



April ~ May '16 vol 7 ~ issue 8:6



Simon from the Merchant supplies refreshments & coffees for the CERT Australia Day clean-up effort. (read more CERT update p10)



### Windfall for local groups

George Stockdale (pictured above with Blackwood Reunion organiser Donna Matheson) has announced that the entire funds held for the Blackwood Bowling club have been disbursed as follows: Blackwood CERT \$5,000, Blackwood CFA \$5,000, Blackwood Cricket Club \$5,000, with the remaining (appx.) \$26,000 going toward the renovation of the tennis courts (with a possible inclusion of basketball facilities). Look out for flyers in your mail detailing the reinstatement of the Blackwood Tennis Club & the upcoming public meeting. Get your racquets out, people!

Thank-you, George Stockdale & the late Jack Rayner, who, along with the community, generated these funds many years ago. It's wonderful to see them being put to such great use.

*LEFT: Aidan from the Victorian Historical Mine Shaft Chasers. "It's worth remembering that, only a few generations ago, a bright & able boy his age may have been working these mines." Read article page 22.*



### EDITOR'S THOUGHTS...

Hey there Blackwoodians, Brrrr, after an unpredictable season of heat & rain followed by oppressive humidity, the cold is once again settling in. Bushfire season is behind us &, driving into Blackwood, visitors are welcomed by the haze of smoke from warming fires.

2016 is set to be the year of elections. The 2016 US Presidential Primaries are in full swing. Bets are on for when the date of the Australian election will be announced – will it be a double dissolution – & if that's not enough to keep track of, our local council elections are set for later this year. Having a strong local council is crucial for small towns like ours, so keep an eye on commercial media to stay informed.

With 2016 Easter coming early, this issue is jam-packed, with lots of events & happenings around town. We had so many photos that we would have loved to use but, due to advertising being low this issue, we couldn't add a further page especially because adding 1 page means adding 4. To break-even we need to have at least 30% paid ads so, if you know of someone who would like to do business with Blackwoodians, please refer them to our pricing structure & readership on p20 or send them our website link <http://www.theblackwoodtimes.com.au>.

It's great to hear the hall floor is pulled up ready to be replaced! What a shame we couldn't get any photos of the hard working volunteers! CERT has been fund-raising like crazy for their new garage, the inaugural Great Blackwood reunion was held over the Labour Day weekend. The Easter Carnival is done & dusted for another year. Whoop, I'm exhausted just thinking about the past 2 months, I'm off for a nanna nap! Bye for now!

~ Jinny Coyle



Easter Carnival Queen, Debbie Bridger, is pleasantly surprised by the size of the King's (Karl Church's) speech.

Thank you our HANDS-UP helpers – you are the reason we're able to keep publishing... (along with our regular contributors of course!)

<b>Jimmy Olsen played by...</b>	<b>Brendan Hehir</b>
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### Eulogy for Unita Sheila Cox (Auntie Nita)

Monday February 15, 2016

Condensing a life of 92 years into a few minutes has been an onerous task, hopefully my remarks will give you a glimpse of the enigma that is Auntie Nita.

Imagine, if you will, a sweet & genteel little lady sitting around enjoying afternoon tea with other ladies of a similar ilk, dressed in their "Sunday best" & speaking in whispers about things of no real consequence – this was not Auntie Nita!

Auntie Nita was sweet, she was small in stature, she did enjoy a cup of tea with her very select but diverse group of friends who she spent time with; being well presented was a pre-requisite to going out, clothing was clean & ironed, hair permed regularly, lipstick on & teeth always in ... but she also had a sense of humour, a determined spirit, was strong willed & very resourceful.

Being a Norgate by birth meant she was born with a stubbornness that would remain with her throughout her life, to the very end in fact!

The few diary entries that remain from the last couple of years show that, although she was often ill, she was determined to overcome the headaches, dizziness, weakness & "shakes" she regularly suffered from ... she wrote: "Hope to get over this nasty thing I have. It can't be old age, picked it up probably, it is easily done."

And, on the Monday of her 2nd week at the Ballarat Base Hospital, Stephen was phoned late into the evening to advise that she had been moved to Palliative Care, as they did not expect her to be able to fight through the night, but, she didn't pass away until after lunchtime Friday – 4 days later!

Stephen's earliest memories of Auntie Nita, were of a skinny lady who visited 3 or 4 times a year to catch up with her mother & other family at the Plant Farm.

She would often have to commence walking the 8km to Barry's Reef (from Trentham) due to the ride that had been arranged not turning up; I believe Dennis "may" have been the cause of those adventures.

When in Melbourne, on the odd occasion, Stephen would visit her on the 5th floor of Buckley & Nunn where she worked as a Switchboard Operator.

During the 1970's, whilst living in Richmond, frequent train strikes meant walking to work & the floods of that time meant walking home – in bare feet!

Auntie Nita loved & trusted Stephen, she recorded: "This huge book (a diary) was given to me by Stephen, who is a bit of an angel" & on another occasion she went to the physio with neck issues & said: "Neck is sore but it will feel fine tomorrow, am sure, Steve said so."

Medical Dictionaries were her first port-of-call whenever illness struck & she thought she was suffering from many ailments that caused her a lot of worry & stress but turned out to not be whatever she had self-diagnosed.

At school, a 20 minute walk from home in Bayswater, Auntie Nita excelled at spelling, never getting less than 100%! This explains her latter hobby of perusing the Herald-Sun newspaper to look for spelling & grammatical errors & to cut out articles of interest.

During recess & lunch breaks, she enjoyed skipping with friends; school holidays were usually spent at home with a once-a-year trip to the city to go to the "pictures".

Future years saw her attend dances for entertainment; she has always enjoyed sewing – household items such as curtains, chair & cushion covers as well as clothing alterations & repairs using her well-loved Jones treadle sewing machine. She has always been a keen knitter, one of the last items she ever made is a baby beanie, along with a crossword puzzle book which she was working her way through when she had her fall. She was an avid reader & gardener too.

Her retirement & move to Blackwood saw the arrival of a Collie dog named Chloe in her life & later an Australian Terrier named Matthew; she went for long walks in the area & whilst out walking would collect "trinkets" she



found to add to her collection of "odds & ends".

She would also feed kookaburras on the ramp of her cottage, at one time there were 6 of them; magpies were a favourite too, one coming back for several seasons.

Bringing the bins in, after the rubbish & recycling had been collected, was a chore she performed regularly for several households in the area.

Upon moving into Trentham, a cockatoo became her friend & used to tap on the back door for attention.

Auntie Nita managed to lock herself out of her unit on more than one occasion but recorded one incident in her diary; she had attempted to contact Dennis & Stephen to get a spare key & then wrote: "I walked back & came in the back door which is always open it seems & never locked."

She avoided Senior Citizens & other clubs & organisations like the plague but sometimes wondered why she was always alone & lonely – a bit of a Catch 22 situation really.

Her bank book, cheque book, cash and/or purse were often "missing in action"; she would hide them so they were safe but could never remember where and, in latter days, often thought someone had taken them. She recorded one such incident in her diary: "Put a few lousy dollars away, top of bed." But it could have been anywhere – from under cushion covers, in a tissue box, between the sheet & mattress – anywhere at all; always a mystery to be solved – after she passed away, we were meeting here with Angus when Stephen received a phone call from the hostel saying they had located a purse in her room ... between the mattresses! The purse is with her now, along with her glasses & her watch, so she need never worry about losing them again!

When it became obvious that there was a need for greater care, Auntie Nita moved to the Trentham Aged Care Hostel ... & was not at all happy with the arrangement; every day she would pack her clothes up in her bags ready to leave; she did this for weeks on end, so we had to eventually take the bags away.

She still retained a desire for independence throughout & recorded: "Thought they might let me go & do a bit of shopping but, no, you have to have someone with you it seems!" And, of course, she would write out shopping lists on tiny pieces of paper that either she, or the person taking her or doing the shopping for her, would lose; Panadol was a regular request (not that it was ever purchased, she just forgot that it was given to her) along with writing pads, hair supplies & barley sugar.

She also recorded random phone numbers & other information she would hear on the radio on various pieces of paper she kept for a period of time before discarding; she regularly discarded old photos & diaries too.

Much of what I learned about Auntie Nita came from other sources – her diary, family & friends – because she was such a private person, only occasionally relating stories from her own life, such as when she was stationed in Sydney as part of the Army & "got into mischief" but she never did tell me what the mischief was! After her passing, I learned from a friend that she & her good friend Val, got into a LOT of mischief ... again, the "type" of mischief was not forthcoming!

Some of her other diary entries include: "What that is about, no idea.", "92 – what a nasty birthday!", "April Fool's Day, what a load of tripe!", "Went to get the paper but it had been robbed (the paper shop I mean.)", "Time to start making use of this great book (her diary). Couldn't find it at first, it was in the same place as always" (On the table in front of her, no less.)

And, finally, "Watching the news is bad, misfortunes & murders, I never watch it if I can help it, very depressing."

It was both an honour & a privilege to have known Auntie Nita, to laugh & cry as we talked & reminiscence in the last 2 weeks &, to be there for her as she passed into the next life; she is a beautiful soul who will never be forgotten & will be loved forever by those of us who knew her.



**the BLACKWOOD TIMES info**

The BLACKWOODTIMES invites submissions from the community. If you're at a local event please take a photo or two & write a few lines to share in our community news. Deadlines are as follows

Advertisers book space	May 15
Regular Contributors, Features & Items of Interest, Community Groups & Clubs	May 15
Display Ad Artwork, Gig & Events Guide	May 20
Late breaking News	May 20

**NO late submissions will be accepted.** Please email submissions, display ads & articles to [editor@theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au](mailto:editor@theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au) or post to The Blackwood Times c/o Blackwood PO, 3458.

