

Our FREE Community Newsletter

Meredith & district News

APRIL 2024

OUR FREE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



inside

- Don's Lucky Day
- Aunty's Hot Festival
- Vale Sandra Watson
....and more!



We Launch **2**
New Columns!

e: news@meredithnews.com.au w: 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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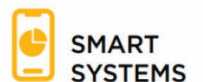
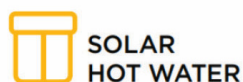
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Church News



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 or

office.revdrtim@hotmail.com

The Revd Dr Timothy Smith

PiC Anglican Parish of

Inverleigh+Bannockburn+Meredith

St Josephs Parish of Meredith

CATHOLIC PARISH OF MEREDITH MASS TIMES – APRIL

Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. APR.6,13,20,27

Anakie – St. Brigid @ 9am Sun. APR.14, 28

Meredith – St. Joseph @ 9am Sun. 7, 21

Bannockburn – St. Mary MacKillop @ 11am Sun. APR.

7,14,21,28

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



Meredith RSL Anzac Service

25th April 10 am

Meredith Memorial Hall.

Corner Staughton St and Wilson St.

Followed by light refreshments.

Everyone is welcome.

OUR COVER

Kids and Slime - of course they are having fun! The story behind the photo is on page 26. Thank you Judith.



POLICEreport

Senior Constable Anthony BOX

Meredith Police Station| Western Region Division 3

Phone: 5286 1222| Fax: 9244 2156

14 Wilson Street Meredith Vic 3333

Throughout March I have attended numerous collisions, so as always road safety continues to be a focus.

As we approach cooler months, a reminder to utilise headlights and fog-lights (as applicable) during periods of reduced visibility.

People continue to disregard the school zone on Wallace Street and while it is not usually locals, it is worth a reminder to everyone to slow down for the kids sake.

Speaking of the school, I would like to thank the Principal Lachlan Day for his invite for me to be involved in the school fun run on the 8th of March.

When he told me that they would like to dunk me in slime I had some questions, but on hearing that it was a fundraiser for the school and the kids would be doing the dunking, I was sold.

There was an incredible effort from the kids to raise much needed funding. They should all be so proud of the goals they met and exceeded, and the event was a fitting tribute to their efforts.

Everyone was smiling and having a great time, even those of us that got dunked in slime! A clean off by the CFA's hose and all was as good as new.

Security

As always, I'd like to remind people about their security.

Ultimately you bear responsibility for the security of your home and vehicle.

That means keeping things locked and valuable objects out of sight as a starting point.

Whilst I don't want to become a broken record about this, I do note we have had a good 6-month period relating to property crimes and it can't be understated how these preventative measures relate to low crime statistics.

A note to livestock owners regarding fencing. Please take the time to address fencing issues, in particular along the Midland Highway or other 100Km/H roads. Police in the area are constantly responding to stock on the road at the same locations.

It's a matter of time before people are injured or worse. Penalties will apply to any animals found at large on the highway, all details will be passed to Golden Plains Shire Council for enforcement and in certain cases WorkSafe notifications and potential criminal charges.

Lastly, remember the Fire Danger Period. In 2023 there was a increase in offences towards the end of the fire danger period, mostly due to peoples interpretation of the weather being safer. A reminder if you plan on burning anything, or know of anyone who is, to check the CFA website for current restrictions.



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 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
Full page	\$100/\$200

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

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advertising@meredithnews.com.au

Accounts: Ian Leighton 0428132880

accounts@meredithnews.com.au

Editorial: Jim: 0409 163169

news@meredithnews.com.au

WEB

You can read back copies and additional stories 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

Issue Production: Peter Boer Editor: Jim Elvey

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emergency

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(from mobile phone)	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	52207111
	or 0409 830 223
Bannockburn Vet	5281 1221
a/h emergency	0407 811 222
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

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PRIMARY

SCHOOL

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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




*"Autumn...the year's last,
loveliest smile" - William Cullen*

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



Coming up in Term 2

Elder Rights Information Session

Tuesday May 7 - 11am - Free

Reduce the Risk Information Session

Tuesday May 21 - 1pm = Free

FERMENTATION With Narelle

Sunday May 19 - 9am - 12pm - \$130 per person

CHEESEMAKING With Narelle

Sunday May 19 - 1pm - 4pm - \$130 per person

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 (1-4 Years) with Jacque

Mondays - 10:15 - 10:45

\$10 per child, pay on the day with cash or card

Jacque - 0448 046 551

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9-3 MONDAY-THURSDAY

DONATIONS ACCEPTED IN THE OFFICE!

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

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PLAYGROUP

THURSDAYS

9.00am - 11.30am

\$2 per family

Recreation



Meredith Tennis Club News

Bridget Dyer

Saturday Tennis

Congratulations to all five of our junior Saturday teams, who all made it into the semi finals, From the Semi finals we had two teams advance to the Grand finals, Meredith Blue in section 6 (girls) in the Geelong Tennis Inc association, and Meredith Yellow in section C3 of the Buninyong & District Tennis Association.

Meredith Blue played well enough to win their grand final , which was an amazing effort as some of the team have been playing together for 6 years and this was their first grand final. Well done girls!

Meredith Yellow played their very best, but were unfortunately beaten in the finals. With three of the team being their first season of green ball, it was an amazing effort to get to the grand finals. Well done boys!

The Senior team, Meredith White, ended up being runners up in the C grade finals at Buninyong and had a great match against Smythesdale.

Presentation Lunch

Thank you to everyone that attended the presentation lunch on Sunday 24th March. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the end of the season and the many achievements that the club has had this season.

Congratulations to the following children who won best player for their section:

Buninyong & District Tennis Association

C1: Connor Spalding

C2: Bailey Dinning

C3: Charlie Thompson

Orange Ball: Evan Fraser & Charles Sergent

Geelong Tennis Incorporated

Section 6: Maddi Sanderson

Section 12: Alasdair Fraser

Seniors: Luke Evans

Congratulations to all the children that won most improved: Reeve Spalding, Pheobe Brown, Alex Dinning, Amelia Dyer, Ryan Dinning and Ellen Sergent .

Every year the club also gives out an award for Best Club person. This award is in recognition of the hard work of an individual that has gone above and beyond for the club. This year it was unanimously voted that Courtney Murray receive the award for everything she has done for the club over the past four years. Her contributions range from raising over \$5,000 for the club by cooking dinners after the night competitions, hosting meetings, cooking BBQs, being a team manager for multiple years. Also liaising and building relationships with Tennis Victoria, which resulted in attending the Australian Open twice, and receiving \$1,000 of ANZ hotshot equipment, that is used for training, to being a volunteer coach for three years. A big thank you to Courtney for all the work that she does.

Autumn Competition

Unfortunately, the club is a victim of its own success and is unable to run an Autumn Competition due to the high

numbers of interest and only having two courts under lights. We are currently in discussions with Golden Plains Council to get more lights up for the other four courts and hope to have this in place for a Winter Competition.

Aver & Line Family Portrait Fund Raiser

The Meredith Tennis Club is excited to have Aver & Line running a Family Portrait Fund Raiser Day on Saturday 27th April. Sessions are for 20 mins and are \$30 for a booking and 8" x 12" print. The \$30 fee goes to the club, along with a percentage of all sales. Aver & Line do beautiful portraits and have very reasonably priced packages. Our Facebook page will have the details on how to book a session.

