additional work that the year 4, 5 and 6s at Meredith Primary School have completed in 2023!

WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER

1PM TO 3PM

IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN AT
10 Wallace Street, Meredith, VIC

Sausage Sizzle

Song and dance



SEASON'S *Greetings*

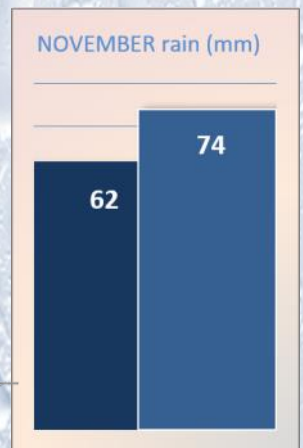
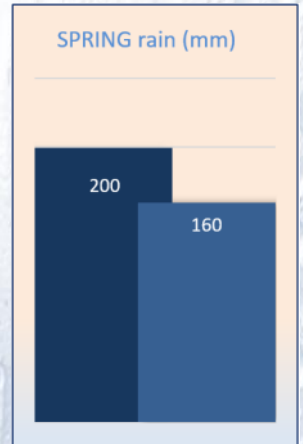
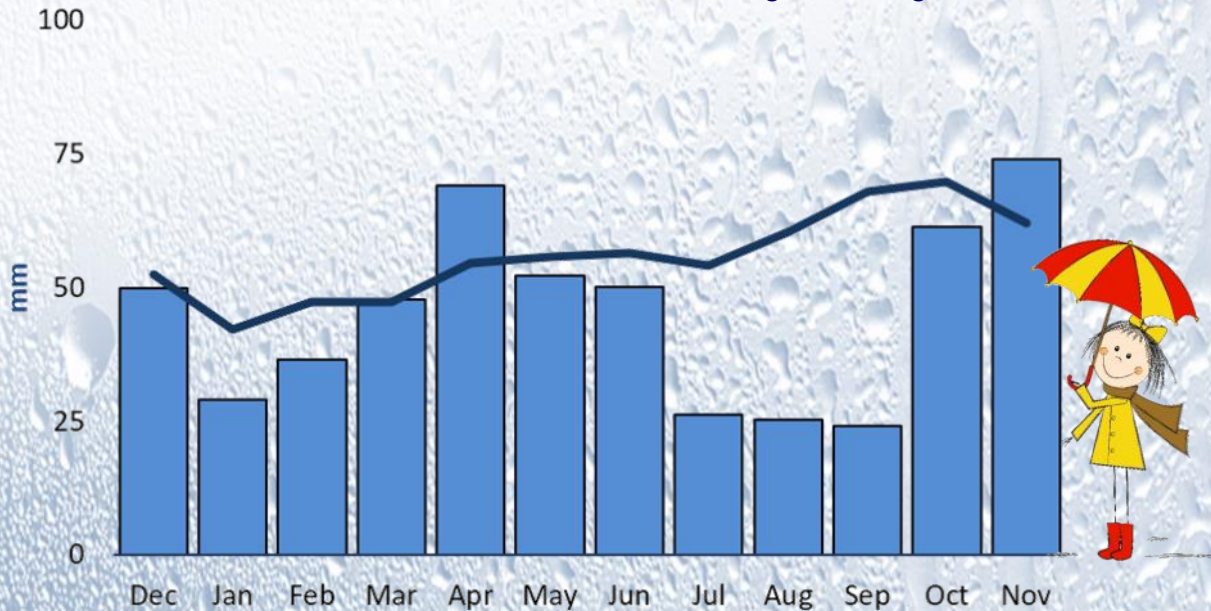
Wishing all in Meredith
a safe and joyful
festive season.

Michaela Settle MP
Member for Eureka

📍 15 Main Road, Bakery Hill VIC 3350 📞 5331 7722
✉️ michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au 🌐 MichaelaSettleMP

the rain report

Thank goodness for the last week in November. All but 1.6 millimetres of the month's 74mm fell in the last six days, including 45mm in one day. That was enough to push the total above the November long term average (and bring out *Smiley Girl*) Not enough though to overcome a very dry September, leaving the season's total 20% down on the long term average.



What's On This Month



Mindfulness with Jade

Monday - 3.30 - Kindergarten - Grade 3
 Monday - 4.30 - Grade 4 - Grade 6
 Wednesdays - 9.30 - Mums, Bubs 7 Expectant Mums
 \$15 per session, payable by Term

THE MEREDITH MART IS NOW OPEN!
PROVIDING FOOD SECURITY FOR OUR COMMUNITY



**THE MEREDITH MART WILL CLOSE ON TUESDAY
 DECEMBER 19 AT 3PM
 REOPENING ON JANUARY 29, 2024 AT 9AM**



9-3 MONDAY-THURSDAY

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

We would like to thank everyone for their support over the past year. It has been a lovely year of meeting new faces through our different programs.

The Community Centre will close on December 15
 The Mart will close on Demeber 19 at 3pm.

We will reopen on January 29, 2024.

Wishing everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2024.

We are looking forward to seeing you all in 2024!



Tai Chi - \$15 per session
 Tuesdays @ Meredith with Sandra - 9.15 - 10.15
 Wednesdays @ Bannockburn with Desma - 9:30 - 10.30
 Taking Expressions of Interest for Inverleigh!

Steady Feet @ Meredith - \$11 per session
 Wednesdays - 10:00 - 11:00 am

To Book:

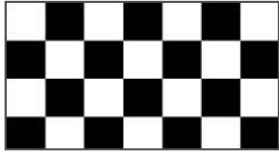
learnlocal@meredithcommunitycentre.com.au
www.facebook.com/MeredithCommunityCentre
 Ph. 5286 0700 / 0491 184 999



Join us on
 Facebook & Instagram
[@meredithcommunitycentre](https://www.facebook.com/meredithcommunitycentre)



**PLAYGROUP
 TUESDAYS
 9.00am - 11.30am
 \$2 per family**



POLICE report

Anthony BOX, Senior Constable 42062| Meredith Police Station| Western Region Division 3
Phone: 5286 1222| Fax: 9244 2156| Address: 14 Wilson Street Meredith Vic 3333

Editor's apology: SC Box provided this report for the November issues; however it was inadvertently left out.

On the 20th of October 2023 at Meredith Police detected and intercepted a driver travelling at 164KM/H on Steiglitz Road near Maude.

The driver will be charged via summons to Geelong Magistrate's Court and vehicle surrendered.

The school zone on Wallace Street continues to be ignored by drivers travelling on the Midland Highway, with dozens of Penalty Notices for speed and other offences being issued, the highest for this month being 71KM/h in the 40KM/H over the crossing. This continues to be a focus for Meredith Police as there is little more important than the safety of our kids.

Meredith Police are seeking information around Graffiti occurring at the Meredith Primary School and also at the Railway Crossing Control Box on Staughton Street.

Anyone with information as to the offenders please forward to S/C BOX at Meredith Police Station or alternatively via Crime Stoppers.

A reminder for all if you require to speak to police and it's **non-urgent** please contact 5286 1222. If I am on duty it will ring the station mobile phone also. The call will divert to Bacchus Marsh if I'm unavailable or not on duty. Please leave a message and your call will be returned ASAP. Please do not wait until you see police by convenience to provide information that would have been useful days or weeks earlier, as that can negatively affect the success of an investigation. I'd also request that you don't call around other stations in the area, if it's that urgent, call **000** as always.

Have a safe and happy Christmas break.

Photograph of Ros Molyneux with a student engaging in Nature play..

