

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE

Edition 72 – June 2020

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Towering Achievement for VMR



President of the Victorian Miniature Railway Andrew Mierisch, puts the final seals inside one of the clock windows prior to this section of the tower being lifted into place. Turn to page 3 to see the story in pictures of the raising of the tower and page 2 to read about the clocks designed and made by Colin Mierisch.



INSIDE

- Harcourt Lions-2
- VMR update-3
- Play Space Update-4
- HPA-5
- Harcourt CWA-6
- Ron & Myra Frankling-7
- HVPS-8
- Harcourt CFA-9
- Community Banking-10
- Home Schooling-11
- Heritage Centre News-12
- Pioneers of Harcourt-13
- Councillor Comment-14
- Harcourt Bowling Club-15
- Harcourt Uniting Church-15
- CHIRP-16
- Walking Together-17
- Gardening-18
- Crossword-20
- Weather and Water-21
- Judy Coram's Diary-22
- Shire News-24

DEADLINES & PUBLICATION DATES

We aim to publish by the 6th of the month. The deadline for submissions is the 24th of the month prior. Advertisers and community groups will be sent reminder emails. **There is no edition in January.**



MEMBER 2020

Harcourt Lions assist at Castlemaine Community Pantry

The Harcourt Lions Club has been very busy over the past few weeks supporting the Community in a variety of ways. In particular we have been involved with the Mt Alexander Community Pantry which has been set up by the Service Clubs, Community Support Organisations and MASC, to service the people in need that are living in our Shire. The Community Pantry's aim is to provide people with access to healthy, locally prepared, frozen meals as well as a box of groceries.

Harcourt Lions and other volunteer groups shown in the poster opposite have combined their resources to access Bendigo Foodshare and the Maryborough Coles 2nd Bite Program. This has assisted us to keep the Community Pantry well stocked with supplies to prepare the meals and grocery boxes.

The meals are prepared in the Church of Christ commercial kitchen by trained volunteers and frozen to ensure quality. The meals are provided in BPA free, takeaway containers. These meals are being prepared on a weekly basis for the individuals and families that call or email and make an arrangement to either pick-up or have a home delivery.

Grant Victor-Gordon

M: 0410 261 338



Mt Alexander Community Pantry

In response to the current Covid 19 crisis many local organisations are working together to support our community members with what they need.

In particular, the Community Pantry will support people by providing meals, made with community spirit, care and strict standards of hygiene, and delivered to your door!

To access pre-prepared meals or food packages, please contact the Intake Coordinator, Kelsey via the details below.(9am-3pm, Monday to Fridays.)

Phone: 0472 537 866

Email: mtalexcommunitypantry@gmail.com

Web: www.cch.org.au/communitypantry.

Orders can be picked up or delivered - **By Appointment Only!**

Pick-Up: Church of Christ, 66 Blakeley Road, Castlemaine. 10am-1pm, Mon to Fridays.

Delivery: 10am-1pm, Mon to Fridays.

**You must contact the Community Pantry
For Pick-up & Delivery appointments!**



For emergency support contact Chris on 0419 154 392 (after-hours only)

Want to make a monetary donation? Contact Kelsey on 0472 537 866.
(Tax deductible donations available on request)

Food donations provided by: FoodShare, Second Bite, Lions Club Rotary,
SuperCold Coolrooms & Local Businesses.



The VMR Tower Clocks

Colin Mierisch the VMR's horologist (clock maker) stands next to the main VMR clock which he made from railway parts. This clock will stand inside the waiting room of the station.

Colin explained the design and engineering of the clocks in the clock tower, "The tower clocks will have four faces. The faces, Roman numerals and hands being made of acrylic, all of which will be cut by CAD (Computer Aided Drafting) machines. Each clock face will be 6mm thick, while the numbers will be 3 mm thick and glued to the surface of each face."

"The four clocks will be powered by a 240V 50 hertz clock movement which will control the speed." Colin went on to explain, "All clocks wired into the electrical system in Victoria have their time maintained by an atomic clock located at Yallourn which controls the speed of the power turbines at 50 hertz."

"Normally tower clocks have their faces and hands uncovered and exposed to the weather, but VMR's clocks will be behind glass. The clock faces will be hinged to open internally for cleaning and for re-setting the time. Anybody who works up there will get a great view!"

VMR Update

VMR Completes Tower Works



The photos show the order in which the tower was constructed and were taken showing the eastern face of the station which looks over Harcourt, with the main entrance in the centre. The base of the tower sits to the left of the main entrance. The first and largest section to be

positioned weighed two tonnes. This was followed by the section with the clock windows; the whole tower is topped by a dome with a flag pole. The tower will be accessed on the inside via a series of ladders and locked trapdoors.



While some of us were sleeping in on Saturday 23 May, VMR volunteers and contractors were up early to put together the clock tower on the VMR Station. The placement of the tower marks another significant milestone for VMR.

Ian Craig of Craig's Cranes provided the heavy lifting; Redda's Carpentry, with locals Daniel Klemick and Hadley Bassett, directed volunteers and assisted with technical issues. Others who have been involved in the construction of the tower and buildings are many, including Tandin Constructions which got a special mention from VMR President Andrew Mierisch.

Prior to the crane lifting the first and heaviest section which weighed two tonnes, the builders and volunteers finished off the seals on the clock face and climbed inside and over the sections of the tower checking and preparing them to be attached to the crane. Friends and family stood well away from the construction

zone and Andrew's wife Karen, set up an iPad on an easel to record the whole event.

