

Meanwhile across the road from Jack we have a fire hazard. Time to work with responsible authorities.

When he was younger, Jack's grandma, Norma, would take him to the Blackwood Hotel every Friday night to meet the locals. Great-aunt, Barb, would compensate with church every Sunday morning for the lad. "No wonder he ended up such a well-rounded young bloke", says his mum, Kylie. "This community deserves a lot of credit too", she adds.

Jack was holidaying with his mates at Sorrento when, one bleary morning last week, he received a call from the mayor. Paul Tatchell said he was ringing to congratulate Jack on receiving the Australia Day Award for Junior Citizen of the Year. I assume his mates threw him off the end of the pier in celebration.

Jack joined Blackwood CFA at the age of 10. Now, as a senior member at age 16, he is training the juniors at Trentham, where they refer to him as Junior Captain Jack. He plans to pursue a career in fire-fighting but, for now, has a school-based apprenticeship as a chef, working with Peppers in Hepburn Springs. He works part-time at Blackwood Hotel & the YMCA as well as volunteering for Dreamfest, Blackwood Special Schools Bike Ride & the Blackwood Easter Carnival. This year Jack will be attending the World Challenge Expedition in Malaysia to work on the building of an orphanage & furnishing a conservatory.



EDITOR'S THOUGHTS...

Hello, hello & a very Happy 2014 to you & your families.

How have you coped so far this year? January has seen a number of extremely hot days. So far we've been fortunate to have had no 'close call' bushfires in the area. But, sadly, not so for our Garden of St Erth's big brother, Heronswood Cafe "Fork-to-Fork" which was destroyed by a regional fire. Just in time for Australia Day, a "pop-up" Fork-to-Fork re-opened on the pool lawn of Heronswood with incredible, billion dollar views, beautiful surrounding gardens, pool, umbrellas and marquee for cover. Found an interesting article at <http://lovethepen.com.au/blog/theres-a-positive-in-all-of-this-at-heronswood/>.

After waiting almost 25 years to build our garden, I was really excited to buy a membership to Diggers Garden Club for our wedding anniversary present. I look forward to being able to visit the beautiful garden any time the whim takes me.

Blackwood Action Group continues to work with Craig Lapsley to develop a town resilience plan specific to our requirements. The refuge was showcased & officially opened. It's good to know the community has a refuge we can turn to if we need it.

I'd like to thank everyone who has sent condolences & best wishes after the loss of my beloved father. Dad loved Blackwood, he was a country boy who was delighted when his daughter moved out of Melbourne to raise his grandchildren. Blackwood was the location of a number of celebrations for Dad including his 50th wedding anniversary.

This issue I simply couldn't have done without Vera & Margaret who both dropped everything to type up stories so we could get this issue out 'almost' on time! Thanks guys! Also to Sue for following up on gigs & events for me.

Have a great couple of months & 'til next issue,

~ Jinny Coyle

HOW'S THE WEATHER BEEN?

~ by Don Owen

Month & Year	Rainfall (mm)	Rainfall Average (mm) 1879-2007	Minimum Temperature deg C	Maximum Temperature deg C
Nov '13	75.5	74	3.7	28.9
Dec '13	50.7	62.2	1.4	34.3

NOVEMBER WAS fairly cool but had short bursts of hot weather with durations of one to two or three days. Rainfall was slightly below average for the November and December period. The yearly rainfall total was 920 mm which was a bit lower than the average of 977.9 mm.

• POP THE FIZZ •



BLACKWOOD MERCHANTS, Peter & Jen, shut the store for the Christmas period so they could attend a wedding in New York.

NO-ONE EXPECTED them to come back married, least of all them! Having decided to tie the not, it took only 24 hours for the licence to be approved. Next time you're in the merchant I'm sure Jen won't mind showing off her Tiffany ring.



MUSTACHIOED WOMBAT SPOTTED ON THE DRIVE TO TRENTHAM

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Blackwood Action Group meets with Fire Services Commissioner, Craig Lapsley
Photo Leon Rolls

COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES

Blackwood Action Group

Following on-going pressure from local MP's, shire councils & groups such as ours, the Planning Minister, Matthew Guy, has flagged changes to the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) to be implemented early this year. We trust that it will involve real change, unlike October's Planning Amendment Act, which seemed an exercise in window-dressing & offered no solutions to Blackwood's planning woes.

"I expect those changes (to the BMO) will be very straight forward to allow residents to be able to build on their properties particularly on land that's been deemed unbuildable at this point of time. What we're going to do is ensure private land, private risk. That principal is paramount & importantly Victorians will be aware of their fire risk before they build," said Mr. Guy.

The Blackwood Action Group had a lengthy & useful meeting with Fire Services Commissioner, Craig Lapsley, on December 22. We will be working with his representative to develop a Town Resilience Strategy, a plan focusing on the special needs of an at-risk community. Harrierville recently completed such a plan, which shone a light on the town's traffic-management problems & local business viability during last year's extended fire event.

We will be meeting Moorabool's Mayor, CEO & Wastewater Management Officer this month to talk about Blackwood's planning problems with regard to their soon-to-be-released Wastewater Management Policy.

The group also plans to this month arrange a public meeting with a supplier of approved fire bunkers, suggested by officials as one of the solutions to the resumption of building in Blackwood.

~ Blackwood Action Group

Blackwood/Barry's Reef Landcare Group

Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group is starting the year on a very positive note with news that we are to receive nearly \$20,000 from Melbourne Water to fund weed eradication on public land on the south side of the river, downstream from Whalebone Rd.

The group is matching the \$18,500 grant with in-kind contributions. At the time of writing, we were yet to receive official written notification so we hadn't appointed a contractor to undertake the assault on gorse, broom & blackberry. The project dovetails into a similar operation on the other side of the river being undertaken with Melbourne Water money by Parks Victoria.

Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in attracting funds from the Port Phillip & Western Port Catchment Management Authority for further funds to complement this co-ordinated effort.

In other wonderful news, the group has enlisted the support of noted

local sculptor, Matthew Harding, to create our "Wilbur the Weed" float for the Easter street parade. We were successful in attracting a Shire of Moorabool grant of \$3000 to build the sculpture which will act as a constant reminder to all of us of the need to keep our townships free of weeds. When not accompanying "Hetty the Hen" in the annual street parade, Wilbur will live on John Fitzgerald's vacant block of land in Martin St between Lerdy's & the Blackwood Merchant. Thanks to John for agreeing to this unusual tenancy.

The group is indebted to Matthew for agreeing to undertake the project which is far beneath his usual standard of commissions, which come from the highest levels from all around the nation. See www.matthewharding.com.au for more details about Matthew's credentials.

We look forward to working with Matthew to create a new character of interest for our local area. Again, the group is making a matching in-kind contribution.

The group thanks the Department of Environment & Primary Industries & Parks Victoria for the fantastic amount of controlled burns around the townships in the lead-up to the fire season. This year the conditions were conducive in our area & a lot of time, resources & money was spent reducing the fuel load.

In conversation with Craig Lapsley at the fire shelter open day in December, the Fire Services Commissioner said he wanted to see the local CFA brigade get back into burning around the town in the future. We encourage & support this. Our interest is two-fold – as a protection from wildfire, & also as a weed-control mechanism.

Since the last Blackwood Times, the group has received interest from two potential new members - Cain White & John Kemp. We hope that Cain & John find real value in contributing to our efforts. Being a small group, we welcome new members. Ring me on 5368 6587 if you are interested. You can also keep in touch by liking our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/BlackwoodLandcare>

~ Shane Scanlan, President

Blackwood CFA

Summer has finally arrived in Blackwood!

