

Our FREE Community Newsletter MEREDITH and DISTRICT NEWS

# Meredith & district News



MARCH 2024

## inside



- Worthy OAM recipient
- Meet the Newbies Series
- Police Paddock update....and more!



e: [news@meredithnews.com.au](mailto:news@meredithnews.com.au) w: [meredithnews.com.au](http://meredithnews.com.au)



# Drug driving? The consequences will blow your mind.

Police are conducting drug tests across Victoria, which helps to keep our roads safe. Being caught with illicit drugs in your system could result in a minimum fine of \$577 and possible licence suspension. Drug driving? Chances are you will be caught. Anywhere. Anytime. Anyone.



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**FRIDAY  
22 MARCH  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
WORKSHOP**

10 am to 3pm,  
Bannockburn and Smythesdale



**We are trialling something new,  
come along and share your  
thoughts to make a difference!**

In-person attendance is required  
and lunch provided. **RSVP by  
Wednesday 13 March 2024**

Please register using the QR Code  
and include any additional/dietary  
needs. Limited transport options  
available.

If you have any queries, please call  
the Community Inclusion Team on  
5220 7111 or email  
[enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au)



**2040**  
COMMUNITY VISION

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*Council invites you to help shape the  
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April**



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## 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

Find us at: [www.goldenplainsanglican.org](http://www.goldenplainsanglican.org) or

[office.revdrtim@hotmail.com](mailto:office.revdrtim@hotmail.com)

The Revd Dr Timothy Smith

PiC Anglican Parish of

Inverleigh+Bannockburn+Meredith

### St Josephs Parish of Meredith

Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. MAR. 2, 9, 16, 23

Anakie - St. Brigid @ 9am Sun. MAR. 3, 17

Meredith - St. Joseph @ 9am Sun. Mar 10, 24

B'burn - St. Mary MacKillop @ 11am Sun. Mar 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

Inverleigh - Sacred Heart @ 4pm Sun. FEB 18

### EASTER CEREMONIES

**Palm Sunday** - Winchelsea 23/3 @ 6pm

Meredith 24/3 @ 9am

Bannockburn 24/3 @ 11am

**Holy Thursday** Meredith 28/3 @ 7pm Mass of the Lords

Supper

**Good Friday** - Bannockburn

29/3 @ 10am Ecumenical Way of the Cross

29/3 @ 3pm Celebration of the Lords Passion

**Holy Saturday** - Meredith 30/3 @ 8pm Easter Vigil

**Easter Sunday** - Winchelsea 31/3 @ 9am

Bannockburn 31/3 @ 11 am

## OUR COVER

Our cover was sent in by Cherie Reid via the Lal Lal and Surrounds Online Community Noticeboard. It is a capture of one of the recent onslaught of white butterflies in the district.

Thank you, Cherie and the many other contributors of beautiful butterfly photos.



## Police Paddocks

*Jim Elvey*

Last month the Meredith Police Paddocks Support Group held its most positive meeting in recent times, when members and townspeople heard newly appointed site managers, Western Region Ecological Network (WREN) is keen to work with the community and will be guided in the management of the site by Support Group input. The meeting, also attended by Michaela Settle MP, a dedicated supporter of the Group's efforts, heard WREN not only supports the installation of onsite storage for the Group's equipment and at least one platform bridge across the creek, it will help facilitate them.

Also attending was Richard Anderson, chair of the Maude/Meredith Landcare Group, who pledged his Group's support in helping to manage the site, working in liaison with WREN and the Support Group.

Importantly, WREN will make an early start on weed management, ending several years of neglect.

The group has chosen the south-west corner of the site, near Campion Road, to locate a shipping container to accommodate equipment. This will make it much easier for volunteers who currently have to use their own trailer to collect the mower from offsite storage and return it after use. The container will be a secure facility, well presented and mostly hidden by screen planting. It is hoped it will eventually be decorated with panels acknowledging Wadawurrung use of the site and detailing the importance of flora and fauna species native to the area.

An early project for all parties involved will be the development of a master plan which will not only declare a vision for the site, but will also identify key priorities, resource requirements and timelines.

WREN stated it respects the Support Group's preferred role, based on developing and promoting the site's history, its environmental values and its appeal as a walking site.

A number of other suggestions arose from the meeting which will be included in the planning process.

If you would like to get involved in this beautiful district facility, or simply be kept informed, contact us at [meredith.police.paddocks@gmail.com](mailto:meredith.police.paddocks@gmail.com) or call

## Golden Plains Festival 2024

Reminder - festival dates Saturday 9—Monday 11 March

- Speed restrictions from 2 days prior Mt Mercer Rd
- One way traffic Mt Mercer Rd day prior & first day
- Meredith inbound traffic diversion down Cameron Rd
- Traffic controllers on Midland highway
- No parking zones around festival site

# 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), Ian Penna, Sue Higgs, Nerida Anderson and Ian Leighton. Production is undertaken 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](mailto: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. Contact us for full details and lodgement forms. Rates, excluding GST, are as follows:

	B&W/Colour
Business Card	\$20.00
Quarter page	\$30.00
Half page	\$50/\$110
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A \$20 loading applies for preferred position. Please submit in jpeg format, if available.

Classifieds are **FREE** for small, personal notices from residents. Otherwise \$7.50 on invoice or \$5.00 if paid on lodgement. Community Groups can have a 1/4 page ad for free or a \$30.00 discount on larger ads. (conditions apply)

## 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

Post Office, Meredith, 3333

Advertising: Ian 0409 016815

[advertising@meredithnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@meredithnews.com.au)

Accounts: Ian Leighton 0428132880

[accounts@meredithnews.com.au](mailto:accounts@meredithnews.com.au)

Editorial: Jim: 0409 163169

[news@meredithnews.com.au](mailto:news@meredithnews.com.au)

## WEB

You can read back copies and additional stories at [meredithnews.com.au](http://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

Issue Production: Don Atherton Editor: Marlene Johnson

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Meredith  
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Morrisons  
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Meredith  
5286 1434

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Lethbridge  
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Meredith  
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# emergency

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Police non emergency	5286 1222
Power Failure	131 444
Nurse-On-Call	132 412
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Poisons Information	1300 280 737
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SES Emergency - flood & storm	1300 656 007
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24 Hour Drug & Alcohol Counselling	1800 629 572
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24hr 5-18yo	1800 551 800
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	or 0409 830 223
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Mr Don Atherton.	0409 869 960
Mr Paul Ryan Elaine	0409 861 296

# services

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## MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

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## RECREATION RESERVE

0429 315 575

## ..start something.

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

*Struggle and determination lead to great things. Just ask the butterfly!*



# I'm here to help.

Please contact my office if you feel I can be of any assistance to you.

**Michaela Settle MP**  
Member for **Eureka**

 michaelasettle.com.au

 (03) 5331 7722

 michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au

 MichaelaSettleMP



Meredith **Community Centre**  
*working for our community*

## What's On This Month



### Mindfulness with Jade

Monday - 3.30 - Prep - Grade 4  
Monday - 4.30 - Grade 5 - Year 9  
Wednesdays - 9.30 - Goddess Mums  
Fridays - 2.10 - 2.40 - Kindergarten Kids  
\$15 per session, payable by Term

### Toddler Dance with Jacque

Mondays - 10:15 - 10:45  
Ages 1-4  
\$10 per child, pay on the day with cash or card  
Jacque - 0448 046 551

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**9-3 MONDAY-THURSDAY**

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### Tai Chi - \$15 per session

Tuesdays @ Meredith with Sandra - 9.15 - 10.15  
Wednesdays @ Bannockburn with Desma - 9:30 - 10.30

### 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



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### PLAYGROUP

THURSDAYS  
9.00am - 11.30am  
\$2 per family

# Recreation



## Meredith Tennis Club News

*Bridget Dyer*

### Summer Night Competition

The summer night competition is off to a great start with 24 teams across four sections! Four sections and 24 teams is an amazing number of people, and shows how much people are enjoying being part of a community sport with their children. There have been some great matches and some delicious dinners available afterwards for \$10 per person. We have enjoyed having the Cricket club join us for these dinners, along with various spectators who have come along to support their favourite teams each week. We have also loved the number of new parents that are playing with the younger children this time round, as we have four new teams in our lower section.