Andrew said, "We are pushing hard to open at the end of the year. The next job is the footings which will support the 80 metre platform and the verandah."

There are a number of new features expected for the VMR site. One which has come to fruition is a set of white railway gates at the entrance to the property. Andrew explained, "The gates are based on the design of the Lyddiard Street railway gates in Ballarat. Andrew Burge, another train enthusiast, who lives in Ballarat built and donated the gates. Brett Allan a Castlemaine/Maldon steam train driver and a member of VMR as well,

will be providing a railway style picket fence along the VMR frontage. We are also planning the arrival of the Bendigo B Signal Box which will stand at the north end of the car park and which will become the Harcourt Lions Club clubrooms."

The many unique features of the development will surely attract a huge number of visitors; it has been an intriguing and complex project for The Core to record. The station which when completed will be a miniature of the Maryborough (Victoria) station, already stands prominently above Harcourt and the completed tower can be seen clearly from various vantage points in the township.

More Funding for Harcourt Play Space

On 19 May, Maree Edwards, Member for Bendigo West, on behalf of the Victorian Government, announced additional funding towards the construction of an exciting new play space at Stanley Park in Harcourt. Maree was joined by Shire representatives Darren Fuzzard CEO, Councillor Bronwen Machin (standing in for the Mayor, Christine Henderson) and Bryan Balmer, representative of the Harcourt Community Play Space Working Group. Maree said, "This terrific all abilities play space will ensure people stay to play and enjoy the beautiful park and township of Harcourt. Mount Alexander Shire Council will receive \$100,000 to build the playground, which is in addition to a \$250,000 Victoria Government Community Sports Infrastructure Fund grant.

As a result of this announcement, the Harcourt Community Working Group has requested a meeting with Council Officers to identify how this money will be put to use in the Play Space.

The Harcourt Community Working Group consists of local residents, parents, grandparents and educators and played an integral role in developing a concept for the Park. This group worked with Mount Alexander Council officers and local play space designers to create a design inspired by the town's fruit-growing history and indigenous culture.

Construction is expected to start in July and be completed by December. In addition to the \$350,000 from the Victorian Government, the playground is funded by Mount Alexander Shire Council. The Harcourt Progress Association has contributed \$6,500 courtesy of a Maldon Community Bank grant. This contribution is allocated to the construction of a barbecue and seating. Plus, Council undertook to match the \$16,100 given by HPA to Council as a contribution for the footpath/bike path to the Mountain Bike Park. This went towards



\$40,000 which was used to conduct community consultation, develop the site plan for the entire Stanley Park/Bridge Street precinct and then the design of the play space.

The play space will feature a 6-metre tall tower with a 10-metre long slide. The large play tower's design was inspired by apple crates and will feature names of apple species grown in the region. The play space will also include climbing wall, play stalls and a viewing platform.

Designed for all ages and all abilities, the space will include a wheelchair accessible carousel, accessible and traditional swings, an accessible rocker, spinner and many nature-play elements.

Traditional Owners Dja Dja Wurrung were consulted about the design, and the play space will include bush tucker plantings as well as locally quarried granite rock and boulders. The Park's tower will take in views of Mount Alexander to the east and the new miniature railway station to the west.

The play space will link to the Harcourt Swimming Pool and the car park for Larr Ba Gauwa Mountain Bike Park.

For more information on the plans, go to the Mount Alexander Shire Council website and search for Harcourt Play Space, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the link: [play_space_designs](#).



Merv Carr ~ Katie Finlay ~ Sas Allardice

READY FOR FRUIT TREES?

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Harcourt Progress Association

Roundabout Update



As promised, I am providing an update on the roundabout after our meeting with Mount Alexander Shire Council CEO, Darren Fuzzard on 18th May 2020. At the recent HPA meeting on 28th May, however, we also thought that it would be a good idea to recap on the history of the roundabout refurbishment since some residents were unable to attend the consultations and public meetings at the time. I am indebted to the former Secretary of HPA, Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns, who was the initiator and Project Manager of the roundabout redevelopment, for providing much of the following background to the project:

Improving the town entrances was identified as a priority in the 2013 Harcourt Community Plan. This matter was raised with Council and VicRoads on a regular basis. At the HPA public meeting in February 2017, the roundabout and lack of maintenance was raised again, and small working group was formed. On the 1st March 2017 Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns, Andrew Meirisch, Robyn Miller, Sha Cordingley, and Paula Ewing met with representatives of VicRoads on the roundabout.

At this meeting HPA was informed that VicRoads had a stream of funding 'Building our Regions' which could possibly go towards improving the roundabout. On 11th July 2017 VicRoads confirmed that an amount of up to \$50,000 was available to assist redevelop the roundabout.

At all times, the limitations as to Council and VicRoads budgets and resources were acknowledged and planning for the redevelopment of the roundabout was designed with the intention that community volunteers would undertake the groundworks and assume responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the site. VicRoads restrictions prevent volunteers from operating machinery on the roundabout so with this in mind, the redevelopment was based on a pebble and rock-based landscape which would require minimal weeding and maintenance. Removal of trees and grasses minimised the need for mowing on the roundabout, a task unable to be filled by community volunteers due to WH&S restrictions.

Pollen Studio was engaged to undertake a community consultation and a draft design was presented at a public HPA meeting in October 2017. Work on the roundabout commenced in mid-2018. Around this time HPA also contacted the VicRoads 'Keep Victoria Beautiful' initiative to establish an Adopt a Roadside group.