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• BLACKWOOD EASTER CARNIVAL 2016 •



Another brilliant, exciting carnival chock-a-block with activities, games, contests, stalls ... thank heavens for the coffee!

NOTE: Best in show dog this year was a black bunny (see right). Last years best dog, from memory, was a goat! Perhaps next year, we'll bring Fido, our carpet snake!



• BLACKWOOD EASTER CARNIVAL 2016 •



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## VALE JOHN DAVIES

Blackwood's magnificent forests lost a friend on March 12 with the passing of John Davies.

Conservation was John's passion & this played out in his various community commitments including being the "encyclopedia" of Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group.

A learned scientist, John not only knew the common names of everything growing around us, he also knew the scientific Latin names.

For rank amateur Landcare members, his knowledge & patience was invaluable.

"Native or weed John?" was a common question. Sometimes the answer would be more thorough than it needed to be, but that was John – a 100% sort of guy.

Most Blackwoodians would have been oblivious to his thorough guardianship of the town from invasive weeds.

In one memorial example, John spent (literally) months on his hands & knees weeding out the vicious galenia from the sports ground after the council had top-dressed the surface with infected soil. Galenia has ruined much of the pastoral areas around Bacchus Marsh, but has yet to infect Blackwood.

Readers might also be surprised that John was the driving force behind the creation of the Whipstick walking track which loops its way through the forest to the west of the town.

John organised the grants, the Green Army labour & personally maintained the track. Blackwood Landcare still has some residual funds earmarked to continue this work.

His dedication to our local environment is an inspiration to us all. We are all saddened by his passing.

~ Shane Scanlan, Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare

**POSTSCRIPT:** Landcare has approach the environment department (DELWP) requesting that the Whipstick Walking Track be re-named the John Davies Walking Track.

Local departmental officials have offered support for the concept & have agreed to work with us towards this objective.



Organised by CERT this year, the Clean-up Australia day (Mar 6) produced piles & bags of rubbish including ½ a car (well, almost).

John had attended Christian meditation for a number of years & during that time we all came to know John very well as we shared our week with each other & then responded on a personal level to a reading from the Bible.

These are the things we learnt about John:

- The person he admired, loved & respected most in the world was his daughter, Emily. We came to know Emily well as we heard of her studies, her career, the shared happiness when she married Andrew & the absolute joy of welcoming Benjamin, John's grandson, to the world. We realised how blessed Emily was to have a father who would have made her always feel so treasured.

- John loved the bush. He made it his business to preserve & protect the native vegetation. Being in the bush inspired, soothed & restored him.

- John enjoyed people. He would talk to anyone. He had no prejudices. He enjoyed the company of young people & revelled in buying books for them & chatting about their lives. He would visit elderly friends & help them out whenever he could. John was a conduit for people to meet others. He would make introductions to bring others together if he had noted a common interest. But most importantly John made time for people. Visits weren't rushed or a duty. He cared enough to be there.

- John enjoyed studying the gospels but would become exasperated at times at how convoluted the writing was & how obscure the meanings could sometimes be. He thought it was about time they were rewritten in a clearer & more contemporary style.

- John was a man of integrity & honesty. He was a hard worker. He gave of himself.

- He defended the underdog, even from a young age. John told us of an incident when he intervened in the school yard. Several older boys had surrounded another & were bullying him, without hesitation John stepped in even though he was younger & smaller - as he spoke about it he still seemed amazed that he got away with it. John continued to live his life in this way. He stood up for those in our community who needed support & when he believed they weren't getting a fair go.

John cared little for worldly possessions, his needs were few. He liked life to be simple so that he could concentrate on the important things.

- He was very independent & self reliant. He was resourceful & practical. John was knowledgeable about many things, much of which was self taught.

- We think that John died in the way that he would have wished, not causing a fuss or inconvenience to anyone & with quiet dignity. He will be greatly missed.

~ Robyn & Walter Zanon

Not sure how many games John played for the club, but he was a regular player in the mid to late 90's. It was also around this time that he was an active member of the committee & was very hands-on with maintenance at the ground, organising working bees & preparing for the upgrade of the Mick Healey pavilion. John erected the scoreboard at the ground which is still in use today. John was also the junior coach for 5 years in the early 2000's. He was really committed to this role, took it very seriously & made sure all the kids had fun & got a fair go. This was a huge commitment by John as he didn't have any of his own children in the team, but treated them all as his own. He would transport all of the cricket gear to the away games in his trusty white van & as many kids as he could fit in legally! John was a very important figure at the Blackwood Cricket Club during this period & his service will always be remembered.

As a side note, John got his nickname of Johnny Bop from when table tennis was played in the Mechanics Hall & John's style looked like he was bopping along, jumping up & down on the spot.

His regular drink after cricket was a "beer with a dash" (of lemonade).

RIP Johnny Bop

~ Blackwood Cricket Club

Most eulogies I have heard are the story of a person's life, however as Dad did so much & was involved in so many things I decided to try & condense it down into a series of random facts about Dad.

- Born in Armadale in 1943 to Edith & Ronald Davies
- Was named after his grandfather John Davies who was named after HIS father John Davies
- Has a sister, Patricia, & brothers Geoffrey, Philip & Alan
- Studied at Burwood High School before finishing his education at Dookie Agricultural College
- Was awarded a Diploma of Agricultural Studies
- Worked at the State Research Farm in Werribee for 30 years
- Helped invent a 'rust resistant strain of wheat'
- Used to bring home orphaned lambs that we would bottle feed
- Could shear a sheep using only an old pair of manual shears
- Lived in Blackwood for 30 years, before that he was in Bacchus Marsh & before that in Carlton
- Loved being outdoors, growing things, fixing things & the bush
- Was a keen photographer, & used to develop his own photographs
- Probably one of the only people left in Australia that was still using a camera with film in it
- Owned a kayak
- Always drove around with his kayak racks on his car 'just in case' he decided to go kayaking
- When last questioned about said kayaking - couldn't recall the last time he had actually been
- Used to drive at 100km in the 110 zone of the freeway because he got better fuel economy
- Refused to remove the kayak racks from the car, which would have increased his fuel economy allowing him to drive at 110
- Would often ask me how many miles to the gallon I was getting from in my car
- Was always surprised when I couldn't tell him the answer
- Loved camping & although he bought himself a new tent, still held on to his old canvas A frame tent from the 70's
- Loved to shop at Aldi, after I introduced him to the supermarket over 10 years ago
- Would ask me every time I gave him a present if I 'got it at Aldi'?
- Loved classical music

- Preferred to listen to it on his record player, because you couldn't beat the sound quality
- Wouldn't let me convert his records to MP3s because the sound quality wasn't as good
- Had a massive record & CD collection & would always be listening to it with the sound blaring
- Played the flute & the recorder
- Was teaching himself how to play the keyboard - which he bought... at Aldi!
- Loved watching the TV & movies, the last time he stayed with me he was up 'till 1am watching Batman
- Was probably the only person in the world who drank Nescafe Blend 43 by choice
- When given the choice of a cappuccino or an instant coffee would take the instant
- Liked cricket & football
- Played cricket for the Blackwood team when he was in his 50s & did a few seasons as 12th man, decided to retire gracefully & found his true talent helping out with the scoreboard
- Coached the Blackwood Junior Cricket Team at one point
- Was involved in Landcare, Green Corps, Weed Eradication Projects, Wildflower group & many more
- Attended meditation group in this church
- Loved living in Blackwood & the bush & would get a bit of cabin fever if he was in the city too long
- Although he had gone grey in his twilight years he was a natural blonde
- Sported an awesome beard in the 70's that would be the envy of any hipster

- Wouldn't grow a beard again when I asked him too because it was too itchy
- Could demolish a 2kg tin of Christmas shortbread in a few weeks
- Would only ever eat 1 piece of toast for breakfast because if he ate 2 he said he would 'get fat'
- Has 3 priests conducting his funeral because they were all his friends
- For someone who lived alone he loved to have a chat, there was no such thing as a quick phone call with Dad
- Would always end every phone call with "I love you"
- Was an incredibly sensitive, kind & caring man who would do anything to help others
- Was a much loved & loving, father, grandfather, father-in-law, son, brother, uncle & friend
- Will be greatly missed by me, our family, friends & the Blackwood Community

I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their love, support & friendship for Dad & to thank especially the members of the Blackwood community for their help over the last few weeks.

~ Emily Braithwaite (daughter)

## A True Blackwood Man

John Davies had qualities we well knew, Honesty, kindness, high integrity too. A shy man of strength and high moral standing, A high-achiever, but humble, Never one for grandstanding. With John Davies, you knew and came to expect, He'd command and give, in return, deep respect. He would help any soul, always pulling his weight, And pitch in for neighbours and strangers and mates. For John was a giver, and gave all he could, To the place that he loved, where he lived – his Blackwood. Farewell, John, we'll miss you and whenever we can, Raise a smile in our hearts for a true Blackwood man.

~ Ewan Cameron



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: After almost 10 years petitioning for it, Blackwood finally has mobile.

L-R: Bill Mundy (Area General Manager, Telstra Country Wide), Cr Pat Toohey (Woodlands Riding) & Catherine King MP officially launch the tower.

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### HOW'S THE WEATHER BEEN?

MONTH & YEAR	Rainfall (mm)	Rainfall historical average (mm)	Temp monthly min (deg C)	Temp monthly max (deg C)	Temp average daily max (deg C)	Temp average daily min (deg C)	Temp average for month (deg C)
Jan '16	*20.6	50	5.1	39.5	27.2	11	17.9
Feb '16	*22.1	54	4.6	37.4	27.8	10.4	17.7

### BUDDY COULD YOU LEND A HAND?

~ by Ewan Cameron



I think most people would agree that we all should try to give a lending hand to someone who is down on their luck or who is feeling a little lost in the world. When my son recently met a very young fellow who was indeed lost & in need of some accommodation & care, he allowed the young guy into our home. We were impressed at once & so Faye organised a care plan that would meet his needs as well as fitting in with the needs of the other members of the family. A fine young man he is, too.

