

It's our 50th Anniversary

Meredith & district News

FEBRUARY 2026

OUR **FREE** COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



CELEBRATING
50 YEARS OF PUBLICATION

- Bushfire Support
- The Threat of Army Worms
- Our Fifty Years of Newsletters Lift Out



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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, Nerida Anderson, Amy Medley, and Ian Leighton. Production is undertaken by Peter Boer, Don Atherton and Jim Elvey.

NEWS & VIEWS

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

DATES AND DEADLINES

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

ADVERTISING

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

	B&W/Colour
Business Card	\$20.00
Quarter page	\$30.00/\$50
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

You can subscribe to get the Meredith and District News posted to you anywhere in Australia for what it costs us to send it - \$59.50p.a. (11 issues)

CONTACT US

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advertising@meredithnews.com.au
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accounts@meredithnews.com.au
Editorial: Jim: 0409 163169
news@meredithnews.com.au

WEB

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

ONLINE PHOTOS

We do not publish children's photos online.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

DISCLAIMER

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

FEEDBACK

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

Issue Production: *Don Atherton* Editor: *Jim Elvey*

connect

ADVANCE MEREDITH 0409 027 359	ELAINE HALL 53415575 0409861296
ANGLING CLUB 0419 248 660	FOOTBALL Seniors 0408 545246 Juniors 0430 587 674
B'BURN ART GROUP 0410 808 483	GOLF CLUB 0407 795 342
B'BURN MENS SHED 0407 835 731	HISTORY GROUP 5286 8201
B'BURN SOFT TENNIS 0409 236 420	LANDCARE 0409 862 326
BLUELIGHT DISCO 5286 1222	MEMORIAL HALL 0409 662106
BOOK CLUB 5286 8201	MEREDITH SEWING GROUP 0491 184 999
CFA 000 for fire calls Elaine 0419 767982 Meredith 5286 1502 Morrisons 0417 770 765	MOTORCYCLE CLUB 0437 009 250
CHILDCARE 5286 0700	PLAYGROUP 5286 0700
COMMUNITY CENTRE 5286 0700	POLICE PADDOCKS 0409 163169
CRICKET Elaine 0448 291074 Junior (U16,U14,13) 0448 291074 Meredith 5286 1434	RSL - 5286 1452
CUBS & SCOUTS Lethbridge 0435 042077	SENIOR CITIZENS 0407 683 892
	TENNIS Elaine 0448 291 074 Lethbridge 52 817 321 Meredith 0424 754 179
	SEW 'N' SEWS 5286 0700
	FRIENDS OF THE BRISBANE RANGES 5286 1252

..or start something.

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



My idea of swimming is aggressively not drowning."

emergency

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

Justices of the Peace

Mr Don Atherton.	0409 869 960
Mr Paul Ryan Elaine	0409 861 296

services

CEMETERY TRUST 5286 1550	MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH 5220 7230
HALL HIRE Meredith Memorial 5286 1545	PRE-SCHOOL 5286 0722
Elaine Mechanics 53415575 0409861296 Elaine Rec Res 5341 5703	PRIMARY SCHOOL 5286 1313
LIBRARY VAN 5272 6010	RECREATION RESERVE 0429 315 575

NO MORE PAYING TWO BONDS WHEN YOU MOVE

HELPING RENTERS KEEP MORE MONEY IN THEIR POCKET

A new Victorian scheme will allow renters to transfer their existing bond to their next home, easing the cost of moving.



Michaela Settle MP
Member for Eureka

[✉ michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au) [☎ 5331 7722](tel:53317722) [f /MichaelaSettleMP](https://www.facebook.com/MichaelaSettleMP)

Stockdale & Leggo

MEET THE BANNOCKBURN TEAM



JULIE KAYE
Director/Licensed Estate Agent
0411 059 001



DEAN WILSON
Director/Licensed Estate Agent
0418 521 322



ANDREW WILSON
Senior Sales Consultant
0452 498 254



FLETCHER WILSON
Sales Consultant
0490 120 668



KERRIN PALTRIDGE
Property Manager
5281 4444



KELLY KENSHOLE
Office Manager
5281 4444

Sales - Rentals - Commercial

Stockdale & Leggo **Bannockburn** | Shop 14, 6-8 High Street, Bannockburn VIC 3331
P 03 5281 4444 | W stockdaleleggo.com.au/bannockburn



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

Catholic Parish of Meredith
 Winchelsea - St. John the Baptist @ 6pm Sat. FEB. 7, 14, 21, 28
 Meredith - St. Joseph @ 9am FEB. 8, 22
 B'burn - St. Mary MacKillop @ 11am Sun. FEB. 1, 8, 15, 22
 Inverleigh - Sacred Heart - @ 4pm Sun. FEB. 15



As a launching point for a celebration of 50 years of publication of **Meredith and District News**, our cover, depicting the Bamganie Forest road soon after the devastating Meredith-Mt Mercer fire that threatened the town last month, is a little grim.

But we feel it important to acknowledge the dangerous proximity of this fire, which burned over 2,000 Ha and forced many evacuations.

If you or someone you know, need help recovering after a bushfire, check what is available at vic.gov.au/help-after-bushfire. We also have a helpful article on page 17, details of Bendigo Bank's Bushfire Appeal on p. 32, Marg's story of challenge and survival on p. 34 and a more photos on p. 41. You can also take a refresher on actions that will keep you safe during summer bushfire season at vic.gov.au/plan-and-prepare

Cover photo supplied by Nerida Anderson .

GETTING HELP and STAYING SAFE.



What's On This Month

TERM 1 - 2026
CHATTY CAFE - FREE
COME AND JOIN US FOR A LIGHT LUNCH AND MEET NEW FRIENDS! BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL FOR CATERING
WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 26 - 11.30 AM

ACT NOW STAY SECURE - CYBER TRAINING - FREE
JOIN TY AS HE ASSISTS YOU TO NAVIGATE THE INTERNET IN A SAFE AND SECURE WAY! - LIGHT LUNCH PROVIDED
WEDNESDAY - MARCH 11 - 12-2.30PM

COMMUNITY DROP IN -
TALL TREE WIND FARM INFORMATION SESSION
WEDNESDAY MARCH 4 - 7.30 AM - 12.30 PM

WE ARE NOW TAKING DONATIONS OF NEW WITH TAGS CLOTHING!
ALL SIZES
PLEASE DROP THEM OFF TO THE OFFICE - NO USED ITEMS PLEASE

DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL TALENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD?
GIVE ME A CALL TO DISCUSS RUNNING A CLASS!

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

THE MEREDITH MART - NEW OPENING TIMES

MONDAY - 9AM-1PM
TUESDAY - 9AM-1PM
WEDNESDAY - 9AM-3PM
THURSDAY BY APPOINTMENT

Logos for Geelong Foodshare, Food Bank, Ballarat Foundation, and Geelong Community Foundation.

The Power Saving Bonus - \$100 for Concession Card Holders!
 Concession card households can cut their energy bills with a new round of the \$100 Power Saving Bonus.
 Come into the Centre with your Power Bill and Your Id and Bank Account Details and we will get you \$100 back into your account.

TAI CHI - \$15 PER SESSION
TUESDAYS @ MEREDITH WITH SANDRA - 9.15 - 10.15
WEDNESDAYS @ BANNOCKBURN WITH DESMA - 9:30 - 10.30

GENTLE EXERCISE @ THE COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR OVER 65'S
THURSDAYS @ 9.15 - 10.15 - FREE

Facebook and Instagram icons with text: Join us on Facebook & Instagram @meredithcommunitycentre

PLAYGROUP
THURSDAYS
9.30am - 11.30am
\$2 per family

Meredith Tennis Club News



Our Spring Competition wrapped up with an exciting finish, with all games proving extremely close and fantastic to watch. The level of competition across all sections made for a great season and showcased the skill and sportsmanship of everyone involved.

Congratulations to our Spring Competition winners:

Section 4: Cross Courts

Section 3: Aim for Fame

Section 2: The Nettos

Section 1: Conrow

We look forward to celebrating the season at our Presentation Night on Wednesday, 19th of March. All past and present players are warmly invited to attend. The cost is \$10 per person, which includes a meal with a main and dessert. It's always a great night to catch up, recognise achievements, and celebrate our club community.

Would you like to get involved? We are always looking for new members and helpers to join our committee and contribute ideas to keep the club growing. Our next committee meeting will be held on March 4th. If you're interested, please email us or contact us via Facebook for the meeting address.

We'd love to see you there — on court or behind the scenes!

Meredith Tennis Club presents:

SUMMER Night Comp

Starting 12th February 2026

Doubles competition | \$30 per team (non members) | \$25 per team (members) | Cash prize | 6 weeks | 🏆

Children welcome to play with adults | \$10 Dinner available

Various grades | Registrations close 9 February 2026

Wilson Street, Meredith

Contact us at meredithtennis2020@gmail.com or on facebook

Below: Meredith Tennis players, Knox Carpenter, Cristian Di Pietrangelo, Adam O'Connor and Alfie Rowe





POLICE report

Senior Constable Anthony BOX

Meredith Police Station | Western Region Division 3
 Phone: 5286 1222 | Fax: 9244 2156
 14 Wilson Street Meredith Vic 3333

It has been a standard summer period here, with few incidents of note.

From a policing perspective the Meredith Music Festival went well.

Fire Danger Period: In place until around 01/05/2026.

Be aware of the regulations set out on the CFA website.

There have been instances of people contravening these regulations in Meredith resulting in Charges and summons to Court as well as Penalty Notices being issued.

Fire 09/01/2026.

This is an active investigation, the origin of the fire is outside the Meredith Police Response Zone.

It is being investigated by the Moorabool Crime Investigation Unit based out of Bacchus Marsh.

I cannot provide information or comment on the status of the investigation at this stage.

On another note, the CFA from Meredith (and others) once again proved themselves to be exceptional at what they do.

CFA members took themselves away from their own properties and families to defend Meredith and surrounds from a very fast-moving fire.

They worked massive hours under very trying conditions and I know we are all proud of their efforts and thankful to them.

Speed / Traffic.

Over the December and January period there have been additional police resources around our area for different targeted traffic operations.

I have been targeting speeding in and out of Meredith on Sutherland Street due to the high risk of collision in that location.

Of note I have issued numerous penalty notices for speed in excess of 90Km/H in the 60Km/H zone between McLeod Street and Ballan Meredith Rd.

The common excuse being that they were unaware it is 60 or that they were slowing down, despite the radar track often showing otherwise.

There has been an increase in burnouts and other poor driving behaviour in Meredith township and surrounds. This is being actively targeted.

CCTV or mobile phone footage can be obtained and used later to impound/ seize vehicles. If you have footage, feel free to reach out and I will obtain that from you.

Some offenders have already been held to account, others I am still working on.

We have had a few single vehicle crashes, thankfully nothing too serious in Meredith.

Reminder:

To contact Police if you require a unit to attend at that time, always call 000. This is the same for Fire and Ambulance, nothing special there.

Do not call the station phone number unless it is a routine enquiry.

Do not contact police by sending an SMS to a mobile phone, an email or any other contact method and expect a response.



GOLDEN PLAINS MUSIC FESTIVAL TICKET ALLOCATION FOR LOCALS

The upcoming Golden Plains Music Festival sold out in December.

There is, however, an allocation of tickets available on a first-come first-served basis for locals living between Elaine and Lethbridge. Tickets can be purchased from the Meredith Roadhouse (26 Wallace Street) from 10am on the 10th of February until sold out. 4 per person limit.

Please bring proof of residential address (Meredith, Cargerie, Elaine, She Oaks, Mount Mercer or Lethbridge address). Card sales only.

Golden Plains Eighteen will be held from the 7th to the 9th of March, 2026, at the Meredith Supernatural Amphitheatre.

If you have any questions, please contact Aunty Meredith via auntym@mmf.com.au.

Thanks very much.

TEST'N'TAG

All plug in electrical items can be tested and certified safe.

On-site or off-site testing. Reasonable rates.

Contact Meredith Maintenance
(Licensed Tester)

5286 1550 or 0427 300742

Classifieds

First insertion of small ads are FREE to district residents

FREE - Master MFG 15litre backpack sprayer - quality unit with spare parts and multiple spray heads. Purchased from Hewitt and Whitty.

And a Karcher K2 pressure washer with foam dispenser. Needs new gun. (\$70 from BigW.) Ph. 0409 163169



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Golden Plains Shire Council is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) for young bands across Golden Plains to compete at the 2026 Battle of the Bands competition.

Battle of the Bands is a competition featuring dynamic performances from emerging young artists aged 12 to 25 across Golden Plains Shire who represent a wide range of genres. The event will be held on Saturday 21 March from 4 to 7pm at Turtle Bend Reserve in Teesdale.