Photo provided by Marg Cooper.



Hearth Nature Play

Marg Cooper

After over 30 years teaching preschool children in Kindergarten and school settings and later as Director of Early Learning at Geelong College, Ros Molyneux has embarked on a new venture using her qualifications, her expertise and her experience.

On a bush block at Grenville, retained by her parents Jenny and Mike Colvin after they sold their farming property in 2020, Ros is creating a Bush Kinder or Nature Play Facility.

Some Kindergartens take children to parks or gardens, weekly, monthly or yearly but there are few designated wild bush experiences in unstructured natural environments.

Ros describes how research shows that play is the most valuable form of learning for young children and play in nature offers room for them to explore with all their senses and to use their bodies freely. Her mission is to create a space for children and families to connect with nature through play and exploration in order to promote ecological understanding and their physical and mental health.

After 18 months of planning, approvals and preparing Ros expects to be open for business by March 2024. She will offer Nature Play sessions for families and Bush Kinder for Early Childhood services. Together with the remarkable bush site, she will provide guided play with an emphasis on free exploration, planned experiences such as bush walks, creative play such as making bush sculptures, storytelling and learning from visiting guests such as members of the Wadawurrung people.

Mud pie making may also be on the agenda. Aiming to reduce consumption of new materials but instead cherish the old, Ros has retained family keepsakes and traditional home equipment for this purpose. So mud pies can be made in old pots, patty pans or on trays using metal beaters and her grandmother's cutlery.

Nature Play welcomes family members to participate. Not only is Ros encouraging children to be children but she would also like to see adults enjoy the experience with childlike delight while still supervising their children. They may help create cubby houses, weave ephemeral art or make an obstacle course with active loose parts to help the children with stamina, co-ordination and balance.

Ros is passionate about her new project because of how it will benefit children and their families and because she has a deep connection to the bush block that her family have owned for over 100 years. They have used the block to camp on and it is a place where she feels at peace and close to nature. The project is also of great interest for her parents: for Mike and the land and for Jenny, the former Meredith Kindergarten teacher.

Hearth is derived from the words heart and earth, with the aim of connecting children's hearts to the earth. The website will be up soon: www.hearthnatureplay.com.au.



COMMUNITY

Are you planning any community activities? Or just held one? Tell us about it, and we'll tell the rest of the community.

Meredith Senior Citizens

Jim Hynds

On November 27th the Seniors travelled to the Golf Club Hotel in Geelong for a meal and get together.

On November 13th the Meredith Community Centre provided a delicious meal for the Seniors at the Community Centre. Leah and others cooked and served roast potatoes, meat, salads and hot rolls for the first course and sponge and cheesecakes with whipped cream and strawberries for dessert. Yum! Everyone was made very welcome. After lunch Estia Health, who run the Bannockburn Aged Care Facility told the Seniors about the services they provide. They offered advice for everyone.

Our Christmas Party is on December 11th at the Memorial Hall. Kylie Miller and her helpers are cooking up a storm and there will be raffles galore.

Advance Meredith Association

Light Up Meredith - To celebrate and encourage Meredithians to share their festive sparkle with their local community. Registration is free, and open to Meredith and District residents, businesses and community organisations, just text name, address and if resident, business or community group to 0424037542. TXT Name , address and category entering. Judging will be the 22nd December between dusk to 11pm. Winners will be notified.

Christmas Carols & Twilight Market - This year will be held at the Sharing Shed / Community Garden 10 Wallace St . Sunday 17th December. 4 - 8 pm. Sausage sizzle, coffee van, face painting, music and of course carol singing. All welcome so come along and join us as we come together - small town with a big spirit.

Santa on the Big Red Truck – hosted by Meredith CFA in conjunction with AMA - Friday 22nd December - check out Christmas in Meredith Facebook page for details.

Christmas Corner will be set up in its full glory again this year, if you'd like to assist you will be most welcome. Saturday 2nd at 10 am. Theme: Peace - Please stop and enjoy in the lead up to Christmas.

Christmas Sheep - we will have MDF and old metal corry sheep on sale (\$25.00 each) at Meredith Rural & Pet Supplies .

Advance Meredith wishes all a fun but safe Christmas Season.

Follow us on Facebook: Advance Meredith Association to stay up to date on community events



Thomson

Kerry

The twelfth of November saw fifteen of our group take our observational skills and artistic abilities to The Paper Mill Gallery in Fyansford for the last session of the year. Most of us decided on the lower terrace near the old stagecoach and in front of the magnificent brickwork of the original mill, but struggled to choose from the incredible array of interesting ‘things’ (items, architecture, perspectives) which caught our eyes. We all thoroughly enjoyed the challenges of the scenery and environment and will, hopefully, return to this venue in the future. (Thanks to Mark for suggesting and arranging this site for us)

Because the cafe was closed we adjourned to the Fyansford hotel (organised by Louise - thank you) for coffee and lunch to celebrate another successful year of sketching, drawing and painting and good company. A huge thank you to Mandy and Alex for their ideas and management behind the scenes. Enthusiasm from all will see the Sketchers continue in 2024, with the first event occurring on the second Tuesday of February (the 13th), meeting at 10.00am at the Meredith Community Centre.



OUR COVER

Cathie Boer has captured the fun and movement of the scarecrow display that has been created by Meredith Primary School pupils—story p.9



Share your favourite pics with us. You could make front page news!

Church News



Meredith Uniting Church

Services have recommenced. 11.00 am 2nd Sunday each month.

Enquiries:

Rev. Paul Sanders 0407 833 515 5341 2440

Serbian Orthodox - 5341 5536

Daily services: Matins 8.00 am, Vespers 6.00 pm.

Divine Liturgies on Saturdays & Sundays 10.00 am.

Worship on Sundays in the Anglican Parish of Inverleigh+Bannockburn+Meredith:

8.00 am Holy Communion St Paul’s, Inverleigh

10.00 am Family Communion. St John’s, Bannockburn

5.00 pm Prayer and Praise Epiphany, Meredith

We welcome you to Christmas Worship:

9 Lessons and Carols, 5.00 pm 10th Dec, Epiphany Meredith

Christmas Eve Vigil Eucharist - 7.00 pm 24th Dec, St Pauls Inverleigh

Family Communion – 9.00 am Christmas Day, St Johns Bannockburn

Find us at: www.goldenplainsanglican.org or

office.revdrtim@hotmail.com

The Revd Dr Timothy Smith

PiC Anglican Parish of

Inverleigh+Bannockburn+Meredith

St Josephs Parish of Meredith

December

Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. Dec. 2/9/16/23/30

Anakie – St. Brigid @ 9am Sun. Dec. 10/24

Meredith – St. Joseph @ 9am Sun. Dec 3/17/31 * 9pm Dec 24

B’burn – St. Mary MacKillop

Mass 11am Sun Dec 3/10/17/31,
6pm Sun Dec 24,
12pm Sun Dec 31

Adoration 11pm Sun Dec 31

Inverleigh – Sacred Heart @ 4pm Sun. Dec 17

January

Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. Jan. 6/13/20/27

Anakie – St. Brigid @ 9am Sun. Jan. 7/21

Meredith – St. Joseph @ 9am Sun. Jan. 1/14/28

Bannockburn – St. Mary MacKillop @ 11am Sun. Jan.7/14/21/28

Inverleigh – Sacred Heart @ 4pm Sun. Jan. 21



Meredith Uniting Church, Christmas Eve Service

December 24th

7 pm

All welcome.