What is apparent on first meeting him is his warmth & friendly disposition at all times. He loves company & engaged at once on first meeting each person in the household. He was at once likeable, not the least because of his very good manners & need for requited affection. In no time at all, we all took a strong liking to him & he liked being around every person in the house. In particular, he formed a very quick bond with Faye. He just loves his daily walks around the garden with her & takes note of all that she tells him about the plants. Then he will walk off on his own, inspecting every corner of the garden until he is satisfied everything is in order. As he is naturally inquisitive, he will often take a great deal of time to examine one feature of the garden before hurrying back to discuss a point or two, then saunter off to make yet another discovery. The young ones do try to explore & find out the answers to everything, don't they?

This young man's appearance is handsome & athletic. He has long legs & strong arms but we were surprised to find that he has neither good balance nor confidence with heights. It is comforting when someone looks you right in the face as they talk to you & that is what he does. The young guy always appears so earnest & grateful. He has learned that gratitude will carry him far. We have had our houseguest for more than 3 months now. In that time he has holidayed in Blackwood with us & although he is a city lad, he absolutely loved the experience. One day, when Bella the neighbour's dog visited, we thought he might be very nervous but to the contrary he delighted in the experience. This wasn't totally unexpected as Bella has a kind disposition & seems to love everybody. It's amazing the effect a friendly dog has on everybody & in no time at all, our new visitor & Bella had become firm friends. However, all was not as well as it seemed.



You see our loveable, grateful, well-mannered friend has one problem that saddens us. He is totally devoted to us but he gets anxious about competition with others of his kind. By now of course, you've guessed this poor fellow is feline. We are devastated that we cannot keep him because with all the love & devotion he displays, our female felines display fear & run madly away at first sight of him. He, being a young male & despite being de-sexed & fully immunized, sets off in pursuit. At any other time he would spend hours on a lap & follow his benefactor around at heel like a puppy. But he strictly needs to be in a one-cat household. He seems partial to a friendly dog though.

It is with a heavy heart that I have to say that our handsome friend needs a helping hand to enjoy the remainder of his life. But if you are the one to offer your hand the rewards will be many; a totally devoted friend who enjoys walks, conversation, mutual snoozes & play. Buddy, could you lend a hand? If so, you can ask about him & perhaps even get to meet him if you ring 0413 030 788.

• **TRENTHAM** rainfall recording by Bureau of Meteorology as Blackwood BOM is closed.

**WE ARE** experiencing a very dry start to the year & desperately need rain.

~ by Don Owen

### AN OLD PIANO FINDS ITS VOICE



**THE PUB** Piano had been looking sad & neglected for many years now. The old Thurmer found its voice only occasionally with a frail tinkling in the dead of night, courtesy of one of the hotel's resident ghosts. But a piano needs more attention than the occasional haunting.

**AND SO** it's gone to live with Fish, who will clean it, tune it and, most importantly, play it. He says there won't be any major restoration & the old girl will "keep all her missing bits".

**FISH CAN** play several instruments & has always wanted a piano. At the age of 6, he was offered one for \$20 but his family couldn't afford it. He recently blew a \$100 deposit on a piano that never showed up. Then Darren, Darren & Michael from the pub said, "Give this one a good home."

**"CANCER TOOK** my voice, but didn't take my desire for music," says Fish, writing on his electronic tablet. "I'm looking for a teacher. You can text me on 0418 593491."

**PLEASE HELP** Fish give old Thurmer a voice.

**OH,** & will someone advise him on the eerie tinkling at night. He's losing sleep.

### MAKING HISTORY FUN

There's a lot to learn about this town, & the gents from the Post Office & Pub have teamed up with local experts to provide a fascinating education through their hands-on guided tours & events.

**Township Historical Tour:** Explore the characters from our busy, & colourful, gold years.

**Gold Tour:** Learn panning & sluicing from the experts. Learn how to "read" the river & the local geology.

**Ghost tour:** The old Blackwood Hotel (and mortuary) has a reputation as one of the most haunted pubs about. Night tours. Will it be a hands-on tour? Oooh, I hope not.

**Bushranger Shindig:** Have a rollicking night with some very dangerous locals & a hearty meal.

Pick up a detailed brochure from the Pub or Post Office. All tours can include a meal at the Blackwood Hotel.



### Historical Photos of Unknown people – can you name them? from the Blackwood Historical Society's collection

Over the years many Blackwood photos have been sent to the Historian in the hope that someone can recognise the people and give them names. Some were old and on glass negatives such as the ones shown here.



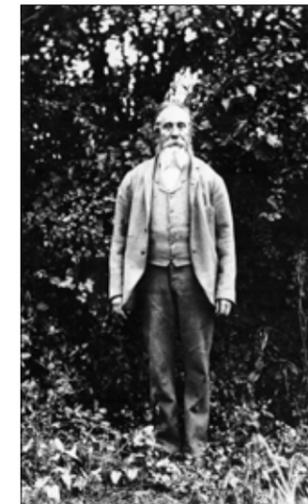
Wedding possibly taken in Blackwood

In view of the recent successful Blackwood reunion & coming Easter Carnival the hope is someone may be able to tell us who the people are.

These 3 Blackwood photos were from a box of glass negatives the historian had prints taken from.



Compiled by Margot Hitchcock, Historian for the Blackwood & District Historical Society. Jan. 2016



From Sandy Ross, Photographer

These three photos were given to the Society by the Seaborn family who once lived in Andersons house, Barrys Reef.

Researched by Margot Hitchcock from her forthcoming book 'The History and Pioneers of Blackwood', hopefully to be published soon. Other books published by Margot Hitchcock – "Aspects of Early Blackwood", Some History of Simmons Reef, Blackwood" and "The Billy Pincombe Tragedy". See – [www.blackwoodpublishing.com](http://www.blackwoodpublishing.com). For help with information on Blackwood ancestors contact [margothitchcock@bigpond.com](mailto:margothitchcock@bigpond.com)



CANBERRA to check out an exhibition at the Museum in Canberra showing indigenous artifacts from the pickings of the British Museum taken as early as from the first fleet.

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Apr 4th & 18th  
May 2nd, 16th & 30th



## COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES

### Blackwood All Saint's Anglican Church

The Blackwood church is currently in recess. At this time you are most welcome to join nearby parishes of Christ Church Myrning or Holy Trinity Bacchus Marsh. Rev'd Darrell Couch is still able to assist with pastoral issues & conduct Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals at Blackwood. For details of services at Myrning & Bacchus Marsh including, Cafe Church, Messy Church,

Senior Citizen's Services & Sunday & Wednesday services please see [www.bacchusmarshanglican.org.au](http://www.bacchusmarshanglican.org.au) or contact 5367 5362.

~ Nina Harbison

### Blackwood Academy Revue (BARinc)

The 2nd Blackwood Festival of Music & Culture, last November, was a great success. It was a wonderful weekend of diverse, quality music with workshops in music, dancing & arts & craft - it was fun & inclusive for all ages! The festival featured a number of locals acts, bands from across Australia as well as international performers. The Blackwood Festival is important for bringing local people together as well as attracting visitors to the town who appreciate & love the place as we all do. We would like to thank all our generous sponsors, volunteers & supporters as an event like this would not be possible without everyone's support. We are looking forward to this year's festival on the October 28-30. For updates through the year, check our website - [www.blackwoodfestival.org](http://www.blackwoodfestival.org)

~ Cat Moser

### Blackwood Action Group

Wastewater Project positions to be advertised in April.

~ Brendan Hehir

### CEMP

Draft Community Emergency Management Plan available for comments soon (watch this space)

~ Brendan Hehir

### Blackwood CERT

It's been a busy month for us at Blackwood CERT. We had an excellent turnout of community members eager to help rid our beautiful town of rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day. Although Blackwood itself seemed to be very clean, the main road leading into town was terrible. We collected quite a bit! Thanks to those who participated.

As most of you know, we've been working hard to raise funds to build our new station. So far, we have the go ahead from Telstra, council approval & Vic Roads are allowing us to access via Greendale / Trentham Rd. With fund raising coming from our GoFundMe crowd sourced campaign (<https://www.gofundme.com/BlackwoodCERT>), the donation tins scattered about, a very generous donation from the local bowling club & the highly successful garage sale, it's full steam ahead towards our goal of \$30,000. Over the month of February all proceeds from Trenthams' Cosmopolitan Hotel Friday night meat raffle went to the CERT team ... thanks Cosmo :) At this point, we're almost halfway there! Thank you so much to those who have donated.

We've also been approached by community members who want to help with labour when it comes time to build. How lucky are we? We'll keep you posted on the progression of our new station.

Just a reminder if you do need an Ambulance call 000 & hopefully a CERT team on call can get to you ASAP.

Until next time, take care, from the CERT Team.

**CERT station update:** March 25 marked 2 years that we've been working to secure a spot for our vehicle. A lot of emails, phone calls & meetings have taken place in that time & it seemed at one stage that it would never happen. A few spots were offered & considered, some good, some not so feasible & while we are grateful for the generosity of those who suggested & offered potential locations for our Station, a few criteria had to be met for us to seriously consider moving forward. The nature of what we do demands that we are central to town &

not tucked well into a back block somewhere. Ongoing costs, site grade, lease arrangement, ease of access, etc., etc. all played a part but proximity to the main road was always at the top of the list.