This Battle of the Bands event is an initiative of Fuse (formerly known as the Golden Plains Shire Amplify/FReeZA Committee). Fuse is a crew of passionate young people from across the Shire who bring bold, youth-led ideas to life. Supported by the Victorian Government's Amplify program, Fuse gives young people aged 12 to 25 the chance to step up, get creative, and design events that are fun, inclusive and local.

If you're in a local band and wanting the opportunity to perform in front of a live and supportive audience, Battle of the Bands is perfect for you. This is the biggest free live music competition in Golden Plains that brings an inclusive and welcoming environment for our local performers.

This is more than just a gig – it's a chance to grow your audience, sharpen your stage presence, network with like-minded people and build credibility.

EOIs are open from Tuesday 20 January until 5pm, Tuesday 10 February 2026. To submit an EOI, visit goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations. Hard copies are also available at Council's Customer Hubs, 2 Pope Street, Bannockburn and 19 Heales Street, Smythesdale.

Food options will be available at the event. In the case of wet/poor weather, the Battle of the Bands event will be held indoors at the Bannockburn Cultural Centre.

For further information, contact Council's Youth Development team at enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7111.



Golden Plains Music Festival 2026 Information and Contacts

We are writing with information about the Golden Plains Music Festival, scheduled to occur at the Meredith Supernatural Amphitheatre from Saturday 7 - Monday 9 March 2026.

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

Implement a speed reduction on Meredith-Mt Mercer Road and Cameron Road from one day prior to the festival through to the last day.

Implement one-way traffic on Meredith-Mt Mercer Road from Bamganie Road to Cameron Road from approximately 6am to approximately 5pm on the first day of the festival.

Direct all festival bound buses down Boundary Road and Cameron Road.

Divert all traffic travelling to Meredith within the one-way zone down Cameron Road.

Station traffic controllers on the corner of Midland Highway and Staughton Street on the final day of the festival to assist vehicles turning left or right onto Midland Highway.

Install no-parking zones along Meredith-Mt Mercer Road and some surrounding roads.

Vehicle passes are distributed to properties along Meredith-Mt Mercer (town side) a week before the festival. If you live or work along Bamganie Road or Cameron Road and you would like a vehicle pass, please email Aunty Meredith to confirm if you need one.

If you have any comments or ideas about any matter related to Golden Plains, including any concern or question about traffic or noise management, please get in contact by phone/text 0430 091 120 (available 24 hours over the festival weekend) or by emailing auntym@mmf.com.au (available anytime).

The festival website is goldenplains.com.au. Additional information for locals is available at aunty.goldenplains.com.au/locals.

Thank you.

Festival Planning Team



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A. Crumble's



Simple Tomato and Zucchini Pastries

Ingredients

- 300g cherry tomatoes
- 1 medium zucchini
- 1/2 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- Pinch chilli flakes (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 50g Meredith Dairy Marinated Goat Cheese or Fresh Goat Cheese with dill
- 1 sheet of bought puff pastry

Method

Preheat the oven to 200°
 Cut the pastry sheet into four squares and place onto a baking tray; score the pastry 1cm in from the edge to make a border (don't cut all the way through)

Thinly slice the zucchini and place on the pastry squares avoiding the border

Cut the cherry tomatoes in half and place cut side up on a second baking tray. Sprinkle with mixed herbs, chilli flakes, salt and pepper

Place both trays in the oven and bake for 20 minutes

Remove the trays and you will see that the edges of the pastry have puffed up.

Spoon the tomatoes over the zucchini and dot with small pieces of the cheese.

These are delicious by themselves or with a side salad

This recipe is quick and simple to prepare and is ideal with all the tomatoes and zucchini in abundance during late summer. It can easily be doubled or tripled for larger gatherings. Meredith Dairy cheeses are available at the Meredith Farm Store in Staughton Street and in supermarkets.



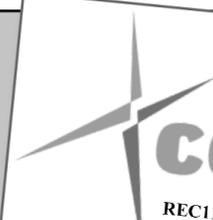
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Pest Alert - Know Your Armyworms

AgVic Media Release

Farmers urged to keep an eye out for armyworms

Following multiple reports of the native armyworms across Victoria, farmers are encouraged to learn how to correctly identify them.

Agriculture Victoria Horticulture Program Coordinator for Gippsland, Scott Botten said often, native armyworms can be mistaken for Fall armyworm (FAW).

‘FAW are native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas but have quickly spread across the world, including to Australia after being found in every state.

‘The Fall armyworm, also known as *Spodoptera frugiperda*, is a highly invasive and destructive caterpillar that poses a significant threat to plant species.

‘They are known to feed on more than 350 plant species, including maize, cotton, rice, sorghum, sugarcane, wheat and other vegetable and fruit crops.’ Mr Botten said.

He said when identifying FAW, there are a number of key signs to look out for:

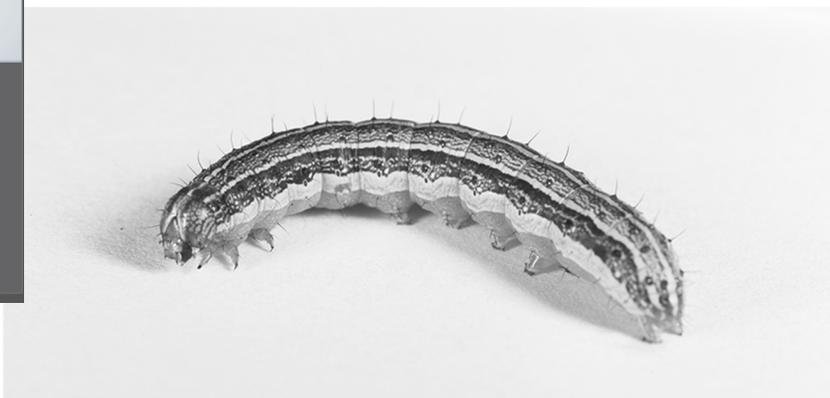
- eggs are laid on the underside of leaves in masses of 100-300 usually with a protective cover of fine bristles
- newly hatched larvae (caterpillars) are 1mm long, pale greenish with a black head
- mature caterpillars are smooth bodied and grow up to 40mm in length
- they range in colour from dark yellow to green, brown and black with prominent lighter stripes running the length of the body
- males have two distinct white marks on each of the forewings.

Mr Botten said while having a similar appearance to other armyworm species commonly found in Victoria, FAW can be distinguished by the inverted Y shape on the head.

‘Correctly identifying FAW is especially vital during the late summer and early autumn months, with the larvae being most active around this time.

‘If you think you have identified a FAW and aren’t sure of next steps, contact your local agronomist for advice, he said.

Further information on Fall armyworm including monitoring and how to identify it can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website and on the Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC) website here.





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Ebony is available to guide you through funeral planning and arrangements as well as provide obligation free funeral advice and information.

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Vanessa's
**FLOWER
 FARM FILES**



Dig in. Grow well. Bloom beautifully.

February on the Farm

February arrives in a haze of heat, dust, and the cautious eye on the Emergency App. It's dry and dusty across the paddocks, as expected at this time of year. Our dahlias—always worth the wait—are growing well and finally starting to flower. They've arrived later than usual this season, but with a bit of luck we'll have them blooming just in time for Valentine's Day.

Across the rows, the garden continues to push through the worst of summer's heatwaves, offering bursts of colour in defiance of the weather.

Caring for Cut Flowers

With your own garden likely in peak bloom too, it's the perfect time to bring that beauty indoors. To help your flowers stay fresh and vibrant for as long as possible, here are some simple but effective tips for the most reliable summer bloomers:

Poppies

Harvest in the "cracked bud" stage, when the outer casing just begins to split.

Seal the freshly cut ends with a flame or boiling water for 5–10 seconds to prevent wilting.

Dahlias

Cut early in the morning once the blooms are fully open.

Place directly into cool water and refresh daily. They are thirsty flowers.

Roses

Pick as petals begin to unfurl.

Recut stems every two days and remove foliage below the water line.

Hydrangeas

Dip stems in boiling water or submerge whole blooms before arranging.

Mist petals when they start to wilt—they drink through them.

Cosmos

Harvest when petals reach full colour and centres remain tight.

Keep in shallow, clean water.

Zinnias

Pick when the stem passes the "wiggle test"—hold the stem below the bloom and give it a gentle shake; if the head stays upright, it's ready.

Place straight into cool, clean water.

Sunflowers

Harvest when the outer petals just begin to lift from the centre.

Strip most foliage and use deep water to support the heavy stems.

Strawflowers (Everlasting Flowers)

Cut when blooms are one-third to half open.

For arrangements, they last for weeks; for drying, hang upside down in a warm, dark space.

Scabiosa (Pincushion Flower)

Pick when blooms are fully open.

Keep in fresh, clean water—scabiosa dislike dirty vases.

Lisianthus

Cut when the top bud is just beginning to open.

Exceptionally long-lasting—change water every few days to maximise vase life.

Snapdragons

Harvest when the bottom third of the flowers are open.

Keep in a cool spot and support stems upright.

A Note on Flower Food

If you'd like to give your cut flowers an extra boost, adding commercial flower food to your vase water can make a noticeable difference. Flower food helps by feeding the blooms, balancing the water's pH, and slowing the growth of bacteria—all of which extend vase life. If you don't have any on hand, you can make a simple DIY version by mixing a small pinch of sugar (for energy), a splash of vinegar or lemon juice (to adjust pH), and a tiny drop of bleach (to keep the water clean). Always start with cool, fresh water, and replace it every couple of days to keep your flowers looking their best in the height of summer.

With fires, soaring temperatures, and unpredictable weather, we hope your garden has held strong and is producing well. If you've got summer colour to spare, bring some of it indoors—fresh flowers can brighten even the hottest days.

Use these simple tips to extend the life of your cut flowers and let your summer blooms carry their beauty from the garden to your home all season long.



BANNOCKBURN SURGERY

Dr Benjamin Fry
Dr Cameron Profitt
Dr Rupali Jain
Dr Rebecca Tidd

Dr John Henderson
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Dr Mohana Govardhanan

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Michael Riseley

Wish



We all wish for different things – perhaps a winning Tattsлото ticket or a sporting victory. Farmers might wish for rain. And we have all stood in front of a mirror and wished it wasn't so truthful! But I wish one of my ancestors was part of the high society gentry on the island of Mauritius in 1847. And that he was a hoarder and kept his correspondence.

Mauritius is in the Indian Ocean and was a British colony. Britain issued the first postage stamps in 1840 and for a while the various British colonies simply used British stamps for postage. Each colony had a separate numbered postmark to identify them. Mauritius had the postmark "B53". This worked quite OK but as the mail services grew, each colony wanted to reflect their own individuality.

In early 1847 the Governor of Mauritius and the Mauritius Post Master agreed on a design of the first Mauritius stamp. It showed a portrait of Queen Victoria and had the words Mauritius Post Office Postage in the design. It would be in 2 denominations – a one penny red stamp and a two penny blue stamp. A local printer Joseph Barnard was contracted to print 500 of each stamp which he did. They were to go on sale to the public at the Mauritius Post Office on 22nd September which they did.

But the Governor's wife jumped the gun. On 21st September she used a quantity of the one penny red stamps to post out invitations for her upcoming fancy dress ball. It is not known how many she used but the ball was a big event and she may have issued 50 or more invites. It is not recorded whether she paid for the stamps. But no matter, the rest went on sale and in due course stocks were running out. In early 1848 a reprint was done with the words Post Office replaced with the words Post Paid. This design was used for over a decade. These Post Paid stamps are quite valuable and depending on its condition one may be worth up to \$500.

Of the original Post Office worded stamps only 15 of the one penny and 12 of the two penny stamps are known to exist. They are all in established collections and their provenance is well documented and recorded. Hard to say but each would be worth up to half a million dollars. That leaves 973 of the original 1000 printing still unaccounted for but it is highly unlikely that any more will be found. Possible perhaps and certainly worth carefully checking any old Mauritius stamps but most unlikely.

However one of the 15 known one penny stamps is quite special. It is still on the intact original invitation card. It sold in Germany in 2021 for a lazy 8.1 million Euros. I wish!




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Bushfire Support

Media Release

Agriculture Victoria teams are on the ground supporting farmers with animal welfare and conducting impact assessments following the recent fires across the state.

Agriculture Victoria State Agency Commander Wendy Thom said the immediate priority is responding to urgent animal welfare needs caused by the fires.

‘If your property has been impacted by fire and you have urgent animal welfare needs, please contact the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.’

‘Our immediate focus is to assess and address urgent animal welfare needs, collect information on agricultural impacts, and refer any personal needs to relevant agencies.’

‘It is currently too early to determine the full extent of livestock losses due to the evolving nature of the fire activity across much of the landscape.’