We still have a few weeks until finals, which will be held on 14th March across each section. As always, feel free to come and join us for a hit and to cheer on the teams that make the finals.

### Saturday Competitions

Our Saturday juniors are doing well across the board with a number of our teams heading to the finals. We expect Meredith Blue to be in the finals as they have been undefeated for this season. Meredith Black are currently second with only 3 points between first and second. Meredith Red are currently sitting third and Meredith Yellow are slightly behind first position. Meredith White has played well and improved so much, but unfortunately will miss out on finals this year.

Semi finals will begin on 16th March and finals will be held 23rd March.

The Geelong Orange ball competition has now finished, and we are extremely proud of how much the 10 children involved have improved. There are no finals for Orange ball as the score is not a focus for this age group and no proper ladder was run.

Geelong will be running a junior winter competition, so if your child is keen to play over winter, please contact us!

Our senior teams have had a number of people playing in the two teams with up to 12 adults, either competing regularly or filling in for either one of the teams. With so many playing across two teams, many of whom are coming back into social tennis after a long break or have not played social senior tennis before, consistency has been a bit of a challenge for both teams, resulting in both teams being bottom of the ladder. As there are only seven teams playing in the BDTA senior section, finals are held for three sections, with the top four teams battling it out in the semi-finals for A Grade finals. The two that lose that semi-finals will then play each other in the B grade finals. The bottom two teams play off in semi-finals to play against the team who is fifth on the ladder for C grade finals.

It's all a bit confusing, but despite being bottom of the ladder, the two Meredith teams will play each other in the

C grade finals in Buninyong on Saturday March 16th at 1 pm. The winning team will then play against the team who are in fifth position to determine the C grade winner. So all is not lost for our seniors and one team can still come home with a trophy!

We wish all teams that make it to any of the finals good weather, good conditions and happy hitting. We hope everyone has enjoys the experience and plays their best.

### Presentation Lunch

Our end of season presentation will be a lunch this year and be held on Sunday 24th March at the clubrooms at 11.30 am. Lunch will consist of roast meat with vegetables and salad, followed by dessert. Cost is \$10 per person or \$30 per family. As this is a catered event, please rsvp by 15th March. All players, past, present and future are welcome to join us. Don't forget to bring your tennis racquets as we will have the BallSlingers out and no doubt everyone will be keen for a hit.

### Autumn Competition

Our next competition will begin around the 18th April and run for six weeks again. We will advertise this once the Summer Competition has finished.

### BallSlingers

Our BallSlingers are available for hire during fine weather. Please contact us if you are interested in hiring one for an afternoon or morning.

### Tennis Victoria Award

Congratulations to Maddy McColl on being Tennis Victoria's February 2024 Community Champion. It has been lovely to see all the recognition that Maddy has received on the hard work she has put into the club over the past few years.

## Meredith Cricket Club



### 2023/24 Season Results (so far)

*Terry Hart*

With 2 rounds of the home and away season remaining our 1st X1 are well and truly in finals contention, sitting just outside the top 4 on percentage. 2 wins to finish the home and away season would give the boys every chance of playing finals.

Our 2nd X1 have struggled for consistency to this point of the season but a strong win against Nth Shore last week will hopefully give the team the confidence to finish off the home and away season on a positive note.

On the social scene we held our Reverse Raffle on Saturday night the 3rd of Feb, congratulations to Aaron Hart who won the \$2,500.00 prize. A great night was had by all that attended.

Our Annual Past Players Day will again be held on Saturday the 9th of March. This is a great opportunity to catch up with past players from all eras and reminisce about the great club we are all a part of.

Keep an eye on our social media pages for information about our end of season Presentation Night.


Ram It



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## MOORABOOL Wind Farm

Moorabool Wind Farm is pleased to support projects and organisations that will provide lasting benefits to the local community neighbouring the wind farm through our Community Fund. Round Six applications will open on May 6th 2024, closing 1st June 2024.

Fund guidelines can be found at the QR code (see right)  
or: mooraboolwindfarm.com/community/ community-fund



For more information, please visit: mooraboolwindfarm.com  
To contact us or register to receive project updates via email, get in touch:  
info@mooraboolwindfarm.com or 1800 019 660.



## Elaine Cricket Club

*Marg Cooper*

### The Jim Connell Cricket Nets

On Saturday evening, February 17 the Elaine Cricket Club conducted a ceremony to open their new cricket nets at the Recreation Reserve, which they have named after cricket stalwart and Life Member Jim Connell. The old nets had cracked concrete and had become quite dilapidated.

Jim cut the ribbon and declared the nets open and ready for use and hoped that they would be used frequently.

As well as naming the new set of nets after Jim the two separate lanes of the nets have been named after families who have contributed heaps to the Elaine Cricket Club. One lane is called the Dunne Lane after Shane and Seamus Dunne and the other lane is named the Pandzitis Lane after Julie and her son Nicholas. They consist of synthetic grass over concrete with nets around the sides.

Money to pay for a private contractor to erect the nets came from many sources including the Moorabool Shire, Cricket Victoria, Mt Mercer Wind Farm, Bendigo Bank and Elaine Cricket Club.

Jim has been a member of the Elaine Cricket Club since 1948 when he was 14 years old and they played in the Mt Egerton Association. He tells they went to matches in the back of Cocky Parkinson's utility.

He retired from playing when Elaine joined the Ballarat Association. Highlights he remembers are the day he made 71 runs and the day he bowled 8 for 31 runs. Unfortunately, he was never given another chance to bowl and describes his usual position as chasing the ball down the ground. The teams he played in never won a Premiership.

Elaine Cricket Club would like to thank all its players and committee members past and present who contributed to the club being successful in completing the new training nets project that has been in progress for the past 5 years.

A special thanks for the hard work behind the scenes contributed by Julie Pantzidis, Nicholas [Chicka] Pantzidis [Captain and Vice President], Shane Dunne [Secretary], Seamus Dunne [Vice President] and Vice-Captain, Amanda Douglass and Karen Pritchard.

## 2024 MEMORIAL HALL AGM

The Hall's Annual General Meeting will be held Monday 18th MARCH at 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall, 61 Staughton St for The Election of the Committee for 2024 and to present the Annual Financial Report.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Hall Bookings/Secretary – Sandra

M: 0409 662 106.

## Breaking Good News

*Marg Cooper*

There is now a Defibrillator at the Royal Hotel.

The Australian Hotels Association at a recent meeting awarded a defibrillator to the Royal Hotel at Meredith.

Claire and Damian have installed it in a prominent position in the bar area and want to tell everyone that it is there in case of an emergency and that it is available for everyone, not just for hotel patrons.

The phone number of the Royal is 03 52861100.

The Hotel is open most of the time and if not, there is usually someone on site.

*A defibrillator is a device that applies an electric charge or current to the heart to restore a normal heartbeat. If the heart rhythm stops due to cardiac arrest a defibrillator may help it start beating again.*

## For Gorse Control

*Janine Schillier*

The Next Gorse Control Demonstration Day for Victoria will be held on Sunday 24 March 2024 from 10.00am - 12.30pm at Rock House Kyneton

Bookings are limited and it's a great chance to get tips from the experts - well worth the drive

See [Info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au](mailto:Info@vicgorsetaskforce.com.au)

Refreshments and expertise provided Free

Bookings requested

We're interested in finding a new...

## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE MEMBER\*

If you are interested in joining the dedicated team behind this important community project, or just want to find out more, email us at:

[news@meredithnews.com.au](mailto:news@meredithnews.com.au)

or call Jim on 0409 163 169

*\*An important, but not a big job. The Committee meets just four times a year.*





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The Philatelist

Michael Riseley



**The First Australian Stamp.**

The Commonwealth of Australia was formed 1/1/1901 and the Federal Australia Post Office founded 1/3/1901 and so naturally enough the first Australian stamp was issued in ..... 1913. Yes 1913!!

Prior to 1913 and since Federation the different states continued to use and print their own state stamps. This was with the approval of Australia Post and carriage of mail was Australia wide. But you had to use a stamp of the state in which the mail commenced. In fact it wasn't until 13/10/1910 that mail was valid to start in any state with any state stamp.

One of the reasons for the delay with an Australian stamp was the desire not to waste perfectly good stamps. But the main reason was that they could not agree on a design. After all it took our founding fathers decades to decide where the capital of Australia should be, and even longer to agree on how wide a railway track should be!

