

December 2023 ~ January 2024 vol 15 ~ issue 16.4

THE SUMMER ISSUE



LADIES WHO LUNCH! OAKS DAY FINERY AT THE BLACKWOOD HOTEL



The Blackwood Times acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung 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...

Finally, winter in Blackwood seems to be in the past as spring is in full swing and summer is just around the corner. Our garden has come out of its winter cupboard, and is in full bloom. At this time of the year, we enjoy nothing more than spending time in it.

With summer approaching it is a reminder of our town's vulnerability. We have been warned that it is going to be a hot summer with an increased fire risk. The last few weeks the skies of Blackwood have been filled with smoke as we get ready for the months ahead, but a reminder that fire restrictions are now in place.

In this issue you will find some great articles and updates on what has been happening in our community and beyond. We also welcome our newest reporter - Aleks Kukiel, whose interview with Carol about the Post Office, is located in our Kids' Corner section.

Also, a big congratulations to the Blackwood Times team who won two awards at the recent CNAV Conference. These are the first awards this team have been honoured with and you can find details in this issue.

Well, the festive season is just about upon us and we would like to wish you, your family and friends, safe and happy holidays. I always see this as a time to spend with family. Our daughter Hannah is coming down from Brisbane to spend time with us, which we both are looking forward to.

Robert Poulter, Editor for this issue

RESPONSE TO WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH \$1500?

Hi Blackwood. We had one person respond to the question in our last issue - October/November, '23. Thanks to Merilyn Campbell who, like me, is keen to see better signage in Blackwood.

Here is her letter: "Hi, I would love a sign at the start of Martin Street/ Greendale Trentham Road, advertising The Blackwood Hotel and the Post Office Cafe. This would be fantastic for our businesses, Cheers Merilyn". Over the next few months, I will contact the Council and see what we can do about establishing a decent sign. Any volunteers?

Paul Kukiel

The BLACKWOOD TIMES invites submissions from the community. If you're at a local event please take a photo or two & write a few lines, or even submit a **non-political** cartoon to share in our community news. Deadlines are as follows:

Advertisement bookings	Jan 15
Regular contributors, features & items of interest, community groups & clubs	Jan 15
Display ad artwork	Jan 20
Late breaking news (100 words max)	Jan 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. Download our Advertising Rate Card & back issues (in colour) from www.theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au &, while you're there, sign-up to join our eList & follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/theblackwoodtimes>

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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.

BLACKWOOD TIMES IS A WINNER

We all know this but it was an honour for the BWT to be acknowledged by the CNAV as the community newspaper with the Best Community Content.

The judge, Karl Hessian commented:

"The cover was attention-grabbing and set up the themes for the content within. Prominent space was devoted to campaign stories of strong community interest. The content was informative, highly local, and generally of proportional length to the value of the story. Text was judiciously supported by photography and both were sourced from across the community. A consistent, engaging and enjoyable tone was maintained throughout without the idiosyncrasies of individual contributors being suppressed or allowed to run free."

The December 2022-January 2023, issue 15.4 was our entry for this award. This was very special for the BWT team as Jeanne Tahini put this issue together with Dave Commins and it was after this that he drafted a writing plan for us, making future issues that much easier to put together.

We were also acknowledged with a special mention in the Best Feature Story category for the Anzac Day article written by Kylie Richardson. (Page 3, June-July 2023 issue).



Judge Michael Smith commented:

"Does the job very well with five pics and story on just one page. Writer Kylie Richardson has done a very good job of explaining the significance of this local event and the human effort that went into making it happen. Well done Kylie and The Blackwood Times."

John Kemp

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)
Dec'23	47.4	101.5	-3	24.9	16.9	2.7	9.3
Jan'24	91.7	94.1	-0.8	25.8	16.5	3.9	9.9

We have experienced a very warm September with rainfall well below the average.

~ Don Owen

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 18th Annual Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV) Conference was held on Saturday 21 October at the Mercure Hotel in North Melbourne. The gathering of over 50 delegates from 30+ community newspapers provided the opportunity to network, share ideas and engage in workshops that are invaluable in supporting our activities.



Apart from being honoured with an Award and special mention (see 'Blackwood Times is a Winner' article on this page), workshops provided valuable insights into the running of community newspaper.

In the keynote address delivered by James Poyner, CNAV President, he noted that all newspapers were subject to Government censorship up until about 1840. In the early 1850's, George Mott started publishing newspapers in the Victorian goldfields in an enterprise that morphed into the Leader Group, the predominant source of printed news for rural and provincial Victoria. With the demise of this Group in 2020, community newspapers such as the Blackwood Times have flourished and are now recognised as critical & invaluable resources for communities. Voluntary labour and minimal overheads are essential for their viability and, in the case of the Blackwood Times, not being beholden to a single owner or sponsor.

A workshop on 'Editing: dealing with other people's submissions', raised many issues. At the Blackwood Times our approach is to print letters to the Editor with a disclaimer but reserve the right to edit or not publish outrageous or harmful contributions. We prefer not to stick to rigid guidelines for contributors and allow for the individual voice to be heard.

A second workshop, 'Reporting on mental health and suicide as a community journalist' was particularly valuable. Too often mainstream media sensationalises such events, stigmatising people and, in the process, does far more harm than good. Always there are many drivers, not just one factor. We have an important role in balancing any report with hope for recovery and to promote services that can support. How we use language in reporting and at the pub must be carefully and wisely chosen. The mantra must be to do no harm and, where possible, do good.

John Kemp

8 GENERATIONS AT BLACKWOOD.



Our family recently celebrated the realisation of 8 generations at Blackwood.

Our earliest ancestor, Matthew Sweet, was born on 27 June 1808 in Bristol England. Just before his 19th birthday, on the 24 May 1827, he was transported on the ship Champion bound for NSW Australia, for a misdemeanour. After he served out his time, he was given a 'Certificate of Freedom' on the 22 November 1833.

Many years later, in c1854, Matthew was working at a sawmill at Mt Blackwood when he received word from his mate, George Jackson, that there had been traces of Gold found at a creek which later became known as Golden Point.

Together with his wife Mary and their children, Matthew packed up their belongings and went to meet up with George, in the search for Gold.

One of Matthew and Mary's children, Elizabeth, met and married William Dudley which began our direct line to Matthew Sweet.

Presently our Dudley/Topp families enjoy a holiday cabin at Blackwood which was built c1935 by Allan Dudley. Allan and his wife Doreen enjoyed family holidays with their two children Len and Joan (Topp).

Recently the cabin has been undergoing restoration by the Dudley/Topp families who look forward to many more years of wonderful times at Blackwood.

To this day there are still 2 prominent landmarks named after the Sweets, namely Sweet's Pool in the Lerderderg River and Sweet's Lookout which overlooks Golden Point.

With the arrival of the latest generation, Lucy, Aalyiah, Charlotte, Kitt & Hamish, the Dudley/Topp families look forward to many more generations at Blackwood.

By Peter Dudley, researched by Len Dudley

HISTORICAL HOT WATER BOTTLE



What is this you might ask? It's not to hold booze but it will keep you warm! it's a vintage hot water bottle!

A hot-water bottle is a bottle filled with hot water and sealed with a stopper, used to provide warmth, typically while in bed, but also for the application of heat to a specific

part of the body.

At the Blackwood & District Historical Society we have one great example of an antique hot water bottle. These would have been used by the early miners in the area if they could afford one! I think they look really comfortable to sleep with. If you are interested in more history of the area, or have something to share please come and visit us during our next open day: Saturday 3rd February, 10:00am-1:00pm.

