

August ~ September 2021 vol 13 ~ issue 14.2



NO POWER? NO WORRIES!

Leon whips up his famous espresso martinis as Blackwood parties its way to a "Cyclone June" recovery.

NEED HELP?
 Some contacts from the
 Blackwood Recovery Hub:
 Moorabool Emergency Recovery 53 661 323
 Bushfire Recovery Victoria 1800 560 760
 Red Cross 1800 733 276
 Salvation Army 1313 7258
 Insurance Council of Australia 1300 728 228
 Services Australia (Centerlink)
 Ballarat Health 5338 4500



This scene from North Blackwood Road is indicative of the widespread damage throughout the Victorian Ranges.



EDITOR'S THOUGHTS...

Oh my, what a couple of months we've had! Early June saw our wee village in the midst of what has been called a Cool Climate Cyclone. We woke up to trees down in driveways & across roads, blocking our passage in & out of town & no power or communication.

It wasn't long before Blackwoodians got together to organise daily meetings. Many, many photos show the resilience of the town amongst the chaos, we have only had space to include a handful. You can view a couple of videos of the street party at <https://bit.ly/StreetParty01> & <https://bit.ly/StreetParty02> (Thanks Peter).

For days the roar of chainsaws rang through the hills. Our ever-present birds disappeared & our wildlife seemed confused.

I know I speak for many Blackwoodians in thanking all those in our community who have banded together to help whoever & however they can. You know who you are! Thank-you.

Our recovery will be slow & long but it is great to know that we are not being forgotten by emergency management services, some of whom I met at the pop-up recovery hub at the hall (p13) as a beautiful pair of wedge tail eagles circled overhead.

Finally, I want to thank Lisa Moore for her time working with the Times. We are really sorry to lose you but I know you will be marvellous attribute to Crown Reserves.

~ Jimmy Coyle, Co-ordinator



The Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV) is the peak body representing not-for-profit community newspapers across Victoria. CNAV works actively with its members to enhance the capacity & standing of community newspapers, to enable them to fully realise their vital role in communities.

MEMBER 2021

Thank you to our helpers, our regular contributors & our advertisers.

Jimmy Olsen played by...	Brendan Hehir
Community Co-ordinator	Sandy Schmidt
Team Members	Kathy Berrill, Fiona Ross

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	Sept 15
Regular Contributors, Features & Items of Interest, Community Groups & Clubs	Sept 15
Display Ad Artwork	Sept 20
Late breaking News	Sept 20

NO late submissions will be accepted. Please email submissions, display ads & articles to team@theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au or post to The Blackwood Times, PO Box 39 Blackwood, 3458.

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theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au Phone: 0491 061 717

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BLACKWOOD PROGRESS ASSOCIATION SECURES \$30K GRANT FOR EASTER CARNIVAL.

Thanks to Regional Development Victoria and the efforts of Andy Waugh and his team at Moorabool Shire's Economic Development Office, Blackwood will be in a position next year to bring back the Easter Carnival with a bang.

A condition, however, of the grant is that the event be non-profit. You'll be aware that Progress has for many years operated the Carnival as the town's biggest fundraiser. Around half the profits are held over to stage the following year's event, the rest is disbursed to community groups, events and initiatives over the year.

So we'll need to change our model for 2022. Progress invites all community groups to join us as partners in staging this historic festival. Let us know how your group might use this event as its own major fundraiser for the year.

Individuals, too, are invited to bring their expertise and passion to this iconic Blackwood event. And don't think that by putting your hand up you'll be committing yourself to endless meetings. We're going to keep this process as action-focussed and as streamlined as possible.

Check out Blackwood Progress on facebook or call me on 0419137812.

~ Brendan Hehir (pres.)

Foodies looking for something local.....

Monday nights	Old Farts night	Blackwood hotel
Tuesday	Parma & Pasta night	Greendale Hotel
Wednesday	Locals night	Cosmo in Trentham
Thursday	Thai nights	Radio springs hotel

Please check with all venues for confirmation of events regarding current restrictions & tixs.

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)
May '21	134.4	90.9	-3.7	21.3	13.1	2.8	7.4
Jun '21	185.2	106.5	*-3.3	*17	*9.5	*2.7	*6.2

WOMBAT DECLARED NATIONAL PARK

What does it mean?

An area designated a National Park is afforded greater preservation of its natural environment.

Does that amount to a lock-out?

No, well not entirely. They're called parks for a reason; recreational use is encouraged. Trail bikes, 4WD's and camping are still allowed, horse riding is allowed (as specified) but no dogs (unless specified).

What if I were riding my dog?

Don't be stupid.

Alright then, what else is allowed?

Mountain bike riding and bushwalking, of course, but also deer hunting (seasonally). Not allowed in the National Park but OK in the Regional Park (see map) are activities like recreational prospecting and firewood collection (until 2029).

Why wont they let us collect more firewood from the extensive June storm damage?

DEWLP are looking favourably at that option to help with the rehabilitation of the forest.

Will DELWP manage the park?

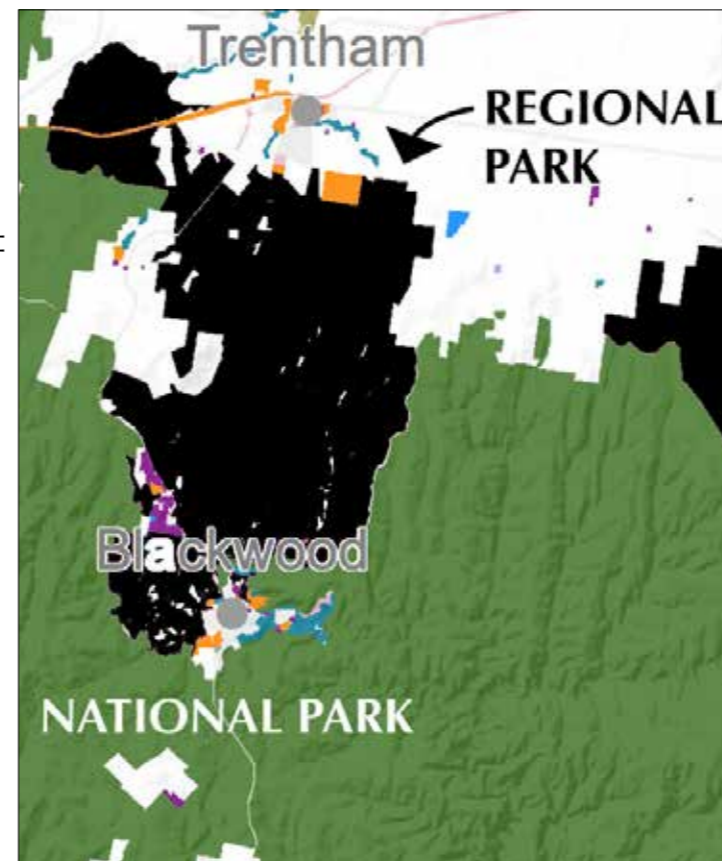
Yep. In partnership with Parks Victoria, so not much change there. Although increased resources are expected, especially given the necessary storm recovery efforts. Under the Victorian Great Outdoors program, \$105.6 M will be released for upgrades to public facilities, campgrounds, 4WD tracks and walking trails in the new parks of the Central West.

Will that include fixing the bridge at the springs?

Should think so.

Will I still be able to ride my dog over it?

Go away.



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NOTE THAT about 56 hours of temperature data is missing due to the recent power outage. This will of course influence the accuracy of the above temperature figures. I have got about 40 hours of battery backup but this wasn't enough to cope with such a sustained power outage. Maybe I will have to increase the battery backup size or involve solar to avoid any future large power outages?

~ Don Owen

UNLIT THE MOVIE.

REVIEW: Well to shed some light on it, it was interesting. There were loopholes in the characters & where some of them fitted into the story.

Apart from the fact they made Blackwoodian's look like a bewitched lot in a spell-bound daze, the story basically was about a woman, returning to Blackwood trying to find her family identity & why she was cursed. The movie did have dark & perhaps confronting scenes which perhaps should be listed as horror.

It was a little like 'The Blair Witch Project' but slightly better.

The story used Blackwood as a name & not a fictional town, which confounded me.