When works were undertaken to redevelop the roundabout, members of the Victorian Miniature Railway, based in Harcourt, donated many volunteer hours to assist earthmover Brian 'Buzz' Nunn clear turf, weeds and trees and to install rocks and gravel. Since the initial earth works were completed there have been regular working bees to plant shrubs and grasses and to continue weeding.

As at 30 June 2018, VicRoads spent \$44,000 on design and consultation works, rocks, gravel, and plants. The labour was done entirely by volunteers. At no point did HPA receive funding for this project.

During the first months we were fortunate to have volunteer assistance to plant and weed the roundabout from many local groups and individuals, including VMR, Landcare, Lions as well as HPA. We also had assistance to spray the roundabout, which made weeding more manageable, although still a huge

task for a small group of volunteers. Once the spraying assistance ceased the weeds took hold with a vengeance. It was at this point the Adopt a Roadside volunteers realised that it was not going to be the 'once or twice a year' involvement that we had been led to believe would be the requirement, but an ongoing maintenance job well beyond volunteer capacity.

Our last working bee was in July 2019. By October 2019, when our next working bee was scheduled, we assessed the magnitude of the work and decided to approach Council for assistance. We wrote to the Mount Alexander Shire Council CEO on 20 October 2019 and heard back from the Director of Infrastructure and Development on 4th November that the matter had been raised with Regional Roads Victoria (aka VicRoads). On 19th November VicRoads contacted Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns and Sha Cordingley to 'discuss the Harcourt roundabout, and specifically the ongoing maintenance'.

Unfortunately, Jacqueline was unable to make the meeting, so Robyn Miller and Sha Cordingley met with VicRoads where it was acknowledged that the roundabout was beyond the capacity of volunteers. It was agreed that VicRoads would undertake maintenance work on the roundabout. This work was undertaken on 29th November 2019. There has been no further work since then.

On the 5th May HPA wrote to the Mount Alexander Shire Council CEO, Darren Fuzzard, to seek a meeting to discuss, amongst other things, the ongoing maintenance of the roundabout. We understood in making the request that overall responsibility for the roundabout lies with Regional Roads Victoria, not Council, however, there are several models where local government has been funded by Regional Roads Victoria to undertake the maintenance work.

The outcome of the meeting, held on 18th May, was an agreement that Council would request a meeting with Regional Roads Victoria to come to some sort of a decision regarding ongoing maintenance of the roundabout. HPA will attend the meeting also.

We completely understand that community members are concerned about the state of the roundabout. We are too, but we will continue to work collaboratively with both Mount Alexander Shire Council and Regional Roads Victoria to try and find the right solutions. HPA's short term goal is to get an ongoing commitment for the maintenance. We will keep you informed of the meeting outcome which we hope will be soon.

Sha Cordingley

Chair, HPA





Harcourt CWA

CWA Association Day Cancelled

Hello everyone. Hopefully you are coping with the various restrictions that are still in place and finding ways of enjoying the extra time that you now have.

During this time of isolation there have been many events that have had to be cancelled. I thought that cancelling the football was bad enough but, when the realisation dawned that our Association Day (which was to be held in July) would also be cancelled, the enormity of COVID-19 really hit home.

All CWA Branches in Victoria host an Association Day to raise money which goes to CWA Headquarters to assist with its running and maintenance costs but, of course, this year there will be no Association Day as all CWA events have been cancelled until we get the all clear.

Association Day takes on many forms. In the past we have had themed exhibitions, fashion parades and, of course, guest speakers and presenters. This year one of our members, Jenny Steiner, was to be our guest speaker, but now that you will not be able to see her in person at our 2020 Association Day, we are bringing Jenny Steiner to you via the Core.

Jenny creates large sculptural works for public spaces. She has created works for many clients including Local Government, RSL, Schools, Architects, Cemeteries and the Catholic Church.

Jenny Steiner's Story

If not for Covid-19 the talk I would have given at Harcourt CWA's Association Day would have been of a journey, but a journey of a career and the path taken as an artist. Perhaps we can do that next year? I feel that it might be more appropriate here to take you on another journey - one that lead us here to this magnificent place we now love so dearly and call home.

Personally, I had my heart set on a sea change (we tell people we took a wrong turn) and trawled the real estate sites for over three years looking for the right place. I found many but the timing was never right. The market changed and prices soared and reluctantly (at first) my husband Victor and I moved our search to the country.

We arrived in Central Victoria three years ago and now live on a hill with 360 degree views, an uninterrupted view to Mt. Tarrangower, magnificent sunsets and the twinkling lights of Maldon only challenged by the brilliant night skies. Alpacas, chickens, an orchard, the garden and veggies all add to this lifestyle but it is the warmth, friendship and the strong community spirit that has embraced us that completed our transition. I can always visit the seaside.

I joined the CWA to be part of the community. I expected many things and was not disappointed, but I hadn't expected the friendship and camaraderie I found. We have been welcomed by all to our new home. Newcomers such as us, and locals who

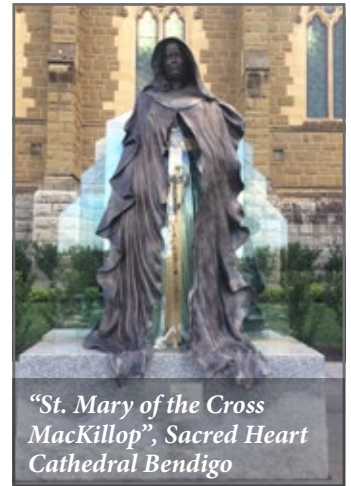
have been here generations, have extended the hand of friendship sharing knowledge, advice and assistance.