Meredith Music Festival 2023

Reminder about the MMF on Friday 8th Dec to Sunday 10 December.

As part of our traffic management plan, the festival will:

1. Implement a speed reduction on Meredith-Mt Mercer Road and Cameron Road from two days prior to the festival through to the day prior to the festival.
2. Implement one-way traffic on Meredith-Mt Mercer Road from Bamganie Road to Cameron Road from approximately 4am the day prior to the festival to approximately 7pm on the first day of the festival.
3. Divert traffic travelling to Meredith within the one-way zone down Cameron Road.
4. Station traffic controllers to the corner of Midland Highway and Staughton Street on the final day of the festival to assist vehicles turning left or right onto Midland Highway.
5. Install no-parking zones along Meredith-Mt Mercer Road and some surrounding roads.

For any concerns regarding traffic or noise management please call/text 0430 091 120 (available 24 hours)

Recreation



Meredith Tennis Club News

Bridget Dyer

Trivia Night

On Saturday 11 November, the Meredith Tennis Club and Meredith Cricket Club held a joint trivia night. It was a great night and we would like to thank all the local businesses that generously donated to the raffle. We had 28 different prizes donated.

Spring Competition

Spring Competition has been another fun competition, with 22 teams and three sections. Our lowest section, with our youngest players, has been a fantastic opportunity for the kids to improve their skills while playing with an adult or older child. It's been great to see the improvement each week. Competition has been fierce in each section but has continued to be fun. The dinners have been delicious, and we thank our volunteers, Courtney Murray and David Fox, who have arranged, cooked and organised the food each week. We also thank all those that helped served on the night and clean up. These competitions and dinners can't run without the tireless help from all these volunteers and we are so grateful for all that they do. Finals were held with our Christmas party on Friday 1 December and were very competitive. The winners for our three sections were:

Section 1: Top Gun who won against The Backhanders

Section 2: The Benchwarmers who won against D&D (runners up)

Section 3: The Destroyers who won against The Webslingers

Top Gun have won all three of competitions so far! Well done to all those that participated and congratulations to those that won. We also would like to thank Sinclair's Meat, who have looked after the club when purchasing meat there.

We are looking forward to running another competition starting in February and hope to have as many teams as this competition. So far we have had quite a bit of interest.

Christmas Party

Our Christmas party was another great community event with many people attending to watch and support the various teams. It was lovely to have so many supporters. We had the opportunity to watch all of the finals while having a hit, listening to the music and having our faces painted! Thank you to all our volunteers who make these nights run so smoothly, so that everyone has a great time. We also enjoyed a visit from Santa and his elves in the CFA truck. Thanks to the Sanderson Elves (Kate and Madi) who organised and donated the little gifts given out. It was also great to see the children getting out and playing their own tennis games.

Training

Our free training sessions on Thursday afternoons are about to get a bit more interesting as the Bannockburn and District Grants committee have given us a grant to purchase two BallSlingers (ball machines) worth \$3,000 in total. These ball machines are a great little unit that hold up to 100 balls and are easy to adjust, move and use for all levels. We are very grateful to Bannockburn and District Grants committee for helping fund this equipment to help our volunteer run training. This will help our Thursday training sessions to be broken up into smaller groups to practice various technical shots. These have been ordered and we hope that they will arrive in time for our Christmas party for some tennis fun!

Thursday night training has finished for the moment. While Saturday tennis will continue until 16th December, we recognise that it is a busy time of year and the children are tired.

Our final coaching session with Coach Jye will be Sunday 3 December. Please keep a look out, as we may be running a January holiday coaching program. If you would be interested in being involved or your children being involved, please contact us.

Australian Open

The Club has discussed running a bus up to the Australian Open in January for the Australian Open Hotshots day, after having such an amazing day early this year that was provided by Tennis Australia. Many juniors have expressed an interest in going to watch the tennis again, so we are keen to organise this. Please follow our facebook page for more details.

Successful Lal Lal Market

Contributed by Janene Schillier

At the Lal Lal Market on Sunday 29 October, the weather was perfect and a great day for the many people who came.

Chris, long time Mt Doran local enjoyed the outing.



Mick Lewis, local shearer demonstrating his craft.

Tips for Your Family to Survive Christmas & the Holidays

I don't have a family of my own; I am often invited to a friend's house for Christmas Day and I offer to contribute when it is welcome. However, I know the stress of preparation for Christmas that Church ministry demands. As we approach Christmas this year, many families are experiencing additional anxiety because of mortgage and rental stress. This holiday season can be stressful at the best of times, but the addition of financial insecurity makes it more so. Maybe it is worth rethinking how our family can survive our celebration of these Holy Days and the entertainment for the kids during school holidays.

Make sure communication is a priority

Being able to communicate openly with other members of the family about what we are struggling with, or where we could use some help, strengthens our relationships, lightens the load, and will enable us to feel less alone in it all.

Get aligned on your priorities

The preparations for Christmas can be a time of conflict for some families. Take time to think through what is most important and be willing to compromise. Maybe it is a focus on spending quality time with family, less peripheral parties, or volunteering in a charity to support those in need; be willing to acknowledge and share separate priorities.

Be willing to meet in the middle

Therefore, try to problem solve, instead of trying to get all we want. Family members may not be able to contribute in the same way as they have done previous years. Things may not be the same this year, so be prepared to adjust to change and to acknowledge any emotions that come with things being different.

Have the money talk

Even if we are pretty financially secure, other members of the family may not be, maybe others will want to do things differently this year. Although, generally uncomfortable in our culture, be willing to talk about money, especially whether to buy presents for extended members of the family, but also what can be done with the kids for holiday entertainment.

Establish boundaries

We all like to try to please everyone and do it all, offering a great family celebration, but finances this year may not allow it. Healthy boundaries, such as limiting the time spent at a relative's house, saying no to some invitations, or making time spent with family the best gift. We also need to support each other in the decisions made together.

Commit to enjoying the little moments

Summer holidays with the kids can seem like doing things, going places, fitting it all in, and spending money. Don't forget to be present and enjoy the quieter moments of connection with family. Make popcorn and watch favourite movies at home as a family, check out the neighbourhood Christmas lights, play board games, or camp out in the back yard. This year the best gift we can give is working to maintain each other's wellbeing.

Based on <https://www.prepare-enrich.com/blog/6-ways-to-prep-your-marriage-for-the-holiday-season/>



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- Bulk Gas Quotations supplied

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Contact Paul Ryan on 0409 861 296



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M Spong Electrical Pty Ltd
REC - 32672

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Email: sponгаа.01@gmail.com





Media Release

TRACKS AND TRAILS

Golden Plains Shire Council is inviting input from the community on the draft Tracks and Trails Strategy (the Draft Strategy) which was endorsed for public exhibition at its meeting on Tuesday 28 November 2023.

Following extensive community engagement in January and February 2023 through a series of workshops, surveys, and consultations, approximately 200 responses from the community have helped to shape the Draft Strategy.

Residents are now invited to have their say on the Draft Strategy from Thursday 30 November 2023 to Thursday 11 January 2024, contributing to the finalisation and adoption of the Draft Strategy at the February 2024 Council meeting.

The Draft Strategy aims to embrace the region's recreational tracks and trails network; identify recommendations for addressing new trails, missing links and realignments; improve liveability and health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents; promote safe, active transport and commuting options to reducing reliance on motor vehicles; improve environmental outcomes and reflect the needs of the community.

Golden Plains Shire Council Mayor Cr Brett Cunningham encourages residents to provide their valuable input on the Draft Strategy.