However, I don't want to be too unkind because it was a low budget movie & was filmed in 13 days. The photography between Blackwood, She-oaks & Lorne was very good. I enjoyed looking at familiar territory around Blackwood.

So, when tourists come to Blackwood scouring our mysterious forest, who will be the 3 witches around the cauldron?

Hubble, Bubble...Pumpkin soup anyone? Imagine the possibilities for a tourist destination. Now that Blackwood is on the map for the wrong reasons, we can make the most of it.

For a low budget movie, shot in only 13 days with outstanding photography, I give it four Wombies.

~ Sandy



RIGHT: We'll be seeing a bit more of you, I expect.



IT WAS A DARK & STORMY NIGHT

I live in a tiny cottage, downhill, on Golden Point Road. Often I've looked out my kitchen window, marvelling at the galaxy of blossom, honey yellow stars across my yard, framing the valleys & forest beyond. This story is for the brave young girl who told me that night was scary but the people are ok.

Wednesday June 9, 16.00. From my Blackwood home office window, I'm in an online Emergency Management Team meeting preparing for the severe weather front coming in. Against the grey darkness of distant Melbourne clouds in the east shines a strong rainbow.

Wednesday June 9, 16.05 My work colleagues provide briefs & share intelligence. Gippsland, some 400ks away, is destined to be hit hard.

We look at the flood maps. We discuss pre-positioning food, flood predications, potential for landslides & roads cut off... & likely power outages. I look out the window & say to the team: "The sky here has turned green".

Wednesday June 9, 16.45. Someone on the call says, "I've just heard the storm is set to move further west than initially expected. It may even hit the edges of Melbourne."

Storms from the coast usually slow down over land & mountain terrains, & our dense tree surrounds usually provides a safe cocoon for us forest dwellers west of the city. I estimate the sting will be well out by the time it reached Blackwood.

"And," he says, "We are likely to see widespread power outages."

At that very moment the power in my office shuts off. "I can report the first power outage has just occurred." We all laugh. I light candles, & run the rest of the meeting via battery.

Wednesday, June 9, 17.00 By now it was dark & constantly raining. I turn off all my devices to save battery & knock off.

I drive to my friends & enjoy a toasty fire & listen to the rain by candle light. I wonder how I might work tomorrow without power. We talk about generators. The rain is fat, the wind consistent. "Some storm," we agree. At one point the rain stops. "I think that's the eye of it."

Wednesday, June 9, 20.00 I drive home in pitch dark. No outlines, no trees, not power poles, no roof tops. The sky has no roof. I carefully take the steps to my front doors by torch light & go to bed.

Then, it begins.

Wednesday, June 9, 23.59 A tree screeches for a second before it crashes. I use my eyes & ears in the dark of my room to try to locate it in space. The wind is jet loud. The rain lashes the walls & windows. Then another. A screech, crack then kufflumph.

I get up & patrol the house. Each room. Is the roof there? Is the rain coming in? All good. Phew. & then repeat. I shine my torch out the back window. What is usually a clear 14 foot drop is filled with trees.

The big blackwood has come down against the house & window. The fly screen is off. The glass intact. "Oh, ok, you're down," I say to the tree over the howling wind. "You can't do any harm now." Another tree comes down. I look at my watch. 15 mins apart.

Thursday, June 10, 02.00 The house feels drafty. I wonder if the tree on part of the roof will help hold the roof down. I do another check on the house. The sound is supersonic. I open my front door & shine my torch out. I don't dare step further onto my veranda. The trees wave like drunks trying to stand still. Their feet rooted, but their arms & heads whipping. A branch the size of a broom flies into my torch light beam & across the gully. I am alone, about 7, like goldilocks in the woods at the three bears' cottage.

I calculate the height of the tall trees nearby. Any one of one of them could reach & crush the house.

Then my brain starting to kick into action. "I'm just watching this. I need to figure out what to do." I close the door, gather my coat, my hat & my boots, & climb into bed with them beside me with them & the torch beside me. If the trees come down, at least I can climb out the window with shoes on. Once I did that I knew there nothing else I could do, I told myself to go back to sleep.

Thursday, June 10, 04.00 A message dings through on Facebook. "Is everyone alright out there?" The community conversation starts up. I feel connected again. Not alone.

Thursday, June 10, 07.00 I go for a walk as the winds die down. The CFA is out & describes the trees & power down. I assess the damage to the yard & forest from my kitchen window. As I look out across the Lerderderg, trees continue to fall to the forest floor, like the long waxy ribbons of table candles.

Thursday, June 10, 08.00 I go to work in my garage to start helping with the state level operations. I tell them mobile communications will go soon & we'll be cut off. I won't be able to work. They ask what my plan is. "I'll leave when safe, so that I can work, but it's a live situation here." As I speak another loud crack & crash across the road bringing the lines down. "Forget that. It's not presently safe to leave."

Thursday, June 10, 11.15. The phones go down. I no longer work. I peek out of my house & start to connect. A chat in a car. A stop & chat in the middle of the street. "Is everyone ok?" "Is everyone safe?" Then, as a town, we started to get a grip on what had happened & started the slow journey to putting things back together. I see a little girl in town with her mum. "That was a big storm. What did you think?" She looks up at my with big brave eyes. "It was scary." Yes, it sure was. "But everyone's ok."

Yes, we're all ok, that's what counts.

~ Margaret McCarthy

BLACKWOOD PARTIES THROUGH A WEEK WITHOUT POWER

Someone bring some light ...
someone bring some music ...
someone bring some heat ...

Everyone bring the contents of your fridge!



Is it a lockdown or a blackout this time? BBQ, booze & music. A great antidote to the destruction Blackwoodians woke up to.



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Previous Page:

TOP: Path to Shaws Lake

BOTTOM: North Blackwood Road

This Page:

TOP: Direct hit on the Springs Bridge, while anywhere along the river is a tangle of fallen giants.

LEFT: No injuries & very little property damage (although Allan & Fiona may beg to differ). Blackwood was lucky.

ABOVE: The start of a very long clean -up.