Strong tradition in the British Commonwealth in those days was for postage stamps to depict the ruling regent and there was a very strong support for the design to be in that format. But there was an equally strong anti-royalist sentiment in the newly formed independent country. Eventually they settled on a design with a map of Australia with a big kangaroo.

A year later and perhaps to appease the royalists a series of stamps showing King George 5th was issued. These 2 designs remained the only Australian stamps until 1927 when a stamp showing the new Parliament House in Canberra was issued.

As a footnote it remained perfectly legal to use the state's stamps on Australian mail until 13/2/1966 when it had to change because of the decimalisation of the Australian currency.

**Being Fire Ready  
Advice for Newbies**

Leanne Martin

I'm sure that recent Catastrophic weather event may have given some of you an awakening to being Fire Ready. Especially if you are new to the country & never had to think about it before.

I'm still a little new myself but worked in the Safety Industry for years and helped the Victorian Police department prepare kits for patrol cars after the deadly fires in the Kinglake area, Black Friday.

As we know, and are reminded regularly we must have a plan. I wanted to share some information on a small kit of essentials that may help when leaving in an emergency. I leave mine in the car always. Use a plastic container that seals or a cotton bag. If you have children or others in the car, add extra to cover all passengers, or extra blanket, small bowl & water for your pets.

1. One pack of P1 face masks - (important, keep these sealed in ziplock bag to be clean.) Allow a couple for each person
2. A pair of goggles. If you wear glasses make sure you purchase goggles that can be worn over your glasses. If they're not sealed you probably wouldn't use them, it's important to have the seal
3. Bottles of water. For washing eyes or drinking.
4. Small first aid kit - always handy to have one in the car.
5. A fire blanket and/or woollen blanket to hide under if needed.
6. A pair of Leather gloves. (Not plastic or woven nylon, if you need to move a burning object they will only melt.)
7. Torch or your phone if you can get reception.
8. As part of your plan, know more than one road in and out of your property plus surrounding areas
9. Have the VicEmergency app installed on your phone and have it set for a suitable distance for warning message range allowing safe exiting of the area.

I hope this is helpful to newbies or long time residents in an emergency.





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## The Day before Christmas

Marg Cooper

Jake McDonnell is a country kid who likes motorbikes, go carts and mucking around. He has always said that he wanted to be a diesel mechanic however, this ambition may have changed because on the day before Christmas he decided to make a gift for his Mum Bianca for Christmas.

He set to work in the workshop at home and sent his brother out to find suitable parts for his creation. Much to the surprise of his mother, on Christmas Day, she was presented with a sculpture of a person made from old iron parts. Not only did he expertly weld all the parts together but he had an artistic eye to choose suitable parts and put them together in the form of a person or a somewhat artistic representation of a person.

Granted that he has seen both his parents create sculptures from a conundrum of parts but this effort was totally his own inspiration and practical work skills. Needless to say, he may now aim to become a Boiler Maker.



## Art Exhibition at Ballarat Gallery

Marg Cooper

The launch of the exhibition of paintings by Catherine (Kat) Ratcliffe was held at the Ballarat Art Gallery on Friday, February 2 and was performed by a university friend of hers, Michael Shields.



Kat always loved art and, after studying Fine Arts at Ballarat University, fell into tattooing for some years. Now, however, she has been drawn back to oil painting on canvas and linen. Her style is neo cubism which is described as a revived form of cubism which was a popular art form that started about 1907. Sales of her work to this stage have mainly been through commissions.

In images from the war in Ukraine, Kat admired old Bubbas or grandmothers who were defending their houses with everything they had. They were not going anywhere. They were going to fight for their place and their cultural heritage. She wondered where that grim determination came from, and looked to Ukrainian Folk Tales for an answer.

Kat's mother came from Ukraine just after WW11 so all her life Kat had heard the language, heard about the traditions and had heard snippets of the Folk Tales. Ukrainian Folk Tales are not about Prince Charming kissing the Princess or the Pot of Gold at the end of the Rainbow but are more about surviving, such as, if Plan A fails go to Plan B. These stories are part of a rich oral tradition which impart moral advice and provide lessons on life.

The exhibition in the Back Space Gallery (in the Ballarat Art Gallery) features eight large paintings each of which represent part of a Folk Tale. With each painting is a short description and title, Unlucky Days, The Voices at the Window, The Man who Danced with Rusalky, Oh, Tsar of the Forest, The Serpent's Wife and others. By studying the Folk Tales and painting Kat explored what influence her ancestors have had on her life, and asks viewers to also consider the role of ancestral stories in shaping their own personal narratives, amid the constant influx of contemporary information.

Kat hopes that this exhibition will lead to more commissions. She also likes to enter competitions like the Biblio Art Prize in Port Fairy where artists are given a book, are asked to read it and create a painting representing that book. She describes how, by moving to an isolated farm house at Elaine, she is

not distracted when creating and her job at the Elaine Pharmacy allows her to meet and get to know the locals.



*Hare in the river pike up a tree—2023*

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## IN the SCHOOL GARDEN



Fairley Pritchard

### A great beginning:

We had a great start to our school year, with the addition of an extra class, and also a wonderful group of Foundation students. This year our classroom structure is a Foundation class, a Grade 1/2, a Grade 3/4 and Grade 5/6. We also have a number of specialist programs running including PE, STEM, Art, Japanese and MARC Van.

### Grade 5 Camp:

The Grade 5s attended Cave Hill Creek camp in Raglan. We were fortunate to have visited when we did as a couple of weeks later, it was damaged by the bushfires near Beaufort. Thankfully lots of the main infrastructure was saved and hopefully they will be back up and running soon. Thanks to Mrs Douglas for attending with our Grade 5 students.

*My favourite thing was canoeing because we got to play a game where we had to scoop ducks up and basketball throw them into another canoe. – Charlie T*

*I loved abseiling because it was a challenge and it felt like space walking. – Dacian*

*My favourite things were abseiling and canoeing because they were challenging. I felt like I was running down a hill when abseiling. - Oakley*

*I loved map reading at camp because it was challenging to find all the markers. We also got to run around the camp and see all the things. - Harry*

### Grade 4 Camp:

Our Grade 4 students attended camp in Anglesea at Coastal Forest Lodge. The students had a wonderful time doing activities like sandcastle building, surfing, mini golf and archery. Thanks to Mrs Edmiston for attending camp with the Grade 4 students.

*My favourite thing at camp was surfing because I stood on the board and did lots of cool tricks. – Kira*

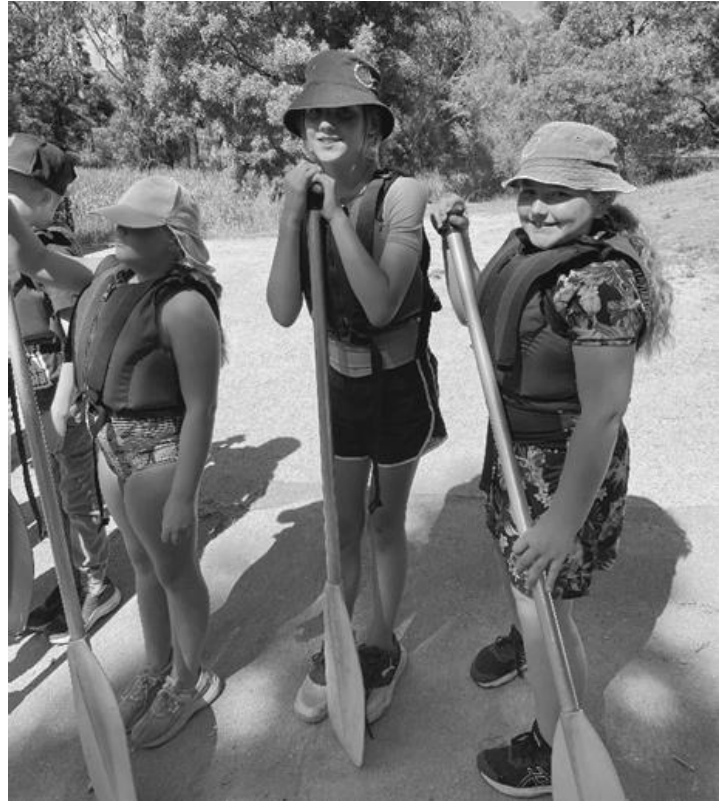
*I liked surfing at camp because we could stand up on the boards on the waves and do tricks on them. – Piper*

*I liked hut building because my friends were there to help me and I liked building mini houses and it was fun – Ayla*

*I liked archery. I hit the balloon, but it didn't pop because the arrows were blunt. But that was my favourite thing at camp. – Ryan*

### A visit from Severus Snake:

As you may have heard, if you have spoken to any students recently, we have had a visit to the school from a snake that the 5/6s have named 'Severus Snake'. It's rare to see snakes at school, even though we know they are in our environment. It provided us with a good opportunity to speak with the students about snake safety when at school. We have had the snake catcher out a couple of times, however Severus remains on the loose – hopefully well away from our school buildings and play areas!