“At the beginning of this year we had close to 200 responses to the Tracks and Trails Strategy which has resulted in a comprehensive and inclusive strategy that promotes physical activity, outdoor exploration and environment stewardship,” Cr Cunningham said.

“The Draft Strategy provides strategic direction for future advocacy and investment in a trail network to encourage safe, active transport and guides the future planning, development and activation of tracks and trails across Golden Plains for the next 10 years,” he said.

“I encourage community members to view the Draft Strategy and provide feedback. Your continued involvement is vital in ensuring that our Tracks and Trail Strategy aligns with our shared vision.”

The \$60,000 Golden Plains Shire Tracks and Trails Strategy Project was funded by \$30,000 from the Victorian Government's Local Sports Infrastructure

Fund's Planning Category and \$30,000 from Council.

The Draft Strategy and opportunity to provide feedback can be viewed online at goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations or hard copies can be collected at Council's Customer Hubs, Golden Plains Civic Centre, 2 Pope Street, Bannockburn and The Well, 19 Heales Street, Smythesdale.

For further information on the Draft Strategy, contact Council's Manager Recreation and Community Infrastructure on 5220 7111 or email enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au

ELECTION OF SHIRE MAYOR

Golden Plains Shire Councillors re-elected Cr Brett Cunningham as Mayor of Golden Plains Shire for 2023-24 following a decisive Council meeting at the Golden Plains Civic Centre in Bannockburn tonight.

Cr Cunningham will serve a second term as Mayor following his appointment as Mayor in 2022. He will serve a one-year term leading up to the next general Council election on 26 October 2024.

At the same meeting, Councillors voted not to elect a Deputy Mayor in Golden Plains Shire for 2023-24.

Assuming the role of Mayor, Cr Cunningham expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him by his fellow councillors. He pledged to lead with dedication, transparency and a focus on initiatives that enhance the wellbeing of Golden Plains Shire residents now and into the future.

“Council will continue its commitment to deliver sound financial management allowing for the provision of 70 individual services that are used by residents of our Shire, and continue to work hard to invest in the health and wellbeing of our community,” Cr Cunningham said.

“I also make the pledge as I did during my Council Election campaign to continue to implement a professional style of leadership that holds not only myself but fellow Councillors accountable for our actions and behaviours. This leadership pledge extends to not only our community but also within our Council organisation where we will continue to assist with implementing a positive workplace environment.

“I look forward to the coming year working together with my fellow councillors, CEO Eric Braslis, Executive Council Officers and Council staff to continue to serve our communities to deliver sound governance, financial management and continue to make Golden Plains such a great place to live.

“To the community, thank you for your continued support and I look forward to serving another term as Mayor of the Golden Plains Shire, working for you, representing and advocating on your behalf.”



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in our NATURE

Wendy Cook

It is a warm summer evening. You walk barefoot across the grass, cool and damp after a brief shower of rain an hour ago. Ahead of you, a loud droning sound comes from the soil. You've heard it before and you're curious, so you approach. When you are almost close enough to discover the source of the noise, it abruptly ceases. Thinking it may have been a little further on, you continue. Two steps later, the droning starts again behind you. It sounds like an extremely loud insect's call. Another begins to your left and one ahead of you. It is impossible to track down the source of the sounds, as whenever you come near, the insect becomes silent. Standing still and looking down, you still have no clue to the identity of the well-hidden insect.

The sight you are missing in the short grass is a small tunnel with a soft brown segmented abdomen protruding from the entrance. It is partly covered by wings too small for flight and belongs to the creator of the droning call, a male mole cricket. He is advertising himself and his tunnel to female mole crickets, who have full-sized wings and may be flying above looking for a mate. Out of sight, inside the tunnel is his dark head with protruding eyes, and brown antennae reaching forwards. Hard plates cover his head and the thorax behind it, and provide protection while he is digging, as well as helping him to press through the dirt. His large strongly clawed front feet, ideal for shovelling earth backwards are shaped like those of the European mole, so giving him his name. His hind legs are shorter than those of most crickets, as he dwells underground and has no need to jump. Instead, these legs push soil out of his way as he tunnels.

Although his wings are not used for flying, they serve another purpose. By rubbing his forewings together, he creates the sound that you are hearing. The entrance to his tunnel has been dug with care, so that it amplifies his calls and funnels them upwards. This means that you are in the best position to receive their full impact, but so are any females flying overhead. They prefer moist ground for laying their eggs, and can judge from his calls whether his tunnel has been dug in dry or damp soil. His calls also indicate his health. If the female approves, she enters the male's tunnel and mates with him. After she lays her eggs, which may be in the male's tunnel, she will remain with them and protect them and her young babies, called nymphs, from predators.

The mole cricket's tunnel is not only to help him find a mate. While he is calling, he may attract predators. Birds, lizards and spiders would all find him to be a tasty meal. Another dangerous animal is a female wasp known as a blue ant. She looks like a very large ant with a shiny metallic blue body. It is also mating season for her, and she seeks a beetle or mole cricket which she can paralyse with her sting. She then lays her eggs on it to provide food for her young when they hatch. Fortunately, the mole cricket has means of defence and escape. He can spray an unpleasant liquid from the end of his abdomen. If this does not deter the predator, he moves swiftly along his network

of tunnels and escapes through another entrance or flees down a shaft which leads deep underground.

For the mole cricket, tunnels are a safe home and a larder. Some species of mole cricket are carnivorous, and catch worms, grubs and insects that they find underground. Others are vegetarian and construct galleries in shallow soil where they eat plant roots. Some species are omnivorous and use both these methods of finding food. Its burrow is also somewhere for the cold-blooded mole cricket to shelter when the air temperature is not sufficiently warm for it to be active. Summer is its season for activity and rearing young, as it is for many insects and small creatures. As you retreat from the mole cricket's ongoing droning calls, consider what else might be living in and under this patch of grass, and how much there is for you to discover here while the weather is warm.

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The Philatelist

Michael Riseley



Herbed Salmon with Pasta and Zoodles

Prep 15 mins Cook 15 mins Makes 2

Ingredients

- 1 lemon
- 2 x 125g skinless salmon fillets
- 100g dried fettucine pasta
- 2 zucchini, spiralized
- 3 tbs light sour cream
- Italian herbs of choice finely chopped
- Olive oil
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

Method

1. 1. Preheat oven to 180c. Finely grate 1 teaspoon of rind from the lemon. Cut lemon in half and squeeze 2 tablespoons of juice. Mix, herbs, lemon rind and 1 tablespoon lemon juice in a small bowl. Rub herb mix all over salmon fillets. Transfer salmon to a small baking dish lined with baking paper. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for about 15 minutes or until cooked to your liking.
2. 2. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a saucepan of boiling salted water, following packet instructions. Drain. Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add pasta and cook, striating for 2 minutes. Add zucchini and nutmeg and cook, stirring, for a further 1-2 minutes, until zucchini is tender. Stir in remaining lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper, then stir in sour cream. To serve, divide zucchini pasta between two plates and top with salmon.

From 5 ingredients + pantry staples

Stefania :)

CURIOSITIES

For me, one of the amusing highlights of the recent cricket one day World Cup in India has been seeing the South African captain Temba Bavuma who is 162cm tall standing next to his bowler Marco Jansen who is 206cm tall. And giving him instructions. Which of course prompted me to think of curiosities in the stamp world.