Welcome Baby Tabid

We are delighted to welcome Tabid, born on the 22nd March to Marshia Nishita and Tanjil Ahmed. You know Marshia and Tanjil as the friendly hosts of The Rustic Ram. Marshia is also a good friend of our Newsletter, keeping our Facebook and Web sites up to date. (Expect lots of baby photos!)



Congratulations Marshia and Tanjil on your beautiful baby boy.



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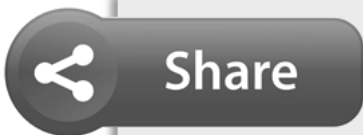



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NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY MAY 20, 2024

10.30 AM

**MEREDITH COMMUNITY CENTRE,
4 RUSSELL STREET,
MEREDITH VIC 3333**

ALL WELCOME
Ph - 03 5286 0700 / 0491 184 999

Thank You Ralph



We farewell Ralph Holtz, who has diligently distributed the Newsletter nearly every month for the last 18 years. This is an extraordinary contribution, involving collection of all copies, counting them out for each of the twelve distribution points and then delivering them to those points. In addition, he has kept an eye on collections, residual numbers and any problems that occur, to ensure we optimise our distribution.



Ralph has also served the community as a long time member of the local CFA Brigade as well as a handyman and helper at the Primary School, where he was very much valued by staff and students alike.

We sincerely thank Ralph for his considerable contribution to our community newsletter and wish him and Debbie happy times in their new home in Bendigo.

We are very grateful to long time Meredith resident, Alan Beales, who has agreed to take over from Ralph. Thank you, Alan and welcome to the dedicated team of volunteers producing and distributing our fabulous community newsletter every month.

My Lucky Day

Don Atherton

A Close Call(s) and Lesson Learned

I've lived in the bush for most of my life and consider myself fairly well aware of the hazards of weather and fire.

The weather had been hot and dry and all the warnings were broadcast about extreme weather conditions for Tuesday 13th February.

I had done as much as I could to prepare. PPE safety gear packed in the ute, chainsaw & fuel ready, personal papers packed, computer and phone charged, leaves raked, etc, etc.

I could hear the storm coming – lots of thunder and lightning, and dark sky, but I couldn't actually see it as it was coming from the west and my house is on the lee side of the hill.

“Better hook the ute up to the water tanker & pump, in case a lightning strike starts a fire” I thought.

I reversed the ute up to the tank trailer and the storm hit just as I opened the door. The wind and rain were absolutely ferocious. I made a quick decision to abandon the hook up and run for the house.

A large tree branch crashed to the ground between me and the ute (luckily not a mark on me or the ute). At that stage I decided to make a run for the bunker (buried in the ground behind the house), but a particularly furious wind gust made me hesitate, just long enough to see another huge branch come down between me and the bunker. (Close call number 2).

Then it seemed like minutes later the storm was over and relative calm returned. The power was out, not surprisingly, so I had a walk around to survey the damage. There were lots of trees damaged (blown over, branches snapped off, tall trees snapped off halfway up, but luckily no buildings damaged).

Two trees had snapped off and were laying across the power line (single wire) and had pushed the line down almost to the ground but not broken it. The power was out for the rest of the night until PowerCor restored it at 4.00am. Next day, I found the piece of tree branch that had been laying across the power line. It was a strong, green and growing specimen about 100mm thick. To my surprise and my alarm, the branch had a large burnt scorch mark and the weight of the branch on the line had burnt 1 cm into the wood before the power tripped. If the tree had been dry dead wood, or if it been Manna Gum with long dry bark strands, then this story may have had a different ending. (Close call number 3).

Lesson learned. We often criticize BOM for overestimating bad weather predictions and can become blasé about the forecasts. In this case I don't know if this localised severity could have been forecast, but better to be over prepared than not, and ensure you have a way out if fallen trees block the way.

Three close calls in one day convinced me to buy a lotto ticket – but that's where the lucky run ended!



Ps. - lotto ticket cost \$3, bank charged me \$4 for using my credit card!! Might leave it there – don't want to risk bad luck number 3)!

E

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SUNDAY 5TH
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FROM: 10.00AM - 2.00PM



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The Philatelist

Michael Riseley



ODDITIES

There are many strange things in the world of philately and they begin at the very start.

The very first postage stamp was the iconic UK Penny Black which helped revolutionise the carriage of mail. But it was also a bit of a failure. Because it was black in colour, it was very difficult to identify if it had been postmarked and which post office. In fact within a year it had been replaced with a reddish brown coloured version which showed the postmark more clearly.

It was a sad day when Lady Diana died. And it seems that the whole world mourned which is proved by just how many countries issued stamps commemorating her life. And not just those countries of the British Commonwealth. There were dozens of other countries including many of the Arab states, communist countries and so-called democratic republics in Africa and Asia. Which of course is very respectful, except that many used unauthorised versions of her portrait which were not quite so respectful. If it was not for her distinctive hair style, in many of these stamps you would struggle to recognise her.

It is often said that everything these days is about money. This is certainly true in the philatelic world where many countries issue stamps based on a theme, so as to create a demand amongst collectors and dealers, and thereby raise revenue. It is quite amazing how many Arab and Asian countries issued stamps to commemorate the Winter Olympics.

And of course times and politics change. Lots of countries issued stamps in 1976 to commemorate the USA bicentenary. This was at a time when USA was, shall we say, viewed more favourably than today by many of those countries.

PROGRESS...

After ordering some groceries for home delivery recently, we were surprised they came on a public holiday. The poor fella turned up at 8.15pm, clearly stressed, near the end of a long, 35⁰ day, having driven someone else's truck through unfamiliar country roads in the dark.

The holiday? It was Labour Day, established in 1879 to commemorate the legislation of an 8-hour day and improved working conditions.

Horse Happy

Local Family Therapist Judith Emond has, over the past 8 years, developed a highly valued equine assisted therapy service to help children and adults with social interaction and anxiety issues. Equine assisted therapy is a well recognised intervention that has been shown to help people find calm and alternative pathways to communication and development.



Judith is a Certified Equine Interaction Professional in Mental Health, having met the rigorous criteria set by the international agency overseeing accreditation.

She, with the help of a herd of 4 horses, conducts her busy practice from her property on the edge of Meredith., with most of her clients coming from the Geelong region.,

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Nerida Anderson

In this new segment we speak with members of the community from Meredith and surrounding district to show the great range of talent and enterprise that resides within our community, as well as showcasing the interesting and varied backgrounds of many of our residents. This month we speak with Lucy Banks. Born and bred in Shelford, the busy mother of four, together with her partner Daniel Measures, run Grubby Gumboots Farm Visits on the outskirts of Meredith.

Tell me about Grubby Gumboots Farm Visits

Lucy and Daniel have operated Grubby Gumboots since July 2017. Their aim is to provide people of all ages with a fun and educational hands-on experience with farm animals. Grubby Gumboots first started out as a mobile animal farm taking small animals to events wherever people with an interest in animals can be found. More recently Lucy and Daniel are developing their 60acre farm to provide a wide range of on-farm experiences. The farm is an interactive petting farm, where amongst other things visitors can feed, groom, pet, and brush horses and plait their manes. As Lucy says, they are trying to do a little bit of everything to give children and adults a taste of agriculture, a place where they can collect eggs, groom animals, play with baby animals as well as big animals, and also water the vegies and plant seedlings.