Farmers and primary producers affected by the fires are encouraged to activate their post-fire plans and actively manage their livestock needs.

As farmers return to their properties and gain access to their land, they may need to dispose of livestock. Agriculture Victoria’s website includes information on how to do this safely.

‘After a fire passes through a property, it’s important to have a plan for the immediate aftermath, as well as for the weeks that follow.’

‘If you’re not sure, a good place to start is the Agriculture Victoria website, which provides practical information on what to do both immediately and in the longer term.’

‘Farmers can also access an online reporting form to inform us if fire has affected their property, including impacts to livestock, crops, fodder or water’.

‘The information they provide helps inform recovery efforts and ensures the right support is made available,’ Ms Thom said.

Advice is available on personal health and wellbeing, livestock carcass disposal, water management, soil and pasture recovery, fencing and financial support.

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is coordinating the donation and delivery of emergency fodder relief for fire affected farmers.

Impacted farmers seeking fodder and those wishing to donate fodder can register with the VFF on 1300 882 833 or visiting vff.org.au.

For more information, visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/bushfires.



Join the Shire’s Youth Council

Media Release

Golden Plains Shire Council is calling on passionate young people aged 12 to 25 across the Shire to step into leadership and join the Golden Plains Youth Council (the Youth Council).

The Youth Council is the official youth advisory group to Council, providing a direct channel for young people to share their perspectives and have their voices heard.

The Youth Council provides young people in the community a platform for leadership and training to help them inform community planning and advocate on youth and community issues. It’s also an opportunity for young people to provide advice from a youth perspective on Council planning.

Members of the Youth Council work together to advocate on behalf of all Golden Plains Shire young people on issues important to them, so they can have an impact on making decisions that affect them.

Golden Plains Shire Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey encouraged young people across the Shire interested in making a positive difference to join the Youth Council.

‘The Youth Council is for young people who care about their community, want leadership or government experience, are curious, motivated, and want to make a difference and wish to grow into a future leader,’ Cr Sharkey said.

‘There is no prior experience needed to join – we’re looking for passionate individuals who are eager to make a positive difference to Golden Plains. This is an opportunity for young people to have their voices heard, be given the chance to help others and gain valuable leadership experience.’

Expressions of Interest (EOI) to join the Youth Council are invited now and can be completed by contacting Council’s Youth Development Team at goldenplainsyouth@gplains.vic.gov.au or calling 5220 7111.

The Youth Council meets on the second Tuesday of every month at the Golden Plains Youth Hub in Bannockburn or online.

For further information, contact Council’s Youth Development team at enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7111.





Wendy Cook

The kookaburra perched on a branch, beak pointing downwards, dark eyes gazing intently at the ground, waiting for movement. He remained motionless for several minutes, then abruptly dropped, his partly folded wings only spreading fully immediately before he landed. He grasped a large grasshopper in his beak and flew to a different tree, perching briefly before continuing in a direct line towards a distant group of manna gums. He landed in the largest tree, gave a brief chuckle to announce his arrival, then swooped to the entrance of a hollow. Inside, were the open beaks of two chicks. He posted the squashed grasshopper into one of them, and flew back to his original perching branch.

The kookaburra was not the father of the chicks, but an older sibling, and had hatched last year. He was part of a family group, which included the female who also grew from last year's eggs, and two older brothers, as well as the parents of them all. He was a helper, and had spent time in the hollow incubating the eggs, and keeping the chicks warm. As the babies grew, they required more food, and the whole family hunted, bringing them a varied diet of insects, spiders, small lizards and occasionally, mice. The helpers assisted their parents to defend the nest. One day, when the helper was on watch duty near the nest, a currawong approached, hoping to steal a kookaburra chick to feed to its own nestlings. It landed on the far side of the tree, and hopped from branch to branch, slowly moving closer to the hollow. The helper gave a loud warning cackle, alerting his family to the danger. He flew at the currawong, his large beak pointed towards the predator, who spread its wings and fled.

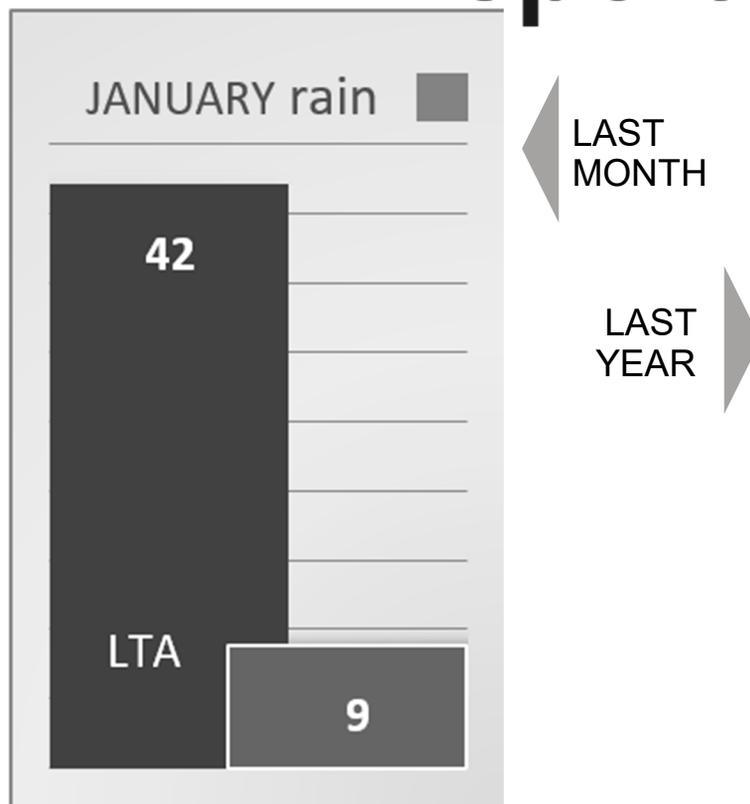
While the kookaburra continued his search for food, he listened to his surroundings. He heard distant kookaburra laughter from a neighbouring territory. All the territories around the one he lived in were occupied. In a year or two, he would explore further afield, seeking a vacant territory and a mate. If he found a partner, they would strengthen their bond by exchanging gifts, such as food, preening each other, and laughing duets. Together, they would search in old trees until they found a suitable nesting hollow with convenient perches nearby. The female would lay their eggs on the floor of the hollow, with no nesting material. They could rear their chicks successfully, even without helpers. Kookaburra families form strong bonds, and if he failed to find a territory and a mate, his current family would welcome him back, or he could join one of his siblings and assist to rear their chicks.

Kookaburra laughter helps families to bond. They commonly perform together in the evening and early

morning, but also laugh to announce that this is their place. Before dark, the helper heard his father's voice and flew to a horizontal branch of the nesting tree, where the family would spend the night. The six of them gathered, and perched near each other, beaks pointing to the sky, tails also pointing upwards. They began with a low repetitive call, before all breaking into a full loud laughing chorus, then gradually winding down to silence. The neighbours responded with a similar chorus. After an interval, the family called again, and the closest neighbours replied. From a more distant territory, came fainter laughter, with the three groups calling several times. As the light faded, each bird spent some time preening, before they settled. One bird entered the hollow, while the other five huddled together for the night.

At daybreak, the chorus was repeated, letting all kookaburras nearby know that this was their territory. It was a skill that the chicks would begin to learn, a few weeks after they left the hollow and could fly. They would start with a poor hoarse imitation of the opening call. It would take them several weeks to work their way from this to a proper laugh. Before the next breeding season, it was likely that the kookaburra's sister would leave the group, as females usually search for their own territory when they are younger than males. Then, this year's fledglings would take their places in the family as new helpers, assisting to rear next year's chicks. Kookaburras generally mate for life. As long as the parents remained together, this territory belonged to them and their family.

the rain report





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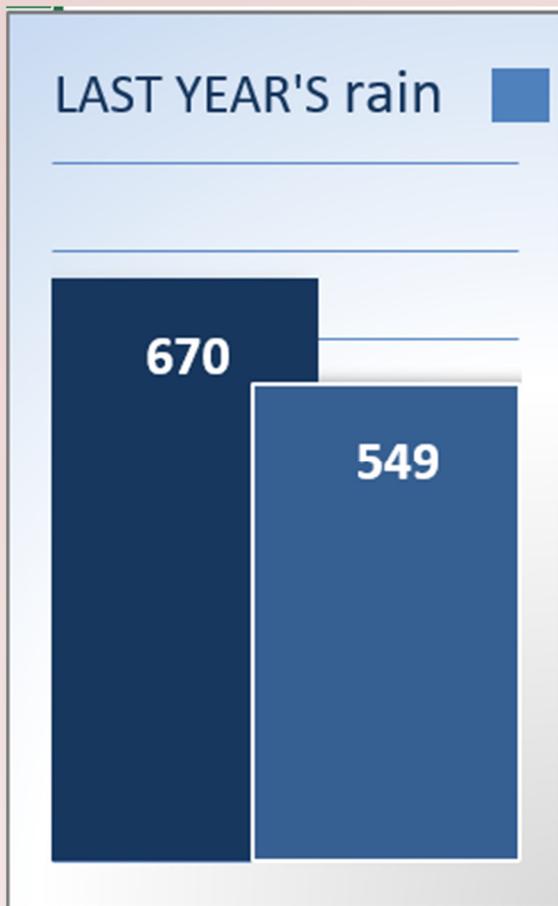
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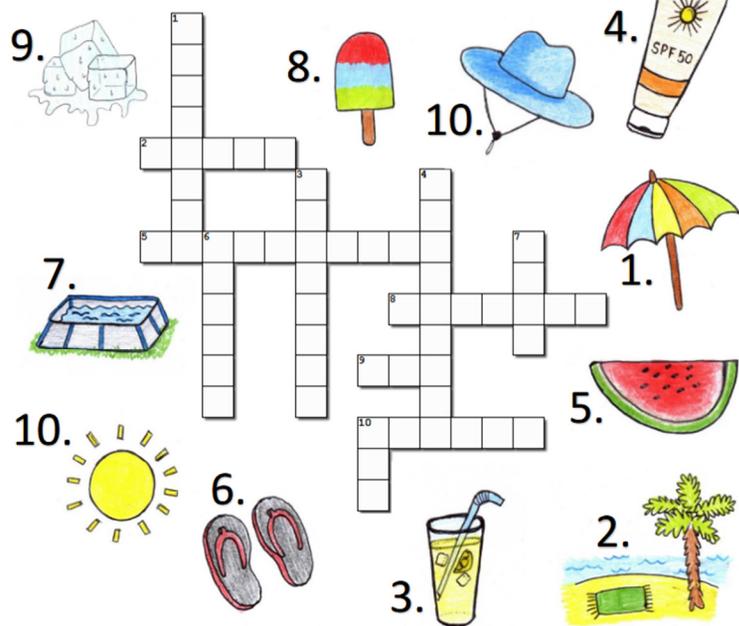


Jess & Asher's

MONTHLY PUZZLE



SUMMER CROSSWORD



1. UMBRELLA 2. BEACH 3. LEMONADE 4. SUNSCREEN 5. WATERMELON 6. FLIPFLOPS 7. POOL 8. ICE CREAM 9. SUN 10. SUNHAT



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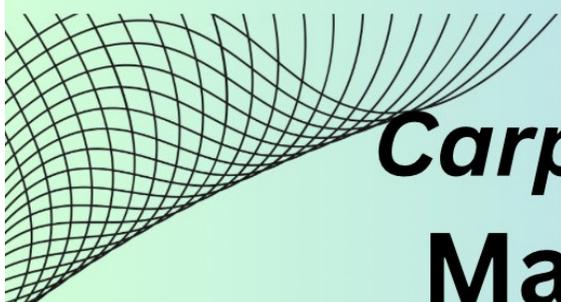
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It's our 50th Anniversary



EDITORIAL

Starting out as a few sheets of text printed on a spirit duplicator, collated by hand and stapled in the corner, we've changed a bit since 1976. But we are driven now, as we were then, by a commitment to the community we are part of.

Over the course of this year's eleven issues, we will trace some of the considerable changes the newsletter has undergone over its fifty-year life. Working with the Meredith History Interest Group, we have access to issues as far back as 1980, (which you can see reproduced in this issue) so we plan to explore both format and content over this period, in five year segments. We will also showcase a few front pages to illustrate the changing look of the Newsletter over the years and its evolution into the stylish magazine format of the last decade or so. We think you will find this both interesting and amusing.

Taking a long view, you will see the changes made to the News over this time - changes driven by technology, personnel, content and advertising. You might even see changes in the community itself brought about, in part, by changes in communications, transport, sporting and community activity, retail and housing as well the very people who live here and have lived here over this time, where they work, shop and play. There are clues to all this in the items that found their way to the Newsletter's pages over the years.