The biggest stamp ever issued was by United Arab Emirates in 2013. It is called the Mother of Emirates. It features the logo of the nation and is more ceremonial than practical. One could argue that it should not be given Postage stamp status as it would be almost impossible to use. It is 136cm high and 177cm wide. Good luck putting that on your envelope. Temba Bavuma could use it as a blanket!

The smallest stamp ever issued was by Bolivar in 1863 which was one of the departments of Columbia. It was 8mm by 9.5mm which is roughly the size of the fingernail on your little finger.

Apart from different sizes, stamps come in different shapes including diamond, triangle and rhomboid. Many countries have issued circular stamps commemorating coins or Olympic medals. Often the stamp subject leads to its shape. Canada issued a set of stamps in the shape of hot air balloons. Norfolk Island has issued stamps in the shape of the actual island. Tonga has issued stamps in the shape of bananas, coconuts and pineapples.

One of my favourite oddities is the 25cent 1935 stamp of the Dominican Republic. It was for obligatory use when sending mail to the President. If your envelope to the President did not have this stamp on it then it would not be delivered. This was at a time when the normal postage rate was 2cents and airmail 10cents. One way I suppose for the President to filter his mail and avoid hate mail.

Letters to the Editor

Thank you!

To Meredith & District News,

Thank you for writing a newspaper article about our Story Dog, Neisha. We love having Marlene and Neisha visit us weekly and reading together.

Neisha is a very well trained dog and great at listening, Marlene is very kind. Everyone at school loved reading the article and checking out the photo.

From Matilda and Addi

Students of Lal Lal Primary School.

Compliments!

Don and Marlene

I live in an apartment block in Ivanhoe and a resident who has contacts in or has recently visited your area had left a copy of the October issue in the mail room today after they had finished with it, for someone else to read. I took it and thoroughly enjoyed everything in it. The Meredith and district News paints a very clear picture that this area is a wonderful and friendly place in which to live.

Barbara McCabe





The Wildcat

The wildcat came to visit at 3.00 am one moonlit night in June. He wasn't really a "wildcat", more likely a roaming feral or a domestic on a moonlit prowl, but he sure did frighten the daylight out of me! I think though in retrospect, he frightened himself more than he frightened me.

Some background first. My house is an old farm type building in which the bedrooms have a lower ceiling height than the living areas, which gives me a little more headroom in the roof space above the bedrooms, and I had loosely placed some old floorboards across the ceiling joists so I could traverse the roof space more easily if I have to access there.

On the night in question, I was in a deep sleep when what sounded in my abrupt awakening, like all hell erupting in my roof space. There was wild bashing and crashing noises interspersed with the screech of a dozen banshees, possums and wildcats all at once and footsteps racing from one end of the house roof space to the other. The pandemonium continued for some time and gradually quietened down until another rush of footsteps would trigger another eruption of furious bashing and screeching. Eventually the raucous din died down to just an occasional terrified whimper and noisy breathing coming from a corner in the ceiling above my head, from whoever had instigated the pandemonium. It seemed that by now there was only one interloper still up there.

I was instantly awake of course when the cacophony erupted and as my mind began to clear and analyse what was happening, I remembered that I had been doing some renovations to my house and had removed a couple of boards from an outside wall which led into the ceiling space above my bedroom. I deduced that a wild animal or animals had come snooping and found the convenient access into my ceiling, jumped inside and landed on one of the loose floorboards. The clatter of looseness must have made him think he was under attack and thereafter every movement he made caused further and mounting panic and pandemonium until he found shelter in a dark corner space.

Now I was faced with a dilemma. How would I know whether the interloper was still holed up somewhere in the roof space or not, or whether he had succumbed to heart failure or some such fate? Should I dare stick my head through the manhole & risk being attacked from behind and in the dark by this vicious animal? Then I had an idea. I had recently taken possession of a wildlife camera, so I set it up where the wall boards had been removed. Three days later, success! There he was on camera – taking very tentative steps towards outside freedom, was a very hungry looking tabby cat!

(ps - I'm sure it was Bob!)

TOMORROW Most things pass

Poem by Linda Brumby - an Australian community poet. Written in the 1940's published 1961.

Submitted by Janene Schillier

Try to remember,
 All that hurt you most, today,
 Tomorrow - may be all forgotten:
 May have vanished right away
 All the care, and disappointment;
 All the burning tears that fall,
 Tomorrow - may have ceased to hurt you,
 May not seem so bad at all!
 Before you speak a word in anger
 To the one who made you "mad"
 Just remember by tomorrow
 You might wish you never had!
 Dawn will bring a new day to you,
 Always hope that it will bring
 Freedom from old day's worries,
 Peace, and joy in everything.
 Fear, and sorrow, and frustrations,
 Though they seem so bad today:
 Just remember there's tomorrow,
 Tomorrow, is another day!

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IN the SCHOOL Garden



Mrs Garden

What an interesting season Spring turned into - quite an early dry period then a late burst in the last week of November with very welcome rain. Gardeners could be heard sighing with relief as their gardens received a wonderful soaking. Hand watering and rain mean two quite different things to our plants. We have probably all noticed the difference in our plants after a good shower of rain: they look lusher and greener and this is not our imagination. Rainwater is highly oxygenated and also brings carbon dioxide, it washes off dust and any pollutants that may be on the leaves. Plants need nitrogen and rain can help them access it from the atmosphere. There have been lots of scientific studies about this however all we need to know is, like our gardens - we love a good shower of rain.

Our tomato seedlings which were potted up from a punnet into larger individual pots in late September were kept in a warm sheltered place until mid November. By then the soil had warmed up sufficiently to put them out into the garden. The Prep and Grade One children undertook this task first digging some deep holes in our wicking beds in preparation. They then gently removed the plants without disturbing their roots and popped them in the holes. The plants were put in at a deeper level than they originally had been in the pots. This is because tomatoes grow extra roots from the stem that is buried helping to stabilise the plant. A light watering over the first couple of days is all that's needed in our wicking beds as the water will then wick up into the roots.

A wonderful development mentioned in our last column has now been completed. Ralph spent some time pondering how best to make frames for the wicking beds

so we could net them. Our chooks free range in the yard during school hours having a wonderful time dust bathing, searching for bugs and grubs and foraging for greenery. This makes them super healthy and they lay beautiful eggs with bright yellow yolks. However, once they discovered they could fly up onto the wicking beds, they took a liking to our vegetable plants and would peck until they disappeared. So no strawberries, no rainbow chard and no peas. As always, Ralph was able to come up with a neat and sturdy solution with a frame attached to the beds over which we have secured netting.

The hens are still happily laying eggs and if you would like to support the students who look after them, the eggs are sold for \$5 per dozen. Perfect timing for all the Christmas baking. Call into the school office or phone 5286 1313 during school hours.

Unfortunately the giant sunflower and corn seeds in individual pots didn't survive the hot weather so we have decided on a backup approach. We have sown new seeds straight into various garden beds around the school and hope to see them pop up all over the place. Corn needs to be sown in a block so they can cross pollinate whereas the sunflowers can be more widely spaced.

The Grade 5/6 replanted bee garden pots have sprouted with nasturtiums and mini sunflowers appearing. These pots not only put on an excellent show but help attract the bees to our vegetables.

It's a good time to pop in seeds of sunflowers, zinnias and cosmos now for some wonderful late summer and autumn colour in your garden. Basil seed or seedlings can go in and make a great companion to your tomato plants. Beans and beetroot can go in this month along with capsicum, cucumber, eggplant and chilli seedlings.