Types of animals

Lucy's lifelong interest in animals is reflected in the wide variety of animals that can be found on the farm, including a pony, donkey, alpacas, pigs, chickens, ducklings, goats, calves, cows, sheep and lambs, and rabbits.

Who comes to Grubby Gumboots Farm Visits?

People of all ages visit the farm, from the very young to those living in residential aged care enjoying an outing in the country. One example of the types of visitors are work experience students from special schools, within the region who visit the farm for 3 to 4 hours per week to learn about animal handling and care. Depending on their interest, students may help feed animals, clean out pens, participate in gardening or woodwork activities such as painting bird boxes, making guinea pig hutches or fencing. For Lucy, one of the rewarding aspects of the work experience program, is to see the students demonstrate their new animal handling skills to family and friends, invited along at the end of the program.

How did you start in this area?

The idea for developing the on-farm experience opportunities arose from when Lucy worked with the animal care course at Gordon TAFE. For 6 to 7 years Lucy took farm animals into Geelong to provide students with practical experience such as health checks, cleaning cages, handling, picking up animals and OHS. Now students can visit the farm at Meredith to develop their animal handling skills with animals in their own environment.

What do you like best about operating Grubby Gumboots Farm Visits?

One of the things Lucy finds most rewarding is to see children from different families, from family day care groups to disability support groups, all mixing together. Lucy loves to see children who previously didn't know each other making friends and seeing the animals together. Lucy says it is very rewarding to see children enjoying farm life, running around laughing and mixing together, having a picnic, looking through the gardens, picking and eating vegetables such as tomatoes and strawberries. For Lucy one of the most rewarding things is seeing people enjoying something that she and Daniel started from scratch in what was a bare paddock, just one to two years ago.

Where to from Here?

Lucy and Daniel have many plans for expanding Grubby Gumboots. The next project is to develop a playground paddock where goats can jump and climb. Lucy and Daniel have planted a hedge maze (although Lucy points out this will take a few years to grow!); and are planning more interactive activities including mini-golf, and more chook pens and pig pens. In the future Lucy and Daniel hope to work with groups such as the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, providing activities including indigenous gardens, a pit area, a hut making area, and a touch and feel sensory area for kindergartens, indigenous groups or anyone to come out to learn about indigenous culture, growing and cooking with indigenous plants. Lucy says they are always looking for new areas to expand to provide an interactive area where people can come to enjoy fresh air and the country – something for everybody.



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in the School Garden



There is change afoot in the school wicking beds.

Sophie, Ayla, Harvey, Ava, Owen and Ryan harvested the remaining cherry tomatoes and presented Kym with a bowlful to use in the after school care program. The plants were pulled out from the two beds along with a few weeds and then dug over.

Elsa, Jacob and Kealeigh pulled out some old plants in the other beds that were past their prime, and took them over to our chooks who greeted them happily and with their usual curiosity.

New compost was added to all the beds to freshen them up. The rhubarb plants that were doing their best but not thriving were dug up and transplanted into one of the newly invigorated beds. We made sure to follow the safety guidelines by opening the bags of compost outside and keeping it damp. Gloves and masks were also worn and hands washed afterwards.

We were appreciative of the older students doing this work preparing the beds so that our newest children, the Preps, could have the pleasure of planting. A delightful afternoon was spent digging holes ready for a variety of additions. First to go in were the big bulbs which were readily identified as being just like an onion, except these will grow into beautiful, sweetly scented hyacinths in different colours. Next were the daffodils of a mixed variety, some early and some late, to provide a longer show of colour and lastly, quite a few anemone that generally flower later than the daffodils.

After this some perennials were added but the vigorous growth of the roots were examined first before they went into the ground. We chose miniature daisies and lavenders that will flower for an extended period, and only need a light prune after flowering has finished, to promote new growth. A couple of Yellow Buttons were popped in along with a lemon verbena which has the most beautiful lemony scented leaves and tiny white flowers.

There was still room so some plants that will trail over the beds were added near the edges: Veronicas in a deep blue and Erigeron with its tiny white flowers will spill over the edges as they grow. If you have Erigeron growing, Easter is a good time to trim it right down to the ground and it will reward you with new growth before the cold weather sets in.

The towers we used for the tomatoes have been repurposed as supports for the Sweet Peas. The seed of a smaller type was sown which will reach the top of the frames and gives us not only a wonderfully coloured display but a waft of perfume as we walk by.

This season our strawberry bed again produced many plump fruits but they have finished fruiting now so it's time for a good haircut to trim away all the old foliage and any runners before the new growth emerges.

It will be a change having most of our beds full of flowers instead of vegetables but there will be plenty of interest and enjoyment as we observe the first shoots from the bulbs and seeds emerging and the perennials bursting into flower. And we still have our rhubarb and a spare bed to go which will be planted with garlic after the holidays.

All gardeners are looking out for the relief that the autumn break will bring. Let's hope the storm clouds are brewing in the not too distant future and a good soaking of rain arrives to turn our lawns green again and put a smile on our plants. Happy gardening!



Sophie, Ayla, Harvey, Ava, Owen and Ryan harvesting the last of the tomatoes.



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MONEY Matters



with Sandy Hoffmann

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR MANAGING YOUR MONEY

This is general advice only. Contact an accredited financial advisor for advice particular to your circumstances.

We're delighted to welcome Sandy Hoffmann to our team. Sandy is a Meredith resident, holds a degree in psychology and is a Certified Practising Accountant. Money management is something most of us have to come to grips with, especially during times of rising prices and cost of living pressures. Sandy's column will help us do that. Written to be easily understood, it will provide useful tips to help readers deal with common taxation issues and make those pennies stretch a little further. She is also very happy to take readers' questions, so feel free to drop us a line at news@meredithnews.com.au. Questions suitable for publication will be published without identifying the writer. - Ed.

How many of us would love a tax refund? Now I can't guarantee you will get one, but I can guide you to maximising the deductions which goes a long way to achieving that goal. So lets dive right in.

Is the first time you think about tax, the day the ads come onto the telly spruiking "Tax Time Bonanza save..." or "Hurry run out sale on now but only till the 30th June"?

There is probably a bargain to be had but it's not necessarily for the purpose of your current tax return.

The main reason... as an employee, if you buy a tool or MV that you didn't get reimbursed for by your employer, it directly helps you do your job, but it costs more than \$300 in your personal tax return, then you need to depreciate the item (called an asset) with the ATO providing the number of years they believe the asset is usable. Buying the asset in June will mean that you held the asset for 30 days or less which will give you the smallest deduction in your tax return.

Of course, you will get to claim the remainder over the next few years, but we want to get the maximum this FY. My suggestion, the earlier the asset is on special after the 1st of July the more deduction in your tax return.

The second tax deduction many don't think about.

If you're reading this and haven't experienced your first official employment income, that is fantastic, because you are about to learn about one of life's little hacks- Super and there is no better time to learn than now!

You may be aware that your employer has to deposit 11%

(increase to 12% by 2025) into your super fund.

