

February ~ March 2022 vol 13 ~ issue 14.5



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How to cook a goose p15

GLAMOROUS LOCAL PARTIES WITH SHAW'S LAKE SHARKS.

Search Continues

We're running short of real, local news & community interest stories. Please send us what you have – photos, opinions, artwork, stories, poems, recipes. Save us the search and spare us an alien invasion front page next issue!

Oh wait, there's the glamorous local alive & well on page 7. PHEW!



The Blackwood Times acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners of the land, waters & forest where we live & work. We pay deep respect to Elders past, present & emerging.



EDITOR'S THOUGHTS...

Hello Blackwoodians,
 Did I hear things were going to improve in 2022? Here we are with another COVID issue. The past 2 years have been really hard on our tiny team of 3. With no events & no real happenings we have still managed to scrape together fun issues. When we started to put this issue together I mentioned to Bren that I'd really like to do a fun front cover to brighten up our days - so we arranged a novelty news item. My it was fun, I hope it gives you a giggle.
 To continue to be published we need people. We do not create content, our role is to collate your stories into a publication. To that end, please read my article to the left & contact me if you would like to know more.

~ Jinny Coyle, Co-ordinator

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 the voice of the community
MEMBER 2022

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.

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	Mar 15
Regular Contributors, Features & Items of Interest, Community Groups & Clubs	Mar 15
Display Ad Artwork	Mar 20
Late breaking News	Mar 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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• READY & WAITING FOR A TEAM •



For 5 years we've been trying to hand the Blackwood Times over to the community. Initially we thought just having a few volunteers on board helping out with little tasks would work. It didn't – volunteers drop off & move on without finding someone to replace them.

A few years later we tried to hand the whole kit & kaboodle over to a new team – that didn't work out either. Just over 2 years ago an open meeting was held with a view to creating a working team, with Progress auspicing us. Using combined funding from the Shire, Progress & Crown Reserves, we set up office at the hall & concentrated on acquiring the equipment we needed to re-locate there – computers, mobile phone for hotspotting at the hall, new banks account & systems etc etc.

Then a beast called COVID hit so we couldn't use the office but Brendan, Kathie Berrill & I continued to put issues together, pulling in whatever favours we could for content. We are very very grateful to our regular contributors - we simply couldn't have continued for so long without your submissions. We are pretty happy with what we have come up with (thanks Kath). But no more – we cannot keep publishing without a full team.

We are calling a meeting to create an incorporated body to take over the publication of the Times from the June/July 2022 issue. It will be held in the office at the hall on at **6.30pm on Thursday February 24**. If a team is formed we will train & support them until the last issue of 2022 when we will resign. If a committee is not formed at this meeting the April/May 2022 issue will be our last.

Please let your Blackwoodian friends & neighbours know about this meeting & show up to support our on-going publication.

STORM DOCO

Do you have records of your June storm experience: video, photo, audio, a written account or maybe a story you'd like to tell?
 Film producer & Blackwood local, Lizzette Atkins, has contracted filmmaker, Tibor Hegedis, to help us tell the story of the monster storm from a Blackwood perspective. There'll be plenty of interesting drone footage as well as interviews with locals (& other experts).
 We're hoping to document the (ongoing) event from social, economic & scientific points of view, to be both a community record & a tool for engaging government. (also see p13)
 Contact us : editor@theblackwoodtimes | Brendan 0419137812

MOORABOOL LIVE & LOCAL

Moorabool Shire is pleased to announce Blackwood's Cat Moser as the Live & Local program curator. Cat is an artist, musician, performer & teacher. She is passionate about live music & believes in the cultural value of the arts & its ability to revive & enrich communities. Her role is to build & strengthen the capacity of our local grassroots live music communities, including musicians, businesses, venues & local industry workers. She will lead the engagement & programming of local musician & businesses to participate in micro-festival events, professional development workshops & a local industry forum. Cat will also assist in community mapping as part of strategic planning for the growth of the local live music community.

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)
Nov '21	106.8	75.5	-1.1	27.9	17.8	5.5	11.2
Dec '21	52.1	61.7	1.6	33.7	22.7	6.9	14.2

November was a lot wetter and colder this year compared to other years. We had an annual rainfall of 1163mm which was above the historical average of 977.2mm.

~ Don Owen

A NEW LOCAL AUTHOR

I've written a novel, my first ever attempt. It is a mystery / suspense story called "This Valley is Mine". I've attached the back cover blurb below. It can be purchased through Amazon Australia, in both paperback & e-book. Delivery from them is surprisingly quick, although current issues may slow it down. I do still have a few copies at home, & would be quite happy to drop one off to any Blackwoodian wanting one. The Amazon price is \$19.95. I will sell the copies I currently have for \$17, but be quick, there are only a handful left. If there is enough interest, I may get another shipment. Just let me know!

~ Cheers, Phil Porter porterstaka@gmail.com

This Valley is Mine

Stumbling across the grizzly find of two murdered bodies on a lonely hillside in the middle of nowhere, was a one in a million chance. It now meant that they too must die.
 Right from the start, this simple camping trip seemed somehow wrong. First was coming totally unexpectedly across the old blind man, sitting all alone in the long-abandoned, ghostly ruins of a remote mining village. The symbols he drew in the red dust, the haunting chant he kept repeating over & over was more than just a little disconcerting. Then a visit to their remote camp from a threatening, angry young man who appeared seemingly out of nowhere, had made him wish he was elsewhere.
 Now he was on the run, his young work partner dead, battling not only an unseen killer, but the fierce tropical weather. This deep,

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PHIL PORTER
THIS VALLEY IS MINE
 ED NOTE: EBook is also available on kindle unlimited

Last issue we did a call out to see if anyone could shed light on who the children were in the photo to the left.