Around a year ago, Telstra was approached with our plan & again, many emails, phone calls & meetings happened before approval was given early Feb. to go ahead. Since then, it's amazing how our team members & the community have stepped up to the task!

I've had a bit of feedback from townfolk who wonder where we're going to put our station. Ok, it's a bit tight, but it'll work & the location really is top notch! When you're standing at the side of the road looking at the exchange building, we're going to occupy the corner to the right of the exchange. We also have approval from Vic Roads to access via Greendale / Trentham Rd. where our sign now stands.

As most of you are aware, we've been working hard to make this happen & at this stage, construction will begin once we've secured enough funds. I'm hesitant to give a date but look for activity sometime this winter.

On behalf of our committee & team members, I'd like to thank you for your help, whether monetary or offers for labour and/or equipment. This truly is a community project.

~ Ivan Johnston

### Blackwood CFA

The CFA estimates that the fire season is 4 weeks more advanced than normal. We are experiencing dry, hot conditions. Brigade has had a busy summer with a number of fires in the Ballarat region. Thankfully with only a few in our patch.

Blackwood appliances have attended fires at Dereel & Mount Bolton as part of District 15 strike teams, while two of our members flew to Tasmania to assist with the fires in late February. Closer to home, a fire on Blue Mount at night had serious potential, but five tankers were quickly on scene & the fire was contained to half an acre.

A dog trapped in a mineshaft was rescued at Barrys Reef with the help of a specialist rescue crew from Bendigo. A very happy dog at the end of the ordeal. (see p11)

The brigade is turning out to a number of smouldering campfires. We attempt to educate campers that they must have water to extinguish their camp fire. If you come across one of these, please call 000 as they have the potential to build into a large fire before they are noticed.

We have had below average rainfall over spring & summer the forest areas are very dry & we ask that people take extra care out in the bush, please be alert & aware.

Please note that the brigade is obliged to inform Police about any illegal burn offs.

We are currently assessing all of the hydrants in town for correct markings & operation as part of our Adopt a Fire Hydrant program where all residents are asked to check for fire hydrants & plugs in their immediate area & keep them mowed so we can easily locate them, if you need further assistance feel free to come up to the station, we are there each Sunday from 9:30am to around noon.

Again members were called upon to assist in another area a long way from home, this time it was Tasmania assisting with the bushfires there that have been burning for quite sometime.

~ Karl Church, CFA member

### Blackwood Committee of Management

The hall is not for hire due to renovations. The floor is being replaced, new equipment is being installed in the kitchen, new toilets & a new water tank.

The hall will due to be finished & for hire again after May.

For further enquiries, please call Elizabeth Hall after 6pm on 53686537 & for caravan park bookings please call Brad or Jenni on 5368 6539.

~ Elizabeth Hall

### Blackwood Cricket Club

The Blackwood Cricket Clubs' Pinks Stumps Day was a great success this year, raising \$2300.00. A BIG thanks to the community for their support & of course all the sponsors, businesses & individuals who donated to the day. Held on February 20 at home, it was the 1st day of play in a 2 dayer against Sunbury. With victory ensuring our place in the Semi Finals, with

special mentions to Luke with a knock of 92runs & Nick a star with the ball bowling 5/37 in the first innings & 8/28 in the second.

The 2015/16 Season finished with a Semi Final loss to Sunbury United at home. The match started promisingly with a 97 run opening knock from Andy & Josh but the bowling quickly got the better of us & we were all out in the first innings for 159. Our bowlers started with a few quick wickets & Nick bowling a 4/34 but Sunbury United crept in front hitting 180 runs. Declaring in the second innings at 204runs, we sent them back in hoping there was enough time left to bowl them out & take the win. But the batting team proved too strong & our season ended at the close of play.

With the passing of John Davies, we pass on condolences to his family. The team would like to give special thanks to all that he contributed over the years, especially the work he did with the juniors. His presence will be missed at home games when he stopped for score & fixture updates & chat with all ... who's gonna drink the Nescafe now?

**PRESENTATION NIGHT** will be held at the Blackwood Pub on Friday April 15 at 6.30pm. 2 course meal: Adults \$30 per head & kids \$15per head RSVP by the 9th of April

Please contact Steve O'Brien on 0488 978 684 or Jodie Bantz on 5386 6428 to confirm your seat.

~ Jodie Bantz

### Blackwood Historical Society

The Blackwood Historical Society Museum was open on the Sunday of the Labour Day weekend & Easter Sunday with an interested attendance.

Margot Hitchcock's 3 books written on the history of Blackwood are available from the Historical Museum, the Post Office & the Garden of St. Erth. For further reading & historical information on Blackwood see the website - [www.blackwoodpublishing.com](http://www.blackwoodpublishing.com).

~ Margot Hitchcock, Historian BDHS

### Blackwood Progress Association

This is a very special thank you to all who helped set up the Blackwood Recreation Ground on Good Friday.

Thanking all who put entries into the Blackwood Easter Parade. Hoping that all enjoyed the Blackwood Easter Carnival & Woodchop this year.

A very special thank you to Genevieve Hall for all the work you did.

~ Judith A. de Groot, Secretary

### Blackwood Senior Citizens

Here we are again with an update from our club which has started off the year quite successfully.

New members would be made most welcome - we start off our day with board games & pool for the men. Then we enjoy a 3 course meal cooked by Lindy, assisted in the kitchen by Deanne. After lunch we play bingo followed by afternoon tea.

Unfortunately we have had quite a few absences in recent weeks - missed on Wednesdays are Ken & Betty Ashton, Linda Cameron and Betty De Weiss, but it is lovely to have our Jackie return.

We wish Di Bridgeman & Bev Bennet a speedy recovery also. We welcome George Stockdale to our luncheon each week.

Our club sponsors the bus that goes to Wendouree on the 3rd Monday monthly picking up at Daylesford, Trentham, Blackwood & Ballan. Our bus coordinator, Bev Herd, arranges monthly outings. We travelled to Lorne for lunch in March. The trip was quite nostalgic but we are hoping that our contribution will help in some way to put some revenue back into their township.

The next outing after that will be to Melbourne where we will visit the Fire Services Museum & Captain Cook's Cottage (cost \$50 BYO). Enquiries Bev Herd 5368 2526.

Until next issue,

~ Regards Barb Sweet (Hon Sec)

### Blackwood Uniting Church

Meditation is on the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month at Blackwood House. All welcome.

~ Robyn Zanon



## RESCUING JACK

by Ross Hall: Blackwood CFA Captain

In February the Blackwood CFA were paged to a confined space rescue; a dog down a mine shaft. The mineshaft was in Barrys Reef, almost opposite Wightmans track. The dog's owner met us on the main road & led us a couple of hundred metres down a gully to the mineshaft, hidden in knee-high bracken. The dog, named Jack, appeared OK & was located about 8m down the shaft, so a ladder rescue was out of the question.

The District 15 duty officer had made the decision to respond, Ballan Rescue & wisely, as it turned out, a specialist crew from Ballarat & the Oscar 1 mine rescue specialists from Bendigo. The Ballarat crew on arrival quickly established that the oxygen level in the bottom of the mine shaft was not enough to sustain a human. Trentham CFA were then responded with extra breathing apparatus equipment. Generators & lights carried down through the bush to the scene. On the arrival of the Oscar 1 mine rescue crew, numerous ropes were laid out & an OzPod metal frame was placed above the mine entrance. Using ropes & pulleys, a firefighter was lowered down the shaft, wearing full breathing apparatus. The safety officer at the top of the shaft reported that there was a lot of tail wagging going on as the rescuer descended.



Within 5 minutes, Jack was in a sling & brought to the top - safe & well.

In total, there were 26 CFA personnel on scene & the whole operation lasted about 2½. You might think that it was overkill for a dog, but it was an excellent training exercise for the specialists & for us observing.

I think that Jack's owners were most impressed.

## A New Logo for our Caravan Park



**WHEN RANGERS** Jenni & Brad approached Daylesford SC with a competition idea for students to design a new logo for our Caravan Park they didn't expect the range & quality of more than 20 entries.

The winning entry was designed by year 10 student Lachlan John & will be used on all future signage & marketing materials for the park.

This issue there have been no reports from Blackwood Cemetery Trust or Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare.

If you would like to let your community know about your organisation, what your focus in the community is & how you would like support, please email Sandy at - [galaxyss@hotmail.com](mailto:galaxyss@hotmail.com). We'd love to hear from you.

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There's no doubt about it, Blackwoodians can even make moving a piano fun! The pub piano is off to its new home with L-R Brendan, Ivan, Max, Richard & Dougie. (see article p8)

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Some sportspeople age gracefully. Others just take up streaking. Above: Easter Woodchop. Above R: Cricket semis Below R: Pink Stumps Day



**WHO WILL WEAR THE EASTER CROWN?**



Henry Hansford, Blackwood resident & World War II veteran, has lived most of his life in Blackwood.

He was born in Lyonville in 1923 (making him 93), & at the tender age of 11 began mining at Dead Horse Gully with his grandfather, James Benjamin Hansford, who lived in Blackwood. At 14 he left to find work in the city, walking to Ballan & then hitching rides from Ballan into the city.

His first job there was breaking in horses at 'Remount', a military organization which supplied horses to the Indian Army. In 1938 he transferred to the Ammunitions Factory in Maribyrnong, but his career there came to an abrupt halt when an incendiary device he was

working on exploded, severely burning his face & arms. Henry spent 3 months in hospital & many more months recovering.

When war broke out, he immediately volunteered for service, giving his age as 21 instead of his real age of 16. Henry says: "I decided it was too bloody dangerous here I might as well join the army!" He joined the 10th Battery artillery & saw active service in the Middle East, the Solomon Islands & New Guinea. He worked for a short time in signals & thereafter drove a tractor pulling heavy artillery guns. Being the only country lad in his unit, initially he was the only one who knew how to drive a truck.