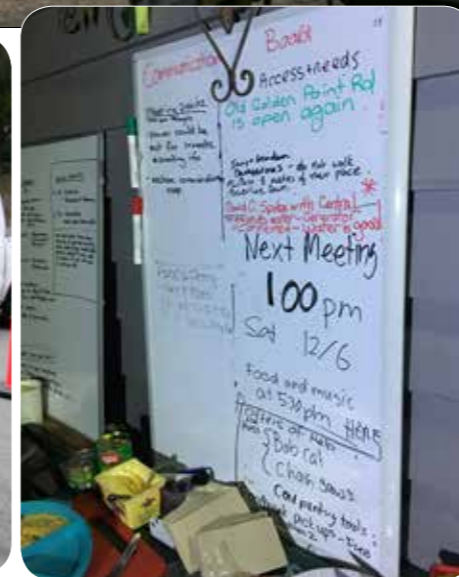
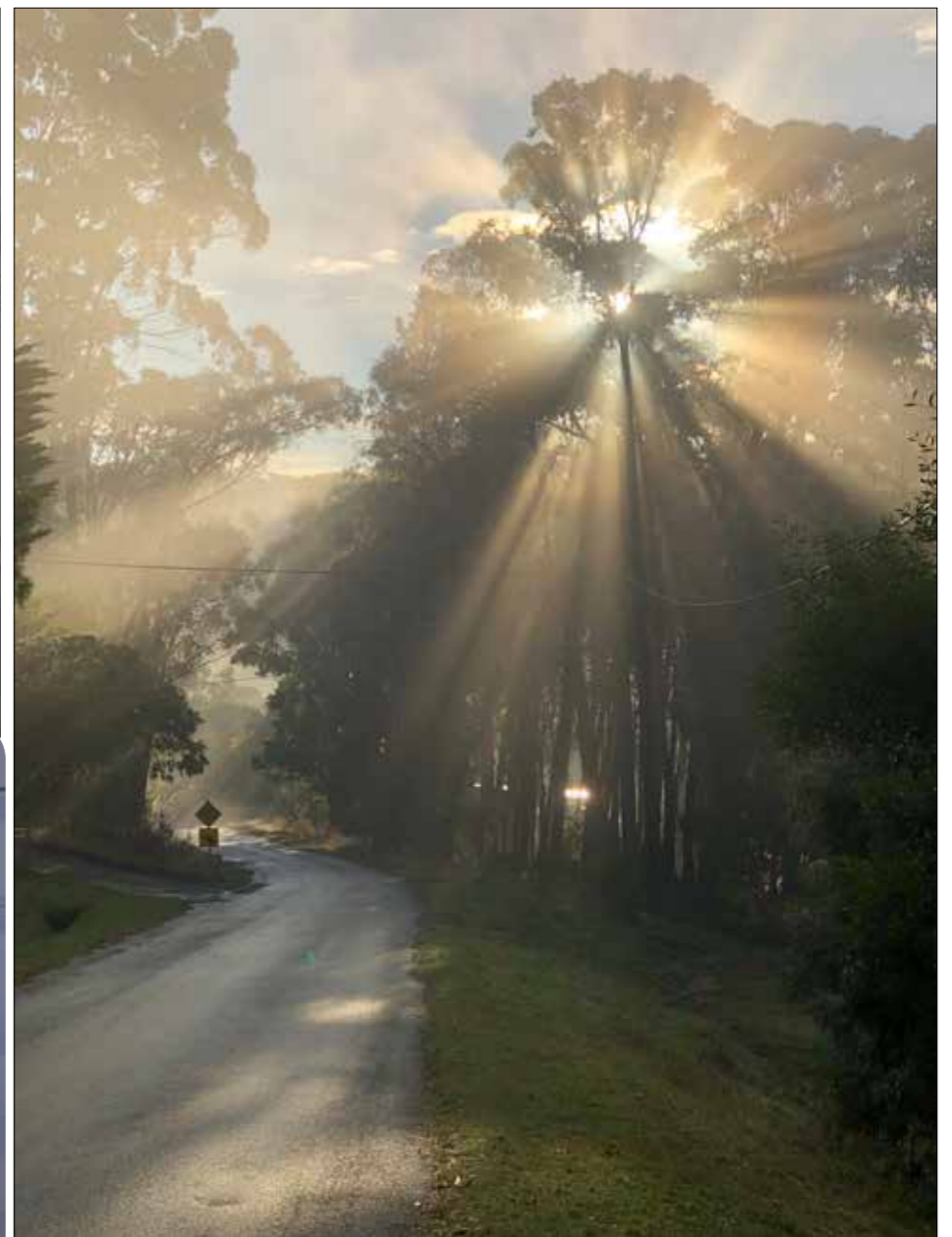


HELP FROM THE EXPERTS

Our daily town meetings, joined by our state & council representatives Mary-Anne Thomas & Ally Munari. Council send in the arborists, Powercor reconnects us, NBN brings in communications on wheels.

FROM BARMY TO BALMY

The huge weather tantrum blew itself out & left us, fortunately, with gentle weather for our 1st week of recovery.



Checklist

- Access needs
- Old Galena Point Rd is open again
- Next Meeting 100 pm Sat 12/6
- Food and music at 5:30pm HERE
- Presence of water
- Bobcat
- Chain saws
- Can pry by tools
- Handed pickup - tree



Vale Shane Patrick Scanlan - 1958 - 2021

When speaking of Shane, & his association with BBRLG, one word defines the role he played in his long-standing association with the group – Champion.

Shane's involvement with Landcare covers more than one decade, and after the deaths of his local heroes, Pat Liffman & John Davies, he was inspired to continue their legacy, & his War on Weeds became the driving force of his involvement. Across the years, Shane assumed many roles; President, Secretary, Treasurer – always willing to step in to enable BBRLG to continue flourishing. He was driven to control the sources of weed infestation in the township threatening the surrounding Lerderderg State Park, Wombat State Forest & waterways. His ability to engage in dialogue & collaborate with agencies, helped form partnerships with natural resource management agencies, both in the government & in the community. He himself believed in on-the-ground action to protect & restore natural habitat to enhance biodiversity. Shane would often undertake action, single-handedly, on behalf of the local community, & if anyone was out with his spray pack & tools necessary for weed eradication & control, it would be Shane. Across the decades, there have been many amazing members who have worked tirelessly for Landcare, & care about the sustainability of our local environment, both flora & fauna, but it is important to honour Shane, who enabled such a diverse range of positive environmental & community outcomes during his life in Blackwood for all of us. Some of these include;

- 2014** – Wilbur the Weed sculpture, to remind us of our obligations to keep the township weed free. Commissioned by Landcare Group [Shane's idea], & made by local & nationally renowned artist, Matt Harding.
- 2017** – Plaque for Pat Liffman & John Davies installed to commemorate the contribution & commitment to the preservation of the forest.
- 2015** – Spanish Heath Spraying
- 2016** – Grant Application for the eradication of Holly, Back Creek
- 2018** – Thistle Harvest
- 2020** – Ultra- Weed-a-Thon, identifying 9 areas of problem weeds in Blackwood. Shane organized the publication of our 9 worst weeds in a booklet/ Blackwood & District Problem Weeds.
- 2018** – War on Wasps
- 2019** – Queen Wasp Eradication
- 2018** – Inviting state members to chair meeting at which representatives of the Victorian Environmental Council [VEAC] explain, justify recent recommended land use changes.
- 2019** – Working with Moorabool Mayor, Paul Thatchell, to save several hectares of native vegetation from destruction.
- 2020** – Weeds Forum: Working with Moorabool Shire Council to identify 14 problem areas of weed infestation in Blackwood & Barry's Reef. Council has now committed to an on-going annual program of eradicating & controlling weeds.
- 2020** – Purchasing a Community Chipping Machine

Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare will miss you.

~ Blackwood Landcare

Some recollections & reflections of some of the people who knew & loved Shane follow.

Shane's son, Courtney Scanlan, recalls:

Shane was born & raised in the Melbourne suburb of Cheltenham. He was one of 10 children along with Clair, Chris, Shane, Jacinta, Andrea, Joanne, Steve, Michelle, Moira & Markie.

Shane first went to law school when he finished high school. He then changed his mind & decided on journalism, as he had a passion for writing & storytelling.

He worked as a journalist for many years. When his family came along, he started a web design company called 'Mediation' in the mid-1990s.

Following the success of this company, he had the opportunity in the late 2010's to buy a small newspaper, the Docklands News, & rehash his passion for journalism, & he built this business up into the local news empire it is today.

Shane was always very fit. He ran marathons & cycled nearly every day. My earliest memories are of him coming home after a run or a bike ride & icing his ankles. He was also a very passionate photographer. He was great behind a camera & held an exhibition a few years back.

Shane & his first wife, Sally, purchased the land in Blackwood over 20 years ago. I remember very well the first time my parents brought us to Blackwood. The property was a sloping bush block & we had a picnic on the side of the hill at the top of the driveway. I had no idea why my parents were so excited. Over the next few years, they built their dream house, & the excitement began to make sense. Before the house was built all of us would stay in a rundown, murky caravan.

Our family & friends would come up & camp during school holidays or long weekends. Slowly the house was built & began to feel more like a home. They both loved to leave Melbourne behind & have a quiet place in the bush to spend their free time.

I think his passion for the environment came from living in Blackwood & seeing first-hand the effects of deforestation & the damage caused by irresponsible & careless people.

Blackwood will always be my connection to my father. He used to drag us here kicking & screaming when we were teenagers in the hope that one day we would appreciate this unique & special part of the world. Blackwood will always feel like home.

Shane's son, Ryan Scanlan, adds:

The family home was in Devon St Cheltenham. He went to law school at Deakin University, but dropped it because it bored him. His first newspaper job was at the Bacchus Mash Express, then the Bendigo Advertiser, followed by the Melbourne Sun.

Shane also loved motorcycles, starting with a Triumph in his early twenties before upgrading to newer machines. He had a black BMW that he used to take to Phillip Island to blast around the GP track in the off-season.

Camping & bush walking were always big parts of Shane's life. We never had a school holiday that wasn't a camping trip! He went on many multi-day bushwalks, including walks in Tasmania, New Zealand & even the Kokoda Track.

I remember that picnic too! He was stoked when he bought the land in Blackwood, & we spent the day removing the wire fence dividing the two blocks. They bought it as their retirement plan: from day one he always planned on leaving the city & settling down there.