As for my work, not much changed in the transition. As Art in Architecture, I continue to create large sculptures mostly on a commission basis in my workshop at the Wesley Hill Business Park. I have found and use many local businesses in the process and am amazed at the calibre of artists (not to mention the plethora) here. I took part in Arts Open for the first time this year meeting many like-minded people and other artists and am hoping to make more of a connection with them.

Though Central Victoria was not the first choice for the next adventure that is our lives, it has proved to be an inspired move and joining the CWA has added so much to the whole.



Jenny with her bust of Br. Ambrose Treacy at Parade College Preston




"St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop", Sacred Heart Cathedral Bendigo



"Winds of Providence", Parade College Bundoora



"Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" Anzac Memorial Springbrook Queensland



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Ron & Myra Frankling

How would you face the challenge of moving house after 59 years in the one dwelling? This is what Ron and Myra Frankling have done in their 60th year of marriage.

The move from Franklings Road to Pippin Court has been achieved with great effort and ultimately pleasure; although Ron says, "I like to go up to the farm nearly every day; there's still plenty to do. Family live at the farm and it's good to see them too." At 84 years of age, Ron still likes to be busy, "I play golf twice a week in the winter and bowls in the summer," he said. Not to be outdone, Myra chimed in, "I played tennis for 40 years. My maiden name was Berry, and Moira Straw was my regular tennis partner for all that time; we were known as the 'Strawberry Pair'. Myra and Ron are long-time members of the Harcourt Bowling Club and Ron's father was a founding member. Myra said, "When I gave up tennis, I started playing bowls. We enjoy the companionship at the club, especially the Friday social nights."

Ron Frankling's family on the male side goes back to the 1880s in Harcourt. Ron's father Hugh was born in 1899 and died in 1987. Between them, Hugh and his brother Neville bought up land for orchards on both the east and west sides of Franklings Road. Ron's father also bought property in Eagles Road. "I recall that the Ravenswood Estate extended from Big Hill on the south edge of Bendigo and came to the northern edge of our property in Harcourt. My mother was born and bred in Castlemaine and her family had the W M Butler Grocery Store in Barker Street, where the BP Station is now."

"I was 8 or 10 years old when a huge bushfire passed through and went all the way to Kyneton." A check on Trove mentions 40 bushfires on one day in

1946, when the temperature was 105 °F. "I remember being in the old Dodge ute with Dad as he sped home to protect the property. In those days there were no methods of controlling a fire of that kind. It was wartime and I believe the fire was caused by a gas producer. Petrol was in short supply and the gas producer was an alternative to petrol for vehicles. The owner of a truck had stopped at Big Hill to clean out the gas producer which was fuelled by coal and he had left the hot ashes by the road, which started the fire."

"I started working in the orchard when I was 15 and worked for my father until Dad retired and he handed over the business to my brother and me around 1969. We grew Jonathan, Delicious, Granny Smith and Rome Beauty apples and Packham, Bosc and William pears. We had our own packing shed and cool store, which are both still standing."

"I travelled to the market once a week for 40 years with our fruit; I started out at the Vic Market and then went to Footscray Wholesale Market. I sold the fruit as well and had regular customers."

Having been in the fruit business over such a long time means that Ron has seen many changes in farming methods. "I've seen many improvements in orcharding. When we started, we picked into small wooden crates called dumps. We had to lay them out and then pick them up afterwards. We used to spray using horses to pull the spray pump; we walked behind with the hose. The horses were directed down every second row and we had to make our way around each tree while the horse waited. The trees were much bigger then – about 6 metres high and 4 to 5 metres across and were accessed on ladders which were over 3.5 metres long. Irrigation was done with furrows and we had to make sure we had

the slope right. If I wasn't spraying I was ploughing using horse-drawn equipment. Since then we cut out cultivation around the trees and started spraying for weeds and mowing. In 1951, I bought my first tractor, a David Brown. We had four of these, I just kept replacing them. I sold the first one, but kept the rest."

Myra was born in Blantyre, near Glasgow which happens to be the birthplace of Dr Livingstone, the famous missionary, scientist and explorer. Myra said, "Our family name is Berry and we came to Castlemaine in 1951 because my two eldest brothers came here after WW II, so the family decided to come too. My father had a job in Thompson's Foundry as a boiler maker. I was the youngest of six children. A vivid memory I have is of my first day at North Primary School in Castlemaine. My mother dressed me in a kilt and a white blouse with frills down the front. Everybody thought I was a freak! One of my first friends (who is still a good friend) would give me a poke and say, 'Go on say something!' The kids just wanted to hear my weird accent."

"I met Ron at the Castlemaine Town Hall dances. I was going with another young man, but he was away one time and it was then that I met Ron; I was 16. My other young man came back and I had to make the choice, and I chose Ron. I used to play tennis at the Presbyterian Church, but Ron asked me to play for North Harcourt. As a young woman, I worked in Castlemaine as a receptionist at Leech's, and at Clarke's Grocers, which were in the Clarke Arcade in Barker Street, and when we moved to Harcourt, I packed apples. We were married at the Presbyterian Church in Castlemaine when I was 20 and Ron was 24; I celebrated my 80th birthday this February.

After Ron's retirement, they have both enjoyed some overseas travel. Myra has been back to Scotland, to her home town, more than once. "A very special visit centred round seeing a memorial which the family had paid for. It was for our Aunt May and was placed in the Livingstone Memorial Church in Blantyre."