After the war Henry returned to Blackwood & he has lived here ever since. He married Joan Stringer & had 4 children. Henry still lives in the original 1br miner's cottage his grandfather owned, which he enlarged over time to accommodate a growing family.

Many thanks to Henry for drawing the 2016 Easter Carnival Queen & King! (see p2) Henry recently fractured his kneecap in an altercation with a pavement & we wish him a very speedy recovery.

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**GIGS & EVENTS • GIGS & EVENTS**  
**APRIL**

when	what	where
Sun 3	King Maxwell	The Cosmo
Tues 5	Twisted History Ghost Tour	Blackwood Hotel
Sun 10	The Cartwheels	The Cosmo
Thur 14	Dinner with a Bushranger	Blackwood Hotel
Sun 17	Victoriana Gaye	The Cosmo
Sun 24	Slim Dime	The Cosmo

**MAY**

when	what	where
Sun 1	Cat and Clint *	The Cosmo
Sun 8	The Capo Brothers	The Cosmo
Sun 15	Jarrold Shaw and Sarah Wilkinson	The Cosmo
Thur 19	Dinner with a Bushranger	Blackwood Hotel
Sun 22	Kind of Blue Jazz Duo	The Cosmo
Sun 29	Memphis and Benz	The Cosmo

To the best of our knowledge all information correct at time of publication, it is advisable to check times, dates & venues with the organisers.\* Blackwoodian locals



### NATURAL RHYTHM Seeing the Light

by Kathie Strmota

Each morning when you wake, step outside, greet the day & 'see the light'. Why? Humans are light-sensitive beings. Our first exposure to morning light 're-sets the body clock' for each day & aligns time-co-ordinated activities, like the evening release of melatonin (which ensures a good sleep). Sunshine is also a relaxant & mood-lifter. It stimulates serotonin production (enhancing feelings of satisfaction & pleasure) & nitric oxide release (reducing blood pressure), so when you're 'stressed out', take several daily doses of sunshine!

Morning light is high in blue frequencies, which are stimulating, increasing physical energy & mental clarity, & our processing is centred in upper chakras, which manage thought & intuition. The morning is our best time of day for action & achievement, especially when it involves brain challenges, planning & problem-solving.

Middle-day light (11-2) contains the whole spectrum, centred in harmonizing green frequencies. This is the only time when skin receives UVB to produce vitamin D. Our energy has moved down from the head, to focus in the heart chakra, which heightens our ability to experience warmth & connection with our inner being, & the world around us. Now it's time to slow the morning's mad rush, reconnect with ourselves, & appreciate what we've achieved so far. Have a nourishing lunch in the park, alone or in good company, feel the love, & get your daily dose of vitamin D.

By early afternoon, quality time for high mental effort has passed (along with blue light), & our efforts are best put towards body-centred activities, manual labour, & 'no-brainer' tasks, like filing paperwork or routine repairs ... tasks where planning has already been done & you just need to 'follow-through'.

As daytime moves to evening, orange-red frequencies dominate, & energy moves deep into the body & lower chakras. It's time to 'close' the working day, make peace with successes & failures, & let it all go, so you can truly 'come home to yourself'. The warm evening light is not for 'fixing', but simply for 'being', hanging out with yourself, friends & family, totally feeling 'at home', preparing body & spirit for sleep.

Ironically, at this time when we should be turning inward, leaving the world 'outside', & producing melatonin (our sleep-time hormone), most people switch on lights, watch TV & use computers. These items cast light dominated by blue frequencies, & act like a 'spanner in the works' of our body's time-keeping. Natural morning blue light appropriately shuts down melatonin & wakes us up. Unfortunately, so does artificial blue light in the

evening, so when we should be primed for sleep, we're being stimulated to wakefulness. Melatonin is the brain's primary antioxidant, & does major work overnight to prevent brain tissue degeneration, so inhibiting this evening hormone with artificial light does far more damage than simply keeping us up at night.

Cover evening lights with orange filters (to block blue waves), turn the TV off by 7-8pm, & reduce stimulation to allow your system to wind-down towards sleep. Listen to calm radio-talk or music, chat with house-mates, do something creative, read an easy book, meditate, or have a relaxing bath by candle-light. Let your melatonin kick-in so you can benefit from its powerful support, & let your spirit enter freely into its night-journey.

Our whole system is attuned to light cycles, & all functions are optimized when we allow ourselves to flow naturally with these. Consider what changes you could make, to align more with this natural flow, & watch your health & life experience improve with every little change you make.

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### • OUT & ABOUT • OUT & ABOUT •

#### APRIL:

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
Sat 2	See website	Apple Festival	Garden Of St Erth
Sat 2	10:30-12:30PM	Blackwood Historical Society Meeting	Martin Street
Sat 2	12 PM - 2 PM	Blackwood Historical Society Museum - Open	Martin Street
Sun 3	See website	Apple Festival	Garden Of St Erth
Tue 5	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Sun 10		Myniong Car Sprint	Myrniong
Tue 12	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Sat 16	10:00 AM	Blackwood Garden Club	Blackwood Ridge
Sun 17	3:00 PM	Wombat Book Club	TBC
Tue 19	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Tue 26	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood

#### MAY:

Tue 3	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Sat 7	10AM- 4PM	Trentham Spudfest	Trentham
Sat 7	10:30-12:30PM	Blackwood Historical Society Meeting	Martin Street
Sat 7	12PM - 2 PM	Blackwood Historical Society Museum - Open	Martin Street
Tue 10	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Tue 17	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Sat 21	10:00 AM	Blackwood Garden Club	Garden Of St Erth
Sun 22	3:00 PM	Wombat Bookclub	TBC
Tue 24	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood
Tue 31	6:50 PM	Meditation (Free)	Yogazen Blackwood

To the best of our knowledge all information correct at time of publication, it is advisable to check times, dates & venues with event organisers.

**• MARKET CALENDAR • MARKET CALENDAR • MARKET CALENDAR •**

1st SATURDAY	1st SUNDAY	2nd SATURDAY	2nd SUNDAY	3rd SATURDAY	3rd SUNDAY	4th SATURDAY	4th SUNDAY
BALLAN MARKET 8am-1pm Inglis St	DAYLESFORD MARKET 8am-4pm Railway Station	KYNETON FARMERS 8am-1pm St Pauls Park	DAYLESFORD MARKET 8am-4pm Railway Station	CRESWICK COMMUNITY 9am-1pm Victoria St	DAYLESFORD MARKET 8am-4pm Railway Station	BREAKFAST BAZAAR from 9am Hepburn Springs	DAYLESFORD MARKET 8am-4pm Railway Station
DAYLESFORD FARMERS 9am-1pm D'ford PS	CASTLEMAINE ARTIST MARKET 10am-3pm (not Jan) Theatre Royal	BALLAN FARMERS 9am-1pm Mill Cottage	MALMSBURY VILLAGE MARKET 9am-3pm (Sept-May) Gardens	RIDDELLS CREEK FARMERS 9am-3pm (not Dec) PS	TALBOT FARMERS 9am-1pm Scandanavian Cres	LANCEFIELD & DIST FARMERS MARKET 9am-1pm High St	LANCEFIELD/ROMSEY LIONS 8am-2.30pm (not Jan, Jun, Jul) Main St
DAYLESFORD MAKERS 10am-3pm Town Hall	CASTLEMAINE FARMERS 9am-1pm Mostlyn St			DARLEY MARKET 8am-1pm Gisborne/Grey St Darley	WOODEND 9am-3pm High St	BALLARAT LAKESIDE 9-1pm	TRENTHAM SUNDAY MARKET 9am-2pm Victoria St
TRENTHAM INDOOR 9.30am-1.30 TNH Centre	GISBORNE OLDE TIME MARKET 9am-2pm Hamilton & Aitken			TRENTHAM FARMERS 9am-1pm Town Square			
DARLEY MARKET 8am-1pm Gisborne/Grey St Darley	GISBORNE ALL SEASONS 9am-3pm Brantome St			TRENTHAM MAKERS 9am-1.30pm Cosmo			

To the best of our knowledge all information correct at time of publication, it is advisable to check times, dates & venues with the market organisers.

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LEFT: Bill Slattery (mid R) says I take my hat off to these Easter carnival organisers.

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## ROSE HIPS

~ by Caroline Parker



Hello Blackwood & friends afar, I hope you've had a lovely summer & you're looking forward to the slow wind-down to winter.

Today I was enjoying a lovely cup of tea with some friends when I noticed the bright red hue of rose hips in their garden. I couldn't resist helping myself to their bursting ripeness, as I'd just been thinking about how they would make a great addition to an autumnal immune boosting tea that I'd been dreaming up.

Rosehips are the fruit of the rose plant & have most commonly been valued for their high levels of vitamin C. Some studies demonstrating levels at 30-50% above those of oranges. Vitamins A, B Complex, E & K as well as calcium, silica, iron & phosphorus are also found in rose hips. Vitamin C is a great immune booster & especially helpful to ward off colds & flu, this being the reason in WWII a 'National Rose Hip Syrup' was distributed by the UK Ministry of Health, as there was shortage of imported oranges. I just love how plants seem to give us the right medicine/nutrition for the coming seasons.

When collecting, look for hips that are full in colour, typically from red through to orange, with some even being black to purple in colour. Wild roses such as Dog Rose are the most commonly used variety for their hips. Collecting after the first frost apparently produces a sweeter flavour, as the starches have been converted into sugars. Remember to only pick from plants that have not been sprayed/grown with pesticides or chemicals.