CHILDREN NO LONGER A MYSTERY



Around Christmas time we got a call from a gentleman who grew up in Blackwood & was visiting on his annual trip. He was astounded to see the photo.
 He says "I refer to our recent conversation regarding the photo that was published on page 3 of the Blackwood Times, and hereunder are the names of some of the children that attended the Blackwood primary school circa 1950. Front row: Margaret Mitchell, Judith Dalton, Margaret Dalton, Norman Hando, Not known, Not known. Second Row: John Mitchell, Not known (perhaps a Matheson), Not known, Graeme Burkett, Not known. I also attended the school periodically at that time. The children I have named as well as myself, were under the care of Alma and Ernest Burkett at their home now known as "Ambleside". They only had one child - Graeme. Hope this information assists others in identifying the "unknowns".

~ John Tannock

Historical photos of the Anglican Church courtesy of Robyn Zanon

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• OLD FART'S CHRISTMAS PARTY •





• A WORD OR 2 FROM ALLY •

Happy New Year to all in the Blackwood & surrounding areas. I hope you were all able to spread some well-needed Christmas cheer over the last month & gather safely.

I was shattered to hear of the cancellation of the Re-Dedication of St Martin's Chapel gathering. I look forward to celebrating with you all soon I hope. (see p9)

A bit of Council news for all. Back in December the Blackwood Tennis Courts was chosen from a list of projects to receive funding from the Commonwealth Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program, Round 3. This funding allows for the delivery of upgrades at the reserve to the value of \$140,000.00.

Greendale-Myrniong Rd Footpath Renewal also made the short list, with works from Shuter Avenue to Hastings Road to be completed this year.

The Australian Government created the program to support local Councils to deliver priority local road & community infrastructure projects across Australia, supporting jobs & the resilience of local economies to help communities bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Just a reminder to anyone that is still effected by the storms from 2021 & the deluge of rain just recently to reach out to our Storm Recovery Team for help & support. It is as easy as calling the Council to be put through to the team.

Please feel free to contact me on 0428 116 001 or amunari@moorabool.vic.gov.au for a chat.

Take care & stay safe through the summer period.

~ Cr Ally Munari

BLACKWOOD MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Due to COVID nil rides have taken place but we are hoping that February brings us better weather and able to get out without being contained by this virus.

~ Brett Bond

BLACKWOOD CRICKET CLUB

Blackwood had another win on Saturday January 22 after a 2 week bye. We are still short on players as we had 2 juniors in our team (& not to be sexist)1 was a young female who did very well. We have 2 games at home, both being one dayers, February 5 & 12.

February 12 will be sponsors day & March 5 will be our last home game before finals. This game will also be half price drinks for members.

~ President Brian Suters

• BOUQUET •

Thank-you.

On behalf of my family, I would like to say thank you to the many people who expressed condolences on the passing of Allan.

Thanks to Blackwood Cemetary Trust, Crawfords, Genevieve Messenger, catering staff, Blackwood Crown Reserves, Blackwood Senior Citizens, The Blackwood Times, all of who helped make the day easier.

Many thanks

~ Elizabeth Hall & family.

see The Blackwood Times Dec/Jan 2022 issue p6-7

HOW TO SAFELY LOCATE & DESTROY A WASP NEST

Our Wasp Problem: For several years 'pre-Covid', European wasps were becoming quite a problem in Blackwood.

The last 3 Easter Carnivals were blighted by wasps: in one incident, a child who had been stung inside the mouth had to be rushed to hospital.

Landcare ran a wasp eradication campaign back in those halcyon days. Perhaps to the surprise of many (definitely me included), it actually worked.

Because of these efforts, the past 3 years have been relatively wasp free in & around town. To be fair Covid would have played a role too - fewer people & less food waste means fewer wasps.

But it wasn't just Covid - locals found & killed hundreds of queens, & destroyed dozens of nests. Well done us!

It's That Time Again: The time for killing queens (late summer) this season has passed, but the time for finding & destroying those elusive wasp nests is upon us. It looks like 2022 will again be a bad year for the wasps of Blackwood & a good year for the humans of Blackwood, but let's not take any chances. Here are a few tips to help you in your wasp nest eradication efforts.

Is it Safe? Yes, provided you take sensible precautions. For example when you are eradicating a wasp nest, wear clothing that doesn't leave skin exposed. Long sleeves shirts & trousers, no exposed midriff or ankles. Button up cuffs & collars so that wasps can't buzz around inside your clothing & sting you - recalling that wasps, unlike honey bees, can sting multiple times. To protect your face you can make a veil fro, gauze or netting. Drape it over a soft hat & tuck it into your collar, all around your neck. No gaps. Especially if you find a nest that's above ground, make sure you're fully covered & buttoned. You don't want wasps flying horizontally into the sleeves of your shirt for example.

What do they look like? Hopefully you already know this, but just in case: European wasps are quite a bit larger than honey bees, & they are brightly coloured in yellow & black. No other colours.

If I find a Wasp Nest, what are my options? You can call a pest eradicator, or someone in town who's experienced at destroying nests, or you if you feel confident & take the necessary precautions, do it yourself. If you're not able bodied, don't attempt to do it. & if you've ever had an allergic reaction to wasp or bee stings, or are prone to allergies generally, you absolutely should not attempt to destroy a wasp nest. If you do decide to destroy it yourself, I highly recommend getting someone experienced to help you for at least the first nest. If I'm around, I'd be happy to assist.

How Do You Safely Destroy a European Wasp Nest? The only safe & effective way of destroying a wasp nest is to use wasp powder. You 'puff' the powder into & around the entrance of the nest. Wasps entering the nest carry it in on their bodies & it kills the wasps inside. It works quickly & it is very effective.

By far the best time to do it is in the evening, when the wasps are all back home in their nest. There's no need to wait until it's pitch black; you don't want to be stumbling around in the dark. Some people use a red torch or torch with red cellophane over it, as wasps can't see much red. I just use a dim torch. Follow the instructions on the wasp powder container. There will be a guard wasp or two at the entrance of the nest. Try & take these out first, I sometimes use a blast of insect spray. Regardless, make sure the first puff of the wasp powder hits them first, or else they will signal your presence to the other wasps, & you don't want that to happen. Do it quickly & don't under do the powder. I always use much more powder than is strictly necessary, for my own peace of mind. Then, walk briskly away from the nest & let the powder do its work. Don't hang around - go home & come back the next day to see the result.