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## it'S HISTORY

Meredith History Interest Group

A dynamic team of volunteers work together on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am to 3 pm at the History Centre. They may be cataloguing, researching for a client, planning for an event, compiling a book or balancing the financials.

There is also a lot of work done by volunteers at home especially trawling through Trove.

### Chronicles X:

Now showing on Channel 31 is a show titled Chronicles X Golden Plains produced by Mystical Guides. These episodes were filmed at Barwon Park, Winchelsea and feature interviews with several MHIG members including Joanne Mitchell {Stevenson}, Gail Hadley, Paul Ryan and Kerrie Kruger.

### Annual Meeting:

The 16th Annual Meeting of MHIG was held at the Memorial Hall on Sunday, February 25 at 1.30 pm. The Treasurer's and President's Reports were presented followed by the election of Office Bearers for 2024 and general business.

President: Marg Cooper  
 Vice President: Darren Guthrie  
 Secretary: Kerrie Kruger  
 Treasurer: Gail Hadley

Committee: Jan McDonald, Paul Ryan, Bev Loveday, Tony Scott, Alan Caddy and Andre Konarski,

Then the book *Ladies Please Start Your Engine*, compiled by Darren Guthrie was launched. Darren, Vice President of MHIG lives at Steiglitz, has a keen interest in gold mining in the district and a particular interest in the engines involved and the ceremonies conducted to start those engines. [Book review p;20]

### Future Events:

MHIG has registered an event with the National Trust of Victoria's Heritage Festival which takes place in April / May. We will be included in their promotional material so a larger audience will be aware that our event is on. Their theme is *Connections* and MHIG has decided to call our event *A Different Ball Game*. Our theme is football in Meredith in the early days and how nearly everyone in Meredith & District community was connected through the football club from the bootmaker who mended the boots, to the publican who sponsored the team to the local newspaper who reported on matches, to the woman who washed all the jumpers, to the man with a truck who transported the team to matches etc.

### What Do We Do?

The number one aim of MHIG is to collect history. This could be paper, photos, information, stories, maps etc. What we collect we then organize so we can store and be able to find again. We call this process cataloguing whereby we record and enter onto a data base.

The number two aim is to share that history. Displays, events and books are some ways that MHIG presents history to the public as well as Facebook, a Web Site and articles in the Newsletters. We also answer requests for information from visitors or people who contact us by email, social media etc.



Brisbane Ranges  
 sketchers

Kerry Thomson

Forecast hot weather, gale force winds and a Total Fire Ban led to postponement of our outing by a week. Thank goodness! As a consequence though, fewer people were able to attend to paint/draw the old Bannockburn Railway Station. Mandy, Alex, Mari, Mark, Ray, Ros, Peter x 2 and I enjoyed the slightly cooler weather, shade of the large, old cypress and proximity of coffee and lunch (afterwards).

The low perspective and panoramic view of the bluestone building presented challenges to all of us but, nevertheless, we rose to the occasion producing interesting and varied results. There is no doubt this regular plein air activity is helping hone both our observational and artistic skills. A lovely, friendly, encouraging and supportive atmosphere has developed as well and we welcome any newcomers prepared to join our group.

Next time: 12 March (second Tuesday) 10.00 am meet at the Meredith Community Centre

**Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.**  
 George Santayana, "The Life of Reason", 1905

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## Ladies Please Start Your Engines

*Marg Cooper*

The launch of this book went off with a Bang!

The book that Darren Guthrie has compiled documents over 150 christenings of engines at gold mines in the greater Ballarat area, including Elaine, Steiglitz, Woodburn, Morrisons and Mt Mercer between the 1860's and the 1890's. The christenings were similar to the christening of ships and usually involved a pretty lady smashing a bottle of champagne against the fly wheel of the engine, the naming of the engine usually after the pretty lady, lots of speeches and toasts, a crowd of well-wishers and a banquet.

On Sunday, February 25 at the Memorial Hall our own pretty Leanne, dressed in period costume, smashed a plastic bottle against a spoked wheel positioned on a table, pulled a plug in the bottle and it went off with a Bang! She wished the book well, hoped it paid dividends and enjoyed considerable success! The crowd then were invited to toast the book with a cup of tea and a bountiful afternoon tea.

Prior to the christening, the author Darren showed photos of engines at gold mines on our big screen and explained how all the equipment worked. It is amazing how big, heavy and complicated the machinery was. It was amazing how big the buildings, chimneys and poppet heads were. It is amazing how they had all this up and going in a matter of months.

And to start off proceedings our invited guest Doug Bradby spoke about his love of history, the importance of recording and sharing history, and congratulated Darren on his extensive research and stressed the importance of productions like Darren's. Doug lives at Scotchman's Lead, taught history, still teaches history and produces booklets about Ballarat history.

This is one description in Darren's book of the christening of an engine named Louisa at the Band and Barton No 1 Company mine in Ballarat in 1880.

*The young lady, Louisa by name, was stationed in front of the fly wheel [which sometimes were 18 feet in diameter] and given a bottle of champagne and instructions. The engine driver turned on the steam, the engine moved off smoothly and the young lady dashed the bottle against the gyrating flywheel with such effective vigour that the glass flew into smithereens, and the sparkling shower of champagne tinged by the bright sunlight streaming through the building blushed into rainbows and formed arches of colour that gave promise that the mine was sure to be successful.*

Ladies Please Start Your Engines is an interesting read. As well as the christening ceremonies it gives the reader an overall sense of all that was going on at that time from weather, to transport, to personnel, to shares, to expectations etc. If you are at all interested in the gold mining era this is a must read.

The book is available from MHIG at a cost of \$45.00.



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## MEET OUR DISTRICT NEWBIES

Marlene Johnson

*Leanne Martin, botanical artist, moved into a cottage in Elaine, two years ago. She shows her work at the local Gallery and her bee drawing is currently being exhibited on the large Buninyong cube.*

**What attracted you to buy in Elaine? Have you enjoyed your first two(?) years here? Are you starting to feel a part of the community?**

It was the house that brought me to Elaine - it kept popping up on Instagram. I've always been a lover of period homes and was keen to find one in the regions out of Melbourne. The house had charm, and the garden was a blank canvas for me to develop. I wanted to be a little more self-sufficient – have a garden and to grow plants to capture in my art, and my own veggies.

The first two years have had their challenges - the transition from city living to establishing my home and getting into the groove of regional living. Still working full time back in the Melbourne area means lots of time in the road. Working out the best ways back to Melbourne; traffic; best places to shop; understanding the land; adapting to tank water /septic tanks, weather and seasonal factors; buying equipment needed to maintain the land - all with the COVID hangover was BIG!

I arrived with a plan but the first eighteen months threw me some big curve balls - water, lots and lots of water was the biggest thing. The property spent a good 3 - 4 months under water. This meant making drainage changes to improve the situation on the return of major water in the future. Then it was time to plant trees - on my last count I was about 260 planted – with as many local native species as possible and a few deciduous feature trees to give me some autumn colour. I am slowly feeling part of the community – it takes time to meet people in the area especially when working full time. My biggest asset in the early days was Lola, my trusted furry friend. She helped me to meet others. I'm sure lots of you know her or seen her around.

**What do you feel you have achieved?**

When I look back through my photos ,I get a real sense of achievement over the time I have been here and what I have done. I am quite proud of my achievements, most of which I have done solo. I have added another tank to help with the garden, built myself a woodshed, trees planted are starting to

show good growth, expanded garden beds, maintained the property for the seasons, and sealed the house to keep the warmth in during winter.