With the recent hot weather, fuel on the ground has dried out significantly increasing the risk of fire. Recent fires in the Grampians have shown that when conditions are right, fires can start & spread rapidly. If the hot, dry weather continues, the risk of fire in the Blackwood area will significantly increase – it's definitely time to revisit & rehearse your fire plans.

Although there have been no major fires in the Blackwood area, some Blackwood CFA volunteers have been busy helping in other communities that have been affected by fire. They have joined strike teams in Ballarat & the Grampians, where they worked on containing fires & relieving local crews.

This season has seen many opportunities for DEPI to do a number of controlled burns in & around Blackwood. CFA volunteers have been assisting them in asset protection when required.

The new fire station was officially handed over to Blackwood CFA on January 19th. Volunteers now have a state of the art facility to train in, wait in during strike team duty & welcome the general public for fire safety education. It is also a Community Fire Refuge.

Members of the public are always welcome to pop into the station if it is attended to ask any questions or for further fire information.

Remember to report all fires by calling 000.
Stay Safe,

~ Leon Rolls, Communications Officer, Blackwood CFA

Blackwood CERT

Hello,

With summer now in full swing, many of us spend more time outside playing in the garden. We should keep in mind that it's easy to become complacent in regards to safety. Garden equipment such as ride-on mowers, whipper snippers, hedge clippers, etc. can make a large task more manageable but we must remind ourselves that they can also be dangerous & cause serious injury. Well maintained equipment & proper safety gear are essential. Watch out for Jumping Jacks & snakes as well! Familiarise yourself beforehand with the proper first aid to apply to snake bites at this website; www.ambulance.vic.gov.au/Education/First-Aid-Tips/Bites--Stings.html

Recently, Blackwood CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), which is funded by Ambulance Victoria, went through some changes. For many years, Blackwood & surrounds have benefited from the untiring devotion of a few CERT members. There's no doubt that lives were saved, pain eased & sick or injured comforted by these volunteers. I won't mention any names Wendy, Trevor, Linda, Bruce & Lynda!

Almost two years ago, a new group of recruits, including myself, began training to become CERT members. At the annual general meeting, new committee members were voted in. These include; Leonie Brasier - President; Caroline Parker-Rolls - Vice President; Lynda Henry - Treasurer; Anne Vergona - Secretary/Public Officer General Committee - Linda & Laurie Byers, Bruce Henry, Douglas Peerman
Congratulations on your new positions!

I'm honoured to be chosen as the new team leader.

If you have any questions or would like to consider training to become part of our crew, please don't hesitate to call me on 0425 723 335

~ Ivan Johnston

Blackwood Senior Citizens Centre Inc.

Hello, me again from the Blackwood Senior Citizens Club. We hope that all had a great Xmas & an even better start to 2014.

After a break of a month, it was good to resume activities in the club & meet up with all of our friends once again.

We welcome Isobel O'Neil as our new chef &, of course, our ever-reliable De-anne, who is a great asset to us.

The majority of our members, 45 In all, enjoyed very much our Xmas lunch at the Blackwood Hotel. Our thanks to Kevyn, Anna, Barb, Angie & Henry.

Toward the end of 2012, 3 of our members were presented with their life membership badges – these were Ken, Betty, Ashtin & Isa Taylor - Congratulations to these people.

Ben Heard, our trip co-ordinator has a lot of outings organised for the coming year – so become a member of our club & be part of the fun.

Amongst the trips we had last year was a visit to Crystal World at Cranbourne – Then a complimentary lunch at Hudsons Hotel, Ballan, which was Moorabool Shire's donation to us for Seniors Week.

We thank Jim Usher, our president, for being our odd job man & carrying out repairs when needed.

Jamie from Hung Signs has erected a new memorial board in our club room.

Our thanks go to the Wilson family – who donated said board in honour of their father (Bill). We do miss Bill, he was a well-liked

member & friend to us all.

Seniors meet each Wednesday in the Blackwood Hall between 10:30 AM & 3PM.

Any newcomer would be made most welcome
Until next edition.

~ Barbara Sweet (Hon) Secretary

NO REPORT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED BY BLACKWOOD CROWN RESERVES COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

(DEPI reports no decision yet on new committee. Victorian ombudsman still deliberating.

NO REPORT SUBMITTED BY BLACKWOOD PROGRESS ASSOC.



Junior Captain Jack in his element...

PLAN & PREPARE FOR SUMMER FIRES

You've cleared the gutters, cut back the grass and tackled the undergrowth – but that might not mean that you are fully prepared for fire this summer.

CFA Chief Officer Euan Ferguson said research showed Victorians were great at carrying out the easy-to-do preparation tasks in the lead-up to the fire season.

"But it's actions like talking to your CFA brigade about the risk where you live and making a decision with your family about when you'll leave and where you'll go that could save your life," he said.

Fire risk varies from city fringe areas next to grassland to rural areas close to grass or bushland. For information on the risk in your area and tips on leaving early, you can talk to your local CFA brigade or visit cfa.vic.gov.au.

Fire planning and preparation should include a conversation with your household at the start of summer about when you will leave before a fire and where you will go. You also need to decide where you will shelter if you get caught out and cannot leave your property or area.

"Make sure everyone you live with knows these plans, so you're all clear about what you'll do on a fire risk day," Mr Ferguson said.

"You should also pack an emergency kit at the start of summer so you're ready to go any time. This should include important paperwork and essentials like mobile phones, medications, change of clothes and water. If your kit is already packed, it's easier to grab it and go.

"Finally, remember to talk to friends, family and neighbours who may need help leaving early before a fire," he said.

"The responsibility for surviving the fire season is shared between emergency services and the community – we all share the responsibility for our community's safety," he said.

Plan and prepare for fire this summer:

Do you understand the fire risk where you live? Talk to your local CFA brigade and find out your level of risk, or visit cfa.vic.gov.au

- Talk to your household about what you're going to do on a fire risk day, where you'll go and when you'll leave
- Pack an emergency kit so you're ready to go. For more information on what to include, go to cfa.vic.gov.au
- Download the FireReady smartphone app
- Plan ahead so you don't have to make decisions at the last minute

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HEALTH BASICS: LUNGS & BREATHING ... DO IT YOUR WAY



by Kathie Strmota

Oxygen (O₂) is the molecule of life, the energiser & nourisher in every body process.

Improving circulation will improve movement of O₂ from blood into cells, but you first need to get a good supply.

Lungs facilitate nutrient & waste exchange between air & blood. When lung tissue is damaged or breathing habits are poor, the efficiency of this exchange is reduced, affecting the whole body.

Breathing polluted air creates a toxic load on lung tissue & encourages damage. An obvious example is cigarette smoking, but consider also chemicals & city air in general. If you can smell it or taste it in the air, you're breathing it in, & the toxic influence accumulates over time. Reduce this load with a mask over nose & mouth when using chemical cleaners, paint, fertilizer, etc, or any activity releasing dust, like sawing wood.

Even if you breathe clean air, it's important to breathe properly, with the entire lung. Most people are 'shallow-breathers', lifting shoulders to expand lungs, a habit developed with tension from a modern lifestyle. The lungs only part-fill, bringing less O₂, while mucus waste from lower lungs is not cleared. Deep breathing (using diaphragm - stomach area - & chest muscles, with shoulders relaxed) expands lungs from below, filling them completely, allowing maximum O₂ exchange & waste clearing. Additionally, regular aerobic activity gets lungs pumping & clearing, while breath-related activities like yoga improve energetic capacity.

Vitamins A & D, & Calcium work together to strengthen lung tissue, all supplied well by Cod Liver Oil. If you're prone to chest infections, or allergies which affect breathing, get these goodies in.