The Blackwood & District Historical Society

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25 SCOTTISH FIDDLERS IN BLACKWOOD

Melbourne Scottish Fiddlers featuring Mickey & Michelle and supported by Fiona Ross

We were treated to a feast at the Blackwood Hall on Sunday, 22 Oct. Starting with Fiona, in top form, preparing for Halloween with two of her favourite Dundee songs; Bonnie Susie Cleland and Ghost of Dundee. We were then entertained by Mickey and Michelle on violin and harp (fiddle and clarsach) performing original compositions, both recent and early, by both M's. They had recently trekked over 7000 km on foot, performing whenever the chance arose. One composition, so new it is yet to be named, was Mickey's reconciliation to his musical fate. They were joined for the last piece by Catie on cello, an homage to Leonard Cohen on a garden theme, the Scarecrow Dance. Michelle on harp produced powerful notes and phrases that filled the hall while Mickey on fiddle and vocals showed the breadth of their skills. Young and confident, they have a huge future ahead of them.



photos: Peter Donnelly

At interval, refreshments were served to a grateful crowd. Then, if that was not enough, we had the stage filled with a score of Melbourne Scottish Fiddlers plus a double bass, cell o, guitar and Michelle's harp. To complete the troupe, Fiona joined in to sing a traditional mocking song: The Laird o Cockpen. The Melbourne Scottish Fiddlers went on to play a medley of reels and jigs from the Scottish diaspora in Quebec. Then on to Shetland for a reel and waltz. Following that, we were treated to LuLu singing the modern ballad Caledonia composed by Dougie Maclean, allusions to Lewis Carroll, Walking on the Moon and a wistful rendition of The Bonnie Lass o Fyvie.

From behind the curtain, stage right, introduced by our nterpoint, came a new fiddler. The stage was brought alive (and the floor tested) by fiddlers jumping in unison. It was now time for the Young Subset, led by LuLu. We heard lively renditions of Welcome to the Club and Mystery Edge. From the Lonely Swan, Katrina gave us the Swan Song and then we heard about The House on Lonely Hill, a real location in Adelaide. Fiona returned with the perennial favourite Loch Lomond, with plenty of audience participation, to finish the concert; only we would have none of it! The fiddlers had to continue with three more reels until we were all sated with a surfeit of music, food and drink.

Thank you, Fiona and all concerned, yet again for bringing top class entertainment to Blackwood.

Tony Tonic



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A BLACKWOOD PROFILE - PETER DAGLISH

Bushwalking in Blackwood as preparation for Spain

Q: Have you always been a bushwalker?

I haven't always been a bushwalker, but I have always been active. I was an AFL umpire for fifteen years and a bike rider. Previously I rode around the Bay two times and also ran five marathons.

Q: What is special about bushwalking in Blackwood?

I find that the solitude in walking is good for the soul. Bushwalking is for me a case of - stop the world, I want to get off! I take everything in...the views, the sounds and the atmosphere.

Q: How do you cope with the changeable weather in Blackwood when out walking?

Blackwood weather is a challenge! I usually have a light backpack with a coat and hat in it. You have to be prepared to get a little bit wet. There's days when I walk on a track and I can see forever, and other days when the hills and view are covered in fog. I really appreciate the changing weather we have here.

Q: Do you have particular walks around BW that you do regularly?

I retired in January this year and I committed to walking six days a week. As they say - do something for thirty days and it becomes a habit. My habit is to now walk for six days a week. These days, I get up and go for a walk and have the reward of a coffee at the Post Office at the end. That's part of the ritual. Every walker knows that they need to monitor their body. I monitor mine and do a long walk one day and a short walk the next day. I walk Monday to Saturday and have Sunday off, but do CFA training on Sundays. A big consideration in walking is looking after your feet. Blisters and sore feet will totally ruin your experience. At the first sign of any foot rubbing, I stop and treat the area straight away. Otherwise sore feet develop and walking is hampered. Well worn-in shoes are essential. Shoes need to be broken in for about three months before a big walk is undertaken. I know about 20 ways of blister management!

Q: Have you undertaken big walks in places other than BW?

I have previously walked the Camino Trail, in Spain, twice. The first time I walked 800kms to Santiago de Compostela and the second time I walked 915kms from Santiago de Compostela to Muxia. Both walks started in France at St Jean de Port. The first day of the walk is over the Pyrenees and it is a tough track. Many people retreat from the walk on the first day. If you manage the first day you are home and hosed for the rest of the walk. It's 24kms uphill and then there's a 4kms really steep decline. It is a brutal day. In my last two walks I made a point of not sitting down after the first day as I thought I wouldn't be able to get up again. St Jean to Rochabelle is 28kms. There is an option to stop at 10kms but the determined people, like me, keep going. It's like running marathons...the first one teaches you a lot as you then know what you are in for and your mind-set changes.

Q: Is preparation in Blackwood good psychological preparation for the Camino?

Without doubt. Walking the Camino is almost identical to walking areas of Blackwood. Walking the roads around Blackwood and the Morning Star track you walk through dirt, mud, gravel and sealed roads.

The last 30 km, walking into Santago, you are walking through eucalyptus forests. All of a sudden I would get a whiff of eucalyptus gums and I would think - I'm home! I've done my previous two walks in April as there are less people on the Trail. Many people do it in the European summer and the accommodation fills up and the Trail can be busy with many walkers.

The Camino is about the people you meet from all around the world. People open up and tell you their life stories. I have often wondered what it is about walking that prompts people to tell others significant stories of their lives. For instance, I met Gary, a Vietnam veteran, who told me many important stories that affected his life. Sometimes I walk alone, and sometimes I walk with others. I stay overnight in an Albergues/hostel. Many rooms in Albergues have about twenty double bunks in each room and people bunk in together. 6pm is the Pilgrim's meal time and by 7.30pm it's time to hit the sack. In many Albergues I have heard some of the world's best snorers! I take a set of good ear plugs, to tune out, as it is usually a 6am start each morning.

People from all over the world walk the Camino and many people want to hear about Australia. Hopefully I will walk the Camino in April next year and this time I will be fitter than I have been before, as I have had more time to prepare...older, fitter and wiser! My first walk of the Camino took 34 days and the second time I took 39 days. Anyone who wants to walk the Camino shouldn't put time constraints on it. Rushing should be eliminated from the walk as going at whatever pace suits you, is the way to go.

After the walk the last two times, and then again next year, I will fly to Dublin for seven days of R & R. I walk all over Dublin and enjoy a few pubs. We miss a lot when we are in cars and walking is full immersion in a place. It gives time to take in the experience.

Q: What has walking given to your life?

A determination to take a challenge on. During the walks across Spain I learnt to exercise patience. If you stop, you are not going to get there. I also love the peace, and the peace of mind walking has given me.

Interviewed by Jeanne Tahini



Sue Donnelly and Peter Daglish on The Heritage River Walk photo: Deirdre Cronin

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GOLD RUSH DAYS OF BLACKWOOD. - 14TH NOVEMBER 1854, IS THE RECOGNISED DATE THAT GOLD WAS FIRST DISCOVERED IN BLACKWOOD.

Any discoveries of gold in the Blackwood area which had been made before 1854 were isolated discoveries. It was only a matter of time, though, as in late 1854 that a significant attempt was made to find gold in the Blackwood area, which resulted in the riches of the gold being known and which led to thousands of miners creating a rush to Blackwood.



The man who was credited with discovering gold on the January 4th, 1855 in Blackwood and who received the £300 reward was Edward Hill. In 1854 Edward Hill, together with his mate Isaac Povey, left their home in West Bromwich, Staffordshire, England, bound for New South Wales. They worked for a time helping to build the Sydney Mint before deciding to try to make their fortune in gold mining. They were members of a party on the Wombat Creek (Daylesford) but had limited success. In October 1854, Hill came to Melbourne for the purpose of fitting out to prospect the Mount Blackwood Ranges, being induced to do so from reading a course of lectures delivered in England three years before, at the Society of Arts, on the goldfields of Australia. One of these lectures particularly mentioned that Mount Blackwood, from its geological formation, would be a likely place for gold. Hill applied to Captain Buckley at the Survey Office for permission to take a tracing of the district for the purpose of using it in prospecting that area and was allowed to do so.

Hill left Melbourne on October 18, 1854, with one mate and on October 20, arrived at Blow's Station lying between Bacchus Marsh and Ballan. At Blow's Station, Hill took his loading, consisting of three hundredweight of tools, provisions and other requirements off the dray, which then proceeded on to Ballarat, leaving Hill and his mate camped by the roadside for the night.

Unfortunately for Hill, on preparing to start next morning, Hill's mate declined to proceed any further through the fear of them losing themselves in the rugged terrain. After remaining four days camped near Blow's, trying to persuade his mate to come on, Hill was finally obliged to bury the greater part of his belongings in the bush, and return to the Wombat with the intention of getting one of his former mates to take his place. However, on his arrival there, they one and all declined with the consequence that his first mate once again reluctantly agreed to return with him. This time, leaving from Ballan, Hill and his mate got about five miles into the bush when his mate again refused to go any further. Fearing that his mate would lose himself in the bush

from sheer nervousness if he returned alone, Hill again took him to the Wombat with the intention of getting one of his former mates to return with him.