**I know you've been doing a lot of renovations including designing and planning your garden – has it easy to find local trades people and product?**

A really good community notice board with contacts. tradies, firewood etc., would have been very helpful during this process. Tradies and local trades have been hard to find and making contact with people that are prepared to come out Elaine is a struggle. I was very happy to find and sad to have seen Teneille (Tradie Lady Electrician) move away, but I'm slowly finding trades that willing to travel out or in the area.

I am learning that renovation does take time so having a good plan helps. Being a hands-on person, I have attempted many and been learning a few new skills.

**Tell us a little about your career as an artist; key achievements and your plans for the future.**

Botanical art was an inspiration from a very young age but didn't start until later in life. My passion is for our unique flora and fauna with a contemporary style. I did classes at the Melbourne Botanical Gardens for about 4 years under Dianne Emery. I have been an active member of the Botanical Society for years, exhibiting at the International Flower and Garden show, the Melbourne Botanical Gardens events .I have won some prizes in shows in Victoria and NSW. Also opened an Etsy shop - [www.botanicaleyes.etsy.com](http://www.botanicaleyes.etsy.com) and started an Instagram page - [botanicaleyes](https://www.instagram.com/botanicaleyes) I also have plans to travel to the UK to study at the Kew Gardens. Till then I am focusing on my profile as a Botanical Illustrator/Artist living in regional Victoria. .Having one of my Blue Banded Bees on the box in Buninyong was a great start to the new



year, leading to an exhibition of some of my pieces in Espresso Depot for February and being part of the Smart Living Expo. I am very excited to be doing a solo showing at "The Arts Space" Ballarat - March/ April 2025.

**What challenges have you faced as a newcomer to a rural community – what advice would you give to those seeking a tree change?**

Do your research on the area, check councils and any other government organisations, join local Facebook groups that will help with information. Have a big focus on water, do you have enough for the household, gardens and to help with fire protection if needed? How are you going to access wood - a good wood supplier or a handy hubby?

Become educated about fires, know your local roads understanding more than one way out. Be prepared for what is needed to maintain the property, understand when this work needs to be done and seasonal weather patterns. Meet your neighbours, you may be able to help them or, help each other.

## Festival Hall, Meredith

*John Merlo*

For those not directly involved in it, boxing can be a puzzling sport. Known down through the ages as The Noble Art of Self Defence, it also suffers a lot of bad press, possibly associated with the recent popularity of what some critics refer to as 'cage fighting' - more correctly known as UFC.

UFC hasn't replaced the classic sport of boxing, but has markedly different rules and has developed its own dedicated following. But right here in Meredith there's an important and growing centre catering to the fans of classic boxing. Local legend Heath Stenton (20 fights as an amateur and 34 as a professional) - won a number of major titles including the Victorian Super Middleweight and Australian Light Heavy Weight Titles at various points in his star-studded career.

Heath had a number of big ticket fights at Melbourne's Festival Hall and fought with considerable success on major bills in Japan. Now aged 48 and officially retired from the sport (a relief to his own manager - wife Alana) Heath is now giving back to the sport he loves so much.

In recent months he's been putting together a stable of talented young local fighters and training them at his highly impressive and very professional local establishment in Campion Road Meredith. The Country Strong Boxing Gym (Motto: 'As Tough As They Come') is a real eye-opener.

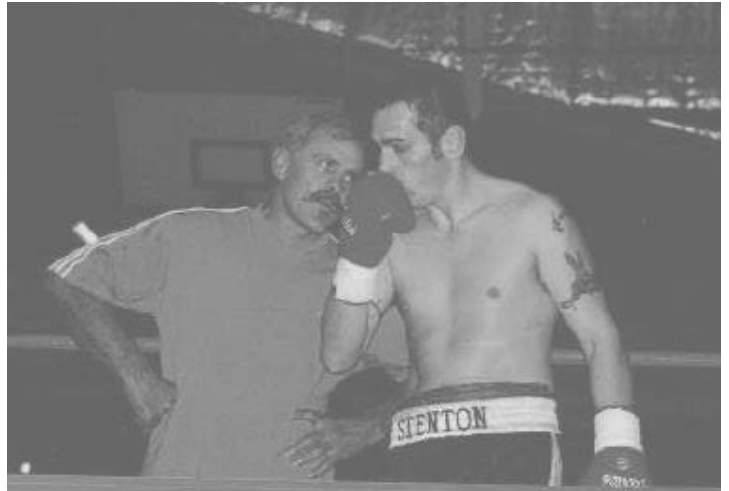
It's beautifully appointed with everything an aspiring young fighter could wish for, with Heath's many championship belts ranged around the Gym's walls for added inspiration. Topping it off is the training skill of the master himself. While passionate about the sport of boxing, Heath is also adamant about the ethics of the sport and the part it can play in the healthy development of young people in our increasingly complex society.

"What we do here is truly about the noble art of self defence," Heath says, "Any young fighter who does the wrong thing with the skills they learn here is no longer welcome."

At present Heath's stable of committed young fighters includes what he considers some outstanding local talent. "One of the most promising is 28-year-old Steven Panzanidis from Morrisons, who fights at 67 kilograms," Heath says, "Another with real ability is 18-year-old Brock Bodell of Lethbridge, who fights as a Junior Middleweight."

"A couple of others who show great potential include Adam Sault from Teesdale who fights at 58 kilograms and Harry Bajeah from Bannockburn who fights at 73 kilograms. I think you'll be hearing more of these young blokes as they progress in their careers," Heath says with confidence and a knowing wink.

There'll be more about the Country Strong Boxing Gym and these budding young local sports stars in coming issues, so stay tuned.



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## in our NATURE

Wendy Cook

In recent years, white-browed scrubwrens have moved into our garden. They are small grey and brown birds with short tails. They can be recognised by their plump bodies and white stripes above and below their eyes. As Spring 2023 approached, I learnt about their nesting habits. They construct a short tunnel made of grass, leaves, twigs and roots, often hidden among vegetation on the ground, and lay their eggs within it. In mid-August, I regularly saw and heard them, calling loudly as if to attract attention. They hopped across the grass beside the garage, and through a small garden bed where they were out of sight among closely packed leaves of an indigenous lily. It looked like an ideal place to hide a small nest.

I soon learnt that the birds had other plans. Family members working in the garage reported small birds flying along its length, undisturbed by people or noise. After a few days, my daughter discovered a nest in a net hanging on the garage wall. Cautiously, I approached. Inside the net was a messy pile of leaves, and from within it I heard quiet cheeps of baby birds. I retreated across the garage and waited for a parent. A scrubwren called noisily from outside. It flew silently down the length of the shed, moved from perch to perch then disappeared among the leaves in the net. I heard a chick's call before the scrubwren flew from the nest and returned to the garden. We watched the nest as the chicks grew and their voices became louder. We were uncertain how the parents would lead their fledglings from the garage. Seventeen days after we found the nest, two chicks were seen on the shed floor, with their parents calling from the other side of a closed door. The door was opened and the young birds were soon united with their parents in the branches of a bushy grevillea.

For the next month, the scrubwrens taught their fledglings to find food and fend for themselves. They came to our attention again, with their next nesting attempt, this time in the plant pot hanging two metres from the back door. While constructing this second nest, they were also caring for their first two chicks, although they may not have been feeding them. Their new nest, lined with feathers, was nestled beside the nest built by the grey shrike-thrushes last year. While the female scrubwren sat inside incubating her eggs, in a lavender bush nearby, superb fairy-wren chicks were growing up in a nest made of wool and grass. The two families had no difficulties sharing their living space, but other birds were to cause irritation to the scrubwrens.

One morning, there was a fuss outside the back door. Two striated pardalotes were investigating the hanging pot, but unlike the scrubwren, they were interested in the hole in the pot's base which is used for watering. They are small grey birds with black heads and wings, yellow throats, and yellow and white eyebrows. They nest in tunnels, often in creek banks, and to them the hole in the pot appeared to be the entrance to a nesting chamber. One at a time, they perched on the lower lip of the hole

and peered inside. They spent much of the morning inspecting it. Another pair of striated pardalotes arrived, and there was a stand-off with the four birds calling loudly, heads down and wings and tails spread, displaying a bright red spot at the front of each wing. Eventually, one pair departed, and the inspections continued. The scrubwren peered out of her nest, then retreated. Later she attempted to chase the pardalotes away, but they were undeterred. She also pursued a honeyeater as it flew beneath the veranda roof. After a few days of inspections, the pardalotes recognised that the wide damp space in the base of the pot would not be suitable for laying eggs and rearing young. The scrubwren had the pot to herself again. Eleven days later, we saw the scrubwren parents regularly flying to the nest and leaving again, feeding their babies. This activity continued for about two weeks, then the hanging pot was deserted. We didn't see the chicks and can only imagine that they fledged safely.