Metaphysically, O₂ is the 'life force' (chi, prana). Inspiration is breathing in, & accessing new concepts & understandings. Expiration is breathing out, & ending or death. Breathing is the cyclic intake of new life & release of what is finished, & breathing problems reflect restriction of this process. The term 'I can breathe freely' often refers to freedom of self-expression, being true to our purpose & desires, without external restrictions or influences.

Limited 'breathing in' suggests you're not fully accepting the gifts of life. Maybe something you're afraid to engage with/experience, or maybe a general mistrust of life from past hurts. Maybe also positive

experiences or insights of such immensity that they overwhelm you & 'take your breath away'.

Limited 'breathing out' suggests you have difficulty giving of yourself. You hold your true self in, perhaps because you're afraid of being revealed in some way, or perhaps you're stuck in restrictive or oppressive childhood patterns where you were unable to freely express yourself.

Wheezing is a complaint that you cannot be yourself, & yawning reflects boredom (needing more inspiration from your experience).

Lungs provide the framework for breathing. Physical lung problems suggest that metaphysical breathing patterns are chronic enough to have manifested into physical damage.

"I did it my way" is the anthem of healthy lungs. Lung issues suggest you haven't been doing it your way. Your true self has had only superficial expression, & the creativity & power of your spirit remains largely untapped. This suppression leads to grief & depression, which weighs heavy on lungs, & further limits the ability to breathe freely.

Open up to a clear & liberated vision of yourself & your life. Let yourself go, & grow in all directions. Let your lungs & your being fully expand.

Affirmations: I now willingly take in the fullness of life & share my truth in perfect balance.

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visit website for 2014 schedule & full details **53686560**
www.aquarianblessings.com kathie@aquarianblessings.com

Robin Bradley, in lieu of his regular wine article, has issued this old quatrain for your edification

**God gave the grape
good wine to make
to please both great
and small
but little fools they
drink too much
and big ones not at all**

Robin suggests for further information ask Jen or Peter at the Blackwood Merchant.



HUMANS OF BLACKWOOD

by Margaret McCarthy

How do you remember Blackwood from your earliest days here? And, how do you think about Blackwood these days, especially when you're away? I asked this of a few people for this issue of The Blackwood Times and this is what I found. Thanks to Sue, Nicola and Lachlan for their thoughts.



Sue

First memory of Blackwood? Camping. The three of us, two adults and a young son, squeezed in a two man tent in the caravan park. It rained the whole time. I remember Peter [the other adult] leaning half out of the tent and heating a cup of milo on a single gas ring. We could only heat one cup at a time.

And now, when you are away, what comes to mind? I guess the feeling of tranquillity when you arrive. And the smells and sounds of the bush. It sounds strange, but there's a feeling of being embraced.

What is the sound of the bush? There's a contrast. There's the silence. I get out of the car and think 'Wow!' Then I begin to hear the rustle, the birds and the creek, the insect sounds. But at first, it is the quiet.



Nicola



First memory of Blackwood? I was travelling around Australia when I was a kid and we stayed in Blackwood. While we were here, we did a walk in the Lerderderg Gorge. I remember thinking: 'What a beautiful place!'

And now, when you are away, what comes to mind? When I'm away I think of the calm, the peace. The breeze and sun glinting off the tress,

like they are today, and how calm and peaceful that is.

Lachlan

First memory of Blackwood? My first memory is when Mum and Dad bought the house. I remember coming up in the backseat of the car and seeing this ramshackle Victorian house. I was playing with their dog. There was a huge holly tree and the old family had carved their names, the initials of their names, in the trunk. The house had the original furniture, all the old Victorian furniture. It was like coming across a treasure chest. There was still the original kitchen, an open fireplace, and an old drop dunny. Dad rigged up a port-a-loo. I remember my brother having a bath in the baby bath in the kitchen table. When I was christened, the whole family came to Blackwood. It was a hot day and afterwards everyone sat out on the veranda and played tunes.

And now, when you are away, what comes to mind? Now, when I'm away I have a weird version of Blackwood in my head.

My perfect day is between the Labour Day weekend and Easter—hot, not as hot as today; the light being pristine; the clarity. There's the concept of Autumn as being the preparing for the winter, cutting firewood. There's the weird day where you have to go light the fire again. Before you're quite not ready for it.

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L-R: Pat, Deirdre, Premier Napthine & Kath at the January hand-over of the new Blackwood fire station & refuge to the community.

Charity Pet Show for a Good Cause

Raising awareness of Greendale Wildlife Shelter
Bacchus Marsh Veterinary Centre is proudly sponsoring an exciting new charity event for 'Blackwood Easter Carnival' an 'All Creatures Great & Small Pet Show'.

With innovative categories such as 'Best Cross Breed' to 'Most Unusual Pet' this should prove to be a fun event which promotes responsible pet ownership. An entrance fee of \$3 applies to each category with wonderful prizes to be won.

The Pet Show is also supported by a creative colouring competition, entry by gold coin donation & judged on the day.

For further info go to Facebook @ Bacchus Marsh Veterinary Centre. All proceeds from this event goes to "Greendale Wildlife Shelter". This shelter is a non government-funded emergency rescue centre, offering caring rehabilitation of our native wildlife. It is run by dedicated volunteers such Donna Zabinskas, who's tireless efforts are much appreciated.

So come along & join in the fun showcasing your furry treasure & support a worthy cause!

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The farmhouse kitchen is fully equipped with dining table for 8. With BBQ, TV DVD & Wifi, everyone is catered for.

This property accommodates families with safe swings & a play house for young children. Visits by local kookaburras, native birds & wildlife enhance the experience. Well behaved pets are welcome.

Enquiries: Fitzgeralds 54241866

THE HISTORY OF BLACKWOOD – THE ROYAL MAIL HOTEL



**COMPILED BY MARGOT HITCHCOCK
HISTORIAN FOR THE BLACKWOOD
& DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
2014**

The Royal Mail Hotel was first recorded as a Hotel 1863 & it was noted as a Stage Coach Office for Cobb & Co in 1863 in the "Victorian Gazetteer". The Hotel was located on Allot. 21 Sec. 2 on the corner of Peter & Alberts Streets, Golden Point, Blackwood.

James Millyard was the first known Hotel Keeper. The Hotel was nearly destroyed by fire in 1878 when most of the shingle roof was burnt. The next recorded owner was Colin McLennan in 1879 until 1889. Frederick Cotton was owner from 1890 until 1893. Mrs. Mary Linnehan was Hotel Keeper until 1899 when it was bought by William Byres (2nd). The Byres family owned & operated the Royal Mail Hotel, which was also a stage coach office in the early days. The Byres family had arrived in Australia in 1857 & were first recorded as having a house with sod walls & a calico roof & had a store.

Mr. Byres had the hotel until his death in July 1913, & it was relicensed on December 31, 1913.

From then on it was run by his wife, Annie Byres & her daughters as a Guest House where they took in guests & was classed as a Temperance Hotel until 1924.

The girls were all excellent cooks & the Royal Mail was a popular place for people to come & stay. The Byres family received 175 pounds compensation for the cancellation of the Hotel license.

The Byres family also ran the Post Office next to the Hotel. Mrs Byres ran the Store & Post Office up until the day before her death May 1910. Then it was taken over by other members of the family.

There were two Annie Byres – Annie Byres (nee Pryn) who married William Byres & Annie Maud Byres who married George Matheson.

Annie Maud Byres was a little energetic lady & would never go out without wearing a hat. She always chewed cloves which she fascinatingly rolled around between her teeth. Grandma Byres would always walk to the church services at All Saints Church of England in Blackwood.