All in all, 2020 has been a momentous year for Ron and Myra, with a milestone birthday for Myra, a 60th Wedding Anniversary and the move to a new home, but they are both still smiling and enjoying life with their family and friends.

Robyn Miller

PS Thank you Ron for supplying the rainfall for 2012 and 2013 which was missing from my records. – Ed .





Harcourt Valley Primary School School Oval Gets a Facelift in Iso

The School Council at Harcourt Valley Primary school took advantage of the opportunity presented by “Iso” and the much smaller number of children physically present at school (because all schools remained open), to undertake a much-needed face lift on the school oval. Yes, the oval!

The project involved turning the soil in an attempt to break up the hard clay layer, applying lime and gypsum—two traditional calcium-based products that lift the pH of the soil and improve its structure to allow better water and air infiltration and root growth. We also used 37 tonne of Biomix compost which will put much needed carbon into the soil, greatly improving the soil structure and its water holding ability.

This provides the opportunity to “close the loop” as Biomix is made from FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) collection. This compost product aligns well with the school values as Biomix divert over 100,000 tonnes of organic waste from landfill, turning it into a valuable high quality compost product. Biomix have generously donated this product to the school.

A traditional winter pasture seed mixture was then applied. The expectation is that, although the sowing may have been a bit late (May 8th), the children at the school will have a much-improved surface to play on in Term 3. We hope that with the continued support of the community the oval will be have a top up sowing of seed in spring with a summer pasture species mix, and top up in April 2021.

The silver (green) lining during “Iso” meant the soil work could be completed and this had a very limited impact to school children. In the past these works would have resulted in school students remaining off the oval for a few months

Thanks go to our brilliant parents: Daniel Chamberlain, Natalie McCarty, Michael Pratt and Jason McAinch as well as to Brian “Buzz” Nunn and Michael Blake in making this project possible. The funds for this project came from the continued support of the community via the purchase of our apple pies through Applefest—with special thanks to the Coolstore and Little Red Apple also.

Bring on the grass!



HPA Efforts for CFA Spark Foundation to contribute \$5,000

On any Sunday you can find CFA volunteers at the fire station in High Street. The siren goes at 9:15 am to let the township know that the CFA is present and that the fire siren works. Depending on which way the wind is blowing, it can be heard near and far.

The President of HPA, Sha Cordingley and one of HPA's Deputy Presidents, Robyn Miller, visited recently to present a cheque to the CFA for \$650 towards the new hose-drying racks. The money was collected at the Twilight Markets held this summer and included a donation from the band Trios Amigos who donated their performance money. Other organisations in the town which made important contributions toward the hose-drying racks include the Harcourt Service Station, the General Store and the Post Office.

There was a little more to the story of the racks than was first thought. HPA began collecting for the CFA at the December Twilight Market. A representative of the Frank Montagnese Foundation was there and enquired and found out what the collection was for. (The Foundation is a registered charity and supports the “General community in Australia” according to its website.) He then spoke with the CFA and organised a \$5,000 donation from the Foundation which was a wonderful boost to the funds.

Work for the racks began by clearing ground to the south of the building and a large concrete slab was laid; the cost for this was covered by the donation from the Frank Montagnese Foundation. Construction of the racks was done by local resident Todd O'Grady of KSD Fabrication and Steel Sales. The racks were galvanised at Campbellfield (Melbourne) and put together by CFA member John Jenkin who also project managed the venture through to completion.

Another new improvement outside the station includes the relocation and refurbishment of the CFA sign from the opposite

side of the road. The metal cut-out sign was made by Nathan Rice and shows an outline of Mount Alexander and includes the Harcourt CFA logo (previously used on T shirts) which is an apple inside a fire hose.

The HPA representatives were delighted to see the completed works which demonstrate the type of volunteer cooperation and contribution it takes to bring a project such as the new hose drying racks to completion.



CFA Captain Andrew Wilson and Project Coordinator John Jenkins receive the cheque for \$650 from HPA Deputy President, Robyn Miller. (The hose-drying racks and the new sign can be seen in this month's CFA article.)



Harcourt CFA

From Busiest Month to Quietest

While the month of April was reported in the last edition as being busier for the brigade, the month of May has been very quiet. Leading into the cooler months, this is a good sign that not only are we doing the right thing in regard to the Corona Virus regulations, but also taking the necessary steps to ensure our homes are safer from the risk of fire. The brigade is still following the recommendations from the CFA in regard to reducing the risk of exposure to the Corona Virus and has now received our CFA issued Non-Contact Infrared Temperature Thermometer for testing of all members when arriving at the fire station. This is applicable for when turning out to a fire or incident as well and so we have a system in place to ensure the least amount of time is consumed by this extra process. As each stage of easing of restrictions, there are steps being taken to restore some of the paused functions of the brigade but the CFA has taken a very cautious view to ensure the utmost safety of all members.

New Hose Drying Rack Now Installed

The new hose drying rack has now been installed on the south side of the fire station. The brigade would like to take this opportunity to thank our community in the support it provided for meeting the cost of the materials and manufacturing costs of this project.

Along with this work, the ladder stand has been removed from the area across the road from the station in preparation for the new community playground and some of this material has been used as



new posts for our brigade sign now also located on the south side of our property. This also now has the facility to display public message signs.