Any vegetables already planted will be jumping out of the ground with this rain and the summer sunshine that is sure to arrive. May you enjoy a bountiful harvest and wonderful times in your gardens with family and friends over the holiday season. We will be back next year with more garden and school news.

*Willow, Ava,
Ada, & Leyton
With a newly
netted
wicking beds*





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The Long Walk

This article was submitted by Janene Schillier who came across Ben in Bamganie, training for his long walk.

My name is Ben Scott, originally from South Devon in the UK (grew up on a mixed farm). Currently I'm staying with old school friends here in Meredith and training for my Camino next year. The route is from Le Puy-en-Velay, France, to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. This is 1500 km. Then I will walk from Santiago de Compostella to Finisterra and back (204 km) and then from Santiago de Compostella to Porto, Portugal, another 280 km. A total distance of over 1980 km which I will start in the second week of April 2024.

The main section from Le Puy-en-Velay to Santiago de Compostella, I plan to complete with a mix of walking and running in order to achieve a distance of 45 km per day. Once I arrive at Santiago, I will complete the rest like a normal person and walk! I shall need the rest too, by then.

This walk is important to me as it was something I was going to walk with my mother, but sadly she died of cancer before we were able to make a start.

As I have no experience in training for events like this, I have a coach. I have been blessed as he works with elite athletes and has far more important things to do than help an amateur like me. The training is full time and is heavy. The training is split between outside road and trail work and gym based strength and conditioning and aerobic work. This means I spend 4 to 5 hours per day training, 6 days a week currently, but this load will likely increase over the coming weeks.

Monday, when we met, is my tyre drag day. Its a light truck tyre weighing 17 kilos that I have to drag for 10 km maintaining my heart rate in the 120-140 beats per minute zone. So pretty good for stamina!



Hands of Change

Nurturing Young Minds Program

Linda Wong and Chris Ardrey

The Meredith based charity, Hands of Change Limited has been delivering the Nurturing Young Minds Program to the Meredith Primary School years 4, 5 and 6, over the past four years. It was first made possible through grant funding received from the Geelong Community Foundation and Golden Plains Youth Development team. More recently, it has been further supported by RMIT Activator and GPG Naturgy.

The NYM program is designed to teach the students practical business skills for the future – focusing on planning, budgeting, teamwork, building resilience and a can-do attitude. We connect the learning by having the students work on a community project. For Meredith it has been the design and build of the Community Garden located at 10 Wallace Street.

Each year, the garden has further advanced through the good work that the students have been doing. We now have completed:

- * 19 self wicking garden beds
- * Open roof gazebo
- * 20ft shipping container/storage shed installed and mural painted on it with artefacts created by the students
- * 2 water tanks installed,
- * Underground plumbing to the garden beds,
- * A compost bin, AND more recently
- * Scarecrows installed!

Last month the students interviewed 5 local community members to learn what they would like to see added to the garden and the results of these interviews are now being collated.

To celebrate what the students have built and wish them well for next year, we are hosting an Community Garden Open day on Wednesday 13 December from 1pm to 3pm. The students have prepared a short performance with the help of singer/song writer Amie Brulee. Come along and enjoy what has been built for the community. Sausage sizzle will be available, and find out who will win the Scarecrow competition that the students are judging!

See you there!

Editor's note: This month's cover features a photograph of the Scarecrows taken by Cathie Boer.

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it'S HISTORY

Meredith History Interest Group

Marg Cooper

Tour of Stony Creek Reservoirs:

Thank you to Emma for offering to take us on a tour on Tuesday, November 21. She was joined by Stewart and Fernando from Barwon Water. After a short introduction we proceeded to the Caretaker's Cottage which was built about 1870. One room has some history of the construction, the people employed over the years, meteorology, work done and so on. We then walked across the dam wall of Reservoir 1, which was completed in 1870, saw where the water overflowed back into Stony Creek and the intricate brick lined outlet channel. Systems have changed now but there were more than 8 kms of tunnels, flumes and channels to take the water from the weirs to Anakie. Geelong received its first water from Stony Creek in 1873. Where the water comes from before filling the weirs is another huge history!

Calendar:

The 2024 Calendar is now for sale at MHIG and at businesses in Meredith, Elaine and Buninyong. Shearing sheds have character and old ones are very individual. But this calendar features shearing sheds with an associated story. Some have been built using another building or with materials from another building, some have been repurposed from a shearing shed into something else and some have features that makes them specifically different. Not only is the calendar useful to know dates in 2024 but records a part of Meredith & District History.

Woodburn Book:

A Special Edition of Woodburn Revisited Book has been reproduced in colour. For those who don't know, this book was produced for the reunion of Woodburn Creek State School in October 2007. It not only includes a history of the school but memories of former teachers, parents and pupils and photos which are now in colour. The cover features a drawing of the school by Leith Russell (Sutherland). Woodburn Creek State School was firstly near to Woodburn Creek but when it was re-established in 1935 Mr McNaughton not only provided a building but also the land for the school.

The Special Edition Book is a great Christmas gift, available at the History Centre for \$40.00.

A Birth for Christmas:

Recently, while doing some paving on the west side of the History Centre, I noticed a neat little nest on the ground beside some tall grass. Then there were eggs in the nest. Then the eggs hatched and now the birds are growing quickly. So the paving is on hold until the birds all fly away.

Christmas:

Also available for Christmas presents are other books

produced by MHIG and decorated mugs and bowls planted with a variety of succulents. Just announced is that coloured copies of Morrisons photos from the recent Exhibition are available, printed either A4 or A3 on photo paper. Now that's a good thought for a Christmas gift too!

Best Wishes to all readers for Christmas and the New Year.

Bolte Collection Auction

Marg Cooper

The auction of 318 items owned by Sir Henry and Dame Edith Bolte was held by Kerley's Auctions on October 29, online. The items spanned a lifetime and included such things as: a cup won in a mixed doubles tennis tournament in Skipton in 1929; a framed document signed by the Governor pronouncing his appointment as a Member of Parliament in 1947; a framed document which pronounced his appointment as Premier of Victoria; another framed document which pronounced him a Knight Commander; a signed Christmas card from the Queen and two red/orange chairs on which they sat during the Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales.

Included in the collection were many engraved items; silver trays, jugs, plates and tankards given at openings at which Sir Henry or his wife had officiated. One item of particular interest was a gold-plated shovel with which Henry turned the first sod at Point Henry for the building of Alcoa in 1961. Some locals remember Henry using this shovel to dig a stock truck out of a bog and to spread sheep crutchings over the floor of the shearing shed. Another item sold was a gold plate recognizing the ten-year anniversary of Sovereign Hill.

The items also reflected other parts of his life: his love of horse racing with several trophies won by horses he owned, a golf trophy from Bannockburn Golf Club, a trophy for a win playing billiards at Parliament House, cigarette cases, decanters, elegant glasses and a vintage Port bottle featuring a photo of Henry on the front.

There were many pieces of furniture including the desk from his den or office at Kialla and a revolving bookcase. Only a few books were included in the auction but of interest was a large pictorial Bible and books that recorded the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956.

Decorative dinner sets with settings for ten or twelve filled the tables at Kerleys with cutlery sets of both gold and silver. One can imagine the Boltes entertaining at dinner parties using all the fine dinner ware, with vases filled with flowers, many paintings adorning the walls (which were also for sale), with historic items on sideboards and shelves and the silk rug under the table. A most unusual item auctioned was an almost life sized, substantial carved statue from New Guinea which may have witnessed many of these dinner parties from the corner of the room.