One fateful day in September 1931, having visitors staying at the Royal Mail, Annie Maud Byres was up early preparing for the day. While cleaning around the fire place, her long skirt caught fire, probably being made more flammable by her rubbing methylated spirits on her legs each day as a remedy used for the relief of arthritis. On running outside towards the well for water to quench the fire, her calls for help were heard by the Stobie family who were staying here at the time. Receiving terrible burns, a call was made to the doctor from the only phone in town, which was at the Post Office in Blackwood. Doctor Gibb had to drive from Kyneton hospital, where she was taken but she died from her injuries on the September 9, 1931 age 71 years.

The next owner of the Hotel was Ethel Turner, one of the daughters of William & Annie Byres. The Hotel was then no longer ran as a guest house but used by the family as a residence. During the mid 1930's work was started to pull down the bar & some of the interior walls & it was suggested while doing thus that the rooms be used for dances. So the families energies went to making the place into a suitable dance hall. It was about this time that the Hotel's billiard table was sold to the Kyneton R.S.L. This table having been used by tournaments including the billiard player Walter Lindrum who was a guest at the time.

Once more the Hotel was brought to life with what became known as the Royal Mail Social Club where public dances were run by the children of Ethel Turner. Most of the organising was done by Ted & Gordon Turner with music on the piano supplied by their sister Renee.

Mrs Ethel Turner organised & cooked all the delicious suppers including sausage rolls on a wood stove. The lighting was organised by Gordon Turner with an elaborate system run off a generating plant with a sound system of speakers connected to a record player for dancing when they did not have a band. Dances enjoyed were the Lancers, Evening Three Step, Pride of Erin, Quadrille's & dances of the 1930's era. Many a couple met at these dances & later married in Blackwood. These dances continued until the outbreak of the 2nd World War

when the four Turner sons joined the forces. A few dances were held after the war in 1946 but with young families coming on these soon ceased & the hotel reverted back to being used as a private residence, until it slowly declined with age until 1980 when drastic steps were made to have the old hotel pulled down. The then owners of the hotel were the sons & daughter of Ethel Turner, Ted, Lyndon, Renee, Clem & Gordon whose family had owned the Hotel for 82 yrs since 1899.

In 1980 the local Ballan Shire Council placed a 'Demolition Order' on the Royal Mail Hotel, which ordered them to either restore or barricade the two outside walls in such a way as to make them safe, as there was a possibility that they would fall onto the roadway. Failing this the only other alternative was to demolish the two outside walls that were a danger. The Turner family had a working bee to try to restrain the two outer walls by pulling them back into position by restraining wires inside but this did not have the desired effect due to rotting timbers.

The Blackwood Historical Society members met with Gordon Turner to see how they could help & were shown around to inspect the deteriorating building, but it was agreed that the building was too far gone to render any work being done to restore it to its original condition.

Photographs were taken by Margot Hitchcock inside & out as a historical record & the owners all agreed that they had no alternative than to arrange a demolition of the building to comply with the council's order.

In December 1981 the demolition of the old Royal Mail Hotel commenced of which Margot Hitchcock attended to record with photographs the various stages of demolition until the completion in January 1982. After the old iron was taken off the roof, the original shingles on the roof were revealed as seen from the street. The Historical Society were offered the original boards from the top of the wall with the old name 'Royal Mail Hotel' on it & they were taken to the Historical Society's Museum where they are now on display. The back part of the residence of the Hotel was kept by the family as it was still liveable.

Eight members of the Byres family are buried in the Blackwood cemetery. What was left of the Royal Mail Hotel & residence was sold in 2013 - a link with the families past gone & a lost visual link to our golden days of yester-year.

Information courtesy of Frances Dillon nee Matheson, Gordon Turner, Renee Budge, 'Hotel & Hotelkeepers of Blackwood' by Andrew Robertson, & 'Aspects of Early Blackwood' by Allan Buckingham & Margot Hitchcock.

Researched by Margot Hitchcock from her forthcoming book "The History & Pioneers of Blackwood" hopefully to be published soon. For help with research of Blackwood ancestors contact Margot Hitchcock - email - margothitchcock@bigpond.com.



Royal Mail Hotel - C. 1880
Photo courtesy Margot Hitchcock. B.D.H.S.

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IN A TRIAL RUN locals nut out the workings of the operational cabinet. With no prior instruction, the group was required to work together to gain access to the Blackwood Fire Refuge & start up the generator, air conditioning, lights & radio whilst preparing for spot fires & medical emergencies.

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JANUARY: "Still Life"

Author: Gillian Flynn
Publisher: Phoenix, 2013
ISBN: 9780753827666

Nicola: This is a classic murder mystery set in rural Quebec and a pleasant, unchallenging read.

While it was generally enjoyable, it all felt a bit two-dimensional to me. I didn't feel like I connected with the characters, I couldn't really picture the setting and the story line felt a bit disjointed. There were sections, plot lines and characters that were pretty superfluous to the main plot while other parts weren't explained enough. For much of the book I was mainly reading on to find out "whodunnit". Having said that, I would be interested to read some other books in the Chief Inspector Armand Gamache series to find out if some of the "superfluous" material becomes relevant in later stories.

Brenda: I read "The Cruellest Month", loved it and had to read the rest of these wonderful books, starting with "Still Life", a gently-written mystery about murder in Three Pines, a picturesque Canadian village. Louise Penny captures the emotions of her complex characters beautifully and the series improves and becomes darker with each book.

Kirsty: This book did not appeal to me as a stand-alone book, as it did not have a great depth of character development. As an initial title to a series, with the same characters and town recurring in each book, this seems like it could be a great introduction to a great array of characters and depth of plot. An easy read for a fan of a series. 3 wombies

Jinny: 'Still Life' didn't capture my imagination. I found the characters under-developed & flat, perhaps because I could not relate to them on any level!

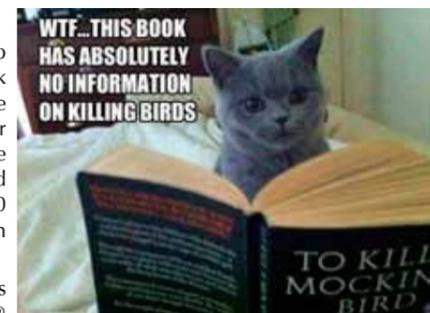


The Wombat Book Club is a casual group of book lovers. We meet once a month to discuss our last book & pick up the next. Books are borrowed from the library, so a \$30 deposit is required on books.

Our next meetings are 3pm Feb 2 @ Blackwood Hotel- 'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee, & March 2 @ Blackwood Merchant - Conditions of Faith by Alex Miller.

If you love reading, come along & join us!

Thanks to the Central Highlands Regional Library for their fabulous advice, support and book gathering. Great to hear the Blackwood service is now weekly on Wednesdays.



Recently seen on Facebook: A cat reading 'To Kill A Mocking Bird'. Very curious - The cat is quoted as saying "Absolutely nothing whatsoever about killing birds!" We'll be discussing if this is true at our next meeting.

Thanks Nicola for bringing this to our attention.

WHO'S TATT'S THAT?

A BLACKWOOD QUIZ

Here we have a full-back rendering of a family Coat-of-Arms.