Super is there to help us in retirement, when we will need to rely on this little nest egg for everyday living. One incentive from the government to increase our super balance is for us to put extra super in the account and claiming this as a tax deduction.

Place an amount of \$ that you choose into your super fund from your net, take home, pay. Ensure it is received by fund prior to the 30th of June.

You call the fund and tell them you would like to claim the \$ as a tax deduction, they will send you a letter of acknowledgement.

The total amount you can contribute is \$27,500 per year but this does include what your employer puts in throughout the FY.

If you don't have the money spare right now, I get it. Cost of living is through the roof, but could you look into your cupboards and see if your trash is someone's treasure using marketplace?

Using moneysmart.gov.au calculator for super as an example and just plucking in random numbers...at 67 years old the balance in the super fund would be \$292,955.*

But if you sold items on marketplace that were in the bottom of your cupboard and made \$50 and placing this into your super. Using the figures above, your super would increase to \$296,680.

Not only did that \$50 just support your retirement by \$3,725 but the \$50 is added into your tax return and ever so slightly reduces your taxable income creeping you closer to that refund.

Now of course, like all things, you must read the terms and conditions (I simply don't have enough words to list them here). I am not here to say do it. What I am saying is look into it and get the appropriate advice tailored to your circumstances.

Household savings hack of the month:

Do you pay full price on ink? Consider looking up marketplace for originals before going to the brick-and-mortar store.

People get rid of printers when they break and are stuck with the unopened ink. Using my printer as an example, buying a pack at a retailer chain will set me back \$184 but after a search on marketplace, a new set, unopened would cost me \$90.

That person's trash was my treasure and just maybe they have put that money into their super fund ☐

**(30 years old, expected retirement 67, have \$10,000 in super, yearly wage \$50,000 yearly wage with employer contributions 11%, average return of 7.5%, tax of 7% and 0.85% fees).*



How come the robot couple's anniversary is in autumn?

They were autumn mated.

A Decade of Management

Marg Cooper

Hilary Reading started managing St Joseph’s Op Shop on March 21, 2014. Before moving to live at Mt Doran she had worked in Real Estate and a Bank in Melbourne.

At a soap making workshop at the Meredith Community Centre, she overheard Diane Ritchie and Denise Farrugia wondering about who they could get to run the church Op Shop, because they found it difficult to organize and sell as well as look after church duties. She applied and stayed for a decade. The Op Shop suited her fine because she was looking for something to do, it was close to her new home and she loved op shopping.

She was surprised when she first realized the challenge ahead of her. The Op Shop operated out of a small detached room behind the Parish Centre, that had been moved from Lethbridge when the Catholic Church there was about to be sold. The meagre amount of goods were in complete disarray!

Over the years under Hilary’s management (ably assisted by her husband John who was only supposed to drive her to work and pick her up, but who stayed every day) the Op Shop has grown. Bob the Builder built a porch on the small room and a patio and two forty-foot containers were bought as well as the Parish Centre being full.

Hilary wanted to put Opportunity back into the Op Shop experience by not charging high prices and offering bargains to everyone. The Op Shop has an amazing array of goods which Hilary and others organise.

Hilary has enjoyed meeting people at the Op Shop and being part of both the church community and the wider community. Sometimes she was required to make room in the Parish Centre for functions but usually it was only a few tables for lunch on Fridays for church helpers and friends. Hilary compared these lunches to the Bible story of the loaves and fishes. No matter how many people turned up, the food seemed to stretch to feed them all. This wonderful get together continues and now four people take it in turns to organise the lunch, including Hilary. She has done an incredible job for a decade, always pleasant, helpful and even let customers know if something came into the shop they had inquired about.

After her retirement on March 21, 2024 she hopes to read a complete book in the same year. Good luck!

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in our NATURE

Wendy Cook

I am standing beside an ancient yellow gum, gazing up in wonder, as I always do when I visit this tree. Its lower trunk is massive, covered in loose flaky curves of grey bark. Higher, its bark is smooth, and streaked with varying shades of grey, brown and cream. The branches above are also massive, with twisting swirling patterns of bark. An almost spherical gall grows in the armpit of one huge branch. My eyes follow branches, their shapes mimicking the twisting pattern of the bark, none truly straight. Many of them end in dead fingers of dry, grey wood, reaching down. They have kept their swirls as if embedded by the bark before it fell to the ground, to join the leaf litter mulch around the tree's base. At the ends of the living branches are slender flexible twigs with fresh green growth above red stalks and darker older leaves. Among the new leaves are clusters of tiny, pointed buds, just beginning their journey to flowers, gumnuts and seeds.

As I look upwards, high in the branches, I see a red wattlebird. It squawks, objecting to my quiet intrusion. Four crimson rosellas are less disturbed by my presence, but leave after a few minutes, chattering to each other as they fly down to a gully of younger trees. While watching the birds above me, I notice that three branches support small clumps of mistletoe, kept under control by the nibbling of possums. A tree like this, hundreds of years old, will have hollows where they can shelter and breed. I see two branches meeting, overlapping and rubbing together, a slight crack between them, perhaps a home for spiders and insects, or even a family of tiny feathertail gliders. It is just one more sheltering place for the vast amount of life this tree supports. A brown thornbill lands on one of the lowest branches, still well above my head and sings a complex melody, surprisingly loud for such a small bird.

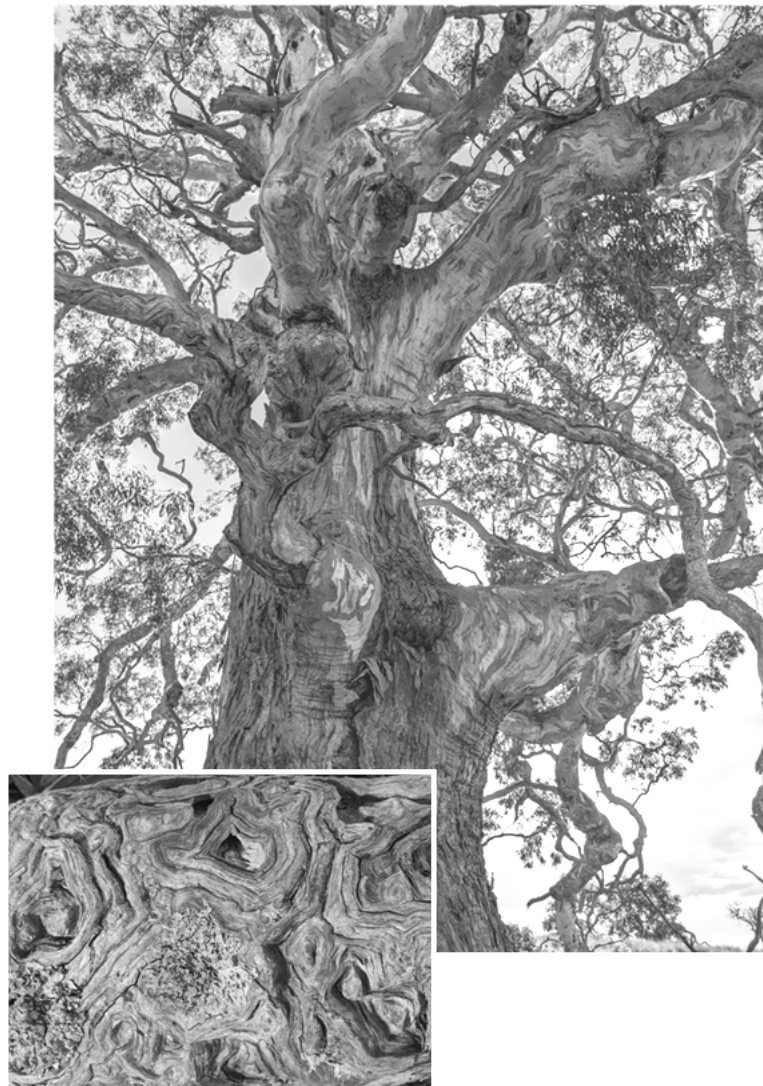
I sit on the slope under the tree's outer branches, feeling more at peace than when I arrived. Trees this ancient seem to exude a feeling of peace and rest, perhaps because they feel so strong and permanent, despite a scatter of small fallen branches, growing patches of pale green lichen. I look at the view across the creek valley. I see paddocks on hills, and in the distance, a pine plantation and wind towers. Once, it would all have been an open forest of uncrowded trees in a grassland coloured by indigenous flowers, managed for the present and the future by the skills of the Wadawurrung people. This tree would have been part of that forest. It is possibly the most ancient of the scattered trees left on this hillside, overlooking a dry gully which joins the creek, then rounds a bend or two to meet the river. The gully and the slope beyond are covered in trees and full of birds, the two-note bell call of spotted pardalotes one of the most frequently heard. Most birds call from the gully and probably live there, but fly the short distance to visit this tree. Their ancestors may have lived in that ancient forest and have known the tree when it was young.