Wrong & Bad Ways of Destroying a Nest: NEVER try to "burn them out" with fuel. This is a bad & dangerous idea, plus you might just set fire to the forest, which would be embarrassing for all concerned. DON'T try to dig the nest out. Say you know where a wasp nest is & you happen to have a backhoe or similar. DON'T try & dig it out or bury it. If you cave the nest in, expect a large number of angry wasps to emerge. If you bury it, they will simply tunnel out, & will likewise be cross.

Where Can I Get this Wasp Powder Stuff? Garden nursery or hardware store. Supermarket if you're lucky.

So Where Are European Wasp Nests? Under the ground, in any sort of wall cavity, in accumulated rubbish or junk, in a tree or up a tree.

About 80% of nests are underground, & that's good because these ones are generally much easier to find.

They have an obvious, clearly-defined hole (well, once you spot it). It will be 4-10cm in diameter & appear black against the background of earth or clay, provided it's not obscured by branches of bushes (sometimes they are)

Ok, But How Can I Find the Damn Nest? If the nest is in your house, you may literally hear them. Easy peasy, but maybe a bit scary. If it's in your yard, they're going to be all over the place & driving you nuts. You'll have little trouble finding the nest. Follow the 'wasp gradient' to its source.

If it's outside your house or yard... well, I won't lie to you: it will require quite a bit of time & patience to find the nest.

But don't despair: if you persist, you'll likely find it. And if you do find & destroy the nest, your neighbours for at a radius of at least 100m will be in your debt. They should buy you a beer or 2, minimum.

Basically the technique is to follow the wasps back to their nest. But before you do that - speak to your neighbours - if you're lucky, one of them might already have an idea of where the nest is. Plus you get to interact with your neighbours, which is always a good thing.

Tracking wasps isn't as easy as it might sound, because when wasps are foraging, which is what they're doing most of the time, their flight paths are fairly random.

If you're seeing quite a lot of wasp activity - wasps flying hither & yon all over the place - the wasp nest will be quite near, say within a radius of 50 metres. That doesn't mean the nest will be easy to find. Especially during the daytime, it's quite challenging to track wasps to their nests. Only if the nest is quite near, say within 25m, there's a reasonable chance of finding it in daytime. The technique is to wander around slowly to see if you can find a spot where there seems to be a lot of wasps buzzing about. That means you're near the nest: even during the daytime, wasps must travel from & return to their nests. But the best time to look for wasp nests is late afternoon / early evening, when wasps return to their nest. At that time you have a much better chance of following them back to the nest. Also, you will be destroying all of them (because they're all home); & they are less active.

Stand still & watch them for a good while - perhaps 10 minutes - to see if you can discern an average direction. If so, walk in that direction for a little bit, & stop, & do the same thing again. With luck, you're walking towards the nest. Rinse & repeat.

If at some point you observe wasps all converging on one point, for example towards the ground, you have found your nest.

Maybe you aren't ready to deal with it right now. That's ok - mark the location (not the nest itself of course!) with some sticks or stones or spray paint & come back the next day to deal with it.

Late afternoon / early evening is a good time to hunt for wasp nests for another reason also: it's a much easier to see insects silhouetted against the setting sun. Position yourself accordingly - you need to be looking towards the setting sun.

If you're patient enough, you will find the nest, eventually, & it's a very exciting moment. The good news is that once you've found your first nest, it will be quite a bit easier to find the next one, if & when you do that. After about 3 or 4 nests, you'll find you've tuned into the game, & you will be pretty adept at it. It's kind of addictive!

~ Good luck! Peter Donnelly



Glamorous Local approaches Sharkie for another lap around Shawk's Lake.

A single ember can spread bushfires as far as 30km.

Burning embers from bushfires can travel up to 30km, starting new fires in seconds, destroying homes and making escape impossible. If the Fire Danger Rating is ever extreme or above, don't hesitate. Leave early.

How well do you know fire? Plan. Act. Survive. Go to emergency.vic.gov.au

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• WALKS IN BLACKWOOD •

Every morning my kelpie, Lydia, is bouncing up & down waiting at the door for her walk. We often meet up with Jane & her fox terrier, Baxter, & set off for an hour or so in the beautiful Wombat Forest.

Apart from the exercise, we spend a lot of time looking at the different flowers popping up every season. Last week we were exploring Easter Monday Mine Track (above Garden of St Erth), admiring this lovely view, with fringe lilies at our feet.

I will miss these walks so much when I leave for England in March but will be taking lots of photos back with me & will still walk in the woods every day.

~ Brenda Hunter

RIGHT photos by Jane Howatt

BELOW: Alli & William love wandering in the bush with Mum & Oskar. On one recent walk William was heard to say "I just love this Country so much!"



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• COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES •

Blackwood CFA

Happy New Year to everyone. Hoping this New Year sees us in a better position than the last couple of years.

Be careful while out & about as trees still present a danger to people, vehicles & property. Contact the SES on 13 25 00 for trees against buildings or blocking driveway access & call Moorabool Council if you notice any trees that could fall & cause injury or worse. REMEMBER that your safety is the first priority & keep well clear of dangerous trees.

Summer is well & truly here with Fire Restrictions in place & will be enforced. While La Nina moisture is keeping things a little green, a run of hot dry weather will soon increase the fire danger.

A quiet fire season so far in our area, but Blackwood CFA has provided strike team personnel to the large fire at Langkoop in the far west of the state. This grass fire burnt out over 7300 hectares with the loss of a large number of stock.

After the prolonged power outage following the June storm, the brigade has acquired a portable Pelican lighting system. This can be used for incidents providing a brightly lit area to work in, giving us high visibility, enhancing the safety of people in & around the incident site.