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Melissa Arch's Once Upon a Benson CHAPTER 12

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Last time: Lottie visits her Nanna, Margie and is shocked by her fragile state. She communicates this to her Pa, Merv.

Gerald blinked and looked again at his computer screen. No, I would not have done this. No way! Gerald was great at reassuring himself, even in non truth. In Gerald's drunken state, he had taken selfies, in various poses and states of undress. Gerald immediately edited his profile, removing the incriminating photos. However, it appeared that his action was too late-he had received much unwanted attention.

"Nice leopard print jocks!", accompanied by a crying/laughing emoji, was the first comment he saw.

"Are you trying to outdo Trump with the orange look??" More crying/laughing emojis. Gerald was mortified. He would have to close down his newly developed profile and start again elsewhere. What if the same people were on multiple sites? Gerald was now freaking himself out. He poured another wine and gulped down three large mouthfuls, whilst typing in dating sites. Perhaps I should not drink wine whilst on the dating sites, Gerald pondered his actions very half heartedly and kept typing.

Johnny pulled his headphones from his ears. One of his schoolmates was trying to attract his attention. Lately, Johnny felt more at ease being in his own world.

"Yo Johnny. You comin' around to Simmo's tonight?", asked his mate, Ben. Ben was a loveable larrikan, known for his keen sense of fun and often naughtiness. Johnny pondered, if only for a brief moment.

"Nah mate. I'm having a quiet one".

"Oh come on mate! When was the last time we had the chance to hang at an oldie free zone?" Simmo's parents were away for the weekend. Johnny's face contorted, to show contemplation. Ben caught wind of this and was not letting it go.

"Come ooonnnn Johnny!" Ben complained. He could be very persuasive. Johnny could not be bothered dealing with any more nagging from his friend. Johnny rolled his eyes, hoping he would not live to regret his decision.

"Oh bloody hell! Alriiight!" Johnny conceded.

"Yes!" Ben clapped his hands together loudly.

"What time?" asked Johnny.

"Kicking off around 7 is the word" Ben replied confidently.

As Johnny watched Ben ride off on his bike, Johnny was second guessing his change of heart. He just had not been keen for too much lately, especially with what had been happening within his family. Perhaps a bit of fun and banter was just what he needed?

Johnny was still a tad doubtful, knowing how boisterous Ben and the other guys could be. Especially without supervision. There had been trouble in the past and he had been spoken to by his parents at the time.

I don't have to be a sheep. Johnny reassured himself that he could make decisions apart from this group. He was known as the sensible one. If things get hectic, I will slip off into the distance.

"What's up?" Jason asked his son, as Johnny came through the front door.

"Hey Dad. Nothing much". Johnny's standard reply.

"What's on for Friday night, in the life of a 17-year-old?" Jason recalled when he was that age with a smirk. He did not think that Johnny noticed this.

"Just going round to Simmo's place for a bit", Johnny replied, looking at the floor.

"Are his folks around?"

"Yeah, I think so".

"You think so or you know so?" Johnny had piqued his Dad's curiosity. Jason did not want to seem too perturbed by it but had heard about Simmo and his mates, from people around the town. There had been some concerning behaviours raised in the past.

"I don't know!" Johnny snapped back at his father, not meaning to sound so defensive.

"What time will we expect you home?" Jason asked his son, more meekly.

"I'll be back by midnight. Is that ok? Johnny asked, clearly annoyed by his father's insistence on the matter.

"I'll run it by your Mum and let you know. She's at work til 10.30 tonight".

Johnny skulked off, wishing his parents would think him more trustworthy. He had just turned 17 but thought he should be given more leeway. It's not like he did stupid things...

to be continued...

Spiny Broom Now in Flower!

Spiny Broom (Calicotome Spinosa) is an invasion woody weed enjoying similar conditions to Gorse.

It is currently in flower in the district (bright yellow). The seeds form after flowering and spread in the warmer months.

Small clusters soon become large infestations

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Refer to Broom Busters website if you have a computer or contact the local shire for a weed booklet

Submitted by Janene Schillier



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MASTER BUILDER

Cert Awards

Martin Peters

On November 8th three members of the Meredith CERT travelled to Ararat for the Ambulance Victoria regional service awards.

Mary Foster, Lynn Heard and Martin Peters all received both the 15-year long service award, and the 15-year safe driving award.

Mary was due her medals last year, but due to COVID restrictions the service awards did not take place. Mary is planning on retiring from CERT at the end of this year, she is the last of the founding members of the Meredith CERT and has put in a tremendous effort over the last 16 years. Whilst she will be greatly missed as a team member, we totally understand that the time has come to hang up her boots. Thank you, Mary, for your dedication to CERT for so many years.

After 8 years in the Team Leader position, Martin Peters has stepped down to make way for Cameron Sibeijn. Martin is still staying on as a First Responder but wanted to spend less time on the administrative side of the team. Cameron has a passion for the emergency services and will help revitalise the team. He has big ideas, including working more closely with the CFA in training exercises to help improve the coordinated response to complex events.

The Meredith Community Emergency Response Team (Meredith CERT) is a group of dedicated volunteers, who respond to medical emergencies in Meredith and the surrounding communities. Volunteers need no prior medical experience, only a willingness to learn and a full driving licence. All training and equipment is supplied by Ambulance Victoria. On completion of training, volunteers receive a nationally recognised qualification in emergency medical response.

If you are interested in joining the Meredith CERT, please email: meredith.teamleader@ambulance.vic.gov.au

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Golden Plate Awards

Marg Cooper

The Golden Plate Awards are hospitality industry awards conducted by The Catering Institute of Australia since 2001.

Restaurants, Pubs, Cafes or other eateries have to be nominated for the awards, then they are visited anonymously by hospitality experts who record and collate a score. Apparently, the judges leave a card when they have dined to say that they have been and judged. Sometime later an email arrives with constructive criticism and notification if selected in the Top Eight.

Our own chef (and co-owner) of the Meredith Hotel, Chris Hassan was nominated for the Best Chef Award. He was delighted to be scored as one of the top eight chefs in Regional Victoria and in October went to a cook-off in Melbourne to compete against the other seven chefs selected. It was a bit like MasterChef without the television cameras.

Individually, the chefs were given a mystery box of random ingredients. They had 40 minutes to design a two-course meal and prepare the ingredients and then 40 minutes to cook the meal.



The meal Chris cooked consisted of pork belly with fondant potatoes, an onion puree, asparagus and a garnish of seaweed. Dessert was apple and rhubarb crumble.

He hoped that by cooking a simple, old fashioned, wholesome sweet it might remind the judges of when their mother or grandmother made that dish. Chris said he has been wanting to compete in the Best Chef Awards since 2003 but it is very difficult to get into.

Jasmine and Chris took over the Meredith Hotel about two-and-a-half years ago and always aimed to make it a place where the food was important.

Jas runs front of house, manages the technology and administration, and works alongside Chris in the kitchen when needed. Chris runs the kitchen, which includes supervising apprentices, preparing and cooking all types of cuisine, ordering food daily and even washing dishes.

The Hotel is open from Wednesday to Sunday but they strongly recommend that you pre- book a table as more and more people are travelling from Melbourne and the Surf Coast to dine. They completely re-equipped and re-designed the kitchen after they came to Meredith but they believe they've now outgrown the kitchen and are looking to make it bigger and better.

At a Gala Presentation Dinner in Geelong on Monday, November 27, the Golden Plate Award for Best Chef of Regional Victoria will be announced as well as the People's Choice Award. This is huge for Meredith. Jas and Chris are putting us on the map and are bringing business to our town, not only to the Top Pub but to others, making Meredith a destination rather than a drive through.