Not sure of the timeline of building the house, but it was just a bush block with a caravan & tents for quite a few years before they even started the build.

My favourite memories are the wrestling matches on his bed, we boys used to gang up on him & have great wrestles, & I remember laying down next to him as he held his arms out, making infant Clancy fly through the air whilst calling him Suuper Baby, & the name just stuck.

- The smell of tiger balm & the jingle of coins.
- The sound of leather soles on floorboards.
- Friday nights at the club, as he & his mates had clued onto the fact that bowls clubs had cheap beer & a great atmosphere long before Mick Malloy.

Shane's son, Patrick Scanlan, adds:

You probably don't need any more Court & Ry, but I'd add he was gifted a great mind.

Michael Sierakowski was telling me how Dad never studied, but always aced exams, & this intelligence stayed with him through his life. It enabled him to start a business & support a family. He reinvented the business three times over 30 plus years (first desktop publishing, then web design, then hyperlocal news).

He never stopped learning. I was so impressed that he was able to pick up an old manual & put that car [a vintage Landrover] back together.

Cat Moser, another great advocate of the Landcare Group, on her memories of Shane.

Over many years of my involvement in Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group, Shane & I developed a good friendship. As can be the case with small community groups it wasn't always smooth sailing, & there were times that I would grumble to Shane about my discontent. He was always open & approachable & although we didn't always agree, we developed a strong friendship & respect for each other. He came to admire my knowledge of indigenous plants & would often ask my advice. He had a way of making me feel valued. We both stuck it out in the Landcare group as the numbers dwindled & many times it looked like it would fold. When Shane retired he said "I'm going to put all my energy into Landcare". His dedication was just amazing. We built up the member numbers & have a thriving group today thanks mainly to Shane's commitment & passion for our community.

Shane was a great dancer. I remember being blown away by his energy on the dance floor when we were watching Clintonium Bomb play. His style was unique & awesome. He encouraged even the most reserved people in the room to get up & let loose!

He always answered the phone when I rang. I recall a time I rang him & he answered, sounding out of breath. I asked him if this was a good time to chat. His response was "I've been racing on my bike". I queried "Oh I see, you're out riding with a friend?" He responded "No, just some guy who's out riding the same road. I've been trying to beat him. Testosterone is such a curse! Don't worry, I'll catch him in no time". His dry wit & sense of humour always shone through.

Peter Donnelly, reflects on his friend Shane:

I first met Shane when I joined Landcare 7(?) years ago. Two founders of that group - Pat Liffman & John Davies - had recently died, & BBRLG was hanging by a thread. Feeling strongly that their legacy had to be carried forward, Shane took on the role of President, & drawing on his apparently limitless reservoirs of energy, breathed new life into the organisation. This did not happen immediately: there were lean years, & it took a great deal of sustained effort, organising skill & determination to bring it about. The results speak for themselves: now, in 2021, Landcare has more paid-up members than it has ever had.

There's so much that can be said about Shane.

He was an incredibly hard worker. At one point last year we tackled the holly trees on the North side of the cricket ground. Observing that, in fact, the entire hillside was infested with gorse & blackberry, we talked about how great it would be to get rid of them & replant in natives.

Shane tried to get one the government sponsored Green Work programs onto the job, but it turned out the hillside was too steep to be considered safe. A couple of weeks later I noticed a 'Landcare at Work' sign at the oval & asked Shane about it. Turns out he put the sprayer backpack on & did it himself over several sessions of what must have been backbreaking work.

Shane knew how governments worked, & how to speak to & interact with politicians & bureaucrats. He was fearless in this regard: when, a couple of years ago, the enduro motorcyclists marked out public land for use in their annual race, phone calls were quickly & strategically made, & that part of the race was moved within a day. A tense situation was handled & resolved amicably.

Shane did lots of other weed eradication around Blackwood that no one knew about, to the benefit of our natural environment. Shane was 'Action Man'.

If you ever identified a weed problem, you had to be ready with gloves & tools to start on it within a day or two. (Shane: "Ok. Are you free tomorrow morning?")



For me, one of the most fun things we did in Landcare was the "War on Wasps".

We became very good at locating wasps' nests, a skill I never thought I'd need. There was great hilarity & the occasional sting. The community really got on board: before long lots of people were hunting wasps' nests & keeping tallies of dead queens. It worked too – the wasp problem has declined greatly since the memorable year the carnival was inundated with hordes of wasps.

Shane seemed to be able to put his hand to almost anything. After he retired, he decided he would need a large project to fill in his time. He bought a beat-up old Landrover & set about restoring it. I still can't quite believe how short the time was between him telling me he'd bought it, & the day he said he was taking it down to Ballan to get registered. & of course, it was meticulously restored & looked stunning. How did he know how to do this?

Sue & I quickly became great friends with Shane & Lou, & we, & often also Shaun, spent many fun evenings at Shane & Lou's house - both of whom were great cooks by the way.

As others have said, Shane loved dancing, & never missed an opportunity to trip the light fantastic. As luck has it, Sue also loves dancing; Lou & I not so much, which worked out quite well when we were all out together.

Shane was an enthusiastic listener of Three Triple Wombat (handle 'DJ Weedman', pun intended) to the point that he installed a large new aerial to ensure he could always receive it well. Shane was madly in love with Lou, & dedicated many a romantic song to her on DJ Ruby Princess's 'Loved Up & Locked Down' program.

We loved our times together: Shane brought nothing but joy to our lives, & we miss him terribly.

Articles on this spread have been compiled by Peter Donnelly

Jinny Coyle, a colleague lost

I first met Shane in a professional capacity in 2008 when I was re-branding the Docklands Chamber of Commerce of which he was a member. I was struck by his fierce sense of what was right, his way of digging & digging to find the facts he needed for what ever article he was writing for the Docklands News.

Years later I saw him in the Blackwood Hotel. He had a property up here. He was with a journo mate & we 3 became the self-appointed 3 Jorno-eers. We were the ones who dealt in localised community news & issues.

Over the years we had many discussions about the news industry as well as his passion for weed management.

Shane was rich in so many ways, intelligent, loyal & tough but full of quiet love for whatever & whoever he welcomed into his world.

You will be missed, Shane Scanlan

ED: Docklands News article https://www.docklandsnews.com.au/editions/article/so-long-scoop_17516/ & a further article from Docklands Chamber of Commerce: https://www.docklandsnews.com.au/columns/detail/chamber-update_17532/

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Blackwood Crown Reserves

The Blackwood Crown Reserves Committee of Management was formally appointed on May 26, 2021.

Since then the Committee has been meeting fortnightly & will continue to do so for the immediate future.

Of course the storm event has compounded the work that the committee is undertaking & the focus has been on obtaining quotes to repair the damage at the mineral springs bridge & inspecting & assessing fallen trees.

We have been liaising with government agencies to try & fast track these works & are hopeful that the army will assist in the clean up. It should be noted that the Committee of Management answers to the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning & is reliant on grants to undertake works at any of the reserves.

The Committee will be developing an overarching vision & strategic plan (short & long term) for the 7 reserves under its management. Key to this vision & strategy is ensuring we represent the views of the community. These reserves are: Blackwood Hall, Caravan Park & Mineral Springs, Poveys Reserve, tennis courts, Cann Reserve, Sports ground & swimming hole.

We are seeking your ideas, feedback, & comments that will help inform our plans. This can be via email or phone:

Chair, David White on 0418 372 203 - bwcrown3458@gmail.com - blackwoodcrownreserves@yahoo.com.au OR Secretary, Lisa Moore on 0419 512 946

Blackwood & surrounding towns are fast becoming 'go-to destinations'. The Committee of Management will work to protect & sustainably develop our natural & built assets. We look forward to hearing from you.

~ David White, Chair, BCRCOM

BLACKWOOD CERT

"It's an Ill Wind That Blows No Good"

The storm that hit the Blackwood/Trentham area in June was a huge shock on many levels. What was not shocking was the generosity of spirit shown by locals in helping each other out in the days following. The winds, however damaging, created an opportunity for neighbours, new & old, to share resources & time with & help each other – a "Good" indeed!

CERT Members were proud to play their part in undertaking welfare checks in the days following, whilst many locals remained isolated & without electricity.