Truck & car fires produce toxic smoke & require breathing apparatus (BA) for CFA to safely fight the fire. Ballarat District 15 has been encouraging brigades along the Western Highway corridor to train in the use of BA. Greendale has now acquired a Breathing Apparatus (BA) set on their tankers & this has the added advantage of providing Blackwood with BA support along with Trentham, for structure & car fires. BA is of great use in a confined smoke filled area such as a building fire.

Have you checked your fire plan & ensured it is current? It is a good idea to constantly review it during the year, even in winter so that you are always prepared.

During these warmer periods it is a good time to get your flue inspected, serviced & cleaned. Some house fires are caused in the colder months when the fire is first lit & the flue is not cleared.

THE FIRST PRIORITY IS YOUR SAFETY

Always ring 000 in the case of any emergency. If you have a fire & do manage to put it out, it is better to have us responding than to wait until it is too late.

For more information contact the station on 5368 6526 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.

Never 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.

If you are interested in joining, we always welcome new members. We can be contacted at the station or via the Brigade Facebook page.

DO NOT USE FACEBOOK IF YOU ARE REPORTING AN EMERGENCY... ALWAYS RING 000

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

Blackwood Historical Society

Thank you to the sponsors for our raffle: Blackwood Hotel, Sue Donnolly, Blackwood PO, K&G Whiffen, M&C Devinish, Moorabool News, J Darwin.

The amount raised was \$450-

Prize winners were Robyn, Rachel & Carlson, Steve (Yarra Valley) B Moore, Peter Donnelly, Deidre, Tony Neil (Melb) Margaret Devlin.

Thank you to all & Moorabool News for the donation.

Next meeting February at the Blackwood Historical Police Stables.

~ Elizabeth Hall

Blackwood Progress

Planning for the Easter Carnival is progressing well. Naturally the committee will keep a close eye on the COVID situation as community safety continues to be our prime concern.

~ Brendan Hehir, President



Blackwood Uniting Church - St Martin's Chapel

This is it! We have a new date for the rededication & opening of the Uniting Church St Martin's Chapel. It is Saturday, February 19. Yay!

Thank you to the community for your support & understanding when we had to make the regrettable decision to postpone at the last minute in December. The decision was made as a precaution & with everyone's welfare in mind.

But now we are ready to go & we have come up with a new plan to keep us as safe as possible while celebrating & having a great time. We are going to split the planned activities over a number of days.

The official rededication, the procession, art show, market stalls, Devonshire teas & sausage sizzle will be held on the 19th of February. The concert featuring our fantastic & talented local musicians will happen at a later date as will the Taster Sessions.

The raffle for the patchwork quilt to raise money for St Martin's was drawn by Karen Bruno on January 8 in front of the Post Office. Congratulations to our winner Em, who is a patchworker herself & really appreciated the work, patterns & colours in the quilt. (It was such a thrill to ring Em & tell her of her win as she was genuinely so excited.)

Thank you to all those who bought tickets & to Carole & team & Karen for selling the tickets. We made \$302, which allowed us to pay the electricity & water bills this time round.

It will be fantastic to see you at the Chapel on February 19 to celebrate our wonderful community & the refurbishment of our church which is now 126 years old.

If you would like to hire the Chapel or have an idea for an event please contact Robyn on 53686792 or email robyn.zanon@gmail.com

~ 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 - galaxys@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month prior to the publishing date. Sign up at theblackwoodtimes.com.au to get deadline reminders.



• FLETCHERS ADVENTURES •



Well howdy doody to all my mates in Blackwood. I do hope you all had a wonderful Christmas & a very happy new year so far. I hope Santa was very generous to all & you had plenty to eat. I know I did. Santa brought Joanie & I some lovely new toys to play with. Our favourites are the mini kong balls that squeak & we love to chase them in the house. I also love the large tennis balls Mum & Dad threw into the dam to retrieve. The water is absolutely beautiful & warm at the moment & we have so many tadpoles to try to catch. So much fun. It is so nice that Mum spends so much time gardening so Joanie & I can run around all day with her. Joanie & I have our hair appointment next week so we both look forward for our day at the spa baths & a short hair cut because we both get hot in this warm weather but Mum says it is a lot hotter where she comes from so I shouldn't complain too much. We have a new friend who comes over when her Mum is at work & her name is Clover. She is very small & is constantly looking for mice & rats. Yucky I say so I'm glad it's her doing the dirty work. But she always has time for a swim with me. So until next time doggies & cats & birds & so on. From, as Mum always calls me...

~ Stretchy Fletchy!

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• BLACKWOOD WOMBIES •

Happy New Year from Wombat Bookclub. Now summer is here, it's a nice chance to bask in the summer sunshine, well, in between the rain that is. Here at bookclub, we read a book a month then meet the third Sunday in each month. Times & venue are subject to change. The last couple of times we have met for lunch at The Garden of St Erth. A very pleasant environment to share thoughts about the book we have just read & socialise. It offers the participant not only a chance to read about topics & novels which we may not think to pick up; & keep us in touch with others of our community.

If you would like information about our lovely, informal gathering please contact Rose at rcarrington1@hotmail.com

The 2 books we recently read were - 'Hamnet' by Maggie O'Farrell, & 'The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart' by Holly Ringland.

Hamnet is fictional, inspired by Hamnet being the only son of William Shakespeare & Ann Hathaway. The book is a twist on a Shakespeare's play but a woman as a protagonist. A young woman becomes ill, & her brother Hamnet is on the quest for a cure for her. I found the read a bit obscure at times, hence this review.

Some readers read the whole way through waiting for something to happen. Was there an ending, a conflict resolved or a question? That, my friends were to be or not to be, must be construed by the reader.

The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart is heart-warming story of a young Alice whose life took on a dramatic change after tragically taken from her. Her Grandmother, a flower farmer, takes her in. Alice learns to grieve through relating emotions & language to flowers. A story of love, grief & betrayal.

Anne: My take on the book The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart... A beautifully written & sensitive book by a great Australian author.

Lovely explanations of the hidden rationale for giving/having certain flowers for specific occasions. I had no idea there was actually a "language". However reflecting on things my Mum & Grandmother used to say about certain flowers i.e. red roses & white lilies etc it now makes sense that there is a whole "culture" behind the meanings of flowers.