Over the same period of time, two men from East Ballan, Harry Athorn and Harry Hider, had been trying to locate six bullocks which had got away from earlier carters. It was generally known that they were somewhere in the area of the Laradoc, as the Lerderberg was then called by the early settlers. Athorn came to East Ballan in 1853, and built a hotel there which he named the Traveller's Rest. In addition, he had two bullock teams carting on the roads. Athorn and Hider went on three different Sundays to look for the lost bullocks. On Sunday November 14, 1854, when in the vicinity of where the bullocks were supposed to be running, they stopped about midday to have lunch on the bank of the creek where Golden Point, in Blackwood is now. The water was clear and while filling their "Billy" they saw water worn gold at the bottom of the stream. They collected as much of the gold as they could. This date, 14th November 1854, is the recognised date that gold was first discovered in Blackwood, by two bullock drivers, Harry Athorn and Harry Hider.

Overjoyed by their discovery, they returned with the gold and with two of the lost bullocks. They then blazed a track by marking some trees on their way back to Ballan, to make sure of finding the place again. As soon as they returned to East Ballan, a party was made up to prospect the discovery, composed of Athorn and Hider and three others named Jackson, Dungey and Bellinger. The arrangement was that all were to share equally in the profit from any gold discovered. Jackson, Dungey and Bellinger were to do the prospecting, while Athorn and Hider were to find them in food and other requisites. The prospectors were determined to make as much profit as they could before others found out about their discovery, so the rush was not about to start.

Jackson, Dungey and Bellinger were experienced prospectors. When they returned to where Athorn and Hider had made their discovery, Jackson was quick to spot colour, so they began work, in what was to be called Jackson's Gully. They camped on the far side of the creek, where the Golden Point Bridge used to be. In some of the holes put down, good gold was obtained, and in others none, but on trying along the course of the creek, the party found that gold could be obtained anywhere in it.

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

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

By Margot Hitchcock, Historian for the Blackwood & District Historical society. November 2023.



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A BLACKWOOD GARDEN

Once temperatures warmed, the plants went ballistic. I could almost see them growing! Overnight the Foxgloves (Digitalis) grew inches. These are one of the few plants that the animals don't munch because the flowers are very poisonous if eaten, unlike many other plants which are supposed to be toxic such as Euphorbias and Rhubarb leaves, the animals still seem to eat them at times.



Poppies and more Poppies keep coming and Aquilegias of the most beautiful colours leave seed heads which the Crimson Rosellas come in for. Although you lose the seed heads, some of the seed is spread to self sow. Daisies, Irises and Roses are in abundance and my Sweetpeas, Jasmine and Clematis are so healthy and madly climbing. Lilliums this year are certainly early and growing at full speed ahead. I grow all mine in pots due to the rats who find the bulbs so delicious. I think the Autumn flowering Tiger Lilies will perhaps flower by Christmas.

Cornus (Dogwoods), of which I have many varieties, are a fabulous tree for our climate and once established are drought-tolerant. Those like Nuttallii and Rubra have finished flowering while others are just beginning. The King Parrots demolished the seeds of my Japanese Maples and for the first time my Weeping Elm which was tip pruning. I'm now trying to disguise my Geraniums so they don't demolish them as well.

In the Vegie patch Rocket has gone to seed, as has most of the Silverbeet. Broadbeans are cropping. Potatoes are looking healthy and the garlic is not far off being ready to pull. I'm trying out pumpkins this year and some I'll grow on a trellis and others will run over the ground. I was late planting carrots and tomatoes but I'm anticipating a long summer, so fingers crossed for bounty. I think we had wet and windy weather while the Crabapple was in flower so I may miss out on fruit.

I'm looking forward to all the fabulous flowers and produce in the coming season....enjoy yours.

The silly season is in full swing.... safe holidays and all the best for 2024. Until next time

Jane Howat

Stop kidding yourself. If you drink, don't drive.

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• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

BLACKWOOD AND SURROUNDS EMERGENCY PLANNING EXPO



It was a surprisingly mild morning on Saturday 21st October when our small but passionate local BERG (Blackwood Emergency Resilience Group) committee arrived at St Martins to set up for the eagerly awaited Emergency Planning Expo. Assisted by a mildly reluctant kid (thanks El) chairs were laid out and projectors, refreshments and information tables were set up. Soon representatives from agencies including the Red Cross, CERT, Powercor, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Telstra, Victoria Police, NBN and

the CFA arrived and readied themselves for a meet and greet with our community. That was about when we realised that our community wasn't there! A couple of minutes to start time and it would be fair to say that the BERG crew – Sophie Guerin, Michael Hotchin and Kylie Richardson – were exchanging some slightly concerned glances. And then, in true Blackwood style, you arrived!

We were truly happy to see you fill up St Martins chapel in time for an opening address by fabulous BERG president Sophie. The session then kicked off with a highly informative presentation from Dhi Singh, a Principal Research Scientist at the CSIRO. Dhi walked us through what it might look like if a fire started near Trentham. It provided incredible insight into how fast fire can travel and what implications we might face when trying to evacuate.



Jamie Mackenzie, former Senior Instructor with the CFA and now Managing Director of Red Flag Real Time Leadership Solutions, followed with an interactive presentation prompting us to think about what we can all do to better prepare for a potential emergency. The brilliant and tireless work of our emergency service volunteers was acknowledged, as was their lack of ability to go from property to property rescuing people during an emergency event. It was an important reminder that we are responsible for our own safety and hopefully left many of us feeling empowered to be more proactive in this regard. Jamie also reminded us that we need to be able to look after ourselves and each other in the aftermath of an emergency, exactly as we did following the June 2021 storm. He highlighted that it is important that we are aware of our local strengths and resources

as we may again face a period of days before outside help can reach us. We know we are capable of this and are so lucky to be such a connected and resilient community.

Before heading out for sausage (special thanks to Ross and our local CFA) and to gather some more information from the support agencies, everyone present was given one of the amazing flipchart fridge magnets that BERG have recently developed. The charts contain local information and numerous tips for what to do before, during and after an emergency as well as providing prompts to add personal information and contacts so it is recorded and easily accessed. Copies of these flipcharts are available for each household in Blackwood, Dales Creek and Barrys Reef. If you missed out on the day you can get your copy from the post office or alternatively you can email: blackwooderg@gmail.com

Kylie Richardson

CROWN RESERVES COMMITTEE

The Labor Federal Member for Hawke Sam Rae visited on Thursday 9 November and met with Nicole and Wyatt from the caravan park as well as Carol from the shop. He had an interest in the lack of support provided to Blackwood by government in relation to the clean-up of the mineral springs post the June 2021 extreme weather event and has requested we provide detail of additional works outstanding.

The painting of the Blackwood Hall began on the 20th November and is planned to be completed by the end of the first week of December. Rotted doors etc. will be replaced post painting due to the non-availability of trades and services prior to painting beginning.

Network Ten Australia's Premier caravanning and camping show "What's Up Down Under" stayed at the Blackwood Caravan Park for 3 days 21-23 November filming Blackwood and surrounds.

As mentioned in previous updates an emergency generator is being installed in the caravan park as a backup for the community for future power outages. This project has required extensive coordination with various suppliers and authorities due to the work involved with the install. This program is a result of the Energy Resilience Solutions Program that investigated energy back-up solutions for 24 high-risk towns across Victoria, and Blackwood was one of the towns selected.

The sewer issue at the caravan park is ongoing with an independent plumbing report submitted to Moorabool as to the extent of the remediation work required. The committee continues to be in direct contact with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) executives on this issue and have been advised that Moorabool is fully accountable for developing a plan and costs associated with rectification of all non-compliant works. At this stage, the committee nor DEECA has been given an update by Moorabool. This issue has been outstanding for 7 years and for the last 10 weeks has stopped the completion of the amenities upgrade in the caravan park.

For future planning purposes Povey's Reserve at Simmons Reef is being surveyed by DEECA in the coming weeks.

As mentioned in the last edition all existing committee member appointments will expire in March & DEECA will be advertising for new committee members.

New volunteers are urgently needed as currently too much is falling on too few. Maybe you have a special interest in just one of the NINE Reserves that the Committee is responsible for - every little contribution will help.