Marg Cooper, a prolific contributor of many years, has undertaken an extensive review of the copies held by the Meredith History Interest Group, spanning 1980 to 2000. These observations, as well as recollections from other involved with its production over the years, will round out our recognition of the publication of the last fifty years and those involved in its production. We hope you enjoy the journey.

Of course, our readers are part of this journey too. Those of you who have been long term residents will have some memories of your own, related to the people and events that have appeared in our newsletter's pages. If you are a recent reader, looking with fresh eyes at our monthly print publication - a curiosity in itself - you might have some thoughts on what we do and your impressions. Either way, we would love to hear from you. To make sure you are heard, John Merlo will be chatting to locals about how they engage with the present day newsletter. (See *What You Think* on p. 37.)

And tell us what do you see for the newsletter in the future. Has it got a continuing role to play in this increasingly digital and media crowded age? Should it change how it is prepared and distributed to meet present and future needs. PLEASE be part of this conversation, by simply sharing your thoughts at:

news@meredithnews.com.au

Jim Elvey - Editor



The article below, appeared in a May 1986 edition of the Newsletter, marking the tenth anniversary of its publication. We have other accounts of its beginnings, which we will share over the year ahead, but this, an historical account of our history, is a pretty good place to start.

The newsletter had its origins as an occasional information sheet for parents at the Meredith Primary School, printed by the school's head teacher, Laurie Manning in 1975. Gradually, it became more regular as more school information was disseminated. Some of the older residents of Meredith who were interested in the affairs of the school asked if they might obtain copies.

The interest that was generated by small snippets of local history to fill a page when there was insufficient school news, and the purchase of a Gestetner duplicator from Ballarat Grammar School in 1976 allowing a much better production, saw Mr. Manning suggesting to the school Council that the newsheet become a regular production emanating from the school to the public and providing information from local sporting bodies and organisations.

At this stage, Mr. Manning was typist, duplicator, collator and distributor, but as the demand steadily increased, first to Woodbourne Creek, then Elain, Lethbridge and to Maude, it became necessary to have a roster of typists and provide assistance with the collating. The cost of production was borne entirely by the School Council. Mr. Manning also introduced the very worthwhile 'Claimstaker' section whereby any organisation could advise the date of forthcoming meetings or other functions, to reduce the possibility of clashes. Up until then, it was a common occurrence for a local organisation to organise a meeting for a particular date only to discover that there were already one or two other meetings already scheduled for that date.

In 1979, a grant was obtained from the Shire of Bannockburn from the Community Welfare Services for financial assistance to the extent of \$400. This defrayed much of the expense of paper and duplicating utensils. The new head teacher was not prepared to do the duplicating or collating so the typist of the week also did this with a range of operators, the duplicator started to give trouble which created considerable and unnecessary expense. The newsletter sub-committee, who are appointed by the School Council, decided to employ one person to duplicate and collate. This expense, together with the cost of paper for a circulation which had risen to 650, and sometimes comprised six sides, resulted in an annual appeal from the community to assist with the cost of production.

The policy for the newsletter has always been to encourage all organisations within its distribution area to make full use of it. However, it will not receive advertisements or entries of a commercial nature. The contribution made by the group of people who voluntarily type the stencils is gratefully acknowledged.

The Words We've Left Behind.

Snippets from 1980 to 1985

50 Years of a Count

20th May 1980

BUTCHERING COURSE

The butchering course is now half way through, with every participant finding it most worthwhile. Last week we had a killing and skinning demonstration, and it seems that no two people killed the same way. It was also rather deflating to see how the skinning could be done by a competent butcher, and to compare that with our own efforts at home. The actual meat dressing has centred around boning and alternative uses of the traditional cuts. Thursday 27th May promises to be a most interesting night with the accent being on the proper sharpening of knives.

7th June 1983

WOODBURN CREEK SCHOOL CLOSES.

As numbers at Woodburn Creek School have dwindled to five pupils, the Education Department have seen fit to unstaff the school as from Monday, 6th. June, 1983. The remaining pupils at the school will go to Meredith Primary School to complete their primary education. The school bus run has been extended to the Woodburn area.

FOUND

1 rooster, white with green tail feathers. Apply 8613

27th May

CLAIMSTAKERS

There was a lot going on, and "CLAIMSTAKERS" was how we made sure they didn't double book a date.

JUNE

- 25 Last day for Colonial Ball tickets
- 26 Meredith School Public Meeting and Council Elections
- 27 Colonial Ball, Meredith Hall
- 30 Meredith Fire Brigade AGM
- * Elaine School Public Meeting and Council Elections

JULY

- 1 Meredith Auxiliary RVIB Meeting
- 3 Meredith Mothers' Club AGM
- 6 Cubs District Football Match
- 7 CWA Craft day
- 8 Meredith playgroup, pre-school speaker
- 9 Meredith Reading Group meets
- 23 Senior Citizens' AGM
- 25 Meredith Golf Club Cabaret-Ball
- 30 Back-to-Earth Bread Bake, Lethbridge.

AUG

- 1 Kindergarten Progressive Dinner
- 11 Meredith Kindergarten - Craft Demonstration.

Important As most people know the Club was suspended for one week after a controversial incident at Modewarre. Things at the moment are looking bad for entry into the G.D.F.L. next year but the Committee is going all out to ensure justice and full activity in the League next year. Legal advice has been received and if successful a complete town effort is needed if the Meredith Football Club is to rise up the ladder and be the strong Club it was back in the sixties!

Don't be like Norm! Hop up and enjoy the local sports provided by Meredith. We hope for lots of local support.

9th

Two people killed the same

MEREDITH and DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

7th. October, 1980.

The first banner heading

13th April 1983

"IRON--A--THON"

Are you tired of "ironing" - well we have the answer to for Friday 29th April R.S.L. Hall, the Ranger Guides will an "Iron-a-thon" for their April Action. April Action funds by doing a service, half funds go to Guide Headquarters to the Ranger unit to help with their running costs. By donation. Ironing will be received at the Hall between 29th starting 8pm. Do support your local girls.

1312

IS

"LET'S GO TO THE HOP" - Friday 15th July 8.00p.m. Meredith Memorial Hall. Just a few weeks left to dig into the cupboard for those hoop petticoats, stove-pipe trousers and blue suede shoes. Dress like your favourite 1950's Rock-n-roll heart-throb and win a prize in the "Look-alike competition. It will be a great fun night with Edmo's Music Machine and a good old fashioned supper, so all it needs is you baby... Tickets on sale through -

28th June 1983



Fri 3rd Oct
debutants to be
presented at 9.15 pm
music by easy street
Supper provided
\$5 adult
\$3 sec student
\$2 pri. student

Meredith Hall
Debutante Ball

7th. October, 1980.

MEREDITH HALL DEBUTANTE BALL .

A most successful Debutante Ball was held last Friday evening in the Meredith Hall. Over 300 people attended including Sir Henry and Dame Edith Bolte, who received the Debutantes. The Debs. were trained to perfection by Mr. and Mrs. Neil Hart. Also in the Official party were Mr. and Mrs. R.D. Cooke representing the Hall Committee. The Debs. attendants were Fiona Cooke as Flowergirl, and Marcus Nolan as Page Boy. The Debs. and their partners were as follows.... Michelle Jones - Brett Boling, Andrea Fagg - Peter Wylie, Christine Parkinson - Chris Hart, Kerry Eason - Paul Nolan, Julianne Musgrove - Hans Anderson, Leanne Wiseman - Bernard Gilligan, Robyn Taylor - Andrew Boardman, Kathy Nolan - Darren Hearn, Debbie le Maitre - Andrew Innes, Tina Perry - Ian Miller, Leanne Hearn - Colin Ballinger, Diane Wylie - Neil Ditchfield, Jeanette Crawford - Peter Blacklock, and Tammy Hodge - Stephen Fagg. DEBS. PLEASE NOTE..... The photos will be on show at the home of Mrs. Martin Nolan by this weekend.

th September 1980

Celebrating our

50th Anniversary

1976 to 2026

Our Cover Story

The Changing Face of our Covers

This selection of very early covers, which aren't really covers, shows its community focus and diversity of content.

FEBRUARY 1980

MEREDITH & DISTRICT NEWSLETTER.

WELCOME MAUDE. 26th February, 1980. 7/80
The Meredith and District Newsletter, welcomes the People off Maude to its circulation. Contributions from Maude People BEFORE Midday Tuesdays.
PHONE - 861243.

TENNIS COACHING.
Owing to Country Week Tennis, there will be no Coaching THIS Thursday Night. But will continue next week 6th March. M.D. Nolan.

THANK YOU.
Roy McDonald wishes to Thank the Ladies of the Meredith and District Red Cross Service Co., for the Meals on Wheels brought to me following my recent emergency operation. A Thank you also for those folk who helped me.

WOMANS WORLD DAY OF PRAYER.
The 1980, Womens World Day of Prayer Service will be held in the Lethbridge Catholic Church on Friday 7th March at 7.30P.M. Sister Mary Patricia of Holy Cross Convent will be the speaker. Everyone Welcome.
Sandra McDonald (Secretary.)

ADULT BOOK & READING CLUB.
A meeting to organize the Reading & Discussion Group will be held NEXT MONDAY, 3rd March, at 8P.M., at the Meredith School. Any keen reader is asked to join in - the books won't be too heavy !! This meeting will not be too long as it is to make the arrangements for our system, but you must attend or leave a message at Bongiorno's if you can't make it as it will be difficult to organize without definite numbers.

PERSONAL
The Death occured last week-end of Karel (Charlie) Havlicek, Charlie was known to the People of Meredith, as Charlie Whiskers, Requiem Mass was held at St. Patricks Cathedral, on Wednesday 27th February, before a Private Enternment.

LADIES MIDWEEK TENNIS.
Two matches were played last week as Our Ladies are all playing Country Week.
Meredith - 3 sets, 29 games defeated Cardigan Village 3 sets, 25 games
Meredith - 3 sets 30 games defeated Wendouree C.O. 3 sets 24 games.

EXERCISE / SLIMMING GROUPS.
Both Groups are off to a great start with an average of 12 girls attending each session.
If you are interested in getting fit and / or losing some weight come along to one of our get togethers. The exercise group meets Monday & Wednesday morning at 9.15 at the sports ground, and the slimming group meets at Margaret Hearns home Mondays at approx. 11 A.M. (B.Y.O. Lunch.)

MEREDITH AND DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

7th February, 1984.

NEWSLETTER '84
Copy for the Newsletter should be IN WRITING and signed by the person responsible for the insertion. THE DEADLINE for copy is 3.30 p.m. TUESDAY'S AT BONGIORNO'S SHOP.
The typists will pick up the copy and people are requested not to phone the typist direct.
Under No circumstances will copy be taken over the phone. EDITOR.

THANKS
I would like to thank my family and friends for their gifts, congratulations and best wishes received for my 80th Birthday. Thanks to you all.
Dick. Lowne

C.W.A.
C.W.A. first meeting for 1984 will be held at the Meredith Hall on Feb.15th commencing at 1.30 p.m. Comp. Prettiest birthday card. Hostesses J.Clarke and A. Miller.
Any new members wishing to join our C.W.A. would be most welcomed.
M.Musgrove Pres.

MEREDITH R.V.I.B. AUXILIARY
Our November door-knock was very successful we took \$1,300 to the Institute on our Annual visit on December 14th. A very good effort as our members are so few. Thank you, members, and a big thank you to all who gave to our appeal. New members would be most welcome.
L. East H.Sec.

80th BIRTHDAY Mr. Dick Lowne.
A large gathering of family and friends attended a birthday celebration at the Meredith hall on Saturday evening. It was Mr. Dick Lowne's 80th birthday. An evening meal was enjoyed by the family, this followed by an old time dance, with music provided by Edmo.
The oldies enjoyed some of the old tunes and proved they can still look good on the dance floor.
Dick received many gifts and wishes, gifts included and enscribed cigarette case from the Meredith Angling Club, to add some humour a fun parcel was passed around in the end Dick received a small tomahawk, we hope he will use the small axe in the future and leave the big one home. It was good to see Dick and Mrs Lowne dancing the night away and enjoying themselves. The best of luck to them in the future, we all congratulate Dick on his 80th birthday. The evening finished with an excellent supper.
Reported by D.Collins.

FREE TO GOOD HOME
Silky bantams one rooster three hens. Ph. 86 1274

GOLF NOTES
Working bee Wednesday 15th Feb. Top dressing scrapes 9 am SHARP.
Committee meeting Friday 24th February. E.Miller Hon.Sec

MEREDITH AND DISTRICT SENIOR CITIZENS
February 13th 12 noon Luncheon. Games to follow. Ring 86 1233 on Thursday if unable to come.
H.Cooper.

L.I. MEETING
R.S.L. Hall next Tuesday 14th February at 7.30 p.m.