Tanker 1 Makeover

Our tanker 1 has just recently returned from having a makeover after having a busy time over the summer. Along with mechanical servicing and repairs, a few of the battle scars have been repaired and warranty issues attended to. While it was in the CFA workshops in Kangaroo Flat, the brigade has had a pair of driving lights fitted as well. While all care is taken to look after our vehicles, there are those annoying dents and scratches that occur in the heat of the battle. This is a good reason to ensure that access to your house and your property is not impeded by narrow gateways or narrow driveways with overhanging trees.

If we do not fit up your driveway, then we may not be able to get the fire truck to the best position to fight the fire.

Winter is here, summer is not that far away.

Have you noticed the budding of the Cootamundra Wattle? It is already showing tinges of yellow as the flower buds are already swelling. With the early start of the fire season in NSW last year, the NSW Rural Fire Service has already commenced their preparation programs. Promotion to the public on preparing for the coming fire season has also commenced as they expect that this year will also start early. Victoria's fire season is always later than NSW, but if their fire season starts early, then it is highly likely that ours will to.

So as we enter winter and summer

bushfires seem so far away, you may not feel like it is the time to start preparing, but it can be as simple as preparing a plan on what you want to achieve prior to the next fire season so that when the weather starts to warm up, you know exactly what you need to do. If you need assistance, there is literature available from the brigade. Contact the brigade using one of the following non-contact methods and we will ensure you receive it. Email: harcourtfb@hotmail.com, through our Facebook page Harcourt Fire brigade or contact myself or a member by phone.

In the meantime, keep warm safely and maintain awareness of the dangers of fire. This also includes those product safety recalls which keep on occurring.

Tyrone Rice

Brigade Community Safety Coordinator

Grow Great Fruit

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Sparkling up great ideas at Harcourt Valley PS

We all know how important schools are to our local communities. That's why the Maldon & District Community Bank is excited to announce funding to support our local primary schools.



Harcourt Valley Primary School was presented with a Spark Grant of \$1,000 this month from the Maldon & District Community Bank. Maldon, Newstead and Dunolly primary schools also received \$1,000 grants.

The Spark Grant was developed by the local Community Bank to directly benefit young people. The grant is designed to encourage students to use their talent and imagination to come up with a project that will benefit their school.

"The money is awarded to the students to empower them to work together to develop projects to improve their school community. It might be used to stage an event, purchase STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) equipment, subsidise an excursion or to help fundraise for a bigger project," said Community Bank Branch Manager Adam Balzan.

"We love the ideas that the students dream up. They come up with creative ideas that we adults wouldn't think of. The students also appreciate the trust we place in them, to develop projects that make a real difference to their school community."

The students, whether they belong to the Junior School Council or are grade 5 / 6 students, get to decide on the best way

to use the funding. The Principal and teachers provide support and guidance along the way. The students need to work as a team, find out what is required for the project they have in mind, and then use the grant to put the project or event into action. It is a great learning experience for all involved.

Harcourt Valley Primary School was thrilled to hear about the grant funding and look forward to it 'sparking' ideas from the students.

"This is terrific news and we look forward to discussing with the students how these funds can be allocated," said Principal Andrew Blake.

"It's great timing with students transitioning back to school over the next couple of weeks. The students will love

the opportunity to come up with ideas to improve our school.

"Providing students with the opportunity to voice their opinion is one of our school priorities and receiving this grant will help to ensure our students utilise their creative ideas to come up with a project to benefit our school community," said Andrew.

Harcourt Valley school received a \$500 Spark Grant in the first round of the grant program in 2018. The students workshopped ideas and used the grant to initiate a project to help students understand and learn strategies to cope with anxiety. The funding enabled the school to engage Castlemaine Community Health practitioners to lead age-appropriate sessions for each year level.



The Bank's Executive Officer Karly Smith discussing Spark Grants in 2018 with Harcourt students

Home Schooling during Covid-19

Interview with Christine and Anthony Webb

A year ago, who would have imagined that almost all Australian children would not be going to school to receive their education, that teachers would be teaching remotely and parents would be responsible for their children's education? Yet keeping us safe from COVID 19 has made this happen. Now much to the relief of many families, teachers and students, students in Victoria are about to return to school. On Tuesday the 26th of May Years Prep, One, Two and Twelve students will return to their schools. The remainder of classes will not be back at school until the 9th of June, that will seem a long wait for some!

One local family happy about the return to school are the Webb's whose daughter Ada is in year one at HVPS. Ada is the oldest child in her family. She has a four-year-old sister Billie, who attends Harcourt Preschool, and a seventeen-month -old brother Jude. Ada's mother, Christine, agreed to share with Core readers her, and partner Anthony's, experience of juggling home schooling, with the demands of a young family and working from home.

For Christine and Anthony not only have they, and many other parents who have had to work from home, had to learn about, and manage, the various IT platforms which enable them to work from home but they also have needed to set up a learning space for their children in their homes, master the use of Google Classroom, and try to follow the school time table. All needing to happen more or less at the same time! Then there are the non-school aged children to consider for example, when the spread of COVID 19 was still very unknown, Christine and Anthony had to decide whether they felt comfortable sending Billie to Kinder. Initially they decided to keep Billie at home, they did this for the first three weeks of home schooling after which they felt OK about sending her to Kinder. This also made home schooling somewhat easier to manage.

The juggling of space and time to allow everyone to have their learning and work needs met has for Christine and Anthony been constant and tiring, especially so without the usual support of family and friends. Jude liked to be involved with the girls learning, particularly climbing up on Ada's desk and turning off her computer! Billie was keen for her parents to work with her on some of the activities from her take home learning pack which Kinder sent home for her to continue her preschool education at home. Ada is at the stage where she requires input from her parents/teachers every 10 to 15 minutes to stay on task to complete the school learning tasks set for the day. Some days flowed better than others and goals are more or less achieved. Keeping some sort of routine was important.