Thanks

Peter Fowler

Chair Blackwood Crown reserves Committee of Management

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CFA REPORT

Christmas is fast approaching along with a new fire danger period, which commenced at 1 am. on Monday the 20th of November. Check your property to ensure it is free from any debris that may become a fire hazard and inspect the driveway/entry to your property to see if it gives us access with our tankers and other emergency services vehicles. Do you have a fire plug or hydrant near your property? Walk around and see if you can find it easily, usually marked by a blue cats-eye on the road, possibly



a white arrow and a red and white post with another blue cats-eye reflector, some areas may have a white and black post. As you look around, keep in mind that we need to find these in a hurry and any help you can provide by keeping the surrounding area clear of grass or other obstacles is appreciated. If you have any questions, you can use the Facebook page to ask.

The brigade has again been unusually busy over the last two months. The dry conditions in September, late October and November have led to several escaped burn-offs and some false alarms.

Forest fuels such as leaves and bark are much drier this year with the lack of rain. The brigade has done some burn piles recently and the heat intensity was noticeably greater with the lack of moisture in the fuel. With the remnant moisture in the ground from the last three wet years, the grass in town is staying green, but any fuel that isn't in contact with the earth like bark and leaves, is drying rapidly.

This year's fire season is about one month ahead of last years. Also, the brigade has extinguished two unattended campfires. The bush fire at Nolans Creek Picnic Area on the Lerderderg river earlier in the year was assumed to have been caused by an abandoned campfire.

IF YOU SEE AN UNATTENDED CAMPFIRE, PLEASE CALL 000 SO THAT THE BRIGADE CAN TAKE CARE OF IT.

On Saturday 14 October we had the 50th anniversary of the Fiskville Cup Event which included a team featuring the top brass of the CFA including the Chief Officer Jason Heffernan leading the team which

• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

took part in the competition. Insider reports say he can bowl a hose quite well.

During the competition the Channel 9 news were there filming for that evening's news. For anyone who missed it, they featured Blackwood Tanker 1 conducting a Burn over (or Entrapment) drill. Our team performed well throughout the competition.

Another brigade event was on Saturday the 28th which was our presentation night with several members receiving awards, Service Medals and the National Emergency Medal.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FISKVILLE CUP TEAM AND THOSE THAT RECEIVED AWARDS.

Santa is preparing for his annual Christmas Day visit with his helpers. From Ross and all the members of the brigade, we wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year and we thank you for your support.

Download the Vic Emergency app to your phone which will keep you up to date on any incidents and warnings and alerts through the App Stores or on your computer using this web site: <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>

Always ring 000 in the case of any emergency. If you have and fire and 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 53686526 on Sunday mornings over the summer period and the first Sunday of every month during the rest of the year, as we are there for training and equipment checks. Never let complacency set in and always be prepared, no matter what the season.

If you are interested in joining, we always welcome new members. We can be contacted at the station or through the Brigade Facebook page or the morning of the first Sunday of each month or drop us an email to blackwoodcfa@gmail.com

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Karl Church

*Communications and Community Safety Liaison Officer
Blackwood Fire Brigade*

SAM RAE MP

LABOR MEMBER FOR HAWKE

Get in touch

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SAM RAE

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BLACKWOOD OVER 55'S SOCIAL CLUB

Hi everyone, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

We meet every Wednesday at the Blackwood Hall for a fantastic 3 course lunch which is cooked by our amazing Rosie for only \$10.00 if you are a member which is \$10.00. We have carpet bowls, Rumikins or Bingo after lunch.

We will be finishing up the year on the 13th of December and restarting on the 17th January 2024. The hairdresser Bernadett will be there on the 13th of December and members get a cut price haircut. Not much to report and I will try to have more to say next time.

Di Volp

WOMBAT BOOK CLUB

Hello, and Merry Christmas from us all here at Wombat Bookclub. We hold meetings for Book Club on the third Sunday of each month at the Blackwood Pub. Locations and times could vary, although the Pub seems to be a favourite location for our very informal meeting where we enjoy a drink and good company.

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

The books we read this last couple of months were- 'The Uncaged Sky' 804 days prison in Iran, by Kylie Moore-Gilbert and 'Sea of Tranquility' by Emily St John Mandel'.

Sandy: The Uncaged Sky is a memoir about Kylie Moore-Gilbert when she was attending a conference in Iran, as she was about to leave, she was arrested on suspicion of espionage. Her story is one of survival and resilience of how she survived mentally. Her captives drained her psychologically, and she did not know how long she was going to be held in Iran. She was finally released and was able to return home to Australia. She gives the reader an insight into prison in Iran and what led to her release.

5 Wombies

Jane: "The Uncaged Sky" the story of Kylie the Australian academic imprisoned in the Iranian prison accused of being a spy. Not an easy read.

5 Wombies

Sandy: The Sea Of Tranquility is an cross between not so futuristic colonies on the Moon but also Time Travel. The characters can be confusing and sometimes the reader may not know at which point some characters are present. It does come together as the story progresses when...I was a bit slow to realise the protagonist 'Gaspery' had time travelled and had changed the life direction of a novelist he interviewed. This is the argument of time travel, would it be possible to wield the course of history?

3.5 Wombies

Dee: Sea of Tranquility was an interesting read, even at times confusing. Time travel throughout the ages with a link to the main character Gaspery. This book takes a look at the future of pandemics and worldly disasters. Which at times is concerning when we see what is happening presently. But Gaspery parrallel worlds connect and all is revealed that he is the phenomenon.

3 Wombies

That's all from us until next year. Have a 'Hoot' of a Christmas. Happy reading.

ST MARTIN'S CHAPEL

Greetings to everyone as we celebrate the season of Christmas. The time when God assumed flesh, took on our life and moved into our neighbourhood in order to get to know us. God stepped firmly into time in the form of Jesus. The one who created the world, moved into the centre of our worldliness to be with us and save us, such is His love for us.

Join us to celebrate this time of year at the Twilight Carol Service. We are still working on the details so keep your eye out on the Blackwood Facebook page and signs that will appear around town.

It was great to have so many people attend a fundraiser for the Chapel when we held our Cabaret night. It really was a fun and relaxed evening and I think everyone went home feeling happy and well fed. We raised just under \$2000 so a huge thank you to all those who contributed to the success of the evening. The money raised will go towards upgrading our kitchen facilities.



As we draw to the end of another year it becomes a time to reflect on what has happened this year at St Martin's. Music, displays, weddings, birthday parties, business meetings, worship, a storm recovery celebration, morning teas, martial arts, meditation, markets, presentations and much more -so many opportunities for people to come together and appreciate what our community has to share. Let's do more of it in 2024!

Robyn Zanon

PROGRESS ASSOCIATION REPORT

The Progress Association AGM was held on the 18th October, with a small number of the community in attendance. The outgoing Executive Committee members were re-elected with the addition of one extra member. As a reminder, your Executive Committee members are: Brendan Hehir (President); Nick Dear (Vice-President); Darren Lynch (Secretary); Allan Tait (Treasurer); Angelko Juresko; Louise Scott; Deirdre Cronin.

Progress is well underway with the organisation of the 2024 Easter Carnival. If you have any suggestions or ideas on how to improve this event, please let us know (blackwoodprogress@gmail.com). As always, we will need support and assistance from our community to deliver another successful Carnival.

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• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

BIN COLLECTION DAY IS CHANGING

Moorabool Shire has made a change of their waste collection contractor and this combined with the growth in the Shire means our bin collection days are changing. We all should have received a letter about this change however some are yet to arrive.

To see what the changes are going to be you can refer to the chart below, but our collection days will move from a Monday to a Wednesday

Collection	Date	Garbage	Recycling	Green
Current collection	Mon 13 Nov	✓	✓	
Current collection	Mon 20 Nov	No Collection as normal		
Change week	Weds 29 Nov	✓	✓	
New collection	Weds 6 Dec	✓	✓	
New collection	Weds 13 Dec	No Collection as per new service		

If you would like more information you can check out the council's website. www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/bin-collection

CERT REPORT

Our local group of Community Emergency Response Team(sters) has seen an increase in callouts to attend 000 Medical Emergencies over the last couple of months.

With only a small Team, we are not always able to respond, which is disappointing for us and for those in our local area who need emergency medical attention. We continue where we can and are always open to welcoming new members to join us.

Statistics show that since the pandemic began, volunteer numbers across the board have fallen. We understand that any volunteering is a commitment, but also "pays" really well in terms of transferable skill development (and formal training), job satisfaction and lifelong friendships.