MEREDITH GIRL GUIDES
All Guides are reminded that Guides will re-commence for 1984 on Monday 13th February at 7 pm. E.Edmiston Leader.

1st MEREDITH BROWNIE PACK - Brownies will resume Monday 13th February at 7.30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 1984

LOOK. Just cut along the dotted line, and you will have a genuine replica of the oldest Meredith Newsletter we have. (and no, we didn't cut the bottom off. The original looks just like that.)

MEREDITH and DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

5th May 1981.

OBSESSION OF THE WEEK
Remember the coming 50/50 dance at Meredith hall on 16th May 81. Plenty of fun for all to be had. B.Y.O drinks and glasses. Supper is supplied. 5.00 a double and 3.00 a single. Tickets from Bob O'Loughlin ph.861392 and Margaret Hinkley ph.861367.

FOR SALE
1 White and black rabbit. A nice pet to have. Ring 861243 or apply at the Meredith General Store.

WANTED TO BUY.
1 VW Beetle. Soft top. Any condition ph. 861243

BAR-B-Q DANCE
To be held at the Lal Lal Hall, Sat.9th May 81. Music by "The Jacksons" Meat and drinks supplied. Starts 6.30pm. Family 12.00 Single 7.00 Tickets at gate.

ROCK - A - TROLL
To be held May 31st at Meredith Memorial Hall starting at 8.00am (but you must have started dancing by 10am.) 50.00 first prize. Money offered for second and third. Lunch on sale. Sponsor sheets ph.861390, 861326 or 861310. Spectators 50 cents. 1st. Meredith Rangers.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR
For all Industrial, Commercial and Domestic work contact Robb A.Downey, C/- Post Office, Elaine. Ph. Lal Lal 053 417623. Quotes given for Pole work and Underground mains.

POLICE NEWS.
New Road Laws as from 1st. March, 1981.
(1) "T" Intersection - Give Way rule
Traffic on the terminating road (the stem of the "T") must give way to all traffic on the continuing road (the bar of the "T")
(2) Dipping of headlights in built-up areas - no longer illegal to use headlights on high beam, however they must be dipped at least 200 metres from approaching car or as soon as the other car dips his headlights.
New penalties for "On the Spot" traffic & parking infringement notices as from 1st May 1981. There has been a big increase in penalties for traffic and parking offences, don't be caught. For further information contact the Police Station.

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LALAL FOOTBALL CLUB
Clay bird shoot at Dallark. Sunday may 10th. Eye Opener - 11am start. Good prizes. Lunch available.

MAY 1981

MEREDITH AND DISTRICT NEWSLETTER.

7th JUNE, 1983.

WOODBURN CREEK SCHOOL CLOSURE.
As numbers at Woodburn Creek School have dwindled to five pupils, the Education Department have seen fit to unstaff the school as from Monday, 6th. June, 1983. The remaining pupils at the school will go to Meredith Primary School to complete their primary education. The school bus run has been extended to the Woodburn area.

MEREDITH LOCAL ASSOCIATION.
Our next meeting is to be held on TUESDAY 14th. JUNE, at 7.30 p.m. in the R.S.L. Hall. As this is an important meeting, could all interested please try and attend.

MAUDE MORNING COFFEE.
At the home of Rosalyn Kelynaek. Tuesday 14th. June. 10 a.m. All welcome. Lethbridge School Recipe Book Launching. Local Historical landmarks sketched by Ros.

LETHBRIDGE MORNING COFFEE.
Lethbridge Hall Tuesday 21st. June. at 10 a.m. Metropolitan Research. Come along and enjoy tasting different products. Admission \$2. Raffle.

SQUARE DANCE AT LETHBRIDGE.
Saturday 23rd. July. 7.30 p.m. Lethbridge Hall. Prizes for Best dressed Senior and Junior Guy and Gal.
Family \$8. Single \$3 Student \$1.50. Supper provided, Melbourne Caller.

HALLOWEEN DANCE LETHBRIDGE HALL Saturday 22nd. OCTOBER. Family Evening.

ANGELICAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP... will meet at Inverleigh at 8 p.m. on this Friday 10th. June. For details and transport contact Fay McFarlane McFarlane, Phone 861283.
Sunday June 26th. Anglican Youth Fellowship Combined Rally at 5 p.m. at Whittington.

BALLAN HOSPITAL LADIES AUX. are holding a Hawleigh Product Demo. at Ballan meeting room on Wednesday 15th. June at 1.30 p.m.
G.Molesworth. Hon. Sec.

MEREDITH ANGLING CLUB.
The Meredith Club Annual Dinner and Presentation Night will be held at the Royal Hotel on Friday 1st. July, at 7 p.m. Adults \$7.50 and children under 14 half price. All Welcome.
Those wishing to attend please advise W. S. Wessman, ph. 052 861241 by June 24th. for catering arrangements. K.Sheedy. Hon. Sec.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL.
Meredith Under 15's had another big win on Sunday when they beat Little River easily. Scores were Meredith 14 - 10 - 94 to Little River

JUNE 1983

MEREDITH RURAL FIRE BRIGADE.

TRAINING NIGHT..... NEXT MONDAY, 7th. January, at the Fire Station. We NEED to have as many people as possible attend these nights.

The Brigade has been kept very busy over the past week attending several small fires in the district.

The request for the availability of private tankers has been good, so as soon as your unit is ready and available please contact Peter Bongiorno, so the list is kept up to date.

The fire fighters who attended the fire at Banganie were very grateful to the Red Cross people who provided the refreshments at the recent fire. We thank you very much.

WARNING..... THERE HAVE BEEN MORE FIRES IN THIS AREA IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS THAN THERE HAD BEEN IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! KEEP ALERT AND BE CAREFUL !!!!!!

In the event of fire use the sheet provided with instructions which should be near your phone and DONT PANIC. If you do not have these instructions please see Peter Bongiorno. The Brigade Phone number to report fires only is 861266.

MEREDITH CRICKET CLUB.

Results... A Grade. Meredith continued batting at 2/53 in reply to Shelford 10/40. Meredith 7 for 204 declared. R.Rayner 49 W.Stanley 44 A. Stanley 39 n.o. R.Argent 26. R.Savage took 3/53 G.Humphrey 2/31 P.Bell Shelford 2nd. innings 1786. Weymess 58 n.o.

B. GRADE... 2/126 in reply to Shelford 10/68. Meredith 9/176 declared. Norm Armstrong 54 James Nolan 26 n.o. Shelford 2nd. innings 1061. B.Shaw took 4 wickets, James Nolan took 3.

NEXT WEEKS MATCHES..... SUPPORTERS PLEASE NOTE..... 1st XI v Rokewood at Rokewood. This is a one day match. 2nd XI have a bye. JANUARY 12 and 19th. 1st XI v Bannockburn at Bannockburn. 2nd XI v Bannockburn at Meredith.

MEREDITH TENNIS CLUB..... Tennis is fairly quiet at the moment with matches not starting again until Saturday 12th January. Under 14's starts again on 2nd February and Ladies Mid week starts on January 22nd.

Dont forget the ANNUAL DINNER DANCE on Friday 11th. January.

MEREDITH CRICKET CLUB TRIP TO THE TEST.. by a Correspondent. (name and address supplied)

Meredith Cricket Club ran a Bus to the first day of the Test Australia v West Indies at the M.C.G. The cricket was terrific and everybody had a most enjoyable day until home time when somehow or other the bus was very difficult to find. One local justice and his daughter, who were considered sober had difficulty and MUCH discussion as to the locality of the bus. The ex - storekeeper was also wandering aimlessly around the car park, dragging his car frige behind him, he finally located the bus at 5.45 p.m. Leaving time after match which finished at 6 !!!!!!! A Certain resident of Boundary Road had caught a nasty virus at the cricket, and found the



MEREDITH NEWSLETTER CONTINUED....

Jack Turnley a Bannockburn stalwart was our only bus member not accounted for. So at 7.15 after an organized search, and a Bus Tour of the Car park and all the M.C.G. surrounds it was sadly decided to leave Jack in Melbourne.. We came down Flinders Street, and just between Swanston and Elizabeth Sts. our alert bus driver said " Theres Jack ", and there he was. He of course was walking home having made quite sure the Bus wasnt where he'd left it. Our day finished pleasantly with everyone accounted for, tea in Werribee, and no further adventures.

MEREDITH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The whole school community wish Mrs. Eva Wilson well at her new appointment to Lara Primary school. The principal and School Council want to express their appreciation to the Mothers Association for the running of the School Fancy dress and Break up night. It has been most gratifying to the Mothers Association and the Council to see so many people support the School social functions , and we hope this will continue this year.

MEREDITH NEWSLETTER.....

The Meredith School Council who currently produce this Newsletter would like the residents of Woodburn Creek, Meredith, Elaine and Lethbridge to contribute towards it. The fact that you have requested it in your area shows your interest in it so PLEASE use it. There is no charge for contributing or receiving it, the only restriction is that it does not carry Commercial content. COPY must be left with Peter Bongiorno , Meredith Newsagent, or rung through to him 861243, by 12 noon each TUESDAY so that typing and duplicating can be completed by Wednesdays. Any questions re the Newsletter to Peter Macdonald, Meredith 861274.

CLAIM STAKERS.....

JANUARY	8	Senior Citizens Games afternoon.
	11	Meredith Tennis Club Dinner Dance.
	12	Tennis re-commences.
	28	Australia Day Holiday.
February	5	School resumes.
	13	Euchre commences at Meredith Golf Club.
	24	Meredith Primary School Family Picnic.
March	5	Annual Meeting Meredith Hall Committee.

OWING TO HOLIDAYS THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE PRODUCED ON 16th January,

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Marg's BOOK REVIEW

Magpie Murders by Anthony Horowitz

The book starts with editor Susan Ryeland reading the typescript of the ninth book in a series by writer Alan Conway. The company she works for have already published eight of his novels and they regularly top the bestseller lists. She has a bottle of wine, a packet of nacho cheese chips, a jar of hot salsa and the rain is hammering the windows. It would be her job to edit it before it was published.

This book she is reading is one in a series about a detective of German descent, Atticus Pund. He is derived from Agathie Christie's Hercule Poirot and in this novel has just received a cancer diagnosis. He also has an offsider, James Fraser who works like Poirot's Captain Hastings. The book is set in the 1950's in a sleepy English village.

She didn't know then, but Magpie Murders changed everything about her life.

The book she read was a whodunnit. A housekeeper is found dead at the bottom of the stairs and there is a host of intriguing suspects but when editor Susan gets to near the end, where usually the murderers are revealed, the chapters are missing.

So, the story jumps back to Susan. She sets out to find the missing pages and is so doing finds herself investigating a murder mystery of her own, that of the author of the book she was reading, Alan Conway.

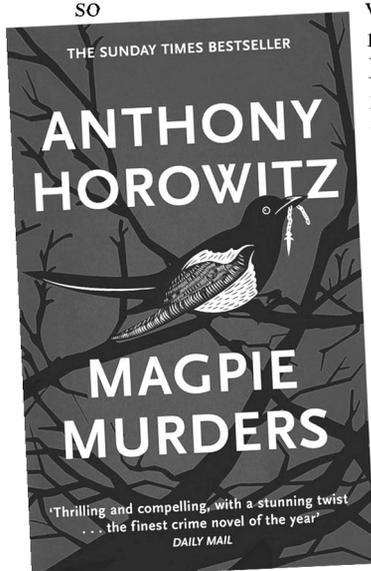
This book is described as a book within a book.

Readers get a two for one with this book or a mystery within a mystery. Reviews called the two books, the inner book and the outer book.

And also, hidden in the pages of the manuscript there lies another story, a tale written between the words on the page telling of real-life jealousy, greed, ruthless ambition and murder.

I enjoyed the inner book that was being read by editor Susan Ryeland and became absorbed in the Pund mystery so when it ended without a resolution, I was disappointed. But then Susan set out to find the missing pages and I was reading the outer book. I was interested but it took quite an effort to understand the complexities within the pages of Alan Conway's typescript.

Apparently, the author of Magpie Murders, Anthony Howowitz is equally known for his work in television including Foyle's War, Midsummer Murders and he worked on the Agatha Christie series. He sure has a devious mind!



Get Fire Ready with the Lethbridge CFA

What to Do on a High-Risk Day

- Monitor fire danger ratings and warnings from the CFA.
- Have a plan for You, your Family and Pets
- Keep your emergency kit in your car or by the door.
- Stay calm and alert, and leave early if advised by authorities.