The book itself was a lovely portrayal of Australian life & its harshness, beauty & the mixed social & cultural relationships that evolved on the multi-generational flower growing property near the Grampians.

It touched on the harshness of mixed social & ethnic cultures & the issues of family violence & its long term impacts.

A great read, a bit slow at times but overall lovely & well worth the time.

Robyn: I think it is beautifully written & a lovely gentle read. It makes you think & question your own thoughts.

As I haven't read the end, it is difficult to complete the review, but I hope that helps a bit!

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Dear Editor,
As a long term resident of Blackwood I thought I would relate my experience.

A large tree branch had fallen down in one of the many storms & I was conveying the green waste to the tip. My choices are Ballan or Trentham, having only a small ute I decided to take the waste piecemeal depending on which way my day panned out.

My loads were exactly the same size & I think in science that is called a control.

First load goes to Trentham tip where I was charged \$12, then the next load went to Ballan tip &, you guessed it, I was charged \$34 for the same amount?

Not being a mathematician I could not calculate the percentage difference but if I was on the board of ASIC I would probably be writing out a summons.

As a rate payer in one shire & not the other there seems to be very little advantage in being in the Moorabool Club.

~ Nick Dear

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PET SHENANIGANS WITH SEAMUS

Woof: In this month's edition I would like to discuss FOOD INTOLERANCE. Or upset tummy as we like to call in our house.



When your dog has a food intolerance, this means that they are not able to properly digest an ingredient in their food. This results in gastrointestinal upsets like vomiting, increased flatulence, and diarrhoea. Food intolerance is quite a common issue with 1 in 3 dogs suffering from digestive disorders. While it is not a serious condition, it can cause your dog discomfort so it is best to seek veterinary advice as soon as you see the symptoms.

Unlike FOOD ALLERGIES, which are immune reactions to proteins that generally show on the skin, food intolerances in dogs often appear as stomach issues.

However, as some of the symptoms can overlap, if your dog is experiencing skin or stomach sensitivities, you should take them in to see your local Vet who will be able to diagnose which ailment is affecting your dog and provide you with the correct treatment advice. Signs your dog may have a stomach issue:

runny stools, mucous like jelly in the stools, specks of fresh blood in the stools, gassy, vomiting, abdominal pain, gurgling stomach, weight loss, loss of appetite.

Food intolerance

Dogs can have a variety of adverse reactions to food. These are often all incorrectly ascribed as food allergies, however this is only one of the forms that adverse food reactions can take. All the other types of negative reactions to food that do not involve the immune system are known as food intolerances.

Though they may produce a similar reaction in the body, food intolerances are different from allergies in a number of ways. Food

intolerances are not caused by a dog's immune system, so symptoms can appear the very first time that a dog consumes the trigger food. Just like lactose intolerance in humans, these symptoms are typically one-off bouts of diarrhoea or upset stomachs. However if you are regularly feeding your dog a diet that contains the ingredient they are intolerant to, this means that they will experience chronic digestive issues. You can prevent your dog from experiencing an intolerance to their food by removing the offending item from their diet.

Transitioning to new food

In general, dogs have more sensitive stomachs than humans and can experience digestive upsets if you suddenly change their diet. If you are switching your dog to a different brand of food, or food with different ingredients, It is recommended <https://www.greencrossvets.com.au/transitioning-dog-cat-to-new-food/> gradually introducing this over a period of 14 days. Note that some dogs may take longer than this.

What to expect at your dog's health check

If your dog is displaying signs of stomach sensitivities, take them in to see a your local Vet who will determine whether these symptoms are caused by your dog's diet. If this is the case, they will be able to recommend a new food for your pet that is suited for sensitive stomachs and will not contain the offending ingredient. Once you have correctly transitioned your dog to this new diet, their symptoms often resolve within a few days. Take them in for a check up if symptoms persist.

~ Woof for now ... Seamus

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NO ONE'S UNSINKABLE
To all those Unsinkable Guys out there -
You might think it's safe to have a few drinks around water, skip the lifejacket when you're out on the boat or go for a swim without checking the conditions.
But statistics prove that 4 out of 5 drownings are men.
Just remember that no one's unsinkable.
RETHINK TAKING RISKS AROUND WATER
VICTORIA State Government



CAULDRON'S CURRENT EXPLORATION PROGRAM USES HISTORIC IMAGES TO HELP UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL VALUE IN TODAY'S BARRY'S REEF.

Cauldron Energy (Cauldron or the Company) has been conducting non invasive exploration underground at Barry's Reef that has gone mostly unnoticed by residents. The Company's goal is to become part of the surrounding community & where possible has engaged local businesses & employed local personnel. Cauldron is proposing to explore & develop any gold resources it discovers using underground mining techniques which will minimise disturbance to the surface environment, whilst adding value for its shareholders & also benefitting residents. There will be no surface disturbance in the forest & only minimal surface infrastructure compared to the unsightly disturbance usually associated with mining – i.e., waste piles, process plants, tailings dams or trucks hauling night & day.

Part of the exploration work that Cauldron has been doing involves research into the two main historical mining episodes at Barry's Reef & Blackwood, (1860-1920) & again in Barry's Reef (1970-1990). Mining techniques during these periods used narrow-vein style, low impact underground mining methods & the same method is planned to be used by Cauldron. However before mining commences, the distribution & extent of gold mineralisation needs to be outlined. The first step is to understand how the gold mineralisation formed & was deposited in such rich quartz veins. The second step is to establish the best way in which to target the notoriously narrow but high-grade vein systems. Fortunately there are some clever modelling techniques & analytical methods are available today that, along with the incorporation of old reports & photographs of historical mining, that can assist the team to piece together the mining features observed at surface & underground. Figures 1 - 3 below, were taken at Barry's Reef in the late 1870s with some additional annotations to link the historical town infrastructure with modern surface features for local interest. See Figure 1

Historic accounts state that Blackwood's first gold discovery was in 1855 at Jackson's Creek, Golden Point. The finding of one gold nugget started the gold rush in the area. Mining reports document Blackwood's population as approx. 13,000 in September 1855. The bonanza gold grades being discovered both from alluvial & later quartz reef sources, resulted in rapid population growth & the establishment of villages such as Blackwood & Barry's Reef.