Ada was at her desk ready to start her school day at 9am. The school had supplied parents with the time table which parents fit into their days as to what best works for them. As at school, literacy and numeracy activities are scheduled for the mornings and physical education and creative activities for the afternoons. All of the Webb children have at times been 'involved' with their parent's work, work places have by and large been supportive and tolerant. Grandparents support has been sorely missed but fortunately they have been able to, and enjoyed being, involved in the home reading program via phone or the internet (a suggestion from HVPS).

Christine said that there have been some positives to this home -schooling time. One major one has been being more involved and familiar with their children's education. Ada's siblings have, at times, been able to sit in on classroom meetings which happened three mornings a week, via Google Classroom. They enjoyed this involvement. Christine and Anthony were delighted that Ada and Billie rose to the challenge of finding different ways to keep in touch with their friends, for example writing letters and

dropping them into their mail boxes. The family have also enjoyed seeing a different side to their teachers such as getting to know their pets.

Additionally, the family have had meals and been able to spend more time together. They have especially liked being able to be outside on breaks to enjoy the beautiful autumn weather we have had. They said that they feel incredibly lucky to live where they do, with plenty of space for the children to run around and explore and burn some of that endless energy. The more leisurely start to the day is a plus, the morning rush to get everyone ready for Kinder, school and work has not been missed!

Christine and Anthony have been surprised at how adaptable everyone has been. They have appreciated the enormous effort the teachers have made to ensure their students learning experience is a positive as it can be. Christine said, "The teaching staff have made a superhuman effort in completely changing the way they deliver their classes, all the while being encouraging and staying positive". She said everyone has been extremely flexible, patient and understanding of the whole home- schooling processes and the challenges involved with this process.

When asked, "What would you do differently if you had to do this again?" Christine replied, "being as adaptable and flexible as I can and not expecting too much of myself, just doing what I can to make sure the experience is as positive as it can be for everyone". Ada has liked some things about home schooling but she has missed her friends. Her ideal would be to alternate having a week at home and a week at school.

Let's hope that we all stay healthy and that children don't have to be home schooled again. A big thank you to all parents and teachers for the super efforts they having made during this very unprecedented and demanding time.

Lois Denham



Harcourt Heritage Centre Re-opens Wednesday 3rd June

Harcourt Heritage Centre will resume operations on Wednesday 3rd June.

A limited number of volunteers will be on-site to open the museum.

The volunteers will immediately commence cataloguing the immense amount of information and donations that have arrived during the period of restrictions.

We thank the many donors who have sent us old photo and documents by mail, or who have left papers, files and news clippings at George's front door. There is a lot of interesting stuff to read, sort, catalogue and file. Harcourt folk have been busy!

The program of tours and talks will not resume until we are more confident about gathering together.

Enquiries that arrived during the close-down have been dealt with.

Members of the public are invited to call in on any Wednesday between 9 am and 3 pm to make enquiries or to view the museum.

Regards

George

Photographic Treasures

Last month you found wedding photos in your box/album of archival treasures. I suggested there might also be items relating to these photos that would be 'the icing on the wedding cake'. It might be a small note book or a sheet of paper listing the wedding presents and who gave them; it might even be a newspaper article! Yes, a newspaper article! It was a tradition in the 1930s that some lists were published in the local paper. Privacy was not a formal word used at that time. This practice did not continue into the 1940s but the tradition of taking a photo of the displayed presents certainly continued in photographic collections.

This list firstly indicates who your ancestors mixed with; that is which cousins mixed with your side of the family. The names also indicate who married who, as the names of females were always listed by their husband's name: e.g. Mrs Charles Scott was Diana. This practice continued until the 1970s. This list might indicate how many attended the wedding. In my archives, a wedding in the early 1930s had 225 guests, of which 66 were family. A generation earlier in 1903, 212 were listed with 64 being related. This is in contrast to a wedding in 1946 with 51 listed and 29 related.

The friends or work associates on these lists can indicate a variety of professions and occupations. At one wedding which took place prior to WW1, the records show 13 Reverends, 11 Doctors, 4 Majors, 4 Colonels, 4 Bishops and 2 Canons!

This list can also show how people were living at this time by the types of presents they chose to give. No shop wedding lists then! In the 1930s, electric lamps and silver tea services and Pyrex dishes were very common presents. On the 1903 list there was no Pyrex as it wasn't invented until 1915; the 1930s and 1940s list contained a number of these. Cigarette boxes featured in the early list but by the 1970s they had disappeared. Embroidered tea cloths appeared in my 1903 list; I assume they were completed by the people giving them. Tea cloths were placed on tables or the auto trolley when serving tea in the afternoon.

Common to all list were cheques; even in the 1940s cheques of £2 (a week's wages) were given as presents. Over all, the list shows all the items that the couple might need in their new home at that time. Did the happy couple use all these items? Did they like them? Maybe they were never used for a variety of reasons. Are they still in use? You might be lucky to still use items given to your grandparents but most unlikely to use items from your great grandparents. However you might still be using items you were given at your wedding and possibly your parent's.

Make your own wedding present list, so in 100 years time your descendents will marvel at what was given in a post COVID-19 era.