For More Information

- Visit Lethbridge CFA, in Russell Street, each Sunday morning from 8.30am to speak to our volunteers on how you can
 - Get Fire Ready
 - Volunteer with the CFA

Key Contacts and Resources

- CFA Website: www.cfa.vic.gov.au
- VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226
- ABC Radio: Tune in for emergency updates
- VicEmergency App: Download on your smartphone for real-time alerts



Compiled by Michael Riseley

Mixture

1. What is the 2nd heaviest land animal.
2. Which country has won the most silver medals in Olympic swimming.
3. What is a quetzal.
4. What is a wahoo.
5. What is a kedge.
6. How many hours from Tulsa was Gene Pitney.
7. What is a shoebill.
8. What are Migs and Mysteres.

You Want Answers?

1. Rhino 2. USA 3. Bird 4. Fish 5. Boat 6. 24 7. Bird
8. Jet fighters - Russia and France

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Morrison's River Blockage

CCMA Media Release

People blocking a culvert at Dollys Creek Road crossing on the Moorabool River have contributed to severe flow stress in the lower reaches of the river around Batesford and Meredith.

This blockage exacerbates impacts of the recent hot, dry conditions and makes it very difficult for fish, platypus and other animals that rely on this water to survive.

The Moorabool River is one of the most flow-stressed rivers in Victoria. The construction of reservoirs, water extraction, and a significant number of farm dams in the catchment are all other contributing factors.

The lowest reach of the river surrounding Batesford and Meredith is extremely vulnerable to cease-to-flow events, this is when the river stops flowing completely. These events can lead to poor water quality and impact native plants and animals that rely on river flows.

Jake van Dam, Project Officer of Estuaries and Environmental Water at Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA), said that we all play a part in protecting flow, "It's up to all of us to look after our beautiful, life-giving Moorabool River and an easy way for everyone to do this is to respect the flow," he said.

"One of the ways we support the health of our rivers and wetlands is through water for the environment - water set aside in storages that is released into rivers and wetlands to support the plants and animals that live, feed and breed in them."

"When people prevent flow from moving from one point to another on the Moorabool River, they are blocking both the natural flows, which are very low right now, and water for the environment."

On the Moorabool River, Corangamite CMA manages water for the environment strategically with support from Central Highlands Water, the operator of the Lal Lal Reservoir near Ballarat. Water is released from Lal Lal Reservoir at different times of the year in different volumes to support a range of ecological processes.

Under state legislation, interfering with water flow in a river can result in fines of up to \$244,000 and or imprisonment for up to 10 years.

Capturing History, One Lens at a Time

Community Bank Buninyong was proud to support the recent "Elaine Thru the Lens" exhibition by the Meredith History Interest Group which a powerful snapshot of community, history and the people who make the region special.

Organised by the Meredith History Interest Group (MHIG), the exhibition showcased almost 450 photos from the Elaine district many of which had never been seen publicly. The project began as a humble idea in 2021 to collect and preserve local photos for posterity, and has grown into a treasured community event that

celebrates heritage and fosters connection.

Community Bank Buninyong's support helped the group:

- Collect, copy, save and print photos in display-ready A3 and A4 sizes
- Hire stands and the exhibition hall
- Provide food for volunteers and advertise the event
- Organise folders of photos that will be stored for ongoing browsing

Visitors connected over images of old homes, family gatherings, school days, sporting trophies adding personal stories that brought the displays to life.

MHIG President Marg Cooper opened the event, introducing speakers such as Paul Ryan, an Elaine local proud of his heritage and Robin Ferry, who rang the Larundel bell to officially start the exhibition.

One attendee reflected on the event....

"At last the Elaine/Meredith rivalry was forgotten. The exhibition didn't just highlight history it helped build community bonds that will last for years".

Held as Part One of a two-part project, the exhibition featured historical and contemporary photos of Elaine and surrounds.

Part Two will be a published book and is coming next year, capturing even more stories for future generations. The group has also published "Steiglitz Thru the Lens", "Morrison's Thru the Lens", available at www.meredithhistory.com.au/shop.html

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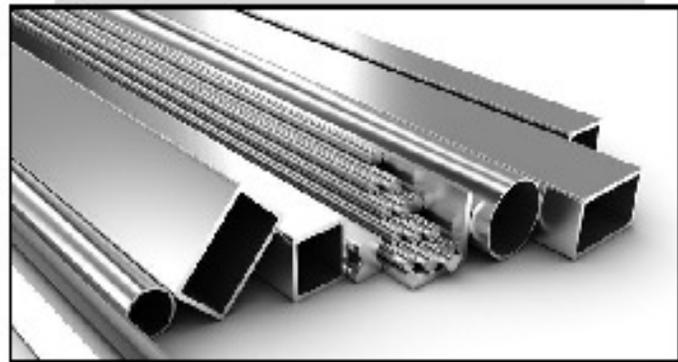
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it's History

Meredith History Interest Group

Christmas Lunch:

The Committee and others celebrated with a lunch on December 18 at the History Centre. Various themes were thrown around, like bring some food from a particular country with a story about that food, but in the end, we all brought some Christmas Fare and a feast was had by all. After lunch Bev issued us with a pair of cardboard glasses on which we had to write the name of an important person. We then each gave the glasses to the person on our left who had to ask questions of the group about who they were, as in Celebrity Heads. It was hilarious as everyone looked ridiculous, no one could read the writing because it was too small and by the time it was your turn to ask questions again you had forgotten what you had already asked. Good Fun and Good Cheer!

Annual Meeting:

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 1 at the History Centre at 1.30 pm. After the formalities, David Rowe who is Director of a Heritage Consultancy Company, Authentic Heritage Services based in Geelong, will speak. He is widely known, has prepared many heritage studies and conservation management plans and other heritage assessments and has authored several heritage publications. Lately he has been working on a Heritage Study of Meredith.

This is of interest to all Meredithians as to what happens to buildings in Meredith, what is allowed to be built and where and how we want our town to look like into the future.

Come along and ask some questions!

Sculpture Exhibition/Competition:

MHIG is once again holding this event on May 16 & 17. The theme is again History Reconstructed. Please start making sculptures early and make several. They can be made of any material, of any size and can be displayed inside or outside. Entry Fee is \$10.00 for 3 entries.

There is a lovely big yard at the History Centre that would look magnificent filled with sculptures!!

Calendars:

Although most people now rely on their phones to know the day of the week the Meredith Calendars, with a different theme each year, continue to sell well. This project delivers substantial funds to MHIG to help with research, cataloguing, productions etc.

There are a few calendars left and will be available from the History Centre during the next few weeks.

The Bound Family:

Following a post on Facebook Jan told us that her grandmother grew up in Meredith and her father worked at a Meredith mine, and she supplied a photo of the mine structures. This resulted in exciting research using the information supplied.... similar to doing a jigsaw. Some of the Bound family lived at Yorktown and some lived, as Jan said, next to the school in a white house. Her great

grandfather was a mine worker and we are sure that the photo she supplied is of the Duke of York Mine at Bamganie, with the Duchess of York Mine in the background.

Elaine Thru the Lens Photographic Exhibition:

MHIG entered this event in the Moorabool Shire Australia Day Awards in the category, Community Event of the Year. Paul Ryan and Jim Connell represented MHIG at the Award Ceremony at Bacchus Marsh Hall at 9.30 am on January 26 and were presented with a Certificate of Achievement and photographed with the Mayor of Moorabool Shire, Cr Steve Venditi Taylor who I believe did attend our event at the Elaine Hall. The Big Freeze held at Maddingly Park was the winner in this category.

MHIG was delighted with the community response to the exhibition and thank everyone who helped in any way. A book containing many of the exhibition photos is now being created.

Memberships:

For \$20.00 you can become a member and become part of the MHIG and help to preserve our history.



Paul Ryan and Jim Connell representing MHIG at the Award Ceremony with the Mayor of Moorabool Shire, Cr Steve Venditi

Bushfire Appeal

from Media Release

Bendigo Bank has launched the Victorian Bushfire Appeal which is the official platform for the community to donate funds. Our Community Bank will also be making a significant donation via our Community Investment Program (and under our Natural Disasters Policy) to this appeal.

The appeal is being formally managed by Bendigo Bank's charitable arm (the Community Enterprise Foundation) and is a trusted and safe alternative for the community to consider if they are looking for ways to help at the moment.

For more information and to make a donation, visit bendigobank.com.au/media/victorian-bushfire-appeal-launched/ or QR code.



Bubsie goes on show!

Marg Cooper

Recently, Denis Gear put up his hand to tow Bubsie (a replica Citroen) around for a week as part of its trip around Australia to celebrate the incredible journey of a Citroen 5CV that was the first car to circumnavigate Australia in 1925.

Denis picked up the covered trailer containing the car in Lilydale one morning and by that afternoon was in Warrnambool to display the car at Lake Pertobe. The next day it was displayed outside the Seventh Day Adventist Church and again at the Lake. During the rest of the week, it appeared Museums, Churches, Aged Care Facilities and in front of a supermarket. It was taken to several towns, including Portland, Mt Gambier, Naracoorte and Keith.

Denis says that it wasn't a holiday. He was accompanied by two couples with caravans that helped look after the car, set it on display and to talk to people who came to see. The viewing times and venues were advertised in local newspapers, radio stations and at church services. But, witnessing the interest in old cars Denis got the bug to *do up* an old tractor. When he came home from towing the replica Bubsie he gave 22 bales of clover hay for a 65 years old Fordson Super Dextor tractor that needs quite a bit of work to restore!

The story of the original Bubsie is indeed incredible. In 1924 Neville Westwood travelled extensively in the northern parts of Western Australia on a motorbike undertaking evangelical work and selling books about his church. In August 1925 he and his friend Greg Davies headed north again from Bickley in Western Australia. They intended to cover northern Western Australia again but later on decided to continue the trip right around Australia and after only five months arrived back in Perth on December 30, 1925.



Although the little car was economical, simple and reliable they had many troubles to overcome. Tyres were a constant problem and at *Wave Hill Station* the manager offered the hide of a cow which they had just slaughtered which they stuffed into the punctured tyre and managed to continue driving although the cowhide started cooking in the heat, the humidity drenched them in sweat and the track bathed them in dirt.

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The Power of Green Grass

Marg Cooper

For the third time in six years, fire that erupted at Mt Mercer raced down the west side of the Leigh River and then due to a change in the wind, attacked our property.

Friday, January 9 was a horrendous day, weather wise with very strong northerly winds and extreme heat. Ever watchful and alert for both the sight and smell of smoke, a bit after 2 pm Jeff noticed billows of smoke that we deemed were over the river and to the north/west of us.

Here we go again!

In 2025 Jeff had prepared (more than usual) in case of another fire. He mowed strips in paddocks and extensively around sheds and the house and watered some of these areas so there was green grass. He installed sprinklers on verandas and behind the machinery shed and sturdy hoses with high pressure nozzles on most buildings. This watering system was backed up with a diesel pump that ran independent of the power system. He also had a generator on the back veranda that supplied power until mains power was restored, about 4 days later.

We were also determined to stay and protect our property because we had had experience, we could see what was happening around us until we got enveloped in smoke, we were well prepared and we wanted to be here to mop up immediately after the fire. Some wood-chips on the garden behind the house caught fire and despite floods of water couldn't be extinguished. After the fire front had gone this fire could have crept towards the house in the short dry grass and ignited.