The tree has seen many changes, not only the loss of its

forest, and many of the plants and animals that lived there, but also the loss of soil. It stands on a slightly raised area, its roots holding the earth firm around it. Large tussock grasses grow on its uphill side, but there are brown and red stones on the surface of the steeper downhill side. Soil has been washed away, leaving footholds only suitable for tougher plants, such as wallaby grasses and tree violets, kept small here by munching wallabies. The erosion of soil has exposed old roots, some cracked, hollow and dead, others alive, twisting beside and over their dead neighbours. On the uphill side of the tree, its roots are securely buried in the soil, as are those that reach down deeper and help to hold this hillside together.

While some of the changes the tree has witnessed are long-term and possibly permanent, others are short term. Twenty years ago, there was a huge stick nest in a fork halfway up the tree, the eyrie of a pair of wedge-tailed eagles. From there they could view the world, and a gap between branches allowed them to spread their long wings as they launched themselves outwards to soar above the world. The nest gradually fell apart, but eagles still live here, and may build in this tree again, as other generations of eagles will have done before them.

Despite all that it has experienced and its vast age, the ancient yellow gum stands strong. I hope that it will live a few hundred years longer. The way we care for the land is slowly changing. I like to think that it will be here long after I am gone, and that it will end its life as a giant, living in a forest once more.





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Art Girls Fly

Marg Cooper

On March 7, eight members of the Art Group took two flights, firstly from Tullamarine to Adelaide and then from Adelaide to Port Lincoln on the south west coast of the Spencer Gulf on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. It is a city of 15,000 people and is reputed to have many millionaires among its population. The destination was chosen because it was an area that we hadn't visited before and knew little about.

Although there was a heatwave during our stay we had a marvelous adventure. We swam at many of the pristine beaches around Port Lincoln, toured the Marina with Fred and saw the biggest fishing fleet in southern Australia. We also donned rubber waders at an oyster farm, visited an Art Gallery in Tumbly Bay, then went back in time at Koppia Museum, followed by a visit to the RSL Museum. We walked, we ate and we enjoyed each other's company.

We were surprised by the extent of the fishing industry, the beauty of the beaches, the wildness of the National Parks. These contrasted markedly with the vitality of the shopping strip opposite the sea, and the stories of the town's characters. Sculptures in the main street included Matthew Flinders and his cat, the horse that won Melbourne Cups - Makybe Diva, and a pole tuna fisherman. The friendliness of the locals was most welcoming.

I think that we stayed in the best part of town. The house was just behind the Marina with a lush lawn between it and the sea. Everyone walked their dog or dogs on the lawn every morning and evening. We talked to many of them including Andrew who invited us to his workplace to buy crayfish, Brian who boated us over the water for dinner at the Marina Hotel and Valda who loaned us DVD's.

It was a wonderful holiday but where to next?

Rafting on the Franklin River

Caroline Barrie, Mount Doran

After my husband died 12 years ago I made a pledge to myself that I wouldn't say no to any adventure opportunities that came along. With that, my plan was to live life to the fullest and gosh I've had some fun.

Recently I had an offer to join my nephew in law and his adventuring family to spend 10 days white water rafting the iconic Franklin River in Tasmania. This is my second rafting adventure. I had 5 days rafting the Snowy River last November with the Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoors Club which I absolutely loved, so whilst the rapids on the Franklin River are much more challenging, I felt comfortable that I could manage this adventure, even as a 65 year old woman.

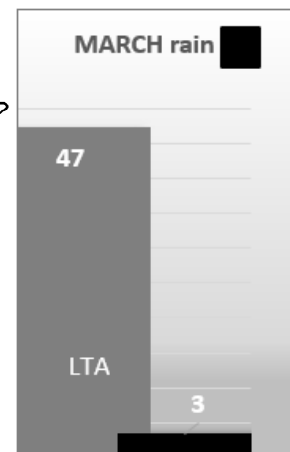
It was exciting to meet up with our group in Hobart. Most live in mid NSW so I don't see them often but we have previously done some hiking trips together in Tasmania. All 12 of us gathered in Hobart over 24 hours, arriving on different flights in mid January. There was much hilarity, excitement, practical joking and last minute planning as we prepared our bags and last minute needs. We didn't need much. It was to be minimal and had to be packed into one small water proof bag per person. Yes, you can wear the same clothes for 10 days, plus one wet suit, toiletries and a sleeping bag!

How lucky were we, it rained heavily in the catchment above the river the night before, bringing the water level in

the river up to the perfect level. Our 3 guides met us in Hobart the next morning with a small bus. We then drove 3 hours to just past Lake St Clair and Derwent Bridge. There, we pulled off the highway into a park beside the Collingwood River. This was where we pumped up 3 rubber rafts, did our final preparations and lowered the rafts into the river in just over 1 metre of water. When we returned 10 days later, there was about 10cm of water in the river. From there it was straight into the water and down into the rapids. The water was flowing fast, we quickly travelled the 5 kilometres to the confluence with the Franklin River. It was flowing so well that we paddled the first two days in one. We paddled through rapids with some great names like Log Jam, Boulder Brace, Sticks and Stones and Flanagan's Surprise. We finished the first day in Descension Gorge and camped at Irenabyss. The next morning at 6am, we hiked up towards Frenchman's Cap (1445mts above sea level). We hiked for 8 hours there and back. We didn't make it to the top as it was in the clouds and the leader was keen for us to make the most of the water whilst it was flowing quickly. We had lunch at an amazing lookout above a lake before getting back in the water at 3pm and paddling on. It wasn't getting dark until 9.30pm so lots of daylight.