All this time, we had been waiting patiently to see if the grey shrike-thrushes would return to the nest in the hanging pot, where they had successfully reared four chicks last year. About two weeks after the scrubwrens left, I saw the grey shrike-thrushes renovating their nest. In the first week of December, the female laid two eggs on one day, and another on the following day. They hatched on Christmas Day. The previous year, we watched the development of the young birds. This time we concentrated on the behaviour of the adults. We heard them call to each other, and to their babies. As the chicks became older, they answered back with the musical two-note call that I heard the fledging chicks give last year. It was a busy time for the parents, with regular food deliveries to hungry chicks who stretched quivering necks up as far as they could, for the best chance of a meal. At the time, small lizards were also breeding in our garden, and they formed a large part of the chicks' diet. After releasing one of these skinks or its dropped tail into a wide mouth, the parent would pause. Often a chick would raise its rump, lift its tail, and squeeze out a white sac of faeces. The adult would grasp it in its beak, and fly away, ensuring that the nest remained clean. When the chicks were seventeen days old, it was time to leave the nest. That morning, we saw one chick perched in the lemon verbena close to the hanging pot, where it was fed by its parents. The other two remained in the nest for at least half an hour, then found the courage to leave, one following close behind the other. Within five minutes the family had left the area. While the grey shrike-thrushes were in the hanging pot, the smaller birds kept away. Quickly, the news spread that the area was safe, and soon superb fairy-wrens were seen hopping through the lemon verbena again.

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# Did you see that snake?

*Douglas Johnson*

With lots of reports of snake sightings, and reports of a number of dogs being bitten by snakes over the Summer, I decided to chat to a local snake catcher to get an experts opinion on the slithery beasts.

Gianni Hodgson from Hodgsons Snakes began catching snakes some time ago. He has always been passionate about animals and identified a need in the community for the service. Gianni also likes to provide education as well. Hodgsons service between Ballarat and surrounds, as far down as Meredith. They have been servicing the area for several years now.



“Common species in the area include, lowlands copperhead, tiger snake, eastern brown and red bellied black snake. There are a few less common snakes like the little whip snake and white lipped snake. So what is the typical call out process if you see a snake and are worried about it near your property?

Typically...the procedure starts when a snake is spotted. From here you need to decide if you are ok with the snake being where it is, or if you would prefer it to be relocated. If you want it relocated, call Hodgson and they will gather

more information to help them reach the best result. If a callout is required, they generally leave immediately, although exceptions are common. For example, if they happen to be on another snake callout at the time. From the moment you see the snake, it's important keep it in your sight to increase the chances of a positive result. It's also important to take any pets or children away as well. Snakes in an area sometimes hang around and sometimes move on, depending on your property. If you are fulfilling their needs (food, water, shelter), it is likely they hang around. If not, it is likely to be just passing through. Although, it may pass through anywhere from once a week, to once a day, depending again on the surrounding environment. Being nomadic animals, they move from place to place as their needs are met, most commonly within a home range. They are not territorial”.

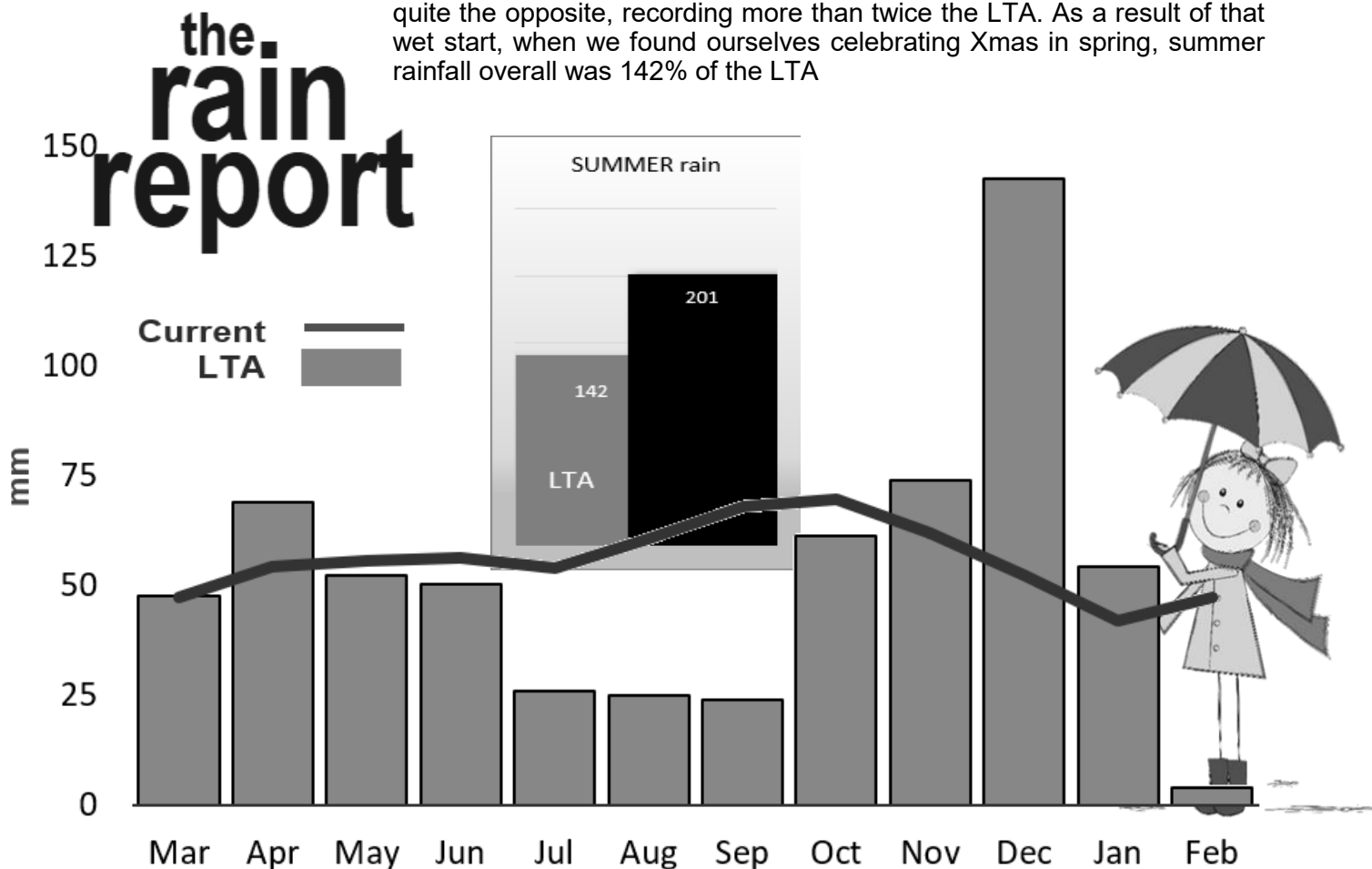
Gianni’s safety advice is really situational. But generally speaking, if you can see the snake, the danger is practically zero. So keeping your property tidy, gardens weeded and pruned, paths swept, sheds and garages organised definitely increases your safety. Keeping your doors closed is paramount too. Snakes will go inside to escape the heat. They also seek out water, so a bird bath, pond, even a pet’s water bowl will be a big attraction factor to a snake on hot days.

Just remember, if you can see a snake (before you are stepping on it) you can choose to move away. So there is no danger.

Hodgsons Snakes can be contacted on 0490 415 734

[www.hodgsonsnakes.com.au](http://www.hodgsonsnakes.com.au)

Last month was an exceptionally dry month, with only 4.2mm registered, or 9% of the LTA. It is easy to forget the first two months of summer were quite the opposite, recording more than twice the LTA. As a result of that wet start, when we found ourselves celebrating Xmas in spring, summer rainfall overall was 142% of the LTA



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## Dawn McDonald OAM

*Marg Cooper*

Congratulations to Dawn for being awarded an OAM in the 2024 Australia Day Honours.