Chris' motto is: If you have a dream you have a responsibility to yourself to strive to make it come true because if you don't you're just a dreamer. This is a quote from Marco Pierre White, one of the world's best chefs.

Have you some interesting stories to share?



Did you read Don's Wildlife story this month and think, "I remember when....."

If you did, why don't you put pen to paper and share with our readers. This edition is packed with stories and information. Why not add your name to the contributors next year?

We look forward to hearing from you in February!

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

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Marg's BOOK REVIEW

Call of the Outback by Marianne Van Velzen

I don't know where I bought this book or why but I found the biography of Ernestine Hill to be very interesting on many different levels.

Ernestine Hill, born in 1899, was a nomad, adventurer and trailblazer. After the birth of her illegitimate son (the father was Robert Clyde Packer who started the Packer Newspaper Empire) she left her job as a journalist at Smith's Weekly in Sydney, going to Tasmania to work for a newspaper but leaving there in 1929 to go outback on the mainland of Australia. She was hoping to stumble on interesting stories past the last signpost.

At the start of 1930 Ernestine and her family (mother, aunt and son) travelled by boat to Perth where her adventure began. Later that year they flew to Carnarvon and later still went to Broome - which she loved from the moment she arrived. Travel in the outback in those days was primitive and uncomfortable with often days or weeks spent waiting for the next ride. Across the painted deserts and the pearling seas, by aeroplane and camel and coastal ship, by truck and lugger and packhorse team and private yacht the trail led her on. When her son grew up they bought a truck, described as a forlorn looking flat nosed army truck. They both fell in love with this old green rattletrap.

As well as writing articles for newspapers, Ernestine was a talented photographer and she also wrote books, including *The Great Australian Loneliness*, *The Territory*, *Flying Doctors Calling* and *My Love Must Wait*. She met Daisy Bates in Ooldea. Ernestine alighted from the Trans Australian Railway carriage hoping that the old lady living amongst the Aboriginal people at the soak would consent to talk to her. They became friends and when Daisy in her later years went to town to live Ernestine arranged for her welfare. Ernestine later wrote a biography of Daisy Bates, called *Kabbarli* which was not published until after the author's death. She was also friends with Mary Durack, with Katherine Sussanah Pritchard and Henrietta Drake-Brockman.

She was a heavy smoker and apparently did not manage her money well. Her mother and Aunt Kitty died in 1941 and 1943 respectively and after the war, her life and her writing became somewhat disorganized. She died in 1972.

This book tells the story of her larger than life personality and the exotic landscapes she explored before any other female journalist. She is credited with bringing the outback into the imaginations of Australians.

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G'Day from the penners for the last month of 2023. It's been a busy year for the penners and we as a group feel that we have grown during this year, our writings have become more nuanced and polished and so much laughter has echoed from our room at the library. We would like to thank the readers of the Meredith News for reading our stories and we hope that 2024 will bring many more for us to share with you. So, until Feb it's Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all and see you all next year.

Cheers, Wendy

The pen is mightier than the sword – Gordon Vanbeck

Lily was an old-fashioned style of writer. She enjoyed the feel of a pen in her hand, the texture of the paper she wrote on and the thrill of wonderment she experienced as words flowed onto the paper, to create sentences, paragraphs and stories. Writing using a computer lacked connection for her. Ideas were slow to emerge, she struggled to create her characters. It was if the computer itself was a block, standing between her and her vision. The pen she used held special meaning for her. It had been a gift from her father to celebrate her thirteenth birthday. It was a Parker premium pearl tip and although her father had passed away many years before, she felt his presence and encouragement whenever she wrote with it. Her favourite writing position was sitting curled in her cozy armchair, notebook and pen in hand, jazz playing softly in the background and a glass of ruby red pinot noir strategically placed on a little table by her chair. Tonight, Lily had barely touched her customary glass of wine and was almost oblivious to Duke Ellington and his Kentucky Club Orchestra playing on her CD. She was scribbling furiously in her notebook. An idea for her latest crime novel had come to her as soon as she picked up her pen. She needed to get the bare bones of the story down before she forgot the plotline. She did not hear the muttered curses from her husband Tony as he struggled to get his front door key in the lock, nor did she smell the scent of stale alcohol that wafted in with him when the front door creaked open.

Tonight was Tony's regular pub night with his friends from the footy club and as he entered and quietly eased the door shut, he was pleasantly surprised to notice that Lily was still up. He was touched by her gesture. Waiting up for him was proof that her love for him still burned bright. He stumbled into the living room and carefully wove his way toward the figure of his wife curled up on the couch. He chuckled quietly to himself. She was so intent on her writing that she was still oblivious to his presence. He swayed closer, a lopsided grin on his face. Then, with an exaggerated flourish, he leant in over the back of her couch and planted a wet, sloppy kiss on the back of her bare neck. It was as if Lily had been plugged into an

electric power socket, she shrieked at the top of her voice sprang to her feet and whirling round punched Tony right in the throat. Their eyes locked in shock as Tony mumbled, "Sorry Lily – did I give you a fright?" At least, that was what he would have said if he had been able to talk. The pen Lily had been holding was now buried to its cap in his throat; the blood that filled his throat made any conversation quite impossible. As he toppled to the floor, Tony suddenly remembered that he had promised to buy milk on the way home. The police arrived within five minutes of Lily's call. They found a man's lifeless body on the floor with a pen imbedded in his throat.

Lily's voice trembled as she recounted the events that led to Tony's death. The detectives examined the room – finding no evidence of a struggle or possible foul play. The wife seemed genuinely upset and her story appeared consistent with the evidence at hand. Over the next few hours the police interrogation of the neighbours confirmed that Lily and Tony had been a normal married couple who had seemed happy together. They formed the view that it had all been a tragic accident. The body was removed to the morgue to await an autopsy and the lead Detective notified Lily that she would not be detained but was required to attend the station next morning to give a written statement. Lily thanked them, and as she closed the front door behind them, she wondered whether tomorrow would be too soon to ask for her pen back.

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COMMUNITY UPDATE - December 2023

All the staff at Moorabool Wind Farm wish you a safe and happy Christmas.

We thank all the landowners, neighbours and broader community for your support during 2023 and look forward to another year of involvement with the local area in 2024.

Round Five Community Fund

Congratulations to the successful applicants of Round Five of the Moorabool Wind Farm Community Fund.

Thank you to all community members who submitted an application and to the Community Fund Assessment Panel for your time and interest. The next opportunity to apply for funding will be in mid-2024.

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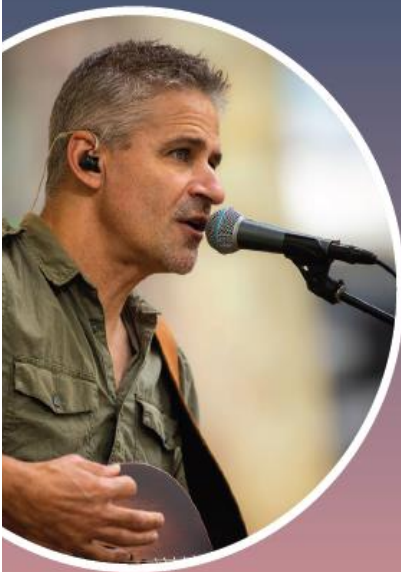


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As the sun sets on 2023, we wish you a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We thank you for your readership and contributions and look forward to more next year.



See you in February 2024!