We were delighted to join with other community volunteers, council etc at the Blackwood Emergency Response Group day held recently.

Again, a real reminder of just how many wonderful people locally are doing "their bit" to help us all. Our thanks to those driving that initiative.

As summer approaches, a few simple health tips to remember are:

- Minimise sun exposure
- Drink lots of water
- Be aware of snakes
- Listen for Emergency Warnings and follow directions

Take care of yourselves and each other!

Leonie Brasier

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BLACKWOOD AND BARRY'S REEF LANDCARE GROUP

Blackwood and Barry's Reef Landcare Group are finishing 2023 with a very special presentation by Janine Duffy, President of the Clancy Koala Foundation, with information about koalas and the special and necessary relationship they have with trees to sustain them. Koalas are still spotted in pockets around Blackwood, so the more information we have to help keep them alive, will be vital to their longevity. Please join us at St Martin's Chapel at 10.30am on 2nd December.

Thank you to all Landcare members for another year of exciting projects, workshops, working bees and presentations. They include: a Native Plant Propagation Workshop and a Soil Health Workshop funded by Moorabool Council as part of a Gardens for a Wildlife Program; Involvement in helping clear Barrys Reef for the Avenue of Honour; Easter Carnival Parade and Stall Participation during which 450 plants were donated to the public; Planting 500-600 plants at the Blackwood Mineral Springs for the Community Planting Day; plus 600 free seedlings given away at a stall in the Main Street of Blackwood.

Working Bees for weed removal included work at: the Mineral Springs; Blackwood Town Hall; the entrance to Whalebone Rd; the track between the Mineral Springs and Whalebone Rd; and Whipstick Track trail head at Jack Cann Reserve, St. Erth.

Special thanks to Moorabool Landcare Nursery (Rowsley), and Wombat Native Plants Nursery (Bullarto), and the Moorabool Shire Council.

Plans for new projects in 2024 are already in the planning stages, so stay tuned. B&BRLG wishes everyone a Very Happy and Safe Festive Season. See you in the New Year.

Noelle Shader for B&BRLG

BLACKWOOD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hi All,

We are having our Christmas break up on Dec 9 this year. There is a tentative booking for a minimum of 20 people, so it should be a rollicking luncheon. At this time, we cannot disclose the venue's location as we are trying to avoid history "groupies". They are so shameless!

On a little more serious note, we recently held our AGM with the status quo of Office Bearers remaining. Mark Devenish is President, myself as Vice President and Elizabeth Hall as Secretary. This will mark Elizabeth's 42nd year as Secretary. This is surely a record as far as Blackwood groups are concerned! Elizabeth says it doesn't feel that long as her journey with the Society has been "fun". I believe that there is a lesson in that! Your group can be as active as anything and pump out publications, organise events etc., but overall, you require a fun group to attain longevity and keep your members. We are lucky to have that.

He would hate me saying this...but we are also lucky to have Mark as the head of our group. For those not aware, Mark took on the Presidency of the Society from Alan Hall at a time when Alan's health was in decline. Mark basically did this to take the burden from Alan, not as something he particularly sought out. It remains a testament to their friendship that Mark had the honour of being one of Alan's pall bearers at his funeral.

In Mark's time the Society has gradually raised its membership and profile to a point that Alan would surely be proud of. Kudos to one of nature's gentlemen!

Ray Castellin

BLACKWOOD CRICKET CLUB

Hello all, we are back on the winner's board with 2 in a row. These were the first wins since the end of 21/22 home and away season. Crowds are good at the home games with many kids running around, sometimes more than at the kids' cricket, which now starts at 10:30 at all home games.

The players are talking about finals!!



Problem being the away games, 7 players don't quite cut the gravy and we are still working on this, there are players with young children and work commitments so it is hard. At the time of writing this, we just got a big sponsor onboard and new shirts are coming soon. We are starting to look like a winning team.



These are our Sponsors: Western Land Services; NVG Heavy Equipment Services; Greendale Hotel, and recently International Cranes has come onboard.

Sponsorship for the club is either: \$500 sponsorships consist of: Business logo on shirts; 2x membership tickets; Presentation

Day invitations; Sponsors' Day invitations; Advertising at the ground; Appreciation plaque.

\$300 sponsorship consists of: 2x membership tickets; Presentation Day x 2 invitations; Sponsors' Day invitations; Advertising at the ground.

A gold single membership is \$50; a family membership is \$80. Both memberships entitle the member to their drink free at home games.

Home Games this Season

December 2nd and 16th

January 13th

February 10th, 17th and 24th

The bus will be running from the Greendale Hotel for all home games A special thanks to all helpers around the Club: Janette for lunch, Jodie in the bar, Keith on the BBQ and Maddie in the canteen. Everyone is welcome to come and help or enjoy the day...hopefully we can keep winning!

Ollie's cash for cans collection is at the oval. This is for Ollie to spend as he sees fit..perhaps wood for Mum and Dad to keep him warm or petrol to take him places, or whatever he desires .

GO BLACKWOOD EAGLES!

Brian President

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• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

POST OFFICE INTERVIEW

The End is Insight.....Almost There

Carol Guthrie is Interviewed by Aleksander Kukiel



A - What construction works have been done up to now?

C - Basically the building has been rebuilt and expanded. So, what we've done so far is we've completely

re-stumped the existing building. There's all new plaster work, everything has been redone on the existing building. Out the back we've built a beautiful new deck. We've built a firewall in between Martin Street Coffee Roasters and us. That's a fully bricked wall that's actually filled with concrete. We have just about finished and we wanted to create something really good.

A - Has business been good?

C - It's been better since the sun started shining, because in Blackwood you've got to have a place where people can come in and get out of the weather and be comfortable and we haven't had that for years.

A - Do you like working at the Post Office?

C - I love it. It's great. The people are wonderful. The town is wonderful.

A - What is your most popular pie?

C - The most popular pie sold here is just the plain beef pie.

A - How long have you worked here?

C - Seven years.

A - Do you and the other workers work well together?

C - Yes, we work really well together. We're a really good team. We've got fabulous staff. They work hard, they go above and beyond.

A - Where do you get the pies?

C - Grist Bakery in Kyneton.

A - When does the post usually come in?

C - It comes at different times, depending on who's doing the sorting, but usually around 9:30am, but sometimes it can be as late as 12.

A - how long has there been a Post Office in this building?

C - 8 years

A - Do you allow dogs out the back?

C - Yes, in the garden. It's a nice place for people to bring their dogs and go out for lunch.

A - What are your thoughts on the program that encourages young writers to submit a piece into the Times?

C - I think it's a wonderful idea.

A - How do you feel about the incentive of the \$10 Post Office credit for young writers?

C - I think it's fantastic. Their effort is to be rewarded.

A - What is your best seller?

C - I would say the best seller would have to be our homemade cakes made by Jeanette Darwen. They are running out the door.

A - What is your favourite item to sell?

C - I really enjoy selling the gifts, the retail gifts.

Aleks - Thank you for allowing me to interview you and have a good day.

Carol - Thank you so much, Aleks. It's been an absolute pleasure.

Fun Fact: Did you know the Post Office used to be in the Pub?

CRICKET 4 KIDS

Cricket 4 Kids runs on the Saturday mornings of home games, we have had three sessions and our numbers have grown to five! If they all turn up on the same day we will nearly have a team.



Cricket 4 Kids is an informal session practicing cricket skills and having a game and some fun along the way. We practice throwing, fielding, hitting the stumps (this seems to be a favourite) and batting and we will introduce bowling over the next few sessions. All children under 12 are welcome and the cricket club provides the equipment.

We have changed the start time to 10:30 so we can all have a

sleep in. I think the dads, mums and grandpas are having just as much fun showing off their fielding skills. Thank you to everyone who has attended so far and to Carol at the post office for providing ice creams to the participants.

Keep a lookout for the next home game and I will meet you at the sports ground at 10:30.

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• MEDIA RELEASE •

19 October 2023

COMMUNITY GROUPS UNITE TO HELP PROTECT WOMBAT FOREST

Wombat Forestcare recently commenced legal proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria to stop VicForests' ongoing logging and commercial firewood harvesting in the proposed Wombat Forest and Lerderderg National Park.

In November the case will be back to court for both sides to present their evidence regarding endangered species in the Wombat Forest.