Dawn's award was for her service to golf and the community.

In Meredith, Dawn's contribution to the community is almost unparalleled in the modern era. She was not only a willing volunteer but she led and she got things done.

She was inaugural President of the Meredith Kindergarten after a meeting at the Top Shop. She started the Girl Guide Unit in Meredith with Margaret Musgrove and later Ranger Guides. She has also been Secretary of the Tennis Club, President of Meredith PFA, President of Meredith Community House, Treasurer of the Newsletter, Secretary of Meredith Cemetery Trust and Secretary of Meredith Community Village. In earlier days of Meredith Red Cross she held positions of both President and Secretary.

Dawn taught many youngsters to play the piano but also played the organ for services at the Anglican Church since 1976, and at the Catholic Church since 1998 when she replaced Mary Nolan after Chris suffered an Acquired Brain Injury. She has also played for the Carols in Meredith and Anzac Day for umpteen years, bringing her own portable organ.

Dawn was a member of Meredith Golf Club and often played pennant or in teams representing Meredith. A team consisting of Wendy Miller, Edith Concannon and Dawn won the coveted Marrum Cup at Barwon Heads in the 1970's which was an extraordinary effort as at that time Meredith GC only had about 12 Associate Members and was one of the smallest clubs represented. It was excitement plus in Meredith! Dawn has held a single figure handicap since she was a teenager when she first played at Ballan, and represented the State and Australia. She also played tennis for Meredith but never connected quite so well with the tennis ball as she did with a golf stick.

### ...and

...we here at Meredith and District News would like to add our congratulations. Dawn is undoubtedly a worthy recipient for this high honour. As Marg's account shows, her community involvement has been extraordinarily diverse and enduring. We were lucky to have her as a Newsletter Committee member and active volunteer for around 35 years. As we said at the time of her resignation from the Committee two years ago, she was part of extraordinary change over that time. From a corner stapled, hand collated, 8 page monocolour, smelling of its Roneod origins (methylated spirits was the lingering aroma, for those too young to have enjoyed the experience) to the sophisticated production we are able to produce from modern computers.

Thank you Dawn for the wonderful service you have given our community, especially through this newsletter. We are extremely pleased and proud that your contribution to this community has been so appropriately recognised.—Ed.



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## Marg's BOOK REVIEW

*The Surgeon of Crowthorne* by Simon Winchester.

The sub title adds that this is a tale of Murder, Madness and the Oxford Dictionary.

In this book the author has told the true story of Dr James Murray and Dr W.C. Minor. Dr Murray, a towering figure of British scholarship with an incredibly unique approach, created the Oxford English Dictionary. Dr Minor, a charismatic millionaire American Civil War surgeon and homicidal lunatic who was confined to Broadmoor asylum, pursued his passion for words and became one of the dictionary's most valued contributors.

Although I found the story of Dr Minor very interesting and recognize that his contribution was enormous and, for most of their long association, James Murray didn't know that Dr Minor was in an asylum, I found the history and production of the Oxford Dictionary of particular interest.

The English dictionary as we know it today as an alphabetically arranged list of English words, together with an explanation of their meanings. It did not exist when Shakespeare was writing at the beginning of the 17th Century. In fact the word dictionary didn't appear until as late as 1692. Many attempts were made to group, explain or catalogue words but it wasn't until James Murray invented an incredibly unique system that the dictionary started to take shape.

James Murray had a team working in a tin shed at Oxford but he invited volunteers from all over the world to send in words. He needed to know when a word was first used, in what meaning, what the origin of the word was and so on. Dr Minor had access to many old books and time and for 25 years did almost nothing else than write slips of paper and send them by mail from Crowthorne to Oxford.

It was oddly hilarious now to see how quickly they thought that the project would be finished. In fact, it took 70 years, almost to the day. The book tells how entries for the letter T, took five years to complete. It was initiated as a conscious effort to define and fix the English language. The Big Dictionary's making all began with a speech at the London Library on Guy Fawkes Day 1857. James Murray who had been a member of the Philological Society since 1869 was invited to Oxford for his first meeting in April 1878. The dictionary was described as the greatest effort since the invention of printing. The longest sensational serial ever written. (The total length of type was 178 miles.)

Simon Winchester is a prolific author. For most of his career he was a journalist, lived in many parts of the world and travelled extensively. He has written and contributed to over a dozen non-fiction books and authored one novel. Unlike other authors he extensively researches a true story and tells that story in an entertaining and very readable way. His books have covered some big subjects like *Krakatoa*, *The Map that changed the World* and *Exactly*.

## Woodburn Creek Picnic 2024

*Marg Cooper*

The 16th Annual Twilight Picnic was held on Australia Day, January 26 at the site of the Woodburn School.

People rolled up from about 5.30 pm to enjoy companionship. Many past locals came; including Andrew Patterson and his wife from Geelong, his brother from Albury, John Allen and his wife from Scotsburn and Stuart Bakes from Ballarat. All these men were former students of Woodburn School and their parents were Soldier Settlers on Larundel.

Many locals also attended and it was good to catch up with neighbours we rarely see during the year. Mary Nolan made a special effort to be driven from Melbourne. It was also lovely for neighbours to meet each other for the first-time, including Mark and his delightful family, and Gerard from Coopers Road.

Participants enjoyed recitals of Banjo Patterson poetry by Andrew and Stuart. To hear these poems about bush life recited from memory, out in the open in the quiet of a country evening is just magic. Food was shared and enjoyed with much comment made about June Cameron's cake cooked in the shape of Australia - minus Tasmania! This year she opted to bake a chocolate cake which was delicious but not nearly as delicious as her usual fruit cake.

The night became quite chilly so almost at dark we packed up quickly and departed hopefully to meet again next year.

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*G'day from the penners for March, and welcome to Autumn, at least as the calendar tells us anyway. Autumn is my favourite season, the winds calm. The mornings are clear and crisp, the days sunny. I find it a calming time of year, and we all need a degree of calmness in our busy lives.*

*This month's story is from myself, we had to use a word that is no longer used in the English language, we hope you enjoy it.*

*Our group can always be contacted via our email address goldenpens4@gmail.com.*

*Cheers Wendy Coddwomple.*

It was a beautiful, warm, sunny day. I was making the most of it, doing some chores around the farm yard. I wandered down to the front gate when I saw young John coming down the lane. He looked like he was on a march to meet Wellington.

"Hi ho young John" I cried out and waved. "Where are you off to this fine morning?"

"Oh Mary" he cried, "I'm off, I've had enough of that old man."

"You look like you're on a coddwomple my lad. Where do you think you are going?"

"Don't care Mary! Anywhere is good enough for me at the moment, who knows where I will end up but I'm on my way there fast!"

"Well, me lad, why don't you just pop in here to my kitchen, for some refreshment before you go, a young lad like you will get hungry pretty quick at the pace you intend to go."

"I don't know Mary, if I stop, I might not get going again."

"Ah, you'll be right, just a quick brew and I've just taken a fresh loaf out of the oven and it's begging to be cut, and some fresh churned butter, who can resist that?"

Secretly, that was my ploy, if I could just get him to calm a bit, he would see reason and hopefully go back home. The kitchen was flooded in sunshine, it felt warm and inviting and with the smell of the newly baked bread, I hoped it would calm the wounded beast. I poured out a large mug of tea and cut a substantial slice of bread which I plastered with rich butter, and put it in front of him.

"Now tell me what has your Pa done this time?"

"Oh Mary, you know what he's like, I swear the pigs get better treatment than I do and that's saying something, cause he treats them pretty rough too. Nothing I do seems to please him, I try my best, I've been working that farm since I was knee high to a grasshopper, but he don't listen

to me. Things are changing but he won't have anything to do with any new practice. Well, I've had enough, I won't do it anymore! Let's see how he gets on without me, the crippled old man!

"Now, now", I crooned, "he is an old man and set in his way's, I'll give you that but he's still your Da, and he can't get along without you."

"Well, he'll learn!" John almost screamed at me.

"Tell you what, you just stay here, rest in the sunshine, have another cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter, rest up a bit and I'll be back in a jiffy."