Rose hips can be used fresh, raw, cooked, dried or frozen. The seeds need to be removed, as the small hairs can be irritating to our gastrointestinal tract. Remove seeds by hand (who has the time for such fiddley things?), or just blitz in a food processor & strain the seeds & pulp out.

You can use whole dried rose hips as a tea; just pour boiling water over a handful of rose hips, let steep for five minutes & add honey to taste. Easy! Below is the recipe from River Cottage I've adapted to make rosehips into a yummy cordial/syrup:

- Sterilise a couple of bottles & vinegar-proof screw-tops or stoppers by washing thoroughly in hot soapy water, rinsing well, then putting them on a tray in a low oven (at 120°C) to dry out & heat up.
- Roughly chop the rosehips in a food processor in batches, then transfer to a large saucepan & add 1.25 litres water.
- Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down & simmer for around 15 minutes.
- Strain through a double layer of muslin, letting the pulp sit for a good half hour so that all the juice passes through.
- Wash out the muslin, or cut a fresh piece, fold to double it & pass the strained juice through it again.
- Measure the rosehip juice into a large saucepan.
- For every 500ml, add 325g sugar & one vanilla pod.
- Heat slowly, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved, then bring to the boil & boil for 3 minutes, skimming off any scum if necessary.
- Decant immediately into the prepared bottles & seal.
- Label when the bottles have cooled completely.
- Use within 4 months & refrigerate once opened.

This syrup is great splashed into soda, poured over porridge or stirred into natural yoghurt.

~ Enjoy! Caroline xx

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## Dear Pet Guru,

My pet Giant Squid has outgrown the swimming pool. Should I build him a bigger one?



Dear Madam,  
No. That would be an outrageous extravagance. I suggest that you develop an insatiable appetite for eating calamari.  
Pet Guru

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## WHO'S TATTS THAT?



**THE MAGNIFICENT**, & completely self-assured, creature stares out from its tribal domain. The image must have felt so right for the 18 year old; a bold & rebellious statement of intent.

**WELL, THAT** was then. A decade or so later & she's not so sure. I wish it was a bit more girly. I regret having it now. I'm just glad its on my back so I don't have to look at it!

**STEADY ON**, Tiger! We think it suits you just fine



**The Great 2016 Blackwood Reunion ...** featured (top) Miss Blackwood 1968 & Miss Electricity 1961 (when this town was first powered). Way too many photos to print here (see editorial p2) see facebook & website.

### FROM THE DESK OF DELWP Firewood Collection Season

The 2016 Autumn Firewood Collection Season has started across Victoria & closes on the last day of June.

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) Operations Director (Grampians Region) Rachaele May said: "Once the firewood collection season is underway, it's important that people collect firewood from designated areas & stay within collection limits."

"This includes taking a maximum of two cubic metres per person per day & a maximum of 16 cubic metres per household per financial year."

"Designated collection areas are put in place to protect sites of cultural & environmental significance. Also, some households rely on firewood for winter energy so consider others when taking wood," Ms May said.

"People should check where designated collection areas are in their local area. They should also check local weather & forest conditions to make sure it's safe before collecting firewood."

Victorians with a current Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Veterans Affairs Gold Card can also access firewood at the restricted sites.

DELWP & Parks Victoria will continue to support Victorian communities with limited access to firewood supplies.

For more info on firewood concessions & DHHS Non-Mains Energy Concessions call 1800 658 521 or visit [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions)

Wood collected during the autumn may be green & will burn best if cut & stored correctly for 12 months. The felling of any trees for firewood is strictly prohibited. DELWP & Parks Victoria staff will be patrolling parks, forests & reserves to ensure people are doing the right thing while collecting their firewood. Concealed cameras will be used in some areas.

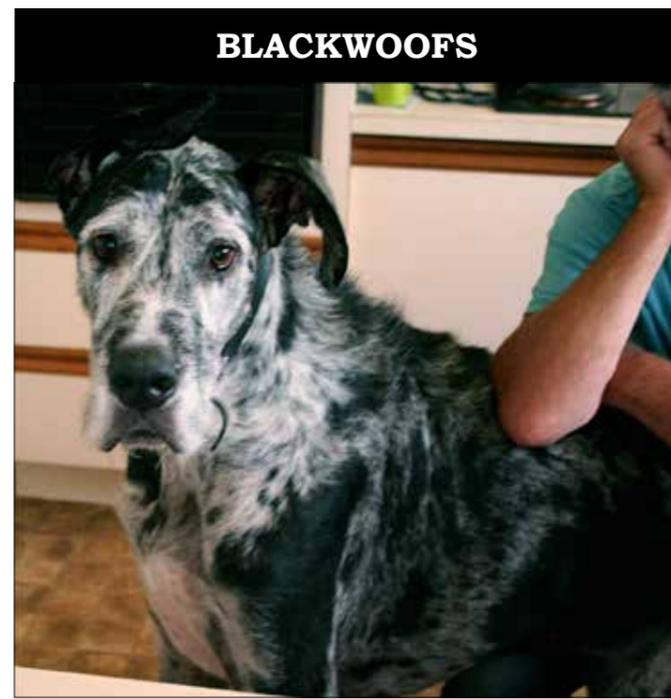
For more information go to: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au/firewood](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/firewood) or call 136 186. Maps showing designated collection areas are available on the website.

Permission from local government is needed for the collection of firewood from roadsides under their management. VicRoads does not currently allow firewood collection on roadsides it manages. Roadside collection of firewood in State forests is only allowed in a designated collection area.

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**BLACKWOOF'S**  
THE GREAT Dane is not Danish, it's from Germany. There they recognise it as a national dog, naming the breed Deutsche Dogge. Our Blackwoof's name is Shültz.

SHÜLTZ'S PARENTS were Harlequins (black patches on a white coat) but he came out with more colourful patterns, or merle. So you could describe him as a Long-haired Merlequin Great Dane (or a Langhaarigenmerlequindeutschedogge if you're German). Or just Big Boof. He stands 98cm at the shoulder.

AS A pup, 7 years ago, Shültz helped save Australia from the CFC, when he was purchased with K.Rudd's \$900 stimulus bonus. Well done, Shultz. So much better than the Pokies & Flat Sceens the rest of us wasted our money on.

HE'S A gentle giant, even if he does bark a bit & will happily bowl you over without notice. If he really likes you, he'll sit on your lap. Ouch!

OR AUTSCH! (if you're German).

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### PET SHENANIGANS WITH SEAMUS



#### LOSING A LOVED PET

**Woof:** In this month's edition I would like to acknowledge and sympathise with the loss of two of my Blackwoodian furry friends (Sammy & Cleo). Saying goodbye to a pet is something that most of us go through at some stage and can be a very difficult situation. Whether it is the passing of your pet at home or making that decision to let your pet go, both

aspects are never easy. It is a personal, loving decision to euthanise a pet for which the quality of life has deteriorated. It takes courage to make this decision as it is your last responsibility to your beloved pet who has given you endless amounts of love and companionship. Every pet owner can experience several different emotions when it comes to considering euthanasia for their loved one. The feelings may be a mixture of grief, relief, guilt, or simply a practical approach of necessity. There is no wrong way to grieve over the loss of a pet or the decisions you make.

Your pet is an integral member of your family. Therefore, after losing a pet, it is normal to feel an array of emotions, including anger, sadness, guilt or even confusion. Grieving is a highly personal experience and there is no time-frame for when grieving will pass; it can vary from weeks to years. Some people find grief comes in stages, while others find the grief recurring, coming in waves, or a series of highs and lows. You should never feel guilty or ashamed about grieving over the loss of your pet. There are many ways to cope with the grieving process. Here are a few helpful tips:

**Be patient:** The grieving process is natural; there is no time-frame for it. Don't try and force yourself to heal. Take the time you need to acknowledge your grief and mourn your loss. Be aware of other furry family members as they also sense the loss and miss their best buddies.

**Accept and understand your feelings:** You may experience an array of feelings such as anger, sadness, loneliness or guilt. It's important to understand these feelings, even if you think they don't feel like part of your grief. Your loss could be bringing up old memories and it's important to recognise and understand this.

**Celebrate your pet:** Whether you decide to bury your pet at home or cremation, remember the good times you shared with your pet and use these memories to create a memorial, such as planting a tree, creating a photo album or writing a story or a plaque with a special message.

**Talk about your pet:** It's important to have a strong support system as you go through each stage of your grieving process. Talking about how you're feeling and reminiscing about your pet with the people who care for you will be helpful as they are most able to understand the love you had for your pet. Also, they may have gone through a similar experience and can understand the pain you are feeling. Losing a loved pet is heartbreaking but thankfully time does mend and eventually a new furry addition will help.

*Woof for now, Seamus*

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# TRAINS; SIMPLE THINGS REALLY

~ Perspective by Paul Tatchell



Let's face it; trains have been around for a long time; they haven't changed much in over a century & a half; lots of wheels on lots of track & no steering wheel.

It's a brilliant concept; they carry lots of people, they are relatively economical in terms of productivity, & they do the A to B thing better than any other form of transport.

In terms of freight; there is no other form of transport with the potential to carry large volumes of cargo A to B with relative efficiency; they can carry more weight than trucks, & deal with the elements much better than shipping.

As I said it's a brilliant concept; in most countries, developed or otherwise, it's not just a concept; it's a reality; so why is Australia such a basket case in terms of such a simple tried & tested form of transport; well let me tell you it's got nothing to do with the trains; it's about the people running them!

Let's face it; I wouldn't let Jacinta Allen play with a Hornby trainset; let alone a public transport system; Thomas the Tank has more credibility than the Minister for Transport, at least the "Fat Controller" started off as a fictional character running a fictional train network; with the Minister we started with a real person & ended up with a fictional rail service.

We don't even have to be innovative; there are literally thousands of rail networks working efficiently all over the World; if we are not smart enough to build one; just copy one!