A key question is whether VicForests have been observing the 'precautionary principle' according to the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004 (Vic).

Gayle Osborne from Wombat Forestcare says:

"Many people have been campaigning for a National Park for years, and since the government's environmental assessment commission (VEAC) recommended it be protected in 2017, we have seen little action besides more logging of areas needed for the park"

Wombat Forestcare Fundraiser

To fund this important legal case, Wombat Forestcare urgently needs to raise funds to engage a number of expert witnesses on native fauna, flora and fire management.

Media contact: Miriam Robinson 0409 351 123

Gayle Osborne 0428 457 378

We acknowledge that this action will take place on the stolen land of the Wadawurrung people. We pay our respects to the Elders past and

• AROUND TOWN •

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Blackwood Community Christmas Party is going to be held at the Mineral Springs this year. All are welcome. Bring whatever you will need for a BBQ, chairs, food, drinks, etc. day will be very low key, just a chance to catch up with your neighbours before the busyness of Christmas takes over, maybe a game of cricket or some bocce.

If you would like to bring a plate of Christmas treats to put on the share table that will be a bonus, my speciality is berries and cherries, unless I get lots of chocolates from the kids at school then it's berries and chocolate!

We might still be able to have a visit from Santa, if he is not too busy.

WHOSE TATT IS THAT?



The owl represents wisdom, intelligence, good luck and prosperity. My tattoo is a constant reminder of this and my Grandparents who were always there to provide me with guidance.

Sandy Meade

• AROUND TOWN •

BLACKWOOD GETS SPOOKY

October 31st has become a big date on the Blackwood calendar, as the cobwebs are dusted on and the

Jack-o'-lanterns are carved for the community trick or treating trail. Seventeen houses were on the trail this year and the streets were haunted by lots of tiny pumpkins, witches, ghosts and skeletons, all super excited to check out the decorations throughout the streets and collect their treats!



Alvie, Jayden and Brodie coming down Byres Road. photo: Jeanne tahini

The kids all had an absolute ball and it was lovely to connect with other members of the community, some of whom we don't normally cross paths with. A huge thank you to Deirdre for organising the night and to all the houses that participated.

Anna Perry

SAM RAE



Sam Rae, our Federal MP, spent the day in Blackwood recently, chatting with locals about their issues, big and small. Here he is talking Middle East politics with Maeve in the main street and with Rangers Wyatt and Nicole at the Mineral Springs Reserve (see article on page...).

Brendan Hehir

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CURRAWONG RESOURCES RECENT EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES AT BLACKWOOD.

Currawong Resources, a Bendigo based gold and mineral explorer, is currently drilling at a few locations in the Wombat State Forest between Blackwood and Trentham. The Blackwood area has significant historical gold production, and Currawong are exploring further for potential underground gold deposits.



Currawong made application for the Lauriston tenement Exploration Licence No.6656 in 2017 and has been operating in the area between Lauriston and Blackwood since 2019 when it was finally granted. We are a wholly owned subsidiary of Great Pacific Gold, listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Importantly, the Lauriston - Blackwood goldfield area has extremely similar geology to the Fosterville goldfield, and these similarities are in many ways unique to the area.

As part of the exploration strategy, Currawong has recently acquired another adjacent Exploration Licence, No. 5479, from Cauldron Energy to consolidate exploration of the district.

Our drill permit is a Low Impact Exploration Permit (LIEP) which has been inspected and approved by various government and private agencies. Impact and rehabilitation are strictly monitored to meet permit conditions.

The recent drilling uses the compressed air reverse-circulation percussion method and utilises the same machinery for constructing water-bores. The modern Atlas Copco compressor used is heavily sound proofed to keep sound levels to a minimum.

While drilling, air from a compressor is used to drive the drilling equipment located down in the hole and this also helps return samples of crushed or ground rock up the drill pipe for collection at surface.

transport of Currawong employees and drilling contractors to access the sites. A drilling crew usually consists of two or three people - a drill rig operator (driller) and assistant(s). A geologist will also visit the drill site to supervise operations.

The crushed rock samples generated from the drilling are divided into various types of samples for analyses. Once the analytical investigations are complete the remaining samples are removed from site and the drill holes are accurately surveyed for location.

Percussion drilling generally drills about 150 metres per day but is limited to drilling to depths of up to 200 metres. Diamond drilling can drill to depths of over 1000 metres.

The present drilling is at O'Connell's Find near Trentham East, the Trojan area to the south of Blackwood North and Comet area nearby to Shaw's Lake. Drilling is during daylight hours in accordance with EPA regulations.

Rex Motton

SNAKES ALIVE

It feels like summer has finally arrived in Blackwood and when the weather gets warmer, we all want to get outside and enjoy the sunshine. With the warmer weather we also see the increases in the number of sightings of one of our natural inhabitants - the snake.

Our neighbours in Trentham and Ballan have reported sightings of them basking in the sunshine in the town centres. However, in Blackwood we have only had a couple of sightings but, be aware, they are there! You can usually find them hiding away under logs, rocks and materials that you may have lying around your properties.

We are home to a number of varieties of snakes here in Blackwood including the highly venomous Tiger, Red Belly Black, Copperhead and Brown Snake. So, what should you do if you have an encounter? ... Keep calm and keep your distance, remove yourself and kids and pets from the area as quickly and quietly as you can but also doing it in a way that you can still see the snake and ensuring they have a way to slither off.

If the snake is in your house or on your property and you are concerned for your safety you can call a snake catcher, of which there are a number in our local area and they will safely remove and rehome them. Remember snakes are a protected species and killing them without a cause can result in significant fines.

If you are unfortunate and experience a bite, remember to keep calm and seek medical assistance immediately by calling 000.

You can learn more about what to do by looking at this information document from Wildlife Victoria: https://www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0034/549178/Living-with-snakes-fact-sheet.pdf

Robert Poulter



• AROUND TOWN •

DINNER CLUB REPORT

November Dinner Club was held at The Plough in Myrning. A small group of us went down to enjoy their new 'Thursday Night - Locals Night' menu. The food and service were good, the company even better.



The next dinner Club will be held at Cattleya Thai in Ballarat on the 7th of December. Everyone is welcome to attend, just let us know in the community events page on Facebook. If we have enough people we can take the bus across, if not we carpool.

January Dinner Club might be a bit more casual at the Kyneton RSL. This was suggested by one of our regular attendees, apparently the food is great.

MARTIN ST COFFEE

Excitement is brewing at 21 Martin Street as the familiar façade undergoes a transformation into the vibrant and eclectic space known as Blackwood General. Brace yourselves, because this is not just a rebranding of the building; it's the dawn of a collaborative marketplace, a haven for small and micro-businesses that promises to redefine your shopping and dining experience.



A Symphony of Flavours at Your Doorstep

Picture this: the aroma of freshly roasted coffee beans wafting through the air, the scent of artisanal bread mingling with the sweet notes of chocolate, and the promise of exquisite ice creams tantalising your taste buds. Welcome to the world of Blackwood General, where independent businesses come together to create a symphony of flavours.

First up, we have Simon, Simon, and Susie from Martin Street Coffee, your go-to destination for freshly roasted coffee beans, hot chocolate bases, and fresh chai. Their coffee bar is not just a place to grab a drink; it's a space to gather, relax, and savour the moment with delectable Moorish cakes and decadent biscuits. There's free Wi-Fi too, and plenty of space for those 'work from home' (work from the coffee bar) days.

If you're a fan of sourdough, Adam The Good Baker has you covered. Operating on Wednesdays and Saturdays (Saturdays only for the rest of 2023), Adam crafts naturally leavened sourdough products from scratch right on site.

Craftsmanship Beyond the Ordinary

Ever wondered what happens to single-use plastic waste? Jess from Singleuse Multiverse turns these materials into bespoke pieces of jewellery, showcasing the transformative power of art and sustainability. Explore her unique designs at her studio inside Blackwood General or find them at various locations across the Daylesford Macedon region.

Indulge your sweet tooth with Jim and Jess from Port Melbourne Paletas, creators of some of the most mouthwatering ice creams on a stick. Treat yourself to these delicious delights and let your taste buds embark on a journey of pure joy.

And yes, Blackwood now boasts its very own chocolatier! The Ministry of Chocolate has set up shop, offering a permanent home for their delectable treats. Drop by for a free sample and discover a world of chocolatey delights.