Back in the water, the rapids were fast and fun. Three rafts, one guide and 4 paddlers in each. You can't raft all of the rapids as some are too dangerous, so sometimes we had to drag the rafts between and over big rocks and rushing white water with ropes. We stayed in some crazy places, there's not a lot of room for camping, balancing on hillsides and narrow pebbly beaches. Most nights putting a tarp up to keep the rain or dew off. Our lead guide cooked amazing food for the 10 days. With only 2 gas burners and esky's to keep the food it was a meal of tapas. We had great weather with only a bit of rain some nights. The paddling was exhilarating and fun, whilst the river was running well it wasn't so difficult to paddle. We had 2 lay days on a rock ledge at Newlands cascades near Rock Island Bend, made famous by the Franklin Blockade poster 40 years ago. A few more days paddling through more rapids and finally onto the Gordon River before catching the sailing boat back to Strahan. All up, we'd paddled 110km. An exhilarating 10 days with no phones and absolutely no communication with the outside world. Completely immersed in the beauty of mother nature. I feel indebted to those who participated in the blockade to save that beautiful area. Thank you.

the what
rain
report?



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Aunty in a Sweat



Aunty Meredith

The Golden Plains music festival was held at the Meredith Supernatural Amphitheatre over the March long-weekend, with around 12,000 people braving the heatwave conditions.

Now in its sixteenth year, Golden Plains took flight, after much umming, and a little ahing, in 2007, as an autumnal accompaniment to the Meredith Music Festival, held annually in December. The latter began in 1991 as an end of year blow-out for a group of friends eager to see out the year in style, and introduce some city kids to country things. For the first one, tickets cost 18 bucks, the stage was the back of a truck, and about 250 people showed up. It was called a 'music festival' with tongue pressed firmly to inside of cheek.

But it seemed to work pretty well, and so it was decided that it would happen again the next year. Four years later, 5,000 people were in on the act. These days the festivals cater to 12,000 odd people, with the Meredith Supernatural Amphitheatre kitted out with all-manner of permanent infrastructure and steeped in weird and wonderful traditions and folklore.

The festivals take place on the Nolan family farm. Of Irish descent, the Nolans first arrived in the area in 1859, and have been farming here ever since.

Meredith co-founder Chris Nolan, the son of Mary and Jack, suffered a multi-organ collapse whilst working as a lawyer in Hanoi and preparing for the 1996 edition of Meredith. Critically ill, he was airlifted to Singapore and then St Vincent's in Melbourne, and hovered on the edge of life in a coma for 6 months.

Three weeks before MMF '96, he 'woke up' laughing at a story his cousin had made up about a photo of Chris and his father Jack. As a result of the brain injury he sustained, Chris can't move, see or hear much to this day, but he is still able to perform a special moment at the start of every GP. Using his main form of communication, Chris opens the festival with a long-blink once the crowd has generated what he feels is a sufficient amount of noise and excitement.

It wasn't since the 2006 Meredith that either festival had encountered heat like this year. For the organising team, it was certainly a challenge - as the forecast came out each day in the lead up, the temperatures pushed higher and higher before stabilising on the Thursday with an expected max of around 37 each day of the festival. Which precipitated a mass of activity as everyone kicked into gear to prepare not only for the heat, but the expected fire danger in the region.

A key pillar of both festivals is the long-established Multi-Agency team, which is comprised of members from local and regional Police, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, the Department of Health, 1300 Medics, the Golden Plains Shire Council and the festival's own staff. Meeting regularly throughout the year, the team decided to meet everyday in the week leading into Golden Plains to assess the forecast conditions and put in place any necessary measures.

The result was a substantial increase in firefighting

preparedness, with the festival's usual robust approach to fire prevention and response strengthened considerably by bumping up internal resources, as well as those provided by local and regional CFA support.

On the heat side of things, the phones ran hot, locking in more supplies, with ice and electrolytes the big ticket items. Because the Supernatural Amphitheatre is a permanent site, there is an abundance of infrastructure to help deal with different atmospheric conditions, with the site's many water tanks, as well as misting and douse showers, getting a decent workout all weekend.

What really made the weekend, however, wasn't so much the infrastructure, planning and organising, but the way in which attendees and staff banded together to support each other through the hottest parts of the day. The best place to spend a weekend during a severe heatwave would no doubt be an air conditioned lounge room (or maybe the deli section of a supermarket), so it was remarkable to see thousands of people not only out in the searing heat, but getting amongst it with the usual verve and excitement.

After an at times rousing and and at times poignant Welcome to Country from the local Wadawurrung crew, the stage went live with the almost cruelly named *Split System*, a band out of Melbourne currently making waves.

Special mention must be made of *MJ Lenderman*, a singer and guitarist from Asheville in North Carolina. MJ performed in the band *Wednesday* in the height of the heat on Saturday, and then performed solo just as the mercury was peaking on the Sunday. British Band *Black Country, New Road* mentioned on stage it was the hottest temperature they had ever experienced.

Other highlights included the band WITCH (We Intend to Cause Havoc), all the way from Zambia in central Africa, and King Stingray, an Arnhem Land band with bloodlines to Yothu Yindi. Another to receive a few hundred raised shoes of appreciation were Belgium duo Charlotte Adigéry & Bolis Pupul.

Although it wasn't exactly sausage-in-bread eating weather, the Meredith Community Tucker Tent sold more ice than they ever had before, with all monies raised going back to local groups like the Primary School, Kindergarten, Memorial Hall and Golf Club.

As the sun sets on another festival season at The Sup', Aunty Meredith would like to thank everyone involved, particularly CFA Captain Josh, Martin, Jackie and Heather for all their work organising the Tucker Tent, and Dale and Campbell for getting thousands of people here and home again on buses. Thanks also to the broader community for all the work and support.



If you live or work in Meredith and you would like to volunteer to help raise funds for local organisations during either Meredith or Golden Plains, please email Aunty via auntym@mmf.com.au

"It's always a privilege and a pleasure to be there, at the best festival in Australia." The Guardian 12th March, 2024

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Targa Classica

Marg Cooper

This event is advertised as Australia’s Premier Classic Car Event that involves a thrilling journey that mirrors Italy’s Grand Event. It is run as a prelude to the Grand Prix.

This event ran over four days from March 18 to March 21, 2024. The contestants followed various routes each day and stayed at RACV owned accommodation at Creswick, Warrnambool and Torquay before ending their trip at Federation Square.

They travelled over 1000 km and competed in 70-to-80-time trials over the four days. Community interaction is an important part of the event and as part of that school

children on the route are given flags and invited to watch the cars.

About 100 Classic Cars and about 200 drivers and passengers were at Meredith Recreation Reserve on Thursday morning and competed in time trials in McLeod Street before leaving for Calder Racetrack.



School - Colour Fun Run

Judith Wood

On the 8th of March, Meredith Primary School held a Colour Fun Run. The students firstly enjoyed a healthy lunch but afternoon was all about fun, fun and more fun with colour, laughter and physical activity! Each class took part in a colourful and wet running course around the school oval. With the local CFA fire truck spraying children with water, teachers and our local police officer colouring students with powder, students and parents using water pistols and water buckets wetting students, and we had a colourful slippery dip! It was amazing to see all of the students embracing the afternoon and having such an enjoyable time. It was equally as impressive to see the whole school community come together for the afternoon, and enjoy the activity, including some kindergarten families.