It's not the first time this country has had a problem with running a rail network; when we first got into this train network caper; we built different size tracks in all of the State's, that needed different trains & carriages to move people & freight around the Country, & it took nearly a hundred years to sort it out.

Even Hornby have enough engineering expertise to know that if you want the Ho scale train go all the way round the kitchen table; it helps if the track is the same gauge, & more importantly the train suits the track! Maybe we should get Hornby in to sort out our public transport woes!

We have been re-vamping, re-working, & re-designing the rail system between Ballarat & Melbourne for over a decade now, & it was more reliable when it had twice as many stops & the trains ran on steam.

It is a one track system; not the Paris Underground & the taxpayers have paid a King's ransom to lay a high speed track for a low speed trainset that spends more time in the workshop than out of it.

When Steve Bracks started this Regional Fast Rail project 15 years ago on the

Ballarat, Bendigo & Geelong lines; Bracks claimed that the tax-payers would only be tipping in \$80 million towards the project, claiming the Private Sector would be paying \$470 million towards the \$550 million project.

It was soon revealed that there was no private sector money coming into the project; in fact there was no private sector interest at all; the project blew out to \$750 million, & the claimed speeds of the new service, modest by World standards were never achieved.

Just to put train speeds in "Perspective", Fast trains all over the world were already doing 300 kph with no issues, we were aiming for 160 kph; it's probably worth noting that a steam train was clocked doing 160 on the Ballarat line in 1930!

Ballarat was the first line to see VLine's new VLocity trains & its coming up 10 years since they were put into service; using the term service fairly loosely.

Track & signalling was upgraded to allow VLocity trains running at 160km/h between Deer Park West Junction & Ballarat. In addition, some deviations were built to ease curves & potentially provide a considerably shorter route; but the original route was retained to provide a passing loop.

Whilst Jacinta Allen ducks & weaves around the Ballarat – Melbourne rail debacle like a punch drunk prize-fighter in a bowl of jelly; the Victorian tax-payers are estimated to be paying \$300 million per day to maintain what was already a bad regional transport service; with no end in sight.

Put that into "Perspective" & you have a project that cost \$750 million costing \$300 million per day; going off the rails costs more than staying on them; whilst the Bus Companies are more excited than Brahma Bull in the Spring; the Regional Transport System is about as humorous as a crowd warmer at Tobin Brothers!

With the "blame game" in full swing; Allen has spent more time blaming people for the problem than she has fixing it; it's a sad indictment on the state of Ministerial politics, & indicative of the lack of understanding of the role of a Minister.

If you want the title, you own the problem, that's the grown up world of senior management, & whilst I accept that her predecessor Terry Mulder wasn't the sharpest tool on the bench; this was always a Labor driven project as it went from one fiscal disaster to another.

Using the old saying, "a well-worn path is not necessarily the right one" the cost of propping up a broken system would fund & build the much needed second line to Ballarat, & probably upgrade the stations to boot!

The State Government has been "spinning" its way through this debacle since the Minister took the reins; the only thing missing is the truth; people the public would be a lot more sympathetic if they are told how it is, not how the Minister wishes it was.

Parliamentary enquiries, blaming previous governments, & putting the whole regional rail issue through the political spin cycle; won't get country people to work on time, it would be refreshing to have a Government put up their hand & own a problem as opposed to politicising one!

# WOMBAT BOOK CLUB 2016

Hello, we had another couple of books of interesting reading. Bookclub meets the third Sunday in the month. It's a good time to sit out in the warm Autumn sun, or come in as the evening cools, now the nights are closing in, for a good read.

The first book we are reviewing is 'Year of Wonders' by Geraldine Brooks. Based on a true story. Set in England in the 16th century, the protagonist, Anna Frith, a young widow, takes in a boarder who succumbs to the Bubonic Plague. It's a story of courage through these dark times, with a lighter ending. It was chosen as both a New York Times & Washington Post Notable Book.

**Sandy:** The story is well written & easy to read, although at times a little predictable. It gave the reader an insight to what it would have been like during that awful time in history. A ending of hope to a dark tale.

3½ wombies

Anne: This book of historical fiction was based on a true story. Set in 1666, in a small isolated village called Eyam in rural England, a bolt of infected cloth from London sets the plague bacteria raging. The townspeople decide to cut themselves off from the rest of the world to prevent it spreading further & the year of wonders begins. A potent mix of religion & fear sparks death for "witches" & for those who eventually survive, life is changed forever.

I really enjoyed the story but found the ending puzzling.

4 wombies

**Jane:** I loved the Year of Wonders. It was beautifully written with richly-developed characters, & it reminded me, somewhat of Death Rights which we read last year. The story tells of Anna Frith & the villagers of Eyam as they try to survive the plague of 1666 by isolating themselves from other towns in England. Anna loses her 2 sons to the plague & as the rest of Eyam lose family members they also lose hope, turning from prayer to murderous witch-hunting. With the pressure of death ever near, it brings out either the best or the worst in the people of the village.

4½ wombies

**Sue:** This book is set in a time when superstition & religious beliefs explained the unexplainable, in this case the plague. It raised some interesting moral questions. I found the ending unconvincing, but overall an enjoyable read.

4¼ wombies



## GARDENING CLUB

Our numbers are swelling with lots of interest & knowledge, sharing of our gardening experiences. If anyone who is not in the group but who has great tips or suggestions from experience, for growing in our particular environment, we would love to hear from you. We get together at 10am on the 3rd Saturday monthly, should you want to come. Our April meeting will be at the Blackwood Ridge Café & in May we'll meet at the Garden of St Erth cafe.

Use vinegar instead of Round-up. Online this week there was a recipe for a clean weed killer, that is certainly worth a try.

### WEED-BE-GONE

- 4 litres of Vinegar
- 2 cups of Epsom salts
- 1/4 cup of dish washing liquid

Just mix and spray in the morning after the dew has gone. Late in the day when you return, whatever you sprayed it on will be dead.

'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Bronte, was novel #2. This old-time favourite classic, published in 1847. Set on the moors in Yorkshire, Heathcliff is adopted by a man who had a daughter Catherine. Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights & returns years later a fortunate man. He & Catherine have a volatile & passionate love for each other. After Catherine's passing, her ghost frequents Wuthering Heights & Heathcliff. A gothic love story, which has had readers enchanted since it was written. A love story in which 2 people are so entwined with each other they are inseparable even in death. It is this romanticism which engages the reader.

**Sandy:** I love these old novels, a reminder of how much our language has dissipated. A love story of how 2 people became entwined with each other, not only in the physical life, but still connected in the life after. A book for romantics who enjoy the yesteryear reads.

4 wombies

**Sue:** I enjoyed Wuthering Heights in spite of the sometimes difficult language & the dark characters, but then I love historical novels. I kept waiting & hoping for Heathcliff to redeem himself!

4½ wombies

**Deirdre:** What a fantastic novel. It captures the struggles & achievements of a defiant, resilient woman. Her understanding of the Language Of Flowers changed the lives of people around her & helped heal her damaged soul..

4 wombies

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR,

**HAVING SPENT** a wonderful Saturday morning at the Cert garage sale, on the grounds of the Uniting Church, I was inspired to write this article that I was previously unable to do. The gathering reminded me of what a special town we are, filled with diverse personalities, each contributing and caring about Blackwood in our own unique ways. Full credit to all of the Cert team - we are lucky to have you!

**LIVING DIRECTLY** opposite the Blackwood Cemetery has also made me more aware of our heritage sites, as I often see the reality of life/death and the value people place on their final resting place, and of those they love. The recent large gathering for the funeral of Ross Hannaford (ex Daddy Cool band) highlighted how unique and special our hamlet also is to outsiders. As the highest point in Blackwood, I recently found myself facing the dilemma of a new mobile tower being placed opposite my home. Although I objected strongly to the site of the tower, because of the impact on the beauty of an untouched historical site, I was also one of the many who rallied for coverage to protect our town, and enable outside communication.

**THEREFORE, MY** question is this: Where is the cut off point - when do we say no, and question the cost that these changes could potentially destroy what we value and hold dear. How do we balance the impact of technology, and still continue to preserve the history and heritage of Blackwood? And as the saying goes - One does not realize how special someone or something is until it is gone. We are often in the position of not being aware enough of knowing how easily the heritage of Blackwood can be taken away, or altered forever. I suppose I am writing this article as a reminder or wake up call to ask yourself these questions. Without denying ourselves the progress technology offers, we need to stand together and clearly define and examine what we want and need to preserve for future generations of Blackwoodians.

~ many thanks, Noelle Shader

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### CHASING MINES

Two of The Victorian Historical Mine Shaft Chasers – Ray, the leader, & Aidan, his young nephew – have disappeared into the earth. We're at Simmons Reef. The adit, or mine, entrance is trapdoor-sized. Ray's voice rises up from within, muffled by the rock & earth. "Check it out! You coming in?"

Each weekend, The Victorian Historical Mine Shaft Chasers (VHMSC) climb through the most inaccessible, underground terrain in the state. I had interviewed them beforehand at the pub asking about danger, gold, fear, noise, & exactly what they think they're doing. A local in the group, Steve, says it's their mission "to bring our past forward", paying tribute to the pioneering miners who lugged equipment overland on foot, dug by pick & candle light, & created kms of underground warrens. The Mine Shaft Chasers explore these old mines. In addition to Ray & Aidan, there are Kurt & Steve, both abseilers & locals, Dean on photography, Andrew on research, & another Andrew who was absent that day. Steve explained the attraction of Mine Chasing: "Down there is like nothing else." These mines are time capsules - not entered since being closed a century ago. Some have no footprints. The other guys are keen to agree. It's like an addiction, made worse if they run out of time. "When you don't check it out," says Kurt, "it drives you crazy."