CERT was also very, very grateful (again) to Blackwood CFA that CERT's ambulance vehicle was safely housed in the CFA Refuge during the devastating storm & protected from the many fallen trees.

Train & Join: Ambulance Victoria (our parent body) has announced a further training course in September for people wanting to join CERTs throughout our region. This is a great opportunity to gain new skills to share in caring for others in the wider Blackwood/Greendale/Newbury communities as fully trained First Responders.

As much of this Cert II in Emergency Medicine course is online, it should not be too disrupted by Covid lockdowns & provides an interesting, free & useful skills-based learning project which can then be applied to assist those in the local area in 000 medical emergencies as a member of Blackwood CERT.

Learn skills online – apply skills in our community – what could be better!

To take up this opportunity please contact Jan (0409 857 180) or Leonie (0438 797 007) to discuss & apply to join our Team.

~ Leonie Brasier, Co-Team Leader

Blackwood CFA

Again we face uncertainty as we are facing another lockdown. It has been a roller coaster for the last 18 months due to the Corona Virus & lockdowns.

After some recent events, including the storms, it is imperative to look after ourselves & each other.

If you are feeling down, or the blues, or things are getting too much, reach out & talk to someone.

There are many services available to help people through these times check: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/servicesandsupport/mental-health-services>

The storm event which occurred overnight & the morning of Thursday June 10 kept the brigade & the rest of the town busy for days.

We were first paged to assist Greendale brigade at Dales Creek about 6:30am Thursday morning & we couldn't even get out of town. As many other townfolk, a few of us had to cut our way out of our driveways just to get to the Fire Station.

It was heartening to see so many locals in the darkness clearing trees & opening up roads - especially as there was so much electrical infrastructure blocking major routes in the town.

The brigade has initiated discussions with Telstra to try & resolve the telephone exchange power issues. The town was without landline, ADSL & 000 access for 3 days. In recent years this is occurring far too often.

Storm incidents like this heighten the importance of clear house numbers. The Fire Brigade is lucky to a certain extent as we can usually look for smoke, but it makes it difficult for Ambulance & Police to get to you quickly.

Street lighting in Blackwood is minimal at best, so clear numbering can be a life saver.

There are still many dangerous trees around the town & in the bush which may come down on the next windy day. We may be living with the results of the storm for many months to come.

THE FIRST PRIORITY IS YOUR SAFETY: Always ring 000 in the case of any emergency. If you have & fire & do manage to put the fire out, it is better to have us responding than to wait until it is too late.

For more info contact the station on 53686526 on Sunday mornings over the summer period & the first Sunday of every month during the rest of the year, as we are there for training & equipment checks.

How is your Fire Plan? Even though we are in Winter, your fire plan should be constantly reviewed & updated to cover any changes to your situation.

To reiterate – do not let complacency set in & always be prepared, no matter what the season.

Always keep an eye on the weather forecasts.

Remember that the Refuge is a last resort measure & that you should have your Fire Plan in place.

~ Karl Church, Community Safety Liaison Officer, Blackwood Fire Brigade

Blackwood & District Historical Society

The BDHS are still seeking new members to join our friendly group. We are beginning the task of scanning & cataloguing our collection for the benefit of future generations to explore our rich history. Any help with this project would be appreciated if you have the time & are seeking a worthwhile pursuit.

We meet at 10am at the Police Stables on the first Saturday of the month.

~ Ray Castellin

ED: See article on p15

Blackwood Landcare

Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group are re-gathering & working towards the future, after the sudden passing of our colleague, Shane Scanlan. We would like to share some information about the amazing contribution one man made to both the local Landcare group, & to the township & community of Blackwood itself.

~ Diana Dawson, President

ED: See article on p10

Blackwood Progress Association

see our exciting news on p2.

~ Brendan Hehir, President

Blackwood Seniors

Well a short lived reunion but it was great to see everyone back. A big welcome back to Jackie who was very much missed. We are still waiting for Bev to come back after a very long illness, we all miss you so much Bev.

Not much else to report, our Xmas in July might have to be Xmas in August if we can get back by then. We hope everyone stays safe & well, hopefully more news next time .

~ Dianne Volpe, Secretary

Blackwood Uniting Church

I just want everyone to know that the last document needed for our Certificate of Occupancy has been lodged with the building surveyor so you should be hearing the bell ringing soon to let you know that we have finally received it. Then watch this space for up & coming events.

Also we have just installed 3 split-system units.

~ Robyn Zanon

Your community wants to know about your club or organisation, what your focus in the community is & how you would like support, please email your regular reports to Sandy at – galaxyss@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month prior to the publishing date.

Sign up at theblackwoodtimes.com.au to get deadline reminders.

THE DAY THE BIG WIGS CAME TO TOWN



L-R: Phil Jeffrey MSC; Stewart Davies BRV; Carmel Flynn Acting CEO BRV; Jinny Coyle, co-ord The Blackwood Times; Sally Jones, MSC; Andrew Crisp, EMV Commissioner; Cherie Graham MSC Emergency Management

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV) is working in the 3 most storm impacted areas of Victoria, including Central and Southwest Gippsland, Yarra Ranges, Murrindindi and Cardinia and the Central Highlands including Moorabool Shire. BRV are working closely with the council and local government agencies to understand and respond to the needs of storm-affected communities.

Jinny Coyle, The Times co-ordinator, was fortunate to be up at the pop-up recovery hub during a briefing between the shire & members of a number of emergency services.

Carmel Flynn noted that even though they were only there briefly, Jinny had provided extremely useful insights into what community recovery means to the community.

As the meeting progressed, those attendance marvelled over a pair of wedge tailed eagles circling above, closely followed a large flock of cockatoos flying into the horizon. These were some of the first birds to come back after the storm.



The Zanon family provided Blackwood with a soup kitchen during the blackout. Edward Zanon serves a mean Laksa, enjoyed by Noelle & Cr Ally.

FROM ALLY'S DESK

It was with mixed emotions that I got to know a lot of you throughout the storm last month.

It was amazing to see the strength & resilience of small-town residents that prove to show that with love & kindness, anything is possible.

If you are in need of information or assistance, please call our Council Emergency Recovery Number on 5366 1323 or visit the Council website.

A big thank you to the many residents that have approached me by phone or email expressing their desires & ideas for their local areas. Please keep them coming.

I want to work with locals for the benefit & good of the community.

Thank you to everyone for submitting feedback in regard to the Blackwood Township Improvement Plan. A draft plan has been completed & will soon be presented to the community for consultation.

Please feel free to call me on 0428 116 001 or email me on amunari@moorabool.vic.gov.au

While my family continues to cut the endless amount of wood that lay around our farm, I am determined to hold focus on what the future holds for our small towns in this Shire.

Take care & stay warm.

~ Cr Ally Munari

Blackwood Motorcycle Club

With the raging storms that came through Blackwood recently the Blackwood Motorcycle Club weren't able to get out & enjoy riding but instead helped with the clean-up within the township & on their own properties.

Nil reports of any one being injured which was a relief & amazing to many due to the stories that followed. Also, nil reports of any bikes being damaged, which we saw as a good sign and, fingers crossed, we can get out soon for another ride.

Only 1 ride happened since the last BWT addition but due to a spur of a moment decision for a ride, & less than 24 hours' notice, only Terri & I braved a ride to Lorne on Sunday, July 11 which saw temperatures getting below 10°. With little traffic heading to Lorne, as most were heading back to Melbourne, we had quite a good run going through the heavy forest areas from Winchelsea with tight, winding roads. Lunch at the wharf was yummy as seafood is always a winner & then finished off with a nice slow ride home.

If anyone has any good ideas for a ride, please let us know via our FB page. Blackwood Motorcycle Club (Not Group).

~ by Brett Bond

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KENNETH JOHN COOKE

April 1, 1931 – June 26, 2021 Ken had acquired his property on Poveys Road back in the late 1950's or early 1960s, where he & his family stayed in the log cabin on weekend visits & holidays. In the 1970's he built the house on Poveys with the help of Jannette Darwen's father, Alby. Ken had always had his eye on acquiring the hotel, this was one of his dreams, to hold the freehold license.