Pure class. Yes, we launched this quiz with an easy one. Why don't you email your tattoo to editor@theblackwoodtimes.com.au

A: Simon (the plumber) O'Loughlin



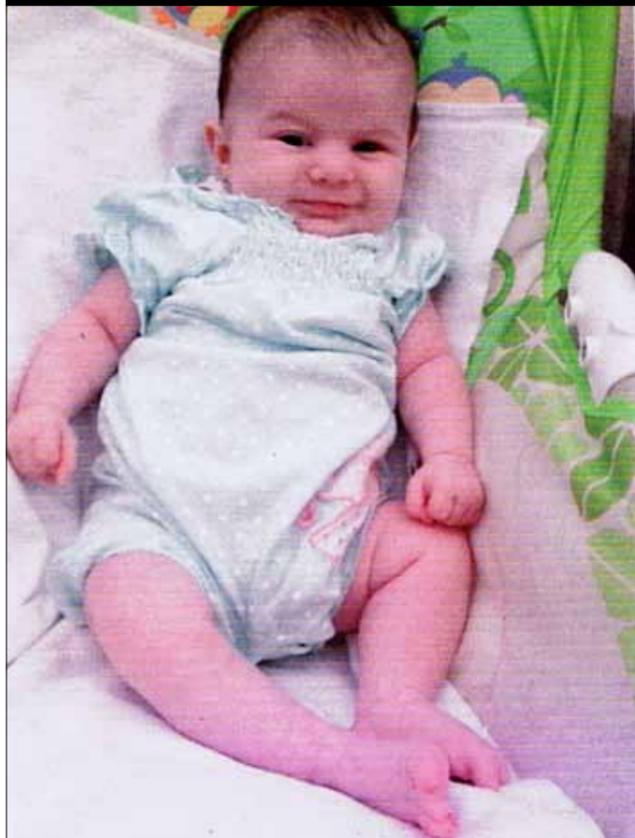
GARBAGE DAYS
FEBRUARY
Monday 3, 17
MARCH
Monday 3, 17, 31





LOCAL BAND HARDRIVE WOWS THEM AT TAMWORTH ...

• POP THE FIZZ •



RUBY NIKOLE Swagerman was born on November 11, 2013 at Ballarat Base Hospital 2.95kg (6lb 8oz).

FIRST CHILD of Lee & Lisa Swagerman (nee Darwen)



The atmosphere was charged at the Blackwood Miss Electricity Pageant held in celebration of the arrival of power to the town in 1961.

photo courtesy <http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/items/762805/negative-state-electricity-commission-blackwood-victoria-1961>

If you can name anyone in this photo please contact us by snail mail C/o Blackwood PO 3458 or email editor@theblackwoodtimes.com.au

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THE TIMES goes to NEW YORK

Blackwood Times spent Christmas in New Year. Highlights of the trip were a visit to Washington Square park & yummy food at the Fatty Crab



LOCALS, VERA, NOEL & WALLY ATTEMPT, EACH IN THEIR OWN FASHION, TO MAKE SENSE OF A BURST PIPE IN THE TOWN CENTRE.



• MARKET CALENDAR • MARKET CALENDAR • MARKET CALENDAR •

Table with 8 columns: 1st SATURDAY, 1st SUNDAY, 2nd SATURDAY, 2nd SUNDAY, 3rd SATURDAY, 3rd SUNDAY, 4th SATURDAY, 4th SUNDAY. Rows list various markets like Ballan Market, Daylesford Farmers, etc.

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THE GARNETTS & ST ERTH

Following is part 2 of an expanded version of the talk Penny Garnett gave at the opening of the Garnett House at the Garden of St Erth...

We found that people visiting the garden were asking where they could buy some of the plants they had seen, so we opened a small nursery...

The trees in the English garden were a leaving present from his colleagues, other plants came from many sources, including rare stuff from Gillanders in Tasmania...

In 1980 we went to England, & found the gardens we most enjoyed were those where the plants were clearly labelled. So we brought back an engraving machine & started the task of labelling all the plants...

There was a small dam on most of the site of the present carpark, & another, which leaked, where Koban's Pool is now. Koban was a labrador who patrolled at night & kept the rabbits at bay...

We bought land which had belonged to the Wesley Church & built a large dam there, & installed several tanks, & later Tom was chairman of the committee which, after a referendum, got a water supply to Blackwood...

We bought parcels of land which had been sold in 1950s when the Simmons Reef school property was subdivided. We bought the Butchers Shop by adverse possession, & we bought the disused road in front of the house...

Tommy did other things as well; he became secretary of what is now Birds Australia, and editor of the garden section of The Age, which meant a weekly trip to Melbourne.

That was his day off, and it brought him in touch with many great ornithologists and gardeners and nurserymen - and the more he wrote, the more people came to visit the garden, 12,000 a year by the time we left. He was also appointed a lay reader of the Anglican church...

As a Garden Editor he was sent many books to review for the paper. There was no pay in this but you were able to keep the book, and there were some magnificent volumes. For his part he did promise to at least mention every book he received.

On Saturday mornings he usually took his binoculars and walked the Back Creek track which we had made, and in the early years saw a new bird or plant on each walk. Saturday afternoons he often sat in the potting shed, a commanding position overlooking the orchard...

~ to be continued next issue

MY KITCHEN WINDOW (CONT)

Kookaburras - a civilized community

Most of the time kookaburras seem to be very civilized & unafraid. Other birds mostly keep their distance but Mr Magpie would often sit on the other end of the handrail just to show them that he was my friend too...

Another time there was a half-dozen kookies when one copped a full-on attack from another. They fell off the handrail on to the top of the kennel below. The attacker had him by the wing near his chest & was really roughing him up...

Over the years I have observed an interesting kookaburra phenomenon. Many times I have noticed how they would gather again on the same branch. One would swoop over to a spot on another tree, touch it & return with minimum flapping...

It's now 6 months since I began writing this & they have returned. Mr Fluffy isn't with them any more but two of them seem to have his habit of ruffling feathers even though they don't have his size.

~ Bob Ebdon

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BLACKWOOD & DISTRICT PROBLEM WEEDS

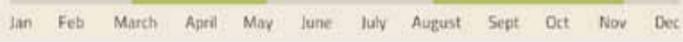
Holly (ILEX AQUIFOLIUM)

Weed 7/9

- STATUS: Environmental Weed
STEMS: Pale grey and smooth.
LEAVES: Dark green and wavy with irregular prickles along the margin when mature.
FLOWERS: Small off-white flowers are borne in the leaf axils, developing into a red berry in autumn on female trees.
SEED: Four to five per berry, held on the tree over winter.
INVADES: This species invades damp and wet forest areas, riparian where it out-competes and replaces indigenous species.
DISPERSAL: The fruit are eaten by birds and other animals which disperse the seeds into bushland.
CONTROL: Hand pulling of seedlings, cut and paint mature plants.



This weed is best tackled in the following months:



Blackwood and Barry's Reef Landcare Group has identified nine priority weeds that threaten the Wombat State Forest and Lerderberg State Park. The weeds are gorse, broom, blackberry, holly, blue periwinkle, Himalayan honeysuckle, radiata pine, galema and Spanish heath.



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MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE!

The Library service runs weekly on Wed's 1.30 - 2.30pm at the Blackwood Hall. There is a small high quality collection to browse & 2 Librarians to help borrowers order any additional items for loan.



Dear Pet Guru,

I lent my pet yak to a friend in Ballarat for a couple of weeks and he has come back with a cold. Are you surprised?



No, Ballarat's climate is severe even for a yak.
P.G.



BLACKWOOPS

ALFIE WAS meant to be a purebred Beagle. When his owners discovered that the pup had some Wire-Haired Pointer (a substantially larger breed) they showed him the door of their compact townhouse. Sometimes humans can be so picky.

BUT, TO young Alfie's delight, his new family lived in the wilds of Barry's Reef with its intoxicating smells of rabbit. Now, Beagles are Scent Hounds and are bred to sniff out small game like rabbits, so when Alfie escaped on his first big adventure, it wasn't to the next-door neighbours or even the Blackwood shops. Alfie followed his nose

straight into the bush. Where the Bunnies lived.

HE FOLLOWED his nose so closely that he didn't hear his people call, didn't see where he was going, didn't even feel the scratches as the Nose dragged him through the undergrowth and over the flinty ground where it sniffed and sniffed and sniffed.