After the fire front passed us, although still feeling anxious our spirits were buoyed by the number of fire trucks, utes, people and aircraft. Talk about busy! Three helicopters filled out of the northern end of the dam in front of our

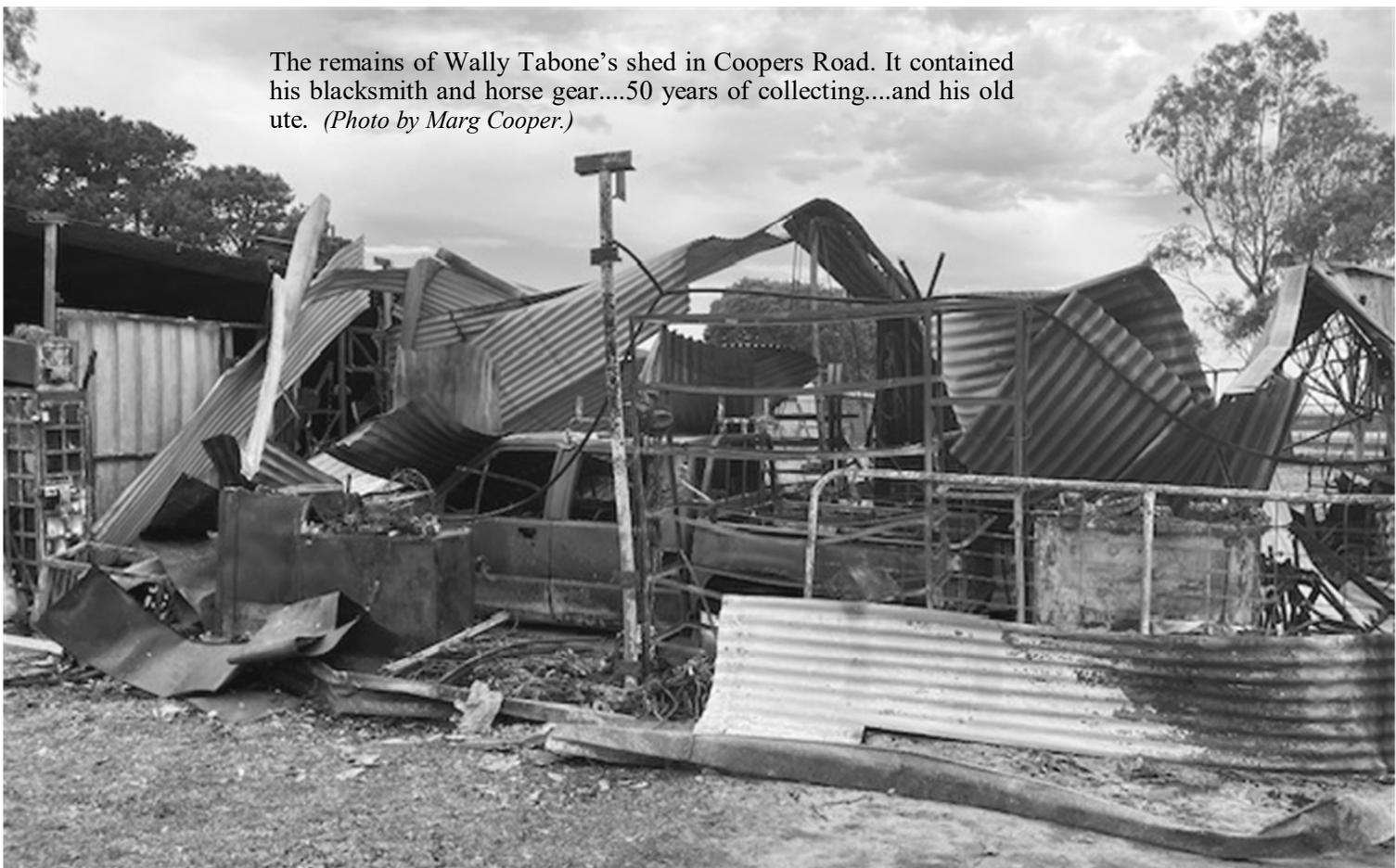
house and trucks continuously filled from the southern end. Some crews took their short breaks on our lawn and vehicles came and went through the yard for days. A huge thank-you to them all including strike teams from South Australia who helped extinguish secondary fires in later days.

Although we lost grass, fences and poly pipe it was a shock to see neighbours' properties where they lost sheds, machinery, a house and a container of furniture. All that remained were the twisted, scorched corrugated iron, the mangled steel frame of the house that you can look right through to see ashes of stacks of books and blackened appliances, a treasured tractor burnt out and collapsed in the middle, a life time collection of horse and blacksmith gear gone, an enclosed hay shed smouldering and shedding smoke and a full machinery shed reduced to twisted metal.

On the Friday morning before the fire, Jeff, after spending some time in his workshop, announced that he had made a Stooge! What is a Stooge? He deemed he/Jeff couldn't stand and hold the hose behind the machinery shed so he made a stand that wouldn't blow over, that would hold the hose firmly and allow the direction of the flow to be altered. He joked later that it was fresh off the assembly line when it went into action. The Stooge held the hose and sprayed water to protect the machinery shed from when the fire crossed the river until night fall. The machinery shed didn't burn although some logs, grass and tyres along from it in the next paddock did burn.

Thank-you again to all the volunteers who did such an amazing job, not only on the Friday when the fire raged but in the days and weeks after. Now, Blaze Aid have arrived and are pulling down fences. This is another voluntary organization that help disaster affected areas.

Thank-you all.



The remains of Wally Tabone's shed in Coopers Road. It contained his blacksmith and horse gear....50 years of collecting....and his old ute. (Photo by Marg Cooper.)

The Bard in Buninyong

The Bard in Buninyong's upcoming summer production; Aristophanes' **The Birds** (classical Greek comedy - edited and revised for Australian audiences by Susan Pilbeam, 2025 – The Bard in Buninyong).

This February flock to the beautiful Buninyong Botanic Gardens, to enjoy this fabulous fantasy/comedy. Aristophanes, the father of comedy, invites us to see a birds' eye view of the world as the birds band together to build Cloud Cuckoo Land and take on the gorgeous Greek gods and their old enemy, the not so humble humans.

A family friendly spectacle of theatre, satire, song and dance, in the perfect setting.

Performances dates: Friday 6/02 7pm, Saturday 7/02 1pm & 7 pm, Sunday 8/02 1pm, Friday 12/02 7pm, Saturday 13/02 1pm & 7pm, Sunday 14/02 1pm (perfect romantic Valentine's Day outing)

Venue: The Buninyong Botanic Gardens (201 Scott Street, Buninyong, Victoria 3357): bring a picnic/something to eat & drink, something to sit on (picnic blanket, camping chair, etc.), and get there early to enjoy our pre-show musical entertainment (details below),

Community Bank Music Program: (15 minutes prior to performance start),

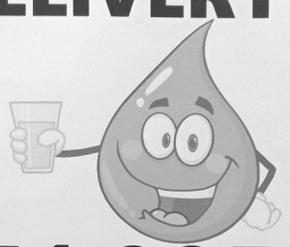
- Friday 6th 6.45-7pm - Martin & Talia
- Saturday 7th 12.45-1pm - Milla Williams Duo
- Saturday 7th 6.45-7pm - The Buninyong Players
- Sunday 8th 12.45-1pm - The Winter Berries
- Friday 13th 6.45-7pm - Tom and Freya McGowan
- Saturday 14th 12.45-1pm - Quinta and Friends
- Saturday 14th 6.45-7pm - Monday Trippers
- Sunday 15th 12.45-1pm - Steve Mckenna

Prepare Fire-Damaged Land Ahead of Storms

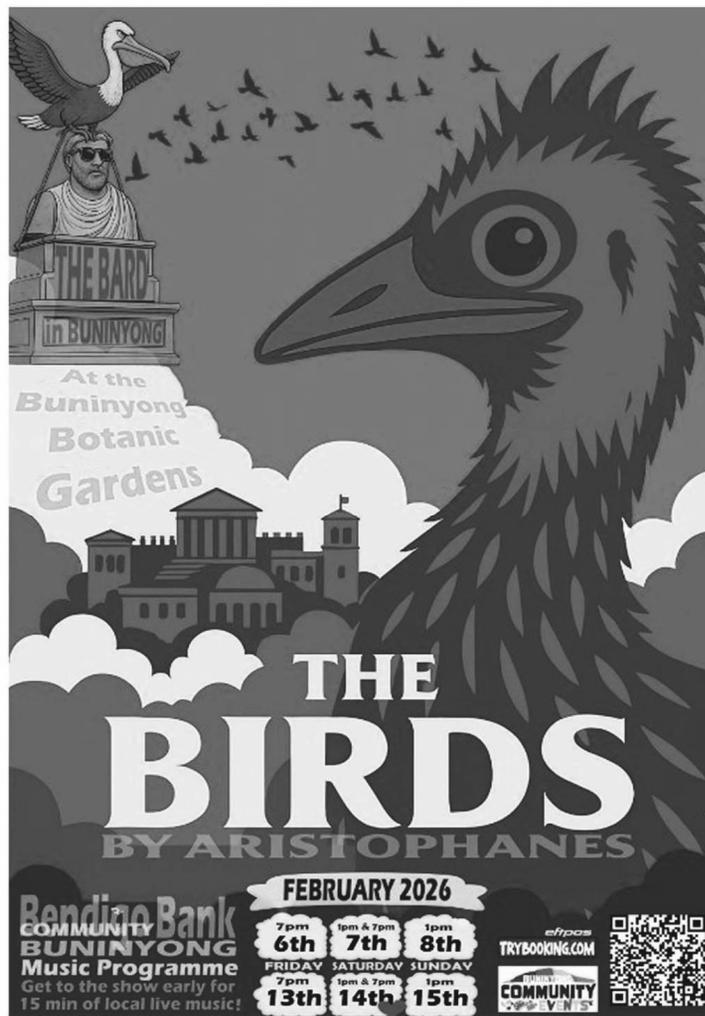
Fire-affected landholders, especially those in hilly and mountainous areas should prepare for potential flash flooding, soil erosion and landslides in the event of a thunderstorm. To read DEECA's media release on this subject, including a link to a video demonstrating how to build a sediment fence to protect dams, visit the "Extras" tab at our website meredithnews.com.au.

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Going to School

Did you see them pass to-day,
Billy, Kate and Robin,

All astride upon the back of old grey Dobbin?
Jigging, jogging off to school, down the dusty track -
What must Dobbin think of it - three upon his back?
Robin at the bridle-rein, in the middle Kate,
Billy holding on behind, his legs out straight.
Now they're coming back from school, jig, jog, jig,
See them at the corner where the gums grow big,
Dobbin flicking off the flies and blinking at the sun -
Having three upon his back he thinks is splendid fun:
Robin at the bridle-rein, in the middle Kate,
Little Billy up behind, his legs out straight.

Poem by CJ Dennis Source: Selected verse of C.J.Dennis Angus & Robertson 1961

Submitted by Janene Schillier

Vale to Barbara Baird

Marg Cooper

Barbara grew up in Perth, WA, trained as a doctor and worked overseas in England, Scotland and Norway before buying a block at Meredith 1982.

On a trip home to visit her brother and his family at Meredith she walked down a bush track and she chanced to see a For Sale sign on a block of land.

It was 160 acres that she described as a derelict sheep and cattle farm with little or no tree cover and much of the soil eroded.

She relished the challenge it presented and made it her life work

Barbara worked tirelessly, from then, to restore the property to health. Her property now thrives with an abundance of native animals among the Australian bush plants.

She lived simply within the bush in a Nissan Hut with bird feeding stations, possum boxes, bushfire protection bunkers, various cages and aviaries used only as temporary respite for sick or injured animals and a self-composting toilet with a view.

Barbara was a vocal advocate for local environmental matters including PALM [People for a Living Moorabool], Meredith Police Paddocks and the Brisbane Ranges.

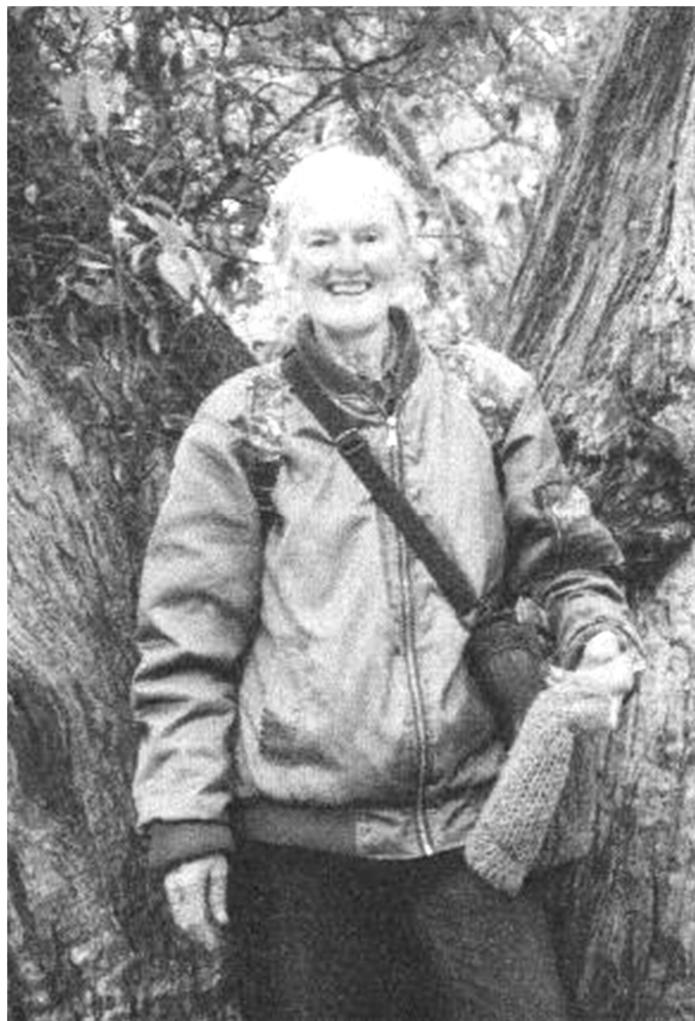
She knew the scientific names of the flowers, grasses and trees, she kept log books, photos and diaries and measured the salinity of the Moorabool River and she had what was described as a Municipal Library's worth of books.