I left him sitting in the sun, and I made my way over to our adjoining fence line. I could see old man John struggling to get a wayward pig back in his sty.

"Hoy, old John, a word if you please."

John made his way over to me on his rickety legs,

"Ahoy Mary, what's the matter."

"Well John, I've got your boy in my kitchen supping on some tea, I saw him coddwompling down the road and I called him in. What have you done to him this time?"

"Oh Mary, you know me, my temper got the better of me, again, and I went at him, I don't mean it, but these legs give me so much pain I just lash out."

"Well as far as I can see John, you had best give your boy his head or he'll head off and that will be the end of you and your farm, remember when you were a young lad, battling with your own Pa?"

"Yeah, I can, and it got bad at times too", he chuckled, "but I won out in the end!"

"Yes, you did, so?" I questioned

"Yes Mary, you are right, I will try but it's so hard to give up the reins."

"Well, you must or you'll be lost. "

We shook hands and I made my way back to the kitchen to find young John snoozing in his chair.

"Young John," I gently woke him, "all is well with your Da, I had a stern word with him and he is sorry. He knows he needs to let you work things out on your own, give him another chance, he's old and stubborn, but if you just keep at it, it will all work out in the end. What say you?"

Young John bowed his head, "I guess I am just as stubborn as he is, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree I suppose."

At that I walked young John back to the lane and sent him on his way.

I watched him for a while thinking, I hope they can work it out, at least until the next time young John decides to go a coddwompling.

*The End.*

## KOALAS SEEKING NEW ACCOMMODATION

*Glen White*

The Koala Clancy Foundation, an independent charity and not-for-profit organisation is seeking landowners interested in creating a koala habitat on their land near the Moorabool River around Maude and Russells Bridge.

Land with river frontage, creeks and tributaries is ideal koala habitat. Deep bends on the Moorabool in the vicinity of Perdrisat Rd, Russells Bridge Rd, and Parker Rd are very suitable for creating koala hubs with a minimum of fencing.

Koala sightings along the Moorabool River downstream from She Oaks are scarce. But we know of reports at Maude, at Russells Bridge and around Gheringhap.

The Moorabool River is naturally good koala country. They love the huge old River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) along the banks. But for most of the 40km between She Oaks and Batesford, the forest is only one-tree wide on each bank, and surrounded by open farmland. Not many koalas can live in such a narrow corridor.

We are looking for planting projects along the Moorabool River that can create koala hubs – patches of river-side land, especially on bends, where we can plant a broad block with a minimum of fencing. We include all the local native trees and many of the smaller plants including native wildflowers. With koala hubs, a koala population can form. A male koala could have a big home range that includes the ranges of two females. He'll still have to walk a bit, but at least he doesn't have joeys to feed. The females can rest up, and save their energy for raising joeys.

If you have land that sounds like it will suit this project, please get in touch. More information here: <https://www.koalacancyfoundation.org.au/landowners/>

## Bush Song

*Janene Schillier*

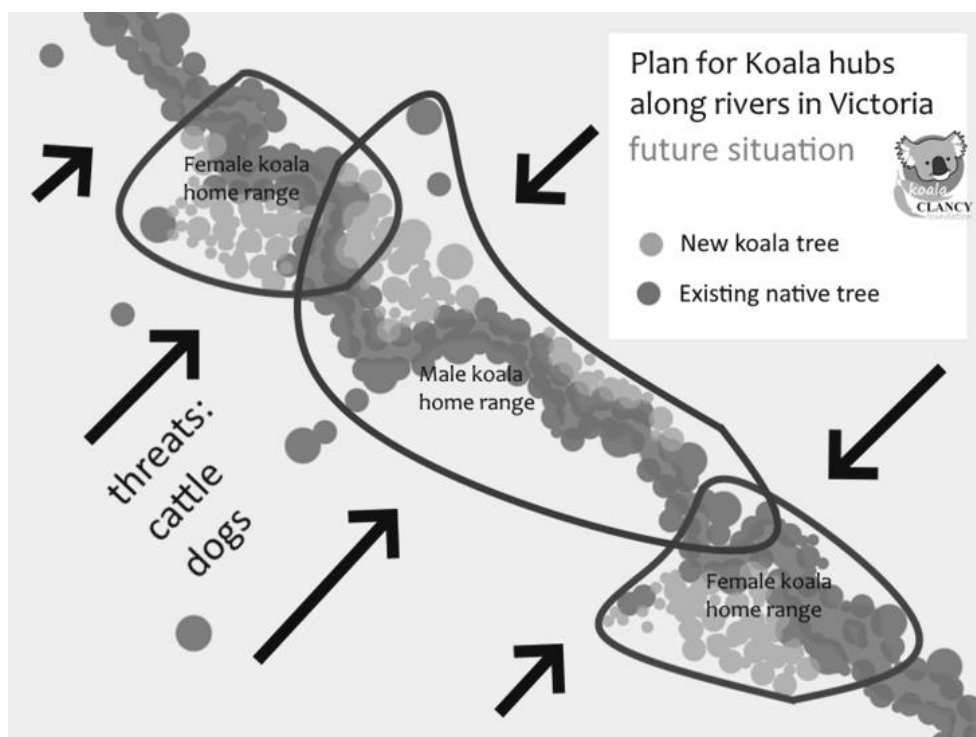
**A poem by Linda Brumby published 1964**

I'm yearning for the old bush days  
That I exchanged for city ways!  
I long to find the breath of Spring  
And know the peace the bush can bring  
I tread the city's barren waste  
And wonder at the foolish haste  
Gently pitying those I see  
Who've never shared the bush with me

For as I walk, I am not here  
Nor gazing on the scene so drear  
But in a place more fair to see  
And dearer, sweeter - far - to me  
The City streets are country lanes,  
Wet by the soft September rains  
The pavement, grass beneath my feet  
And - maybe the people are the sheep!

Again, I see the gum trees tall!  
Where silver throated song birds call  
With purple sarsaparella sweet  
Twining and tangling at my feet.  
I hear the axe man's echo ring!  
And see the harbingers of Spring:  
The butter cups of yellow gold  
Dancing along the grassy wold!

And as this scene from memory's store  
Passes before my gaze once more,  
With yearning all my heart is filled-  
A yearning that will not be stilled,  
Until the day I break away  
From all that claims me here today:  
And there my spirit finds its nest  
With all that's beautiful and best.



Male koala "Morrie" seen at planting site at Lethbridge in 2023.



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## Where did all these butterflies come from?

*Republished article from 'The Conversation' published on December 7, 2023 6.07am AED.*

*Author: Nigel Andrew, Professor of Entomology, Southern Cross University.*

*[Nigel Andrew – The Conversation—A great year to be a cabbage white butterfly: why are there so many and how can you protect your crops? \(theconversation.com\)](#)*

You will all have seen the beautiful white carpets of butterflies which have invaded our district over the past few months. This issue has a number of photos volunteered from the community and they display the joyful scenes many of us have enjoyed. However, this pleasure has been accompanied by fear of what they may do to our gardens! The following is an excerpt from the linked article cited above

*“Cabbage white butterflies are one of the most common garden visitors across southern and eastern Australia. The butterfly looks elegant in white with black dots on its wings: females have a pair of black spots and males a single spot on each forewing. But their velvety green caterpillars are ravenous beasts on brassicas – the plant family that includes common vegetable crops such as cabbages, cauliflowers, broccoli, kale and bok choy. One female can lay up to 800 eggs. When they hatch, the caterpillars prefer densely planted hosts in moist, warm habitats. The caterpillars' biomass can double each day, making them one of the fastest-growing cabbage-feeding caterpillars.*

***Why are there so many this season?***

*Because of their caterpillars' addiction to eating brassicas, it is one of the most pervasive pests of any crop worldwide. Recent conditions have been favourable, resulting in large numbers of cabbage whites.*

***How to live with them***

*A key way to control the caterpillars is to deny them access to your crops in the first place. When you remove the mesh to water or weed, do it in the early morning or late afternoon when the adults are not flying.*

*It can be useful to provide a “sacrificial” plant. Leave these out in the open to attract the adult female to lay her eggs.”*

The link above provides the whole article which includes interesting facts about how the butterflies attract predators to our gardens, in turn the predators deal with the problem.



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