BY THE time Alfie got home, the Nose was red-raw and bleeding but otherwise feeling very pleased with itself. Mum and Dad weren't so pleased.

SINCE THEN the Nose has been relegated to sniffing dogfood and sitting quietly at the end of Alfie's snout, somewhere just above the teeth, and Alfie has discovered the joys of being a 30Kg lapdog. Those Wire-Haired Pointer genes have kicked in.

BUT NOW that his dad has bought a ute and he gets to ride in the back, Alfie has his long, floppy ears parachuting in the breeze and the Nose gulping down mile after mile of good rabbit air.

HOLLY SMOKE BATMAN!

The beginning of December brought to mind The Holly Patch. This is a spot in the bush adjoining the Wombat State Forest which has an unfortunate invasion of English Holly plants.

Our cool climes mimic those of its homeland & the Holly would very much like to become a prickly thicket, choking the creek-side ferns & bushes. The solution is painstaking hours of digging the blighters up. Holly Smoke Batman!

Part of the solution lies within the gardens of Blackwood, Dales Creek & in the Moorabool district. Did you know that the festive Holly bush you may have along the fence is actually quietly producing the seeds which are so attractive to our birds. Off they go to a nearby patch of bush & Poop, another Holly Patch begins! Do you really need to keep that prickly character? Dig it up!

If you would like to keep this Yule Tide reminder, can I suggest giving it a severe short back & sides? By keeping it to a small waist-high clipped bush, you will remove its seeds or the pollen that can spread to other plants. But you will need to do that every December!

~ a The Blackwood Times reader

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EVENTS & GIGS • EVENTS & GIGS • EVENTS & GIGS • EVENTS & GIGS •

FEBRUARY 2014

when	what	where
Sat 1: lunch	Stewart & Piano	Radio Springs
Sat 1: lunch	The Duck Down Pickers	Radio Springs
Sun 2: lunch	Geoffrey Williams	Radio Springs
Sun 2: arvo	Sarah Wilkinson	Cosmo
Sun 2: 1-7pm	Blackwood Academy & Revue featuring Whitetop Mountaineers	Blackwood
Sun 2: dinner	The ChrisPaul Jazztet	Radio Springs
Thurs 6: dinner	Table Hill	Radio Springs
Fri 7: dinner	Liz Frencham & People We Know	Radio Springs
Fri 7: pm	Pete Daffy & the Forcasters ***	Hudsons
Sat 8: lunch	Birdland	Radio Springs
Sat 8: dinner	Louis & the Cocktail Shakers	Radio Springs
Sun 9: lunch	Gillian Eastoe & Terry Murray	Radio Springs
Sun 9: arvo	Little Miss Red	Cosmo
Sun 9: dinner	Table Hill	Radio Springs
Thu 13: dinner	Cat & Clint ***	Radio Springs
Fri 14: dinner	Family Farm	Radio Springs
Sat 15: lunch	Zeptepi	Radio Springs
Sat 15: dinner	The Dear Family Allstars ***	Radio Springs
Sun 16: lunch	Liz Frencham & People We Know	Radio Springs
Sun 16: arvo	Cam Burnside	Cosmo
Sun 16: dinner	Travelling Concessions	Radio Springs
Thu 20: dinner	Table Hill	Radio Springs
Fri 21: dinner	Pennyweight	Radio Springs
Sat 22: lunch	Stewart & Piano	Radio Springs
Sat 22: lunch	Geoffrey Williams	Radio Springs
Sat 23: lunch	Liz Frencham & People We Know	Radio Springs
Sun 23: lunch	Lancefield Motorcycle Run (fundraiser)	Lancefield
Sun 23: dinner	Sweet Nothings	Radio Springs
Fri 28: pm	Steno & Gracey	Hudsons
Fri 28: 7pm	School Uniform Locals Night	Bwd Merchant

MARCH 2014

when	what	where
Sun 3: 1-7pm	Blackwood Academy & Revue featuring Peter Rowan Trio	Blackwood
Sun 9: 3-6pm	Slap, Bam, Boom	Greendale
Sat 22: all day	Myrniong Music in the Park	Myrniong Rec Res

*** denotes Blackwoodians

BLACKWOOD ACADEMY of Bluegrass & Old-Time Music

SUNDAY MARCH 2

1.30PM Shapenote singing session
2.30 PM Bluegrass session (all players welcome)
4.30pm PETER ROWAN TRIO



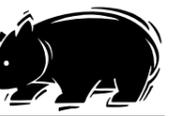
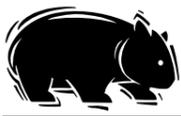
Peter Rowan is a true legend of American Bluegrass, with a history dating from 1964 and his role as lead-singer/guitarist with the father of Bluegrass, the late Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys. Rowan returns to Australia with a new album, and a hot new trio, featuring Chris Henry on mandolin and vocals, and George Jackson on fiddle, banjo and vocals.

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IT'S OFF TO SCHOOL THEY GO... THE 2014 SCHOOL YEAR BEGAN AFTER THE AUSTRALIA DAY WEEKEND

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FOUR OUT OF FIVE

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Stop making excuses.

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• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR • LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

DEAR EDITOR,



EXACTLY ONE week before Christmas in December 2013, we woke up to a very sick dog. It had been a hot night, so we had left the front door open & just had the screen door closed to let some air flow through. At some point in the night, our big dog Dozer - a Great Dane/Ridgeback, must have broken the door open & the dogs escaped into the night while we were sleeping. They weren't gone for long, but our little overly-inquisitive Beagle, Maybelle managed to eat close to an entire box of slug pellets that she had found on a neighbour's property. We had to drive her to the Bacchus Marsh

Vet, a drive that seems interminably long when you have a very traumatised dog who is having seizures & foaming at the mouth! Luckily, one of our other neighbours went & found the nearly-empty box of pellets for us & we were able to identify exactly what it was that she had consumed, something that greatly helped in her treatment & recovery. Despite that, she still had to spend 24 hours fully sedated & three days at the vets. It was an extremely upsetting (not to mention costly) experience & I just really wanted to remind everyone to be so careful with poisons & pets - we all have pets & we love them dearly & seeing them go through such a horrible time, fearing that we may lose them forever because of something so easily avoided is truly something I hope we can prevent happening to others. Remember also, if something is within reach of a dog, it is probably within reach of a child too!

IF YOU have poisons on your property, PLEASE keep them locked away out of reach of pets & children & where possible use pet-friendly poisons or alternative methods of deterring garden pests. The Digger's Club have some great products (www.diggers.com.au), & I'm sure most gardening or hardware shops stock pet-safe pellets, or you can just search online - there are so many other options! It is also better for our native fauna who can be poisoned from eating poisoned snails or slugs.

AND FINALLY a HUGE thank you to those who helped us & were so supportive & understanding while our puppy was sick, particularly Bacchus Marsh Veterinary Centre, Brendan Hehir (the poisonous pellet sleuth!), Brad Cassidy & our close friends & family.

~ Nicola Strating

DEAR EDITOR,

I'D BE grateful if you'd share the link below with fellow residents & readers to allow others the opportunity to advocate for an improved mobile coverage in Blackwood & surrounds. I did try to submit an email enquiry to the Blackwood Times via the web portal but it didn't work.

THE FEDERAL Government has announced \$80 million of funding to improve mobile coverage in regional & remote Australia & small towns, but is calling for public submission to identify to the blackspots!

I'VE PERSONALLY written & sent the email below, but encourage others to do the same.