In the early 1980's he built his garage on the property & this was the time I became affiliated with Ken & his family. In 1984 he offered me the house to live in & manage the clearing of his property which I gladly accepted. In the years that followed I became not just a tenant but a firm friend & part of his extended family. That friendship lasted 43 years up to his passing on. In 1994 he acquired the ownership of the hotel from George Stockdale, he took over the running of the hotel in 2000 from the then lessee, Ray Meade. During Ray's time Ken built the storeroom onto the hotel again using Alby as the builder. During the next few years, we would supply the license & stall for beer sales at the Easter Carnival where he would donate all the proceeds of beer sales to the progress group. He always donated to the CFA & was prominent in helping them acquire their 1st fire truck, he also helped in the acquisition of the 2nd.

In 2001 Ken, Dave Dandy & several others got together to help start the CERT group in town, the names of some others now elude my recollection.

In 2002 we engaged Steve Empey to build the deck onto the hotel, Ken loved Blackwood & up to the time of his passing became the second longest owner of the freehold surpassing George Stockdale's 20 year ownership Ken had the license & freehold for 27 years.

~ Robert Van Zyl



ABOVE: Ken & Anne's 60th wedding anniversary
BELOW Left: Ken's 90th birthday - celebrated at the Blackwood Hotel



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LABOR MEMBER FOR MACEDON

Welcome back to The Blackwood Times, and welcome to 2020!

As your local Member of Parliament, I am keen to hear from the community and assist with any State Government matter.



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Authorised by MA Thomas, Shop 14, Nexus Centre, 9 Goode Street, Gisborne. Funded from Parliamentary budget.



WHEN WE WERE "BOURKE STREET"

It may surprise many to know that our little town was once populous enough to support a Bus/taxi service with associated depot.

Following are the reminiscences from the memory of Alan Hall pertaining to the "Plumridge & Wiltshire Bus Company".

Jack & Marg Plumridge, together with Alfie Wiltshire constructed the shed for the bus & taxi depot sometime in the early 1950s. Jack drove the bus, a KS 51 International, this unfortunately drove over the bank at the mineral springs! Jack replaced this with a Bedford in 1954.

A couple of memorable journeys were taking the Blackwood primary school children into Ballarat to see a young Queen Elizabeth as well as transporting those lucky enough to have tickets, to the station on the way to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Meanwhile Marg ran 2 taxis, an Oldsmobile & a Vanguard Space Master. Marg regularly did the run to Bacchus Marsh & Trentham Railway stations as well as collecting the mail from Trentham & returning it to the Blackwood PO.

After Jack's death, Alfie drove the bus. A regular daily trip was to Myrning Primary School as well as the Catholic & State Schools & the High Schools in Bacchus Marsh.

Ted Walker & John Murphy were 2 of the bus captains (responsible for keeping order on the bus!).

An earlier taxi service operated from the corner shop (old tearooms) around 1939.

The depot no longer stands as it was in a perilous state of disrepair although the current owners of the site can attest to the sturdy way it was originally constructed!! A testament to the workmanship of Jack & Alfie.

Another shock is we had the choice of fuelling up from 3 bowsers at one point in time. These were located at the Kiosk above the mineral springs, outside the general store (now the coffee roasters) & outside the before mentioned corner store.

~ Ray Castellin (BDHS)



In this part of the world, easterly winds have always been benign. Until now. Our trees, adapted to the prevailing SW to NW winds (through growth stresses in the trunk & canopy & root distribution) either uprooted or snapped during "Cyclone June". This one also managed to spear itself on the way down.



HELLO FROM A NEWBIE ...

My name is Alice, & I have 2 wonderful dogs, Stella & Wally, who are always excited to meet new friends, 4 legged & 2! Since arriving I have felt nothing but welcomed by this wonderful community! It really is something special, which you probably already know.

I was asked to write this, & now I don't know what to say to you all! I have many stories to tell from my crazy adventures in the Live Entertainment industry, that are surely in part responsible for my mother's grey hair! But for sometime I felt life was more than work, & so here I am, with my garden & dogs. I still love to work on events, & have a wide skillset – so if you're looking for some practical advice, or a techie - reach out.

Now you're stuck with me, I really hope I can be a part of bringing this community together, & I honestly believe that the simplest ways to do that are the best! A shared space to come together, share good times, & the wonderful entrepreneurs of this community to do their thing. I also love sharing my skills, whether its directly, or through passing them along to others.

In the meantime, I am working hard at home! & hope to have bounty from my garden to share with you and would like to gather some interest in some things happening around my home.

- Carpentry Workshops for women – want a safe space & some mentoring on how to use tools? Or would you like to put together a bird house? Garden bed? Or some other small project & don't have the tools or space?
- Need a studio space? I have an empty 5 x 5m studio begging to be used. This can be for your own workshops, office, painting writing etc – rent super flexible.
- Working Bees – my garden is slowly taking shape, it's a lot of work for one, so always open for help, can trade in skills, knowledge, time in your garden, or garden bounty!
- Any tips from fellow Blackwood gardens are also welcome!

My email is pollard35@gmail.com, my phone number is 0481 706 179

You will no doubt see me around town with my two dogs, covered in mud!

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PET SHENANIGANS WITH SEAMUS



Woof: In this month's edition I would like to talk about senior pets. I am thoroughly enjoying my grand old age of 11 and recommend the importance of regular wellness checks. Our pets age more rapidly than we do - the common rule of thumb is 7 animal years for every human year and their risk of developing disease or illness increases as does the possibility that the illness or disease will rapidly progress. So what should you look for in your senior "petizen"?

Eyes: Pets can develop diseases of the eyes such as glaucoma, cataracts or dry eye.

Glaucoma: Glaucoma is an increased eye pressure leading to blindness due to the death of the optic nerve. In the early stages very red, painful eyes develop but is treatable is detected very early on with a thorough vision assessment & eye examination by your veterinarian.

Cataracts: Cataracts are due to lens changes in the eye & are common in ageing dogs or in those with diabetes. The most common sign is a blue/grey look to the centre of the eye which will lead to blindness. With early detection & regular vision assessments, your veterinarian & yourself can monitor if & when surgery is required.

Dry Eye: Dry eye is an autoimmune condition in certain breeds where decreased tear production reduces lubrication on the surface of the eye. This causes a thick sticky discharge to build up around the eye & surface of the eye to 'scar' affecting vision & possibly ulceration. Regular eye examinations will indicate if your pet is at risk of this disease.

Heart & Lungs: Pets can develop conditions such as bronchitis, emphysema, pneumonia & cardiac disease.

Cardiac Disease: With an ageing heart the valves & chambers become less functional, causing heart murmurs or a swollen heart. This means the heart works less efficiently causing breathlessness, cough, bloated belly or decreased exercise tolerance. Regular auscultation (listening with a stethoscope) will give your vet an early warning of cardiac disease.

Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Emphysema: As the lungs age, the tissue that makes the lungs becomes less pliable ("stretchy") meaning the lungs can't expand correctly or the tubes (trachea or bronchi) lose their shape. This causes cough, breathlessness or lack of energy. Again regular auscultation or X-rays can give early warning or respiratory conditions.

Joints: Senior pets can develop conditions such as arthritis or previously undiagnosed conditions such as hip or elbow dysplasia could become apparent.

Arthritis: Most large breed dogs over 7 years will develop this with painful, swollen joints & an unwillingness to move or sit being the most common symptoms. Smaller breed dogs & cats can also develop this condition. Regular examinations with your vet will indicate if or when treatment will be required for arthritis.



In his article on p5 of our last issue, Don Owen mentioned the toilet block by Sebastapol swimming hole. He sent us this photographic evidence.

Hip or Elbow dysplasia: These are conditions which develop when your dog is young but may not become apparent until the joint cartilage starts to "wear out". Again, painful swollen elbows or an unwillingness to sit or lay down are the most common symptoms for these conditions. Regular monitoring & examinations will give your vet early indication if these conditions are progressing.

Organs: Senior cats should be regularly monitored for kidney failure & diabetes. Senior dogs should have regular checks to ensure their liver, kidneys & adrenal glands are working effectively.

Kidney Failure: Increased thirst and weight loss are the first symptoms of kidney failure along with smelly breath, mouth ulcers and nausea as the disease progresses. Regular urine & blood testing together with routine examinations will give an early indication to this disease. Early intervention greatly improves quality of life.