The rapid population expansion mirrors the better-documented gold-rushes of surrounding regions (e.g., Ballarat & Bendigo). The photograph below (Figure 2) shows the likely positions of three main roads in the northern part of Barry's Reef. The old roads shown in the historical photo are of unknown age but seem to mirror the positions of two of the present-day roads used in Barry's Reef. The main Blackwood-Trentham Road was built many years later but may, in part, have followed historical tracks. See Figure 2

Other than the few historical shafts, pits & headframes, there is little to no surface expression of the mining that took place at Barry's Reef & Blackwood between the 1860s & 1920s. Cauldron plans to utilise low-impact, 'zero surface disturbance' mining techniques involving selective hand-mining using airleg drilling machines & light rail, to maximise the high grade ore extraction whilst minimising the dilution of the valuable ore by waste material. Historical mining was very different as it often involved uncontrolled felling of the forest (see Figure 3). as timber was required at the time as support for the underground workings & to feed fuel-hungry steam engines. Steam power was used to power shafts, dewatering pumps & batteries for crushing the ore that produced the gold. At the peak of its production, the Sultan shaft alone, records over 300 people working underground per day. see Figure 3

There is little evidence of historical mining today & Cauldron's proposed low-impact underground mining methods aims to maximise the potential of the high-grade gold ore which will cover the cost of transportation to distant process plants. While these techniques are not new to the industry, their incorporation with similar low-impact mining processes allows extraction of only the highest-grade ore from existing underground workings. Only minor surface infrastructure will be required to enable a small number of trucks to be loaded per week to transport the ore. The minimal amount of waste mined can be

returned as fill to rehabilitate historical workings nearer to the surface, stabilising them & preventing future surface subsidence. Cauldron is also collaborating with an agricultural project targeting proposed soil remediation which will use waste rock suitable for rehabilitating large areas of market garden land that has fallen into disuse through poor land management practices.

As always, the team are very happy to explain the Company's operations to any members of the community. The ultimate objective is to promote the innovative change to mining techniques that will benefit the surrounding communities while ensuring safeguarding of the area's pristine environment. .

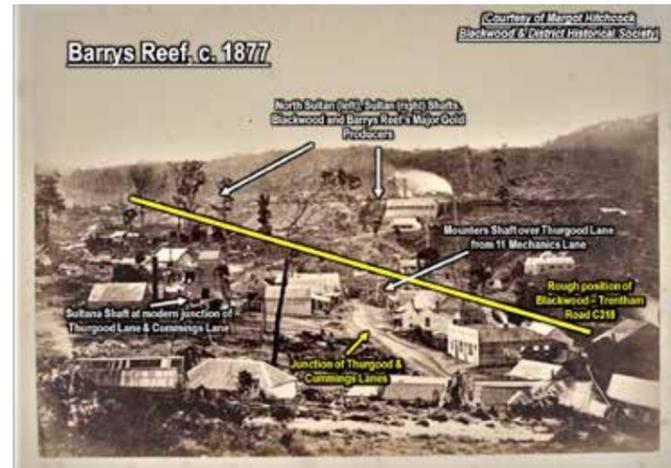


Figure 1: Barry's Reef in 1877 with shafts showing shaft positions which are known today and possible road positions.

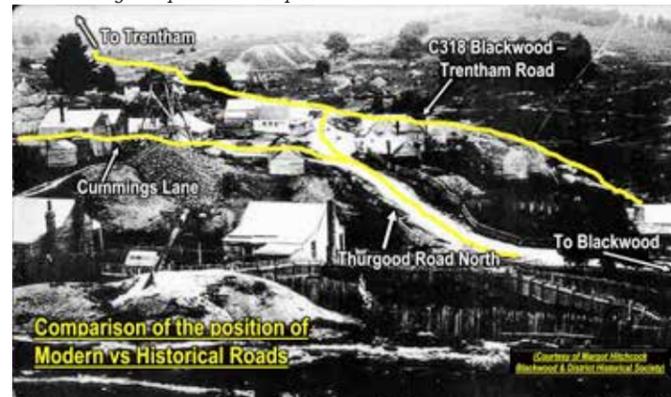


Figure 2: The old roads in this image of unknown age seem to mirror the positions of two of the roads used today in Barry's Reef. The main Blackwood-Trentham Road was built many years later but may have followed in part existing tracks used.

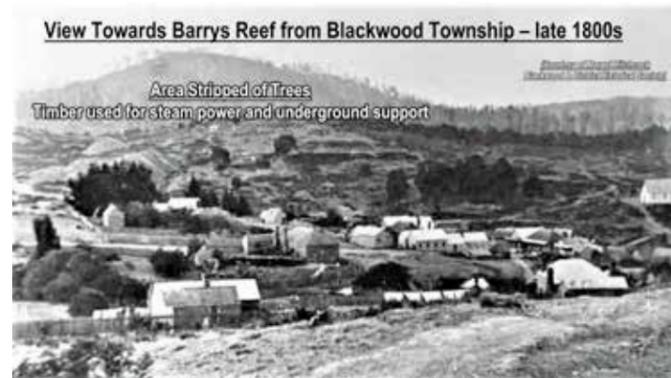


Figure 3 View from Blackwood across Lerderberg River toward Barry's Reef. Today's forest landscape was denuded of trees in 1860-1900s to power steam engines and underground support.

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WHAT DR ROB GORDON TOLD US

"Every disaster is completely unique, every disaster is the same." Winds howled for 12 hours. 5% of the forest was lost. Trees fell on sheds, cars & a couple of houses in Blackwood. Power was lost for a week. That was then, this is now. What do we need to consider next as we reorient our lives post storm. Dr Rob Gordon OAM (Order of Australia) shared his learning from many years of disaster recovery experience at the Blackwood Community Hall (9 Dec 2021) at this session on Storm Recovery run by Moorabool Shire Council.