She had a tree which she called her Thinking Tree, a huge old messmate. This tree which has a fork where she would sit was the only big tree left on the block when she bought the land. Over the years she'd sit in its bough sharing every emotion and dream with this old tree.

She was a valued member of Meredith History Interest Group, attending events and helping when she was able and joining us for lunch if she was in town.

In 1991 Barbara permanently protected her property at Meredith with a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature.

Barbara was highly intelligent woman who was prepared to devote her life to what she believed in. It was a privilege to know her.





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What
You
Think.



As part of our celebrations marking 50 years of publication, our roving reporter John Merlo is giving us a contemporary take, by talking to locals about their use of their community newsletter. If you would like to share your views, get in touch with John via news@meredithnews.com.au. - Ed.

Comments from long-term Meredith resident Doug McFarlane, who has lived in his Lawler Street residence with his wife Fay since having their home built in 1963:

Doug - originally from the Albury district - says he looks forward to every edition of the Meredith News, and generally reads it 'from cover to cover'.

"I even read pretty much all the ads," Doug said when we spoke recently, as 2026 begins with the ongoing celebration of the newsletter's 50th year of continuous publication.

Doug is a great observer of how Meredith has developed since he and Fay moved here - a development which continues as new homes spring up around town, and a number of new commercial enterprises are established.

He does have a few words of advice for new advertisers in the newsletter:

"I'm sure I'm not the only one who reads the advertising in the News," he said.

It can give a real picture of what's going on in the district, and I believe that some advertisers - particularly those just starting up - could benefit from the inclusion of a bit more detail about what their business is offering to the public.

'Just putting in a mobile phone number and leaving it at that is a bit of a lost opportunity.'

"Just a thought," he said with a chuckle.

Enjoy writing?

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The 2026 Golden Plains Shire Community Awards Winners

The Shire of Golden Palis has announced the following category winners of Community Awards.

Young Community Hero of the Year is Declan Davidson.

Senior Community Hero - Joint winners are the late Wendy Leeanne Hellebrand and Gerda Ross and her late husband Dennis Ross.

Community Group Award - Joint winners of the 2026 Golden Plains Shire Council are Bannockburn Wildlife Rescue and Linton Emergency Food Relief Pantry.

Community Hero - is Evelyn Cannon.

For more details, including each winner's citation, contact the Shire of Golden Plains.

Midland Highway Works

Rehabilitation works undertaken on a 1.5Km stretch of the Midland Highway in Meredith between Gargans Road and Creamery Road, have been completed.

To repair and strengthen the road, crews completely rebuilt it from the ground up – correcting any sub-surface issues in the process.

This was part of the state wide, \$976 million Better Roads Blitz.



G'Day from the penners for 2026. This year promises to be very busy for us penners, but never too busy to share our stories with the Meredith and surrounds community. We are all looking forward to regaling you with stories on all subjects as we have done in the past.

We are also looking forward to welcoming any new members who may wish to join us this year, maybe you've made a new years resolution to do something for yourself, or to try a new hobby or to just kick start that creative impulse you've been putting off for one reason or another. We, at the group always welcome new faces, in fact we have had a new fellow join us already this year and we hope he will consent to adding his name, (in time) to our list of writers who publish in this great newsletter. We meet every fortnight for 1.5 hrs of fun and writing on Thursdays at 1:30pm at the Bannockburn library with our February sessions on the 12th and the 26th.

This month's story is very timely, with the recent fires in our district, but it was written from the perspective of an 8-year-old girl who lived at the Bonegilla Refugee camp during the middle of the last century. Laima McArdle has been a member of our group for 4 to 5 years now and is a valued member of our little group. Thanks, Laima, for your deeply personal story. We hope you enjoy it.

Never Forget

I will never forget the smell of the smoke all around the camp. The heat was penetrating, the air was still and silence was everywhere. Wherever you looked there was a wall of grey in the distance – fluffy smoke rising upwards. A flock of galahs landed noisily squawking to decorate the branches of the dead gum tree nearby, but they didn't settle and took off again screeching, restless, their sound echoing loudly in the surrounding stillness. Evening fell. The horizon was lit with intermittent spots of dancing orange lights surrounding us in a circle quite far away it seemed.

We children sat on the steps of the hut. Mum and Grandma were busy packing, efficient, practical. I was given a parcel to carry. What was in it? I don't know. 'We will go to the lake,' Mum said, 'if the fires get closer.' How far was the lake? Not too far. Then I thought that being near the water would be good, but would we have to step into the water with our clothes on till the water was as high as our chins? Would our faces get hot with the fires so close to the shores of the lake?

But underneath the practicality of, the bustle, the activity, I felt a hidden unuttered fear. The dark movements, the uncertainty, the waiting. As if this scenario had been

played out before, as if history was repeating itself. As is Mum and Grandma had danced these steps in the past long ago as refugees, and were going through a well-practised routine – 'Pack your bags and aim for a sanctuary'.

What is happening in the world now?

The mums and grandmas are practical – packing up their families, their few belongings and heading for the lake, a safe harbour, somewhere, anywhere, should the fires come too close.

On a hot summer's day, here in Australian bush country, or anywhere really, when the air is very, very still, when the evening is falling like a heavy blanket and the galahs in the distance screech as they fly by or try to roost on a tree, the fear, the sadness, the uncertainty, an indescribable feeling of longing for something – what? I don't know, is it home? Envelopes me.

That is what I will never forget.

Neither will these generations from this war-torn world.

We're looking for a new...

NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR

Here's a chance to play a key role in one of the district's foremost community projects. If you can commit several hours every second month, use MS Word or Publisher, are a reliable, team player by nature and willing to learn, you could play an important and rewarding part of this highly successful operation. Email us at:

news@meredithnews.com.au

...or call Jim on 0409 163 169 to find out more.



The deadline for copy is

**9.00 am on the
last Thursday**

of the preceding month

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL NEWS

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

FEBRUARY 2026

As we settle into 2026, I hope everyone had a fantastic festive season and Happy New Year. I look forward to what this year will bring across the community.

I'd like to send a big thanks to the CFA, SES, volunteers, residents and Council staff for their unwavering support during the Mount Mercer fire last month. Their tireless efforts to assist residents in evacuating their homes and coordinating a relief centre in Bannockburn were instrumental.

I am immensely proud of everyone who rallied together to aid our communities in Mount Mercer, Meredith and Bamganie. Council held a Bushfire Recovery Drop-in Session in Meredith to assist impacted community members on 15 January, and this was well attended by residents. Thank you to all emergency and support agency representatives, Council staff and Councillors who attended and provided support to impacted residents.

Thank you also to Catherine King MP, Federal Member for Ballarat, for her attendance and support.

I'd also like to thank property owners for their cooperation during our ongoing Fire Prevention Inspections since November. Your efforts are crucial in keeping our community safe. A reminder that we are still in the Fire Danger Period until the CFA announces the end of the season, and I encourage you to remain vigilant when it comes to warm weather.

This is the time to review your fire emergency plan and stay informed throughout the season. Council will continue to provide fire safety information on its website and through social media over the coming months.

It was fantastic to attend the Golden Plains Shire Council Community Awards on 29 January and celebrate our nominees and award winners. Golden Plains truly is home to extraordinary individuals who work tirelessly to support our community, and it was an honour to celebrate their achievements at the awards ceremony.

Lastly, I'd like to encourage passionate young people aged 12-25 across the Shire to join the Golden Plains Youth Council. The Youth Council is the official youth advisory group to Council, providing a direct channel for young people to share their perspectives and have their voices heard.

If you're interested in becoming a future leader, please contact Council's Youth Development Team at goldenplainsyouth@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7111.

The Youth Council meets on the second Tuesday of every month at the Golden Plains Youth Hub in Bannockburn or online.

Yours in community,

**Owen Sharkey
Mayor**

Pictured below: Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey with CFA representatives at the Bushfire Recovery Community Drop-in Session in Meredith last month.



JOIN THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REGISTER



Are you interested in participating in community engagement opportunities?

Sign up to Council's Community Engagement Register to receive Council's monthly Engage newsletter and stay up to date with community engagement opportunities and updates.

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goldenplains.vic.gov.au.



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A Surprise Party

Marg Cooper

Anne Parkinson had told her husband John that all their family were coming to lunch at the Buninyong house on Sunday, December 28 to celebrate his 80th birthday. What she hadn't told him was that she had also invited his best friends, his siblings and his army mates.

She also hadn't told him that she had engaged *Round the Way Catering*, who specialize in function catering to come in their pale green van, to park near the garage in the back yard and to serve food, throughout the afternoon to the guests and that he would have to foot the bill!

John thought *he smelt a rat* when he saw the flash marquee that had been erected in the back garden and the number of chairs, but he was delighted with the arrangements and the celebration.

Son Nigel delivered a speech in his usual entertaining fashion. He talked about his father's schooling, early jobs, his call up and service in Vietnam, his driving prowess and several stories about when he and his sisters, Miffy and Amy were growing up.

Army mate Peter then described how thrilled that he and the other three Vietnam Veterans and their wives were, to meet up to celebrate John's birthday. They were all of a similar age as young men, born in the mid 1940's who were selected via a lottery system for call up into the Army.

Wife Anne explained how they had had their ups and downs, as all couples do, and how her mother had encouraged their romance.

Friend Tom Spielvogel added that Anne was disappointed when John took home another girl from the *Welcome Home Dance* which had been organized, chiefly by Tom's father Phillip, in the Morrisons Hall to welcome John home from Vietnam, in 1968.

This was the last public event held in the Morrisons Hall.

Congratulations John. Keep doing what you are doing because you are certainly a young 80!

Sport & Rec Fest

Media Release

Golden Plains Shire Council is thrilled to host the free Active Golden Plains Sport & Rec Fest (the Rec Fest) in February and March at Bannockburn and Smythesdale!

An initiative of Active Golden Plains, the Rec Fest aims to generate awareness of activities available in Golden Plains and empower residents to explore a variety of physical and recreational activities offered by local clubs, groups and providers.

Community members are encouraged to come along and try out a range of activities – from football, golf, bowls, and tennis, to dance, gyms, fishing groups, BMX and basketball.

The Rec Fest will be held across two different locations:

- Saturday 21 February 2026 from 10am to 1pm at the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve, Smythesdale
- Saturday 14 March 2026 from 10am to 1pm at the Recreation Precinct Soccer Pavilion, Bannockburn

Golden Plains Shire Mayor Cr Owen Sharkey encouraged interested community members to attend one or both events.

"We had an incredible response from local sporting clubs, groups and providers who were interested in running activities at the Rec Fest, and we're thrilled to welcome over 20 groups at both events," Cr Sharkey said.

"I encourage community members to come down to one or both events and have a go at the activities – this is a great opportunity to try something new or something out of your comfort zone."

For further information, contact Council's Recreation and Community Infrastructure team at enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au or call 5220 7111.

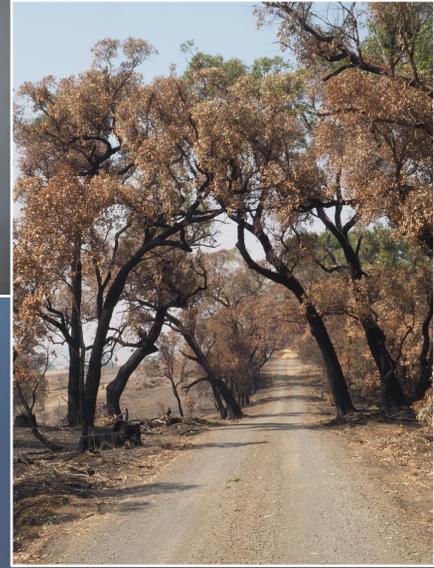


John, second from left, with his army mates - Ross, Peter, Doug & Max



Thank you to everyone who sent photos of the bushfire last month. We have published a few here, supplied by (from top) Cathie Boer, Peter Boer, Peter again, Maddy McColl and Marg Cooper.

And a special **THANK YOU** to the many local and visiting volunteers who so selflessly confronted this threat to minimise the damage and harm to our community.



Catherine KING MP

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Authorised by Catherine King MP, 5 Lydiard St Nth, Ballarat, VIC 3350

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Chicken or Pork Dim Sims
Potato Cakes
Chicken Wing Dings
Chicken Garlic Balls
Chicken Strips
Kransky
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Hamburgers

Cheese Burger
Double Cheese, Sauce, Pickles
Plain Burger
Lettuce, Cheese, Tomato Sauce
Hamburger with the Lot
Lettuce, Cheese, Tomato, Bacon, Egg, Onion,
Sauce
Steak Sandwich
Lettuce, Cheese, Tomato, Bacon, Egg, Onion,
Sauce
Chicken Schnitzel Burger
Lettuce, Cheese, Tomato, Mayo
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Lettuce, Cheese, Tomato, Sweet Chilli Sauce
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