Diabetes: Increased thirst & weight loss again are early indicators along with recurrent urinary tract infections & increased appetite. Regular urine & blood testing with routine examinations will give an early indication to this disease. Early intervention greatly increases prognostic indicators with higher rates of remission especially in cats.

Liver Disease: The liver stops processing certain waste products which cause nausea, lack of appetite & possibly seizures. Regular routine blood testing can give an early indication of decreased liver function.

Adrenal Disease: The adrenal gland produces certain substances which help regulate metabolic processes. If it produces too much or too little the liver, heart, skin, hair coat & muscles can be affected leading to immature ageing processes, diabetes & liver failure. Routine blood testing can give indications as to the function of the adrenal gland.

Lumps: Pets can develop lumps on or under the skin which can become cancerous & spread to the lymph nodes or internal organs.

Thyroid : Senior cats are at risk of developing an overactive thyroid gland which can lead to vomiting, weight loss & heart problems. Regular palpation of the neck area & blood monitoring can lead to early detection of this condition.

As we head into our senior years it is important to have regular veterinarian visits that will monitor our health with blood & urine tests. Petizen's like me have plenty of spring left in our step, see you around Blackwood.

~ Woof for now ... Seamus



THEN & NOW: Blackwoodian Paul Griffin wonders if anyone can date & identify the folk in the photo above. Below: same scene but now.



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• FLETCHERS ADVENTURES •



Well hello to the windy friends of Blackwood.

Not a lot to talk about this month apart from the massive wind storm we doggies & all my other animal friends had to endure & the aftermath of the damage it caused. I recall on the night of the storm (don't know the date as us doggies & friends can't read a calendar although we are very talented!) that Joanie & I were sound asleep & Dad woke us up some time during the night when it was dark &

quickly put Joanie & me into the car. Mummy was already in there & then off we went into the Main Street of Blackwood where it was relatively calm & out of danger. I liked the situation as I love sleeping with Mum & Dad & Joanie as this doesn't happen often & as matter of fact, it doesn't happen at all! I slept like a new born puppy all night.

We returned home to a few fallen trees & not a lot of damage thank goodness & I got to see most of my mates at the town meetings that were held. On the Sunday after the storm, Mum said she had to go to church in the dark as there was still no power. She said she had to read by her phone light. But that is Blackwood for you, still operating despite no power for ages. Well welcome to the present day as Dad has just informed us that there is another lockdown. Doesn't really matter to Joanie & me as we get to run around the property as usual & the trusty old Post Office is Dad's one-stop shop for the daily coffees & town information. Bless Marty & Carol who always say hi when Joanie & I are in the car.

To all my mates in Blackwood & around the traps, "tails up & heads down" & keep on making our Beautiful Blackwood happy & healthy.

~ with doggie love from Fletcher the doggie stretcher!

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BLACKWOOD WOMBIES

Hello & welcome to a freezing cold winter, from Wombat Book club. Yes, it's a good time to retreat to a warm fireside or cozy covers ,tucked in up bed with a good book.

Our last meeting was at Garden of St. Erth.

We get together the third Sunday of each month. Unfortunately, we have not set a place to call home as changes still take place whilst the pandemic continues. New members are welcome but need to contact Brenda at - woodbinelodge1@gmail.com for information on our next get-together.

The 2 books we read this month were, 'Just An Ordinary Family' by Fiona Lowe, & 'A Gentleman In Moscow', by Amor Towles.

Just an Ordinary Family-

Sandy: "Just an Ordinary Family" was an interesting read with the story about twins who were so different from each other. One a doctor, the other, no interest in academia but choose to clean yachts. There were so many twists & turns in this story, which turned out, one twin who was adopted, to other affairs which the family engaged in. The intrigue kept the reader turning the pages to see what else it unfolds. It was well-written & easy to read.

4.5 wombies

A Gentleman in Moscow-

Sandy: "A Gentleman in Moscow" is the story of Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov, who is charged with writing a poem in 1913 with revolutionary overtones whilst Russia is in the grip of Communism. He is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol Hotel.

This is an endearing story of the crush of freedom of speech & how the Count endures his house arrest in this hotel, even though most of his possessions have been confiscated, & he is reduced to basic living. A little slow, but a great story.

4.5 Wombies

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How can I say Thank You from the heart of me to the people of Blackwood?... hopefully by writing a Thank You in the Blackwood Times ...

I know you won't like me naming you, sorry...as I write this I know some of Blackwood hasn't got power yet, it has along with the phone been restored here what a blessing...here we go then.....

A big Thank You to The Blackwood Emergency Meals syndicate (my name for them) arriving late arvo like angels smiling & brimming with kindness a hot meal & the time to give a Blackwood update...

Luise, her son Jeremy, & family have supported me for some time often arriving with a meal & making sure the house is warm etc & then stepping up support through the Covid pandemic but WOW! they stepped up big time through the storm event...one of the best incidences was a generator arriving out of the blue that fired up the modem & iPad, allowing me to talk to my family, who after 3 days of silence, were beside themselves...a lamp & television going was a precious gift for an older night owl like myself...life was so much more comforting & comfortable...the Cassidy children dropping in for a chat often bear gifts especially Dad's delicious home-made baked beans or something they have cooked...I love their company our banter & their often wise words...To Carol, Rosie, Ryan & to Gerard, Thank You...

There are others I could name & you know who you are, another big 'Thank You' said with buckets of gratitude & love...my late husband was an emergency service worker & I have seen & heard of many a dire incidence & communities pulling together but never before has one impacted me on this level due no doubt to my living alone, my age & infirmities. Being practically & lovingly supported with so much kindness by the human family has reinforced my hope not only for our future but it is also strong message of hope to the younger generation that we can & do over come adversity & can do so much for each other when we pull together..Thank You Blackwood.

Mary Waters (Rev)



THE PLEASURES OF BLACKWOOD



by Margot F. Hitchcock, Historian for the Blackwood Historical Society.

Oh to come to Blackwood, where the air is clear,
So often in the city, do I wish I was just here.
When I arrive I can have a rest, or sit down with
a book,
Or take a walk, & unwind, around my garden, for
a look.

I love the cool night air, the morning mist, the rain upon the roof,
Sunny days & windy days, for these I feel so blest.
I love to sleep in, & read a book in bed,
Or have breakfast brought to me, by someone I know who cares.

I sit & listen to the sounds I love to hear,
The birds calling in the trees, are delightful to my ear.
The Magpies, Currawongs, Parrots, Kookaburras & the Cockies too,
Even Gang-gangs, Wattle birds & an Owl or two

The Gang-gangs, grey with bright red crest,
Such pretty birds, & the ones I like the best.
But the parrots are so colourful, with their red & blue,
And happiest when they're feeding with a mate or two.

The Gang-gangs in the Hawthorn trees, cracking of the berries,
The calling of the Parrots in the plum tree, eating of the cherries.
The cockies in the apple tree, making such a fuss,
Have to pick them soon, or there won't be some for us.

Honey-eaters sipping nectar, from the pretty flowers,
Hiding in the blossom trees, in their leafy bowers.
Their music is so peaceful, it brightens up the day,
No need to have the radio, when we have their sounds to play.

When winter comes, the Robin Red-breast brightens up the cold,
And Jacky Winter hops along the fence, looking grey but bold.
At dusk you may see bats flying, if you're still & quiet,
Catching insects, in the air, through the dying light.

At night, Possums run along my roof, & scamper to the ground,
Looking for food or scraps that I may have left around.
I've seen Koalas amongst the trees, & Kangaroos all abound.
I like to see them hopping in the bush, not dead from hitting cars, & lying
on the ground.

If you take a walk you may see, Wombats roaming the bush here too,
And I've also seen an Echidna, but they are very few.
I love to wander through the bush, & walk down to the creek.
To search for gold, or rocks to find, or bathe my tired feet.

I love the smell of the eucalyptus trees, after the misty rain,
The air is filled with the delightful smell, & I can breathe again.
And when the sun comes out, after some heavy rain,
The trees all sparkle & glisten, & look all fresh again.

The earth then gives off warm steam, & clouds of mist arise,
It looks so warm & wonderful, a sight to please your eyes.
When the moon is full, everything looks so clear & bright.
The stars appear to multiply, as they twinkle in the night.