Following the Colour Run the school Captains led a 'Sliming' experience for some special guests, including Anthony Box our local police officer, Chris Jones from the Meredith CFA, Meg Devlin our school council president, Kate Bramley our PE and STEM teacher, Charlie and Kealeigh our school Captains and Lachlan Day the school Principal! Each of these volunteers agreed to be slimed if we met specific targets as part of our fundraising campaign for the event. MPS thanks each of you for being such good sports and participating, the students loved it!

After a month long fundraising campaign, the students , parents and community raised over \$12,000! The monies raised from this event will go towards reducing the cost of excursions and camps for the students, and provide teaching and learning resources for the classrooms. A big thank you to the team of parent helpers, Anthony Box our local police officer and Chris Jones from the CFA.

This certainly was a community event that was enjoyed by all!

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it's history

Meredith History Interest Group

'A Different Ball Game': is a special event to be held in the Memorial Hall on May 4 and 5 which will demonstrate how, in the early days of football, nearly everyone in the town and district was connected through the football club. This event has been registered with the National Trust of Victoria's Heritage Festival and is being advertised Victoria wide.

At the moment we are reading football reports from the old newspapers and gathering stories. Have you heard of the 1884 match played on the cricket ground immediately after it had been ploughed? Or about Meredith playing the Rif Rafs in 1892 and the Teetotalers versus Lubricators Match in 1897. Meredith played at Kardinia Park in 1902 and then there was the Bachelors versus Married Mens Match where one man was heading to the Bachelor's change rooms but had to be redirected by his team mates! There were also those footballers who caused extensive damage to three hotels in Meredith in 1906.

If you have stories, information, photos, cups or prizes we need you! Has anyone got an old Meredith Football Jumper??

Escort for the Queen:

It is 70 years since Harold William (Jack) Powles rode escort for Queen Elizabeth 11 up the straight 6 at Flemington before the running of the Queen Elizabeth Stakes. He also escorted Her Majesty during visits to Melbourne, Bendigo and Geelong in 1954. They were some of his proudest moments. Jack also rode rear guard escort for the first Moomba Parade and performed at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds with the Police Mounted Branch in the Musical Ride. He rode a horse officially named *Royal Escort* but affectionately known as *Scotty*. The horse had been lent to the Mounted Branch by Hendersons of Burrumbeet, but was trained and ridden by Jack. He had joined the Mounted Branch of the Victorian Police Force when he was 18 years old. He came to Meredith as the policeman in April 1958.

Australia on the Map:

In 2006 the 400th anniversary of the European discovery of Australia was celebrated. There were about 30 separate instances of early mariners visiting the coast of Australia before Captain Cook in the Endeavour in 1770, and nearly two thirds of the continent had been mapped by that time.

Those early voyages were prompted by the ambitions of the Dutch trading company, the United East Indies Company (VOC) which, in 1602, was granted by the Dutch government a monopoly over the huge area between the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, eastwards to the Straits of Magellan at the southern tip of South America. Three years later the company gave Captain Willem Janszoon the command of a small yacht with orders to explore the vast land of Nova Guinea, and other east and south lands. In 1606 he made an accurate chart of Cape York coast as well as exploring other areas.

Recognition for Emma Muir

Marg Cooper

The honour of Moorabool Shire Citizen of the Year was bestowed on Emma Muir on Australia Day 2024. The Moorabool News reported that *Emma had united the community to form the Moorabool & Central Highlands Power Alliance, now known as the Regional Victoria Power Alliance, voicing opposition to the high voltage transmission project.*

Emma is the daughter of John and Georgie Molesworth and grew up at *Ballark* on the Meredith/Ballan Road. She attended Kindergarten and Primary School at Meredith in the early 1980's. She recalls that Mrs Colvin, Mrs Hearn, Miss Rowe, Mr Gray and Mrs Gargan were wonderful teachers and certainly contributed positively to her formative years. She married Peter Muir and lives on a farm at Myrning with two teenage children.

For the last few years Emma has worked tirelessly, advocating through this group to stop the high voltage transmission project known as the Western Renewables Link.

She is also Treasurer of the Pentland Hills Landcare Group and is a member of Grow West Implementation Committee. She has also contributed extensively to Little Athletics, Myrning Primary School, Bacchus Marsh Football and Netball Club, and Ballan Netball and Football Club.

Emma comes from a volunteering family. Firstly she helped her grandmother Sheila Molesworth and then her father John Molesworth in their volunteering roles. At the presentation Emma also acknowledged all the people who are involved in these groups as their hard work contributed to her award.

Emma is a happy, confident bundle of energy and a great leader. Congratulations from all your friends at Meredith.

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Marg's Book Review

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

The mystical story is about a young Andalusian shepherd boy, Santiago, who sets out to locate treasure which he dreamed was hidden in the dusty lands of the Egyptian Pyramids. A Gypsy interpreted his dream and told him he wouldn't charge him now but would take one tenth of the treasure when the shepherd boy found it.

On his way he meets Melchizedek, King of Salem who offers to help him locate the treasure if he parts with one tenth of his sheep. The boy works in the Tangier Market, meets a girl, Fatima, in the African Desert who tells him that if she is part of his dream, he will come back to her one day. At an oasis he meets an alchemist and, whilst travelling together across the desert, they are captured by tribesmen who think they are spies. At the Pyramids he meets thieves.

After years of travel the shepherd boy reaches the Pyramids and discovers that the riches he is seeking are back in the land he came from and he's travelled all that way just to learn that he needed to go back.

A Book Review summarizes the message of the book: Santago's journey teaches us about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, of recognizing opportunity and learning to read the omen's strewn along life's path and most importantly, to follow our dreams.

As well as many positive reviews of this book and the author there are also scathing reviews. One reviewer disliked the book comparing it to many modern self-help books that tell that if you want something to happen you need to want it as hard as you can, not allowing yourself to doubt and it will happen. Another reviewer wrote that in his own country folks think of the author as the kind of writer popular with your weird aunt who likes crystals.

It was hard to determine whether the message was a religious one or whether it's just telling us to have confidence in ourselves. It is a small book with a simple story but there are so many life messages that are expounded along the way, it is overwhelming. Another reviewer summed up the book saying it was written in a way that makes people who aren't particularly familiar with deep ideas, feel profound

What happens when winter arrives?

Autumn leaves



Jim Elvey

Volunteer members of Support Group undertook a working bee on a very pleasant morning, clearing creek crossings of a heavy infestation of water cress. The work has enhanced stream flows and exposed the delightful rock crossings and ponds. And everyone enjoyed testing out their gumboots and rubber gloves.

The bee was followed by a meeting, where we heard from WREN director, Tim D'Ombra, of the great support given to the Paddocks in WREN's budget for the year ahead. In summary, \$10,000 has been set aside for weed management - work will start this autumn - \$2,500 toward a creek crossing (subject to approvals) and funding committed to purchase and install a small shipping container on the site. It is expected the container, which will be painted a subdued green and sited near the Campion Road entrance behind a copse of trees, will arrive in the next few weeks. This will be a great improvement for volunteers who presently have to use their own car and trailer to collect the mower from a remote site and return it after use.

We are now planning how to utilise the container as part of an informative display of native flora and fauna important to First Australians when moving through the district.