Ready-Made Goodness at Your Fingertips

Prepare yourself for a culinary revolution with Food by LU. Offering ready-to-heat chilled meals, the prepared on site nature of Food by LU ensures you have a superb choice of fresh, local meals for dinner anytime the building is open. Plus, stay tuned for Wednesday and Friday night-trading until 6:30 pm, making your midweek and weekend dinner selection effortlessly delicious. LU will be here to look after you.

For those craving takeout, Rose's Take Out has you covered with an ever-changing menu of tasty delights. Catch them soon on Wednesday evenings, serving up hot, ready-to-eat food take away that will surely satisfy your cravings.

And for the perfect pairing, a selection of quality, reasonably priced wines await you. Whether you're grabbing a meal from Rose's Take Out or Food by LU, elevate your dining experience with a fine bottle of wine.

A Collective Marketplace: 18 Months in the Making

This grand vision of Blackwood General has been in the making for 18 months, a testament to the dedication and passion of these independent operators. More than just a marketplace, Blackwood General stands as a collective, a space where local businesses shine together, creating an atmosphere that's as inviting as it is diverse.

Blackwood General is not just a building; it's a community, a celebration of local talent and entrepreneurship. So, mark your calendars, gather your friends and family, and come experience the magic of Blackwood General – your new destination for all things delightful, delicious, and distinctly local.

Rolling out now

The visible changes are slowly rolling out and the commencement dates for all operators will continue over December and January. There's still some space for another micro business, or two, to join us - if you're interested pop in for a chat.

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• AROUND TOWN •

BLACKWOOD WORKS DEPARTMENT

This town has a fine tradition of do-it-yourself municipal works. Some of the latest include pothole marking and repair, as well as roadside mowing.



Wouldn't it be great if we locals didn't have to do this; if Council, Vicroads and others stopped seeing us as a small bush town deserving of minimal maintenance and started investing in Blackwood in acknowledgment of its solid and sustained tourist economy?

And while they're at it, maybe give an arts grant to that enterprising pothole painter?

Brendan Hehir

ST MARTIN'S HOSTS MORE FINE MUSIC



photo: *Brendan Hehir*

The Chapel is proving a popular venue with overseas acts, recently hosting the Kody Norris Bluegrass Band (USA) and Sionnach Rua (Ireland).

A full weekend of music (Dec. 2-3) will feature well-known US act, the Foghorn Stringband, an old-time string band from Portland, Oregon.

Brendan Hehir

• GIG & EVENTS GUIDE •

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
December		
Fri 1: evening	Matt Black	Blackwood Pub
Sat 2: 8 - late	True Brit	Greendale Pub
Sat 2 11 - midnight & Sun 3: 10 - 6	Blackwood Festival of Music & Culture	Blackwood Hall
Sat 21: evening	Rock N Co	Blackwood Pub
Sat 2 & Sun 3: 10 - 4	Grapes & Gasoline Summertime Festival	St Anne's Winery
Sun 3: 12-3	Brian Sadler	Greendale Pub
Sun 3: 3-6	5 O'Clock Charlie	Greendale Pub
Sat 9: noon til late	Pig's 2nd birthday Disco Party with DJ Stevie B	Pig & Whistle
Sat 9: 6 -9pm	Christmas in the park - M'bool Light Orchestra	155 Adelong Way Park, Bacchus Marsh
Sun 10: from noon	Blackwood Christmas get together (BYO)	Mineral Springs Picnic Area
Fri 15: 8 - 9pm	Alchemy Crystal Bowl Journey with Fiona Ross	Ballan Yoga & Pilates, 76 Steiglitz St
Fri 15: evening	Jeff Tynan	Blackwood Pub
Sat 16: 8:30 - 10:30	Elvis Tribute Show with Marcus Jackson	Greendale Pub
Sun 31: 8 till late	Matt Black	Blackwood Pub

January

no confirmed bookings at time of printing

REGULAR STUFF

Mon from 5	Old Farts Night & meat tray raffle	Blackwood Pub
Wed, 7 - 10	Taproom Trivia	The Taproom, Bacchus Marsh
Wed evenings	Locals night dinner specials	The Cosmo
Mon	Locals night dinner and drink specials	Pig and Whistle
Fri, 5 - 9	Meat tray raffle & cocktail night	Greendale Pub
Fri pm	Meat tray raffle	The Cosmo
Fri pm	Raffle	Pig and Whistle
Last Fri monthly	Flashbank Friday with Ian Banks	The Taproom, Bacchus Marsh
Sun	Pizza Sundays with live music	St Anne's Winery
Sun: 3- 6	Celtic Sessions	Radio Springs
2nd/4th Sun: 2	Regular service	St Martin's Chapel



• BEYOND BLACKWOOD •

DU FERMIER RECEIVES AWARD

du Fermier is one of the most recognised restaurants in the region and has recently been awarded an Age Good Food Guide Hat for the second year running. Located in Trentham, it is owned and operated by Annie Smithers who is one of Australia's most highly regarded chefs.



Annie moved du Fermier from Kyneton ten years ago when an opportunity presented itself with the current premises. The restaurant is an intimate dining space where you will find Annie in the kitchen, and yes, she does all of the cooking whilst her amazing team take care of your dining needs.

Annie has spent 15 years cooking food from what is growing in her kitchen garden and has become

a leader in the Paddock to Plate movement. Her French country-style cooking is based on what she has harvested from her garden at her home at Babbington Park and supplemented by produce sourced in the region.

The menu at du Fermier is designed on seasonal produce and consists of four courses, which can be matched with a selection of wines. Whilst you may not get the standard restaurant menu selections, having dined there myself, I can attest to the amazing way that Annie selects, prepares and presents her food.

When I spoke to Annie about what it meant to her to receive the Hat award, she stated that whilst it was a fantastic accolade, she considered it more recognition of the hard work and love that her team puts into the restaurant. They help to make du Fermier what it is today.

With the festive season fast approaching I asked Annie what we can expect to see on the menu. We will see a continuation of great seasonal produce from her garden and if you are very good, you may get a Christmas mince pie! There will also be a selection of festive baked goods available for purchase. Also, look out next year for more of Annie's cooking classes which she has been running successfully for the past 12 years.

Whilst du Fermier is a destination restaurant with a clientele built over 20 years, it is also enjoyed by locals from the region. If you are looking to experience the total package of amazing food, fantastic local wines, an intimate dining space and, above all, amazing people make sure

you put du Fermier on your list of must try.

Du Fermier is located at 42 High Street, Trentham and is open for lunch Fridays to Mondays. Bookings are essential and can be made online on the first of the month for two months in advance by visiting <https://anniesmithers.com.au/du-fermier>

Bookings disappear quickly, so if you want to experience this amazing foodie's paradise-get in early!

Robert Poulter



Keisha and Chelsea at the Pig and Whistle.

Photo: Jeanne Tahini

From 1 November 2023, Victoria's container deposit scheme, CDS Vic, commenced! The scheme rewards Victorians with a 10-cent refund for every eligible can, carton and bottle they return. Your new local vending machine is at the Pig & Whistle Hotel where you can receive electronic payments or vouchers or donate directly to the Hepburn Wildlife shelter!

• LETTER TO THE EDITOR •

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

A much-needed injection of State and Federal money to clean up our prime visitor spot seems to have achieved just the opposite. Ravaged by the June'21 storm and subsequent floods, the lawn and river frontage, along with the adjacent mineral springs were in desperate need of rehabilitation.

Instead, at the insistence of Western Water, all the fallen trees have been pushed by DEECA (Dept. of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) onto the water's edge, blocking access to the river and turning what was a picturesque site into blackberry-infested horrorscape.

Their reasoning, it seems, is that the Lerderderg needs to maintain a wild environment to sustain its water quality. Fair enough, but this is a Crown Reserve we're talking about here, managed by locals and administered by DEECA. It has long been set aside for recreation and used by generations for picnicking and paddling, events large and small. It is, simply, the first reason visitors come to our town.

Since the gold gave out, Blackwood has earned its keep as a holiday town. It hasn't always been easy and since the storms it's been particularly difficult. DEECA, Parks Victoria, Western Water and any other agency claiming authority over these natural resources, please get your act together and deliver a co-ordinated response to the recovery of this area.

Interestingly, the town of Walhalla in Gippsland was in a similar situation, post storm, with great damage to a mix of private and public land and waterways, administered by various agencies. A bit messy all round. That's when Emergency Recovery Victoria stepped in and assumed a managing role with the many stakeholders, to great effect. Is it too much to ask that Blackwood receive the same respectful treatment?