If we don't realise early enough, the loss of quality of life is irreversible. If you read no further, spoiler alert - the recipe is **pleasure & leisure** to nourish, restore, & re-energise:

- Pleasure – Enjoyment fills deep wells that are being drained
- Leisure – Time not doing anything - re-find lost connections with yourself

Your level of connection with others (Social capital), be it book group, Landcare, the pub or just hanging out with mates, is super important. So get on out there & spend some leisurely time with people who make you smile – it's what we need most right now. & here's why...

1/ "Trees are different - It takes a long time to sort the trees"

Our expectations won't fit the situation. Government departments take a long time to get moving. Locals are left to deal with the effect –chopping trees up (I'm still doing), or dealing with destroyed forest impacts (where can we drive, go walking? Where's safe?).

Most of us don't have much to do with governments pre-disaster, & don't know how they work. We form expectations that can't be met by slow moving bureaucracies.

Expectations ← (tension) → what actually happens

This tension: Why are things taking so long? Why haven't things been fixed yet? Why can't "they" just get on with things?

2/ Don't rebuild at the cost of your marriage

What will determine how we are in 10 years time after the event is not how quickly the trees re dealt with, it will be how we live our lives through this period. "Refocus away from the trees & focus on what's important in your life."

Dr Gordon told the story of the man re-built his family home, & neighbours home post fires, but in the meantime lost his marriage, kids & ended up in a unit in the city. The 2 rebuilds were simply not worth it.

3/ Adrenaline & cortisol stops us making sense

Stress hormones - adrenaline & cortisol - play havoc with us. Fight or flight on the night reactions no longer serves us.

Adrenaline puts us in a heightened state of arousal. Cortisol keeps us soldering on. You might recognise "The Corduroy state" (fondly



misnamed by a mens' group in the Yarra Ranges), in "dithering". Eg. I go to mow the lawn, then stop because of the piles of blocked logs in the yard that need splitting & stacking. I get the whipper snipper out, but run out of cord. I go to the hardware, forget the cord & come out with a splitter. I go to split the wood, see the long grass, get the lawn mower out & realise the wood needs sorting. Holy moly!

Our **right** brain (sensory, motor, task) was activated often over past 6 months. We thought fast & in pictures, images of what happened, what to do for safety. We now need our left brain (thinking, language, logic). Words to understand what happened, move forward & imagine our future.

How badly you, your family or house were impacted is not an indicator of how you will fare post storm. Even if you were away that night you may still feel impact. The single indicators for impact are:

1/ **trauma** – wound or injury – shattered assumptions, damaged assumptions

- Dr Gordon encourages us to think "My experience totally connected to me. I need to take a subjective view"
- Rebuild assumptions – "what felt safe is shattered (I used to enjoy storms). I need to learn what the actual risks are"
- Aftershocks – wind, trees falling – how might I put these in perspective? Rationalise these?

2/ **Loss** – binds anxiety

- Resolved by grief – community rituals important
- Non-indigenous people have connections to land too, but don't have the language (we have only started to use the words "Cool climate cyclone". We don't have specific names to describe the broken forest, instead use "bald patches", "bomb" or "jumbo crash" sites –
- Grief takes energy – needs community support

3/ **Disruption** –patterns, routines, stability – if not careful we lose structure.

The fix? Pleasure & leisure. My lawn can wait!

~ Margaret McCarthy

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THE HISTORY OF BLACKWOOD: GRAVES IN THE BLACKWOOD CEMETERY

Pioneers of Blackwood – The Wightman Family



JOHN WIGHTMAN - SAWMILLER OF BARRYS REEF, BLACKWOOD.

John Wightman started the first steam sawmill in Barrys Reef, Blackwood in 1866. John Wightman was born 1816 in Ireland. His wife was Annie Matilda Kennedy. Her parents were - David Kennedy & Isabella Batman. John & Annie had children born in Ireland - Anna

Bella Wightman born in 1838 at Ballymaglaff, John Wightman in 1842, Mary Wightman in 1844, Jane Annabella Wightman & David Wightman 1851. The family arrived in Australia March 1863 aboard the "Great Britain" from Ireland. They then stayed in Melbourne for 6 months, after which he they went to the Blackwood diggings where John Wightman was engaged in mining there for four years, before he started the saw mill. A copy of the 1868 Post Office directory lists John Wightman as a Carpenter of Barrys Reef. A report of the death of a Mrs Annie Matilda Wightman (nee Kennedy) appeared in the Bacchus Marsh paper in September 1898. It also mentions that her husband John Wightman had died some 10 years earlier in 1884 on board the SS "Potosi" after taking a trip home & in returning to the Colony aged 68 years, & had been a resident of Blackwood for 30 yrs.

Bacchus Marsh Express, September 1898. "Death of Mrs Wightman - Barrys Reef aged 78 yrs. Her husband Mr John Wightman a millwright by trade came out in early 1850's. After a few years he came to Barrys Reef, & started the first steam saw-mill there, about 1860. This business proved very remunerative, as besides regular output for Bendigo, & other mining centres, there was a big local market for timber, as the Sultan mine & other mines were then in full work. About 10 years ago Mr & Mrs Wightman took a trip home & in returning to this colony Mr Wightman died on board the ship "SS Potosi".

The son, David James Wightman, assumed management in 1885 of the Sawmill after his father's death. The mill remained in operation until 1897. A couple of years prior to this, David Wightman commenced another milling enterprise at Cheviot near Yea. David James Wightman married Lucilla Pearse & died in 1920 at Yea, & was buried at the Blackwood cemetery March 18, 1920.