Oh to be in the Blackwood bush, in a forest of pine,
The beautiful smell of pine needles, reminds me of Christmas time.
To go for a walk in the bush, along the old water race,
Just take your time, enjoy the sights, & walk at an even pace.

The sights to see where the miners once worked, with a pick, shovel &
spade.
With holes & shafts all around, where once their fortunes were made.
I often wonder how they lived, when the weather was so cold, Oh how
those pioneers suffered, in their search for gold.

The graveyard on the hill, where many a pioneer lie,
From accidents, or sickness, & children too young to die,
The headstone tells the story of many a pioneer,
Who lived & died in Blackwoods, & now is buried here.

The Chinese too are buried there, in unconsecrated ground,
And painstakingly they searched for gold, in Blackwood's rocky ground.
I love to go down to the Springs, & drink the water there.
The Mineral water is so tasty, & the water is so clear.

Then up the hill beyond the Springs, for a walk up to the Lake.
That the Shaw Brothers dug, with a pick & shovel, & it took so long to
make.
Shaw's Lake is deep, & the swimming is just fine,
Or sit awhile, & throw in a fishing line.

I like to swim across the lake, then sit in the sun on the bank,
And rest away the hours, before it's time to walk back.
A walk to Sweet's Lookout is good, for the sights to see.
Then walk down the hill, around the race, amongst the various trees.

But best of all, I love the maiden fern,
That grows by the side in the shade,
Or further on at Moonlight Gully,
You can see a ferny glade.

There are lots of walks along the races, that wind around the town
Cocciardi's or Byres race, or the Simmons Reef race to The Crown.
For the Crown Dam once held water, that the Miners & town folk used.
But a log got caught, & the dam did burst, & all the bridges fused.

But a walk to that spot on the higher track, is a sheer delight.
Then back by the creek on the lower track, with the ferns a wonderful
sight.
You get to the track near the Garden of St Erth, down Simmons Reef way,
Where lots of walks can be enjoyed to while away your day.

Blackwood is good in the winter, & sometimes we even see snow.
Then we sit in front of the fire, & watch its warm red glow.
It's good to cook soup on the wood heater, to warm your inside up,
Or go for a walk to the local Hotel, as it's a good old country Pub.

For when I come to Blackwood, be it to work or have a rest.
I always go back to Melbourne with a lighter heart, & with a renewal of zest.
For I love to work in my garden, & see the flowers all grow,
The fruit on the trees, the plants from the seeds, & the vegies all in a row.

For Blackwood is best for the weary, to rest & regain their strength.
To sit awhile, or walk a mile, & renew their vigor's spent.
Whatever your needs, be it company, with a friend or two,
Or solitude & sounds of the bush, to regain your spirits anew.

Oh to be in Blackwood, any time of the year.
With the smells of the bush, & the sounds of the birds,
Aringing in your ear.

©Margot F Hitchcock. January 2017

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GARDENING IN BLACKWOOD

WINTER

If sites are properly prepared and the most suitable sites for their needs are chosen, it is possible to grow a greater variety of plants in the hills of Victoria-including Blackwood- than anywhere else in the world!

At the moment, real crocuses and real snowdrops are coming into flower. These, without very special treatment, will not flower on the plains, because it is not cold for long enough. The little blue Crocus tomasinianus will naturalise easily in our Blackwood soil.

It is possible to go into a supermarket and buy a packet of bulbs promoted as "three different sorts of Autumn Crocus". Not one of them will be a true crocus. The white one will be a windflower or Zephyranthes; the yellow one will be a Sternbergia Lutea; and the pinkish-purple one will be a Colchicum of which there are several sorts and which has been called "Autumn Crocus" for so long that it perhaps deserves the nickname.

What many people call snowdrops are really Snowflakes, Leucojum species. They are quite tall with white bells tipped green. True snowdrops, Galanthus are much shorter with three distinct petals. Sternbergias and Colchicums look like crocuses, but have botanical differences and do not flower in the spring.

A shrub which at present scents our whole garden-especially if there is a bit of warmth about-is Wintersweet, whose rather insignificant yellow flowers come out before any leaves. Some nurserymen will label this "Allspice", which is quite a different shrub, every bit of which smells spicy, but which flowers in the summer. The confusion arises because the Latin names have some of the same letters.

Wintersweet is Chimonanthus praecox ('praecox' means "early" as in "precocious"): Allspice is Calycanthus and the commonest species is C floridus, Carolina Allspice.

The Blackwood Newsletter reserves the right to refuse any advertising or editorial.

Many visitors to our garden claim they cannot be bothered with Latin names. And often suffer disappointment as a result. They want a Winter-sweet. A nurseryman says "Oh, you mean Allspice" and they get the wrong plant. Similarly, I am constantly trying to persuade Melbourne visitors not to buy real crocuses. The obstinate ones buy some bulbs elsewhere and are then disappointed. Daffodils are just coming out. Remember-especially if you are a tidy person-never cut down daffodil leaves until they have turned yellow.


Thankyou to Mr T.R.Garnett. From

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Trentham Football Netball Club has had an exciting season 2021 thus far, with the Senior men being undefeated at Round 11 & the Reserves only losing one game for the season at Round 11 it is an exciting time to be involved with the Saints! Our Under 11.5 footballers are also experiencing some success currently in the running for finals. Although our other junior teams have not had the on field success they would like, our numbers are continuing to grow & seeing the young people out there every week is great. Our netballers also have had a tough season, with some good wins but also some tough losses come finals time we are hoping to be right there with it.

The last round of the season on August 14 the Saints are hosting our Last Ticket Out night, tickets are available at the Club, all are invited & encouraged to attend & support our great club

The Trentham Saints are currently selling tickets to their 2021 Major Raffle! Tickets are available at the Club bar, on Facebook or contact Sharon on 0417 505 931!

~ by Mikaela Fleming

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TNC is proud to launch our new School of Gardening program. This program will be ongoing throughout the year with monthly courses & talks, on a large range of topics, given by various gardening experts.

We have held off releasing our Term 3 program due to the current Covid-19 restrictions....fingers crossed those restrictions will be eased sooner rather than later & that some of our planned workshops & courses can still go ahead.

Bookings can be made via our website
<https://www.trenthamnc.org.au>

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• GETTING OUT & ABOUT • GETTING OUT & ABOUT •

EVENT DATE & TIME	EVENT	ADDRESS	FURTHER INFO/ CONTACT DETAILS
Sun Aug 1, 2pm - 5pm	Birds in Music in Ballan	Ballan Mechanics Hall	Inquiries 0437 682 325 \$15-\$25
Sat Aug 7, from 9am	Ballan Lions Community Market	Inglis Street, Ballan	Ballan Lions Club
Sat Aug 7	Troy & Jay live at the Greendale	The Greendale Pub	https://thegreendale.com.au/
Sun Aug 8, 1pm - 4pm	Elderberry Medicine Making	Barrys Reef	https://www.thecottageherbalist.com.au/
Sun Aug 8, 2pm - 4:30pm	Film screening - 'Feathers'	Trentham N/hood Centre	Bookings TNC PH:5424 1354 Entry \$5
Sat Aug 14, 2pm - 4:30pm	Bush Poetry	Trentham N/hood Centre	Bookings TNC PH:5424 1354 Entry \$5
Sun Aug 15, 11am - 12pm	Words to sing "Great Hymn Writers of the Ages"	Mary Magdalen Church, Trentham	Bookings TNC PH:5424 1354 Entry \$5
Sun Aug 15, 11am - 12pm	Writing our Autobiography workshop	Trentham Men's shed,	Bookings TNC PH:5424 1354 Entry \$5
Sat Aug 21, 7:00 pm	"Can you Ever Forgive Me"	Trentham N/hood Centre	56 High St, Trentham VIC"
Sun 29 Aug	Bec Peel Live at the Greendale	The Greendale Pub	https://thegreendale.com.au/
Sat Sep 4, from 9am	Ballan Lions Community Market	Inglis Street, Ballan	Ballan Lions Club
Sat Sep 25th	Troy & Jay Live at the Greendale	The Greendale Pub	https://thegreendale.com.au/

Please check with all venues for confirmation of events regarding current restrictions & tixs.

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