G'day,

My town, Blackwood, Victoria 3458 located in the Macedon Ranges had little-to-no mobile coverage. Even with rural-recommended handsets on Telstra! The town is in the middle of the Lerderderg & Wombat State Forests, between Ballan & Trentham; & its surrounding hamlets of Simmons Reef, Barrys Reef & Dales Creek are also affected.

The region is at severe bushfire risk & limited coverage poses a threat to life in the event emergency communications are unavailable.

I urge the Australian government to immediately allocate funds for

improved mobile coverage in Blackwood & the surrounding region. Blackwood is only 55 minutes from Melbourne, but many years behind in terms of access to technology.

Regards
Simon Daniel

ALL THAT'S required is an email to mobilecoerage@communications.gov.au

SUBMISSIONS ARE urgent as closing date for lodging submissions is 5.00pm (AEST) Friday 28 February 2014.

FULL DETAILS at this link: www.communications.gov.au/mobile_services/mobile_coverage_programme

REGARDS
SIMON

HI EVERYONE,

IT WAS lovely to read about Rosie Nelson (Parsons), our Nana's next door neighbour at Blackwood. Us Skinner kids knew her as Mrs. Parsons for years. It was a real treat to have afternoon tea in her warm, welcoming, little house, The Rest. One time I was so lucky to sleep in a small bedroom there, with papered walls. It was so pretty & awakened a lifelong passion in me for wallpaper.

WHEN WE got married, 'Hubby' & I spent our first 2 days up there in Nana's house. On Sunday morning I took my 'fella' up to meet Rosie. When I went to introduce him she said "Oh, hello Tony" & laughed at my expression. "He is my butcher from Fairfield" she said, "You have a nice young man there". 'Small world', as the saying goes.

I STILL have the nice man, just not so young anymore. The first gift we received that morning as man & wife was a spoon for the tea caddy & it is still there, 52 years & many pots of tea later. God bless Rosie, a real lady.

I HAVE lately developed a curious thing, forgetting stuff. Is this laziness, an age thing, or just a too-darn-tired thing?

I WAS horrified, not to say embarrassed, when I forgot to pick up my grandsons from the school bus one day. Luckily our driver takes them back to school & they ring you if this happens. The boy's said "Oh, granny forgets things all the time". Well I will not do so again!

SO ANOTHER year flown by, a year of flood & fire, sadness for some & new arrivals for others...and Christmas! My best present this year was a wonderful surprise visit by my sister. We have not had a Christmas together for 20 years. We had a wonderful week together. We toured around & saw a few of the touristy things that I never seem to do, we saw an amazing gallery of wilderness photographic prints up near Cradle Mountain. It is really worth a visit, & also a small Lavender distillery. A week is not long enough time to see very much. Over here even 3 weeks is not long enough to see much of this top end, let alone the rest of the Island.

MY GARDEN is in need of some serious attention, pruning, weeding (of course), mowing & a lot of winter damage. My little log bridge over the fishpond collapsed. My grandson, young Charlie said "I will buy you a new one granny with my pocket money". He is 6 & came back the next day with two dollars for the bridge. We got one & we call it Charlie's bridge.

P.S. NO fish were hurt by the falling bridge, but a couple of herons caused a bit of carnage. "Damned guts of birds", said Charlie.

AND SO that's it from Tassie, Happy New Year to all & bye for now,

~ Bev Cooper

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BLACKWOOD COMMUNITY REFUGE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FIRE REFUGE

About Blackwood's new CFA Station and Community Fire Refuge

The co-located CFA Station and Community Fire Refuge is the first of its kind in Australia and incorporates the latest designs and safety specifications.

Where is Blackwood's new Community Fire Refuge?

The refuge is part of the new Blackwood CFA Station and is located on the corner of Greendale-Trentham Road and Terrill Street.



When should I go to the Community Fire Refuge?

When there is significant fire in the immediate area and your plans have failed and you don't have any other survival options.

Who are Community Fire Refuges for?

People who find themselves in the immediate Blackwood area and whose own fire plans have failed. Pets and livestock can't be taken in to a Community Fire Refuge. The priority is keeping people alive.

Will the emergency services be there?

There is no guarantee that the emergency services will be at the refuge. The refuge has been designed to be operated by the community.

When will a Community Fire Refuge open?

The refuge will only be available for use as a last resort when fire is threatening the local community. The emergency services will advise if the Community Fire Refuge is available for use. The refuge is first and foremost an operational CFA Station. It is NOT a drop-in centre on a hot day when there are no fires.

How will I know when a Community Fire Refuge is open?

It will be on stand-by to open on days with a fire danger rating of Severe, Extreme and Code Red. The refuge will only be opened if there is a serious fire threat in the local area. You should monitor your local conditions and know where to go for emergency information. Information is available through local radio, television, VicEmergency at www.emergency.vic.gov.au, social media and the Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) on 1800 240 667.

If I am the first one at a Community Fire Refuge, what do I do?

1. Press the entry button at the entry door and follow the voice instructions. If there is a significant fire threat and the emergency services have activated the fire refuge, you will be able to enter.
2. Enter the Community Fire Refuge and immediately go to the cabinet where there is a red light flashing.
3. Inside this cabinet is information for you, including instructions on a series of simple jobs to be completed.



What should I take with me to the refuge?

Take only the most essential items such as medication and important documentation.

What should I wear to the refuge?

If you find yourself in a bushfire emergency we strongly advise you wear protective clothing made from natural fibres.

Where do I park my car?

Parking within 15 metres of the refuge is prohibited. Burning cars create very high levels of radiant heat and if parked too close to the refuge could threaten its safety. Car parking is available on the streets around the refuge. Given its location, there is no practical area or land available for a designated car park. Do not park your car in an area that will block roads.

Remember, travelling to a refuge when there is fire in the landscape on busy, smoky and sometimes blocked roads will be dangerous.

For more information www.firecommissioner.vic.gov.au

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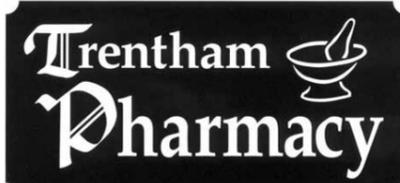


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BEYOND BLACKWOOD...

WHAT IS CHIPA ?

CHIPA is our nickname and we are the newest photography club to be established in Australia; Central Highlands Imaging & Photographic Association, Inc.

This new photography club has been established by a group of enthusiasts who want to have fun with photography and learn new skills at the same time .

The President of CHIPA, Mr Ron Joosten, stated this week that "this is an exciting time for CHIPA and quite a development for photography clubs in general as our emphasis will be on providing our members with a fun environment in which to learn and develop new skills. We also plan to hold Club competitions where judging will be sensitive and designed to encourage each of our members to get the best out of their equipment."



Mr. Joosten also said that, as a real first for photographic clubs, images captured by cameras in smart phones and tablets will be permitted and special competitions for this highly popular form of 'phoneography' would be part of the 2014 syllabus. He also said that new members to CHIPA will find a friendly environment where people who are new to photography will be mentored by more experienced photographers. "It does not matter what type of camera you use, if it takes photos, that is all that is required"

Each month we will hold a workshop focusing on a specific aspect of photography. "The best way to learn is 'to do' so we encourage our members to bring their cameras along to every meeting so that they can practice what we are learning." The workshops will cover a variety of topics such as 'macro', 'high speed drops' and post production, and are designed to improve the confidence and knowledge of our members.

Meetings will be held at 7pm on the 4th Friday of each month (except December) at the Gordon Public Hall, 68 Main Road, Gordon.

Mr. Joosten went on to say that "CHIPA's inaugural meeting will be held on the February 28, and we invite members, prospective members and those interested in learning more about photography to join us, bring their cameras and participate in our free workshop on portrait photography".