Brendan Hehir

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• BEYOND BLACKWOOD •

BLACKWOOD MUSICIANS SHINE AT DORRIGO FOLK & BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Local Blackwood musicians performed at the 21st Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival in northern NSW at the end of October. The festival features some of the very best folk, bluegrass and old-time music from across Australia and overseas. There is also a three day old-time music school held just prior to the festival, that provides an enormous opportunity to learn and play alongside award winning musicians.

Nick Dear and his son Lachlan with their 'Hardrive Bluegrass Band' certainly wowed the audience with their lively performance and musical abilities. The band plays classic authentic bluegrass at its finest and Nick and Lachie can sing some great harmonies together, both having the perfect voices for singing bluegrass!

The complexity and speed with which Nick can play the fiddle needs to be seen to be believed! I reckon Nick would easily win playing against Charlie Daniel's Band's 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia'. The hairs were literally shredding off Nick's fiddle bow as he played a couple of fast numbers, to the astonishment of the crowd watching. No wonder Nick was also listed on the festival programme to run a Bluegrass Fiddle Workshop, which seemed most appropriate after seeing his professional performance on stage.

Lachie Dear set the pace playing guitar and on vocals. Lachie has a great knack of listening and chatting with the audience in a jovial way, virtually bringing them along for the ride. Lachie invited his wife Nicola, along with her sister Corinn, up on stage to sing with the band, which added extra radiance to the show.

As Nick and Lachie introduced the other members of their band, it was evident they were all really accomplished musicians. David Hellens on banjo has played with many top musicians across Australia and the US, having won Australian banjo championships and coming 2nd in the Rocky Grass competition in Colorado in 2008. Matt Ryan on double bass has played with many renowned musicians and has been playing with Nick for over 40 years.

Hardrive Bluegrass Band was formed in 1999, nearly one quarter of a century ago! The band has won the Victorian and National Country Music Awards twice and the Bluegrass and Traditional Country Music Award for the song "Mighty Dark to Travel" on their fourth album. They have recorded five CDs, 'Driven' in 2001, 'Henry Lawsons Blues' in 2005, 'Live in Sydney' in 2006, 'Lightning' in 2007 and 'Live at Guilford' in 2011 which is also available on DVD.

Janet Dear performed on Double Bass with 'Greater Glider Stringband' at the festival, with the other musicians in the band very much anchored to her beat. Greater Glider Stringband play their own authentic early stringband style of old-time music. Other members of the band include Nara Demasson on fiddle, banjo and mandolin and Karina Demasson on guitar, both from Newbury nearby. Peter Graham, with his big box full of harmonicas, plays a diverse range and style on the harmonica. You may have seen Pete around Blackwood from time to time. Gareth Bjaaland joined the band on banjo while at the festival. Gareth is multi-talented and is best known for his acrobatic comedy theatre with his family in The Pitts Family Circus. If you were lucky enough to see the circus when they toured Victoria and performed at towns nearby prior to Covid, you will know who I mean.

Greater Glider Stringband hasn't recorded or released a CD as yet, but you can listen to a few of their tracks on SoundCloud, YouTube or Facebook. Their members have also played or play with a range of other bands. Nara and Karina with Newbury Fog and Janet with High Times String Band.

Blackwood is blessed to have so many talented musicians, which helps to keep the towns, shire and regions music culture alive. This is also what helps to make Blackwood such a special and unique place. I wrote an article on 'Cat and Clint' and 'Honeyfields' in the summer edition of The Blackwood Times last year, after they appeared at the 20th Dorrigo Festival.

Des Peters



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Paranormal Investigation & Dinner

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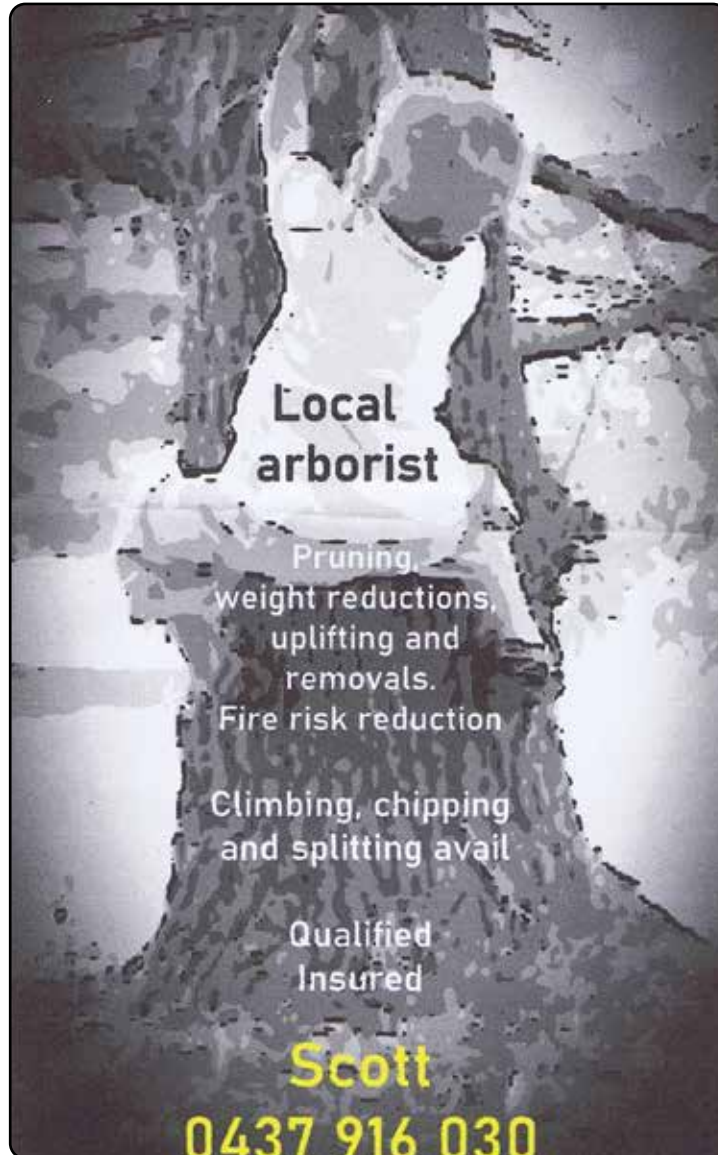
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The Blackwood Times is a bi-monthly community service published by The Blackwood Times Vic Inc. Publication costs are met through the support of advertisers & donations, and in return the Blackwood Times will continue to support community groups and projects.

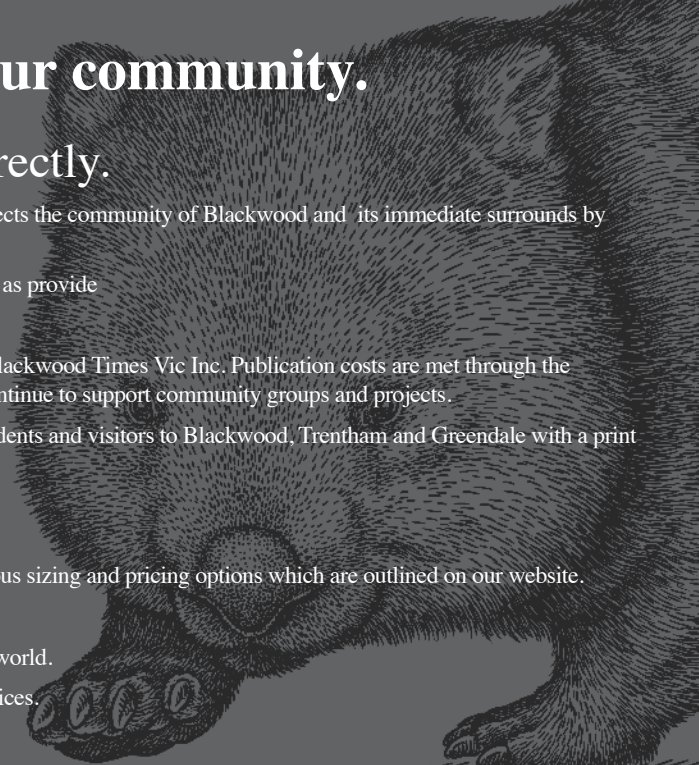
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