Brisbane Ranges sketchers

Kerry Thomson

After some scorching 40 degree days we were welcomed by a perfect temperature to the idyllic river setting at Sharps Bridge in She Oaks. Unfortunately our serenity was disturbed by the regular rumbling of passing gravel trucks. Our artistic abilities were definitely tested by the complexity of the scenery. Numerous greens, greys and browns in the many layers and varieties of trees, bushes, grasses and rocks, the lines and angles of the bridge and, as well, the movement and colour of the water, meant careful, selective editing was required. Nevertheless, and despite some scrunched up efforts, we all rose to the challenge to produce interesting, thoughtful representations in watercolour, oil, pencil, fine-liner and charcoal. It is always amazing how plein air art leads to such highly individual responses, followed afterwards by stimulating discussion over tea or coffee. ps. It was lovely to see Gill and Melinda again.

April outing: second Tuesday (the 9th) meet at 10.00am at the Meredith Community Centre.

BYO art materials, chair, weather appropriate clothing, cuppa for after.

Vale to Sandra Ann Watson

21/9/1947 – 24/2/2024

Marg Cooper

Sandra was born in Geelong to loving parents Fred and Nancy Bryceson. She had a younger brother Greg. Her father renovated houses then sold them, so they moved around a lot. Her mother died when she was 12 years old and her father remarried a few years later and had three more children.

When she left school she worked at Alex Clarke Menswear in Footscray, then she did secretarial studies and worked at Selley's Building products in Brooklyn. In 1967 she married Robert Munro and had two children, Kym and Rachael. The marriage ended in 1977. In 1981 Michael was born during a long-term relationship with his father.

Sandra kept very active. She played squash at State level representing Victoria in the Masters. It was through squash that she met Ian Watson, they became good friends and in May 1985 they wed and Ian took on a readymade family.

As the kids got older Sandra and Ian decided to have a tree change and moved to Elaine from Doncaster, and ran the General Store for 13 years. While running the store seven days per week, they started up Elaine Bus Lines which serviced the school bus run. Sandra even drove the bus at times.

Sandra took up playing golf in her 40's and ended up being Captain of Meredith Golf Club for several years and later President of Midlands Golf Club for two years. One of her greatest pastimes was football. She followed Geelong in the AFL and attended all of the home games at Kardinia Park. Sandra and Ian moved from Elaine township to a block at Cargarie where they established a huge garden around a very comfortable house. In 2014 they reluctantly left their country retreat and bought a house in Barkly Street in Buninyong.

Sandra was a straight shooter, didn't tolerate false people, she could be feisty if she had to be, but she lived a good honest happy life, caring about others and being fiercely loyal to those she loved. She always seemed to abound with energy.

Sandra lived with Frontotemporal Dementia (Primary Progressive Aphasia) for the past 10 years. It is a cruel disease that eventually takes away all ability to communicate, memories and ultimately the person we once knew. She spent the last years of her life in the Aged Care facility at Mt Clear. Her funeral was held at Doveton Park Lakeside on March 7.

Sandra was a unique woman who left a positive imprint on many lives.



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Wild Weather in the Past

Cambria Parkinson submitted a synopsis of late 19th century weather in Victoria as portrayed in *"Diary of a Welsh Swagman 1869-1874"* based on the diaries of Joseph Jenkins. Cambria adds: "...they illustrate the vagaries of the climate over a long period a long time ago." The synopsis, too large to publish here, was compiled by Maurie Killeen from Gippsland, can be found at meredithnews.com/extras.



G'day from the penners for April. This month's writings come from Bridh Hancock, a unique sort of a fellow, I would say a very happy chappy. This contribution is from our groups 3rd book, Pearls on the Plains, published in 2020. It is available at the Bannockburn library. We hope you enjoy it.

We at the penners always welcome feedback and we can be contacted via our email address goldenpens4@gmail.com so if you like a particular story (or not) please drop us a line.

Regards Wendy.

The day began as the sun rose over the Bannockburn Ranges, continued with a northward camber, and set in the east at Corio Bay, where it was said, if a shooting star landed there, or some delinquent with a lighted branch was to put into the sea water there, we would have our own Firestorm of the Apocalypse. Fortunately, nothing and no one ever did, not yet, anyway.

It was an auspicious day. I rose with the first cock-a-doddle, breakfasted, and was soon away, breathing the wholesome fresh Australian air. (I am a true patriotic Australian.)

Lunch was at the Norlane Community Food and Feasting Centre. We had plenty to eat, and plenty more to take away with us. We, my wife and I, would eat the seasoned rice with chicken and vegetables for nearly a week. Tea, or dinner, was described, but the veggies were always fresh.

Ah, food, the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

We came home to rest contented in our food intake, and the poetry that I wrote!

The sour part was when a brass band played, and the sour part of the brass band was the cymbalist, who crashed his cymbals together instead of striking one against the other. Clunk, clunk, clunk. Never clash, clash, clash.

And the poetry I wrote!

The poetry I wrote.

The sun rose to
 Good day Bannockburn
 From above the haze of bushfires
 The sun rose across the Strzelecki Ranges
 From Shelford
 Across the twin peaks, Filius and Demus,
 Of the fire and war god of Mars,
 To sort of greet us today, before retiring in the sea
 At Corio
 At Corio that evening a shooting star did land,
 And a ratbag with a flaming branch
 Did put it into the sea,
 Enter: our fire of the Apocalypse.

So much for sweet poems about Bannockburn.
 Bannockburn the brave.

LIMBLESS SOLDIER *by Linda Brumby*

I walk where days are warm and bright
 With footsteps firm, and spirit light;
 My eyes behold each beauteous sight -
 While lying still.

I tread where woods are wet with rain
 Along a well remembered lane,
 And feel the gentle hush again -
 While lying still.

I stand beside the tranquil sea
 Where white-winged gulls soar high and free;
 Its quiet peace caressing me....
 While lying still.

I dance! I hear the band begin!
 The saxophones and violin!
 I clasp a small hand, white and slim,
 Old memories thrill....

I ride across a sun-burnt plain!
 Vibrant, and strong and young again!
 (No sister - No I have no pain....)
 - Memories can kill!

I wonder, but I do not ask
 Why, torn from life's accustomed task
 I bide - within this broken cask,
 - Lying still.

Life moves in its mysterious way:
 Some have their hour; their little day;
 And some are taken - others stay
 Just lying still.

But no man's life is quite bereft
 If with clear thought the mind is blest:
 Not all is lost, when this is left,
 Even - when lying still!

And so - the sea; the woods I roam;
 The shining hours that I have known
 Are with me: I am not alone -

While lying still;

No land; no place where I have been,

Nor sun-drenched hills - however green -

Can match the beauty I have seen -

While lying still!

(Submitted by Janine Schiller)

What is the Equilux?

On the equinox, the length of day and night are only nearly equal. This is because the Sun appears as a disk in the sky, and the top half rises above the horizon before the centre. As well as this sunlight is refracted by the Earth's atmosphere. The Sun, therefore, appears to rise before its centre at the horizon, giving more daylight than you might expect (12 hours 10 minutes on the equinox).

The equilux is when day and night are equal and occurs a few days before the spring equinox, and a few days after the autumn equinox. (www.metoffice.gov.uk)

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