Anna Bella Wightman married Herman Friedrich Wolter from John Wightman's house in Barrys Reef, Blackwood in 1866. Herman Friedrich Wolter arrived Australia age 25yrs in 1863 as a ship's carpenter. He worked as a miner in Blackwood. Herman & Anna Wolter had 2 sons born in Blackwood – John Herman Frederick Wolter, born in Blackwood in 1873, married Jane Priscilla Addcock in Barrys Reef, Blackwood on July 25, 1904 & Frederick William Wolter, born in Blackwood in 1875. Married Priscilla Sara Gill, & they had 10 children.

Frederick Wolter was said by the family to have operated a bakery on Golden Point Road, Blackwood.

Herman Friedrich Wolter died of Phthisis (miner's lung disease) on 2 October 1904, & buried in the Wightman grave in the Blackwood cemetery.

Anna Bella Wolter (nee Wightman) died at Blackwood in 1896 age 58 yrs, & was buried in the Wightman grave in the Blackwood cemetery.

Jane Annabella Wightman married in 1866 to John Thorn Dunlop. Their son, John Dunlop was born in Blackwood in 1868, also the following children - Florence Mary Dunlop born in 1870 & died in Blackwood, age 10 weeks, William Kennedy Dunlop born in Blackwood in 1872, Gabrielle Jane Dunlop born in Geelong in 1874. Then Jane's husband John Dunlop died before the last child was born 1873, & Jane Annabella Dunlop died herself 6 years later in 1879 leaving a young family & they were both buried in the Wightman grave in the Blackwood cemetery.

If any readers are interested to see some history for themselves take a walk to the Blackwood cemetery. The grave is in Presbyterian section A, numbers 29 to 36. Once inside the gates turn right & walk down the hill to the bottom, & the last grave near the fence is Wightman's.

© Researched by Margot Hitchcock from her forthcoming book 'The History & Pioneers of Blackwood', hopefully to be published soon. Other books published by Margot Hitchcock – 'Aspects of Early Blackwood' and 'Some History of Simmons Reef, Blackwood & 'The Billy Pincombe Tragedy. See – www.blackwoodpublishing.com

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For help with information on Blackwood ancestors contact Margot Hitchcock – email – margothitchcock@bigpond.com

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ABOVE: Wightmans grave, Blackwood Cemetery



BELOW: Wightmans Sawmill, Barrys Reef



• WHOSE TATT'S THAT? •



I love the look of fish (I'm a Pisces) but I didn't want them hanging in space so I framed them, with a tin. I went to Nick Rutherford from 3rd Eye Tattoos, who had a background of inking bikies

~ Nara

• NEWBIE BLACKWOODIAN •



Lucia [loo-see-uh] Grace Worsley entered her world of dogs & people on January 19, weighing in at 3.25k. Aimee & Scott would like to thank the people at Bendigo Hospital for their care, & look forward to raising Lucia in the equally caring environment of Blackwood.

• BLACKWOOF'S •

Luna is 10 months old now; see how much she's grown. "That's because she's a pig", say Tayla and Rylee. "She eats anything: the ottoman, the table, Mum's phone case, the TV, window frames (then she breaks the window and escapes). She snuffles through the rubbish bin and jumps up on the table to eat the leftovers and washes it all down with some lovely toilet water.



Very tired by now, she'll snooze on the couch (until she falls off in her sleep or scares herself with a large fart). The Ridgeback/Rottie is still a pup and is still a bit clumsy. She's a fast runner, but not very good at stopping. She keeps running into Mum's bum. She's a social butterfly and loves everyone, so say hello next time you see her. Did the girls get to finish the icecreams by themselves? What do you think?!

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The Usual Suspects visited the Blackwood Pub to catch up with Pat & Deidre

Adventures in cycling, or, how to cook a goose...

We were somewhere out far along Chettle Track, slugging up a long incline, when the sweating mechanism finally failed. I remember saying something like, "I feel a bit floaty, maybe we should stop..." & then the sky exploded with tiny angels, & I was beating through a sandstorm of them, & someone was roaring demented things about God's bloody glow-worms.

At the top it was quiet. "Who the hell were you screaming at?" my cycling buddy demanded. I waved the now empty 750ml bottle of tonic water—our sole concession to commonsense that day—at him, & said: "Not far now!" He grunted, but I could see that, behind his sunglasses, his eyes had gone all shifty. He wasn't saying anything yet, but I knew with certainty that he had seen the angels too, on the way up that slope.

That could only mean one thing: it had already occurred to him that drinking my overheated blood was better than dehydration beside the track. It was imperative that I showed progress, some sort of milestone, or he would shout "survival situation!" & dump my exsanguinated body in a mineshaft. "Your eyes look red," I muttered, & I hastily remounted my bike. Closing my eyes & commending my soul to the tiny fiends, I plunged down the steep descent, with Stu in close pursuit.

We must have hit the bridge at O'Brien's Crossing at about 80kph, because the screams of feral children & the flapping of their parents were still audible when we finally pulled up in a cloud of dust halfway up the hill on the other side. A thick layer of brown dust had adhered to the foam flecks in Stu's beard, & we were both panting, our eyes rolling. "Mulga Bill," I gasped, laughing insanely, "Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk". "We need to make progress," he replied. "Otherwise we'll have to stop for lunch".

I grasped instantly that he was now completely delusional. Low arterial hypotension, intracranial hypertension, cerebral hypoperfusion, cerebral ischemia, hyperpyrexia caused cytotoxicity ... one glance & I could tell he had it all going on. "It's all right," I replied. "I know a short cut". Hoisting the bikes over our shoulders, we slogged up the ridge to the Byers Back Track trail head. "It's navigable by bike," I shouted, as I went straight over the edge at the escarpment. At least picking myself out of the river gave me time to cool my head a bit.

Having now cunningly removed ourselves from anywhere with other people, or passing vehicles, or even friendly snakes, we now had only one choice. Make progress. Hit milestones. Submit reports. Along the fallen trees, over the narrow path. Or was it the other way around? Sometimes the track turned at right angles to reality. But we found short cuts. Yes, dear reader, it was indeed the comforting prospect of beer that let these two super-athletes finally triumph over terrible adversity. You can support our bid for sporting greatness with donations, in a liquid form, to the Blackwood Times.

~ Geoff Boucher

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