For further information and news about CHIPA please visit our website www.chipa.org.au or email info@chipa.org.au

Trentham & Districts

Community Bank® Branch Bendigo Bank

The next round of the Community Investment Program for Trentham & Districts Community Bank® Branch will once again be open for applications throughout the month of March.

To assist organisations that are considering submitting applications this year, a one hour workshop will be held at Trentham Neighbourhood Centre on March 4 2014 at 7.30pm. Attendees will be taken through the Community Investment Program Application Form in detail to provide you with the essentials for completing the application.

This is an opportunity for community members to discuss any proposed applications, discover what is required to be included with the application & how to best complete your application. Members of community groups within Trentham & the surrounding districts are encouraged to attend.

The workshop will kick off promptly at 7.30pm. Please feel free to arrive 5-10 minutes earlier.

Enquiries: Trentham branch 5424 1608 or Corina Sabo on 0409 866 695.

TRENTHAM PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB



It's time to get out your camera and start capturing those awesome images! Trentham Photography Club is holding its first ever photography exhibition and your photos are just what's required to make it a resounding success.

This inaugural photo exhibition will be held at Trentham Neighbourhood Centre over the same weekend as the Great Trentham Spudfest, commencing with an opening on the evening of Friday May 2 and closing on Sunday May 4.

To keep in line with Spudfest's appreciation of the humble spud, this year's theme is 'Potato Farming'. Use your imagination to draw from a range of scenarios including planting and harvesting, old and new machinery, potato farms, potato farmers, potato plants, shedding and other associated buildings.

All the guidelines for the exhibition, including photo sizes and framing, entry forms and sales, will be available on Trentham Photography Club page at www.trentham.org.au from March 1, 2014. The exhibition is open to primary and secondary school students, Trentham Photography Club members and the general public.

Please direct all enquiries to Sue McBratney on 5424 1773.



MRFS Committee members, Christine Wangarek (left), Peter Hamilton and Lorraine Rutherford, celebrate another fine year of films

MAINTAINING IMPRESSIVE STANDARDS

2013 saw a fine selection of films shown at the monthly meetings of the Macedon Ranges Film Society. Asked to nominate their favourite, members were hard-pressed indeed. Was it that fabulously-portrayed version of Cole Porter's life in the film *De-Lovely*? Or the moving story of a Palestinian widow defending her property in the thoughtful film, *The Lemon Tree*? Then again, who was not uplifted by the hilarious end-of-year offering of Danny Kaye's *The Court Jester*?

This year will not disappoint, & kicks off on February 12 with energy, humour & a slice of Australian & Vietnamese history in the 2012 film, *The Sapphires*. Set in 1968, it presents the true story of four young & very talented female Aboriginal singers who start out small, but their career, managed somewhat haphazardly by an English DJ they pick up in a pub, ensures that greater things are in store. Entertaining U.S. troops in Vietnam means the girls experience a mixture of liberation & joy as their talent is acknowledged, followed by terror as their previously innocent view of life is severely tested when the real ramifications of war hit home.

Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday monthly at 7pm in Woodend. Film notes are provided & supper afterwards is kindly supplied by our members. New members must make initial contact by emailing mrffilmsociety@gmail.com or phoning Lorraine on 5427 0921 or Christine on 5429 5452.

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TRENTHAM EASTER ART & CRAFT SHOW

The Annual Trentham Easter Art & Craft Show will be on again from 18th to April 21, so we hope all the artisans are thinking about their works for entry, as it will come quickly once the rush and excitement of Christmas is over.

The 2013 Show attracted over 2000 visitors, & 327 entries, with 58 pieces being sold, with an ever increasing interest (& sales) in the Craft section. Funds from last year's show have been used to install a Gallery Hanging system in the Mechanics Hall.

The judges this year will be Mark Payne for Art (formally of the "Artist's Muse" in Trentham) & Helen McRae for Craft (see Helen at her "textile creations" shop, "Jargon" in Trentham)

Entry forms will be sent out to all Artists on our mailing list at the end of January, entries close Wed April 2.

Opening night is Thurs April 17 when the awards will be announced & presented. Works will be available for sale from 7.30pm, along with supper & drinks (cost \$15pp). All welcome!

Entry enquiries to Dorothy 54241813- tawnyfrogmouth@hotmail.com
General enquiries Jill 54241483- jillmccallum@live.com

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Please do not hesitate to contact me on 9743 9825 or by email don.nardella@parliament.vic.gov.au should you have any matters you wish to discuss.

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from the desk of our shire:

HAVE YOUR SAY ON HIKE & BIKE

Interested in hiking & biking in Moorabool Shire? If so, Moorabool Shire Council is interested in hearing from you.

Council has endorsed its Draft Hike & Bike Strategy & it will be on public exhibition until February 14, 2014 for people to inspect & have their say.

Moorabool Shire Council Mayor, Cr Paul Tatchell, said the Draft Hike & Bike Strategy would provide the strategic direction for planning & development of the hike & bike network throughout the Shire.

"This strategy will provide the strategic basis to guide Council in its decision making for the future development, provision, management, maintenance, community education & marketing of hike & bike networks to support both recreation & transport needs of Moorabool Shire residents & visitors," Cr Tatchell said.

A range of community engagement & consultation was undertaken to identify community perspectives on current issues & priorities in relation to the development of a Hike & Bike Strategy & network for Moorabool Shire. The consultation completed involved:

- Resident surveys
- Engagement at the Council's Health & Wellbeing Expo
- Consultation workshop/meeting with Bacchus Marsh & District Trails Advisory Committee
- Public submissions process, including an invitation to all Reserve Committees of Management to identify actions for the development of a strategy
- Key stakeholder consultation
- Councillor workshops.

Interested people are encouraged to take the time to have a look through the document, either at one of council's customer service offices in Ballan, Darley or Lerderberg Library, or download it from www.moorabool.vic.gov.au or www.haveyoursaymoorabool.com.au.

Submissions can be made in writing by obtaining a submission form online or in person.

For more information, phone Council's Recreation Development Unit on 5366 7100.

BLACKWOOD & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

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www.blackwoodvictoria.com

from Catherine's Desk

JANUARY SCHOOLKIDS BONUS TO BE THE LAST

In January, 9,500 local families received the first instalment of Labor's SchoolKids Bonus to help them meet the cost of getting their children ready for the new school year but Tony Abbott wants this to be the last, & has introduced legislation to repeal the payment.

Federal Member for Ballarat, Catherine King, said, while parents will appreciate how helpful the Schoolkids Bonus has been, they'll be asking Tony Abbott why he wants to take it away.

"Parents work hard to meet the costs of their children's education, ensuring they can get the best education possible, however items such as school uniforms, shoes, textbooks, camps & excursions are expensive," Ms King said.

"The Schoolkids Bonus helps families lighten the load with payments of \$410 a year for each child in primary school, & \$820 a year for each child in secondary school.

"At a time when family budgets can be tight, this is much-needed relief for families as they get their children ready to go back to school.

"The parents of over 17,000 local students in primary & secondary school will be wondering why Tony Abbott wants to scrap assistance for low & middle income families struggling to meet the costs of their children's education.

"This is another cruel cut from a government that doesn't care about cost-of-living pressures for local families or our children's education."

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BLACKWOOD 89 Simmons Reef Rd

One of Blackwood's renown holiday cottages overlooking the Lerderberg Gorge. Comprising 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large north facing living area. The property sits on around 2.55 acres over five titles.
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BLACKWOOD 4 Wall St

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BLACKWOOD Myrtleford House

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BLACKWOOD 29 Golden Point Rd

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BLACKWOOD 12 Recreation Reserve

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NEWBURY 564 Trentham Rd

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BLACKWOOD 8 Recreation Reserve

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