When talking of their adventures, these guys' faces light up. They're eager to list the items they've located: Candle wicks, picks, dynamite instructions, black power & even old newspapers. They agree on what they hate too: finding rubbish – the mines were often used as dumps – & souveniring, the artefacts they see in people's yards. "We leave what we find where it is. We might bring perishable things, such as newspapers back up for historical preservation."

What about gold?  
"No," Andrew tells me, although they have miner's rights & entitled to use them, it's not their main aim. "None of us are prospectors."



A taste of the thrill these guys get chasing mines can be found on facebook where they relay the spectacular depths they explore to their 3,000 Facebook armchair explorers. Photos & video show hand-dug whinzes propped by dusty wooden stulls, drives flooded with crystal clear water, striped stope backs.

Any dangers? Scary moments? Aidan leans forward, moves his lemonade on the table. His eyes brighten recalling the incident. "We were right down Easter Monday Mine, me & Ray. There was no-one else there. Then, I heard footsteps behind us & sloshing & mumbling. I asked Raymo, 'Is that someone coming?' We got out real quick."

Ray nods to verify. "There's rarely any sound under, in those adits. It wasn't a good feeling there. We came up. The first level is probably ok, but there are several other levels & they're dangerous." Coming from these guys, it's hard not to heed that warning. There goes poking around Easter Monday Mine for me.

Ray's been around mines since he was 12. Aidan, his nephew, is only ten with his own pint-sized safety gear. I ask him what his friends think. "Sometimes they want to come too, but I say 'na'." Not many parents want their children chasing mines. Aidan is an equal in this

group – it's clearly in his blood. It's worth remembering that, only a few generations ago, a bright & able boy his age may have been working these mines.

Later at Simmons Reef, I squeeze through a gap hardly bigger than myself & remember Ray's words at the pub: "There's no room down there for fear." We walk through the adit single-file without stooping. The air is clear, more comfortable than outside. Our lights illuminate various mine features: a carved-out nook to hold a candle, repeated pick strikes in the rounded roof corners, the vivid seam of slate, basalt & quartz. Fine curtains of tree roots hang down beaded with tiny drops of dew. The complexity of what encases us is mesmerising. The air, electric. I can sense what they're chasing, it's palpable.

We see 4 mines over the afternoon – easy ones for my benefit, but the real thrills for mine chasers are the more complex mines with multilevel adits & winzes. To reach these the guys travel for hours every weekend. It's not a cheap business. Ray estimates it's cost him \$20,000 for the vehicle & equipment alone. They'd love someone to champion them to record & track their work, to help keep things going.

When we leave the final mine of the day, & head towards the white light & warmth of outside, I pause to take in what I thought I'd be rushing nervously to leave – the smooth, hand-dug cave. Outside, I thank the guys & say goodbye while they shake dust from their orange overalls. They head home back to families, showers & day jobs, & to research their next adit. Dean is keen to go to Chewton. They don't know it yet, but they'll be filming a rockfall & saying despondently, "That's my only way to get out". They'll get out for sure. "Alright-tee, you guys," Ray will conclude with his signature call. "We'll see you at the top!"

### Fact File

#### Glossary

- Adit** – an opening into the mine
- Winze** – a tunnel or shaft that begins inside the mine
- Stope** – a section between the mine levels that has been mines, now an opening or a gap
- Shaft** – a vertical opening (adit)
- Stull** – a timber post propping up a mine

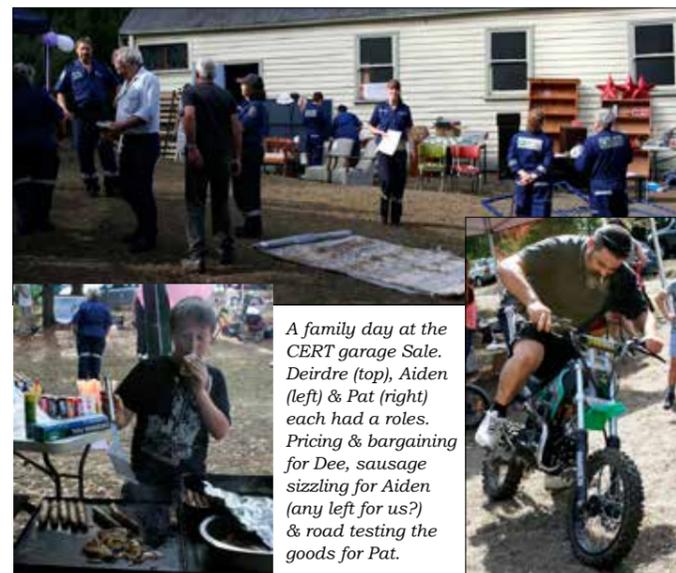
#### Victorian Historical Mine Shaft Chasers

- Established late 2015
- Nearly 3000 likes on facebook

They are:

- Andrew Giles – Researcher
- Aidan Laphorne – Junior Leader
- Dean Rainford – Historian and Photographer
- Steve Hollis - Abseiler
- Ray Shaw – Front man
- Kurt Horrigan – Abseiler
- (Andrew Norman) – Absent for interview

~ M.E McCarthy



A family day at the CERT garage Sale. Deirdre (top), Aidan (left) & Pat (right) each had a roles. Pricing & bargaining for Dee, sausage sizzling for Aidan (any left for us?) & road testing the goods for Pat.

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### 'SPUDLIGHT' ON TRENTHAM AGAIN

Food, fun, live music, frivolity and spuds galore is in store for this year's 9th annual Great Trentham Spudfest to be held in May. Save the date in your diaries or on your calendar & encourage friends & family to do the same. It's a great weekend for locals but also a great reason for out-of-towners to visit.

We will have spuds behaving, spuds misbehaving, mischievous spuds, spuds playing hide & seek in our special 'spud paddock', curly whirly spuds, our own 'Spud Spruiker' otherwise known as 'Spudman', artistic spuds, spud characters hanging around town, spud displays with over 20 varieties on show, spudelicious delights at a variety of food stalls & spuds for sale direct from the spud farmer to you.

Gather up your friends, family & colleagues & get along to have a mashing good time at this year's Trentham Spudfest.

The 'Spud Hub' will be alive with hot potatoes, hot art, hot music & fantastic entertainment for all the family to enjoy.

Spudtastic children's activities & games include: spud dig; spud art; face painting & spud sack races for children & those adults who are still children at heart.

Be entertained throughout the day by roving performers. There will be 2 stages at Spudfest pumping with fantastic bands, artists, foodies & other musical performances. You'd never guess potatoes could be this much fun!

Saturday May 7, 10am-4pm @ 'Spud Hub' at Quarry Street Reserve cnr High & Quarry Street, Trentham info@trenthamspudfest.org.au or 0419 897 660



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Istan Czehmester, B Med Sci, B. Pharm, MPS

### FROM THE DESK OF DELWP

#### 4WD Victoria Clean Up the Bush Program

Coming Soon to our forest ...

A call for volunteers to collect rubbish on April 2 & 3 marks the next stage of a program to tackle illegally-dumped rubbish in White Swan State Forest & Nerrina Heritage Park.

The rubbish collection on public land is part of the Clean Up the Bush Program, coordinated by Four Wheel Drive Victoria (4WD Vic), Department of Environment Land Water & Planning (DELWP) & Parks Victoria (PV). Forest Fire Management Grampians Regional Manager Forest Management & Roding Coordination Amanda Carabott said: "The clean up activity has been in 2 parts – finding the rubbish late last year, & collecting it this April."

"In December, volunteer teams were given an area of bush in White Swan State Forest or Nerrina Heritage Park & asked to search for any types of dumped rubbish, marking the locations as they found them," Ms Carabott said.



"Because we know where to find the rubbish, the actual clean up work will be quicker & easier & we can increase awareness about the impact of illegally dumped rubbish at the same time."

4WD Vic Project Officer, Kate Waller said: "Our enthusiastic volunteers will again donate their time to collect & remove the huge amount of waste including car bodies, white goods, couches, mattresses & general household rubbish."

"We hope to spread the word about our program to help prevent rubbish dumping, & to acknowledge the huge effort that volunteers put into cleaning up state forests," Ms Waller said.

"This should be an enjoyable weekend for all involved, & a great opportunity to clean up Ballarat's backyard."

DELWP, Parks Victoria & Four Wheel Drive Victoria have a formal working partnership across the State to try to change the attitude towards dumping rubbish on public land. Following the Nerrina program, DELWP & 4WD Vic are planning another **Clean Up the Bush Program in May-June, targeting the Wombat State Forest.** People who are interested in getting involved in this event can contact Karen Waller on 9857 5209

### Film Society Off To A Touching Start

MRFS members agreed the February film made a fine start to the year. In the 2011 French film The Intouchables, Phillipe & Driss navigate their way through laughter & heartache. The fact that Phillipe is a quadraplegic & Driss is an individual who knows few boundaries, makes little difference to the two men whose eventual fondness for each other is obvious.

MRFS, now in its 7th year, will be screened the 2013 film Charlie's Country in March. Directed by Rolf de Heer, indigenous Australian Charlie (played by David Gulpili) faces immense changes in his Arhem Land lifestyle as he attempts to respect the laws that have come into being with white settlement.

The Macedon Ranges Film Society meets on the 2nd Wednesday monthly at the Woodend Community Centre. Film notes & an informal supper are part of the evening. MRFS is a membership-based club so initial enquiries must be made by emailing mrfilmsociety@gmail.com or by phoning Lorraine on 5427 0921 or Christine on 5429 5452.



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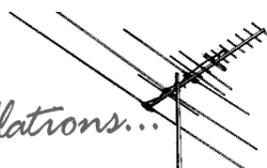
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