Diana

Harcourt Heritage

Some Time Ago

The public will, no doubt, be glad to learn that an important step has been taken towards the erection of the Burke and Wills monument over the explorer's graves, in the Melbourne Cemetery. This was the conveyance from Harcourt to Melbourne by the Victorian Railway, of the largest block of stone ever moved in Victoria, which is intended to form the shaft of the monument. The monolith, which safely arrived at the Spencer street station, on Monday, weighs nearly thirty-five tons, and is of solid granite, hewn from the quarries of Mount Alexander. It will readily be conceived that the labor of drawing this massive block from the quarries to the Harcourt station, a distance of two and-a-half miles, was something immenso. It took several weeks of incessant toil, and was a very expensive affair. The transit by rail was successfully accomplished in about nine hours, no delays beyond those requisite for cooling heated axles being experienced.



The Farmer's Journal and Gardener's Chronicle, Fri 9 Sep 1864. Via Trove

The Burke & Wills monument in the Melbourne Cemetery.



Harcourt Heritage Centre

William John Quirk.

In 1950 the *Weekly Times* commissioned a series of cartoon drawings of local identities from rural towns. The 'local identities' of Harcourt were featured in an August edition in that year. This was the era when life in Harcourt revolved around the Harcourt Fruit Supply, The Harcourt

Cooperative Coolstore, the irrigation system, Walter's General Store, the Methodist Church and the RSL. The production of apples and pears was THE big preoccupation but other on-farm income was derived from the keeping of a few cows or the production of eggs. Poultry farming was coming into its own at that time. Harcourt had more than a dozen poultry farms. You could detect them by the smell. The Victorian Egg Board had a depot (Soding Bros) in Mostyn Street, Castlemaine. The poultry farmers made a weekly delivery of eggs to this depot.

Among those honoured as a 'local identity' by The *Weekly Times* was W Quirk, Orchardist and Poultry Farmer. William Quirk had been born at Tresco and attended school at Kerang. He was first employed as an 'electric wireman' then at Hawthorne Bros. store in Kerang where he acquired a knowledge of the grocery business. In about 1912 he moved to Harcourt in company with, or at the urging of, fellow Hawthorne Bros. employee Claude Wilson, to take up employment at the Harcourt General Store.

In August 1915 Bill Quirk enlisted with the AIF, giving his age as 23. He was posted overseas with the 57th Battalion. After a period of intense training in Egypt, the Battalion arrived in France in June 1916 and travelled by train to the Western Front. Late in 1916 the Kerang Observer reported, with a good deal of pride, that Signaller "Willie" Quirk had been recognized and rewarded for his bravery. The citation for Bill Quirk's Military Medal reveals that Bill Quirk went through the war in really vulnerable positions, distinguishing himself by his conduct under fire in situations where many would lose their life.

"During a raid on the enemy's trenches by a party of the 57th Battalion on the 19th August

1916 Private Quirk was very conspicuous for bravery and coolness. He went forward as a signaller and, even when under heavy shell fire, would not abandon his instrument or return to our line, after the raiding party retired, until he received a message that the party had nearly all returned and that the officer commanding the assault was still missing. On receiving this message he at once started to search for the officer. He failed in his quest, but succeeded in rescuing a wounded man with whom he remained out in No Man's Land for a considerable time, and whom he afterwards brought back to our lines".

Throughout World War One Signallers were used in forward positions to assist the artillery and provide information on their enemy targets. In these positions, often isolated, the signaller became vulnerable to enemy shelling and attack, and many signallers lost their lives. It is not clear whether the instrument was a field telephone, connected by a landline quickly laid out, or whether it was one of the many forms of visual signalling then in use, such as a heliograph.

The battalion history tells us that the 57th had been held in reserve at Fromelles

and was not savaged like the rest of the troops. The history goes on to say that in August 1916 the 57th Battalion, under British leadership, was engaged in attacks on Delville Wood and High Wood in the Battle of the Somme. Wet weather and high casualties had reduced both sides to piecemeal attacks. Bill Quirk was very exposed to danger in his work as a signaller and, on the day in question, he was working on marshy ground in front of the British line of breastworks with the entrenched lines of the Germans only about 200 metres away. The 57th spent two-and-a-half years in the mud and trenches in France and Belgium, seeing action in many battles and joining in the final, successful, push under General Monash. Private Bill Quirk returned to Australia in March 1919. He married Eleanor Frances Phillipa Douglas later that year.

The returned soldier was soon at work at the Harcourt General Store. Later in 1919 Claude Wilson let his grocery shop to W J Quirk, who, in due course sold the business to J H 'Hop' and Alec Walter. After this Bill Quirk conducted billiard rooms near the Harcourt Railway Station. Bill was a keen tennis player and active in the Methodist Church and the Returned Services organization. For about five years he lived in Melbourne and worked for the Yellow Cab Company. In 1931 he returned to Harcourt and became an orchardist and poultry farmer on the 'Highfield' property of his late father-in-law J P Douglas (in Douglas Lane). In 1947 he was appointed a Trustee of Harcourt Methodist Church. Clearly Bill Quirk was a man of good standing. It was about this time that he was noted as 'a local identity'. In his late fifties Bill Quirk moved to a poultry farm at Noble Park before retiring to Bendigo in 1960.

It may not mean much to call someone 'a local identity' but, in the case of Bill Quirk, it is a gross understatement. Bill Quirk MM was admired and honoured in Harcourt as one who, by his personal characteristics and attributes stood out, from the mob. It is good to reflect on Bill's bravery and his career to remind us of the actions, and environment, of a prominent citizen of the Harcourt of bygone days.

This is another in a series of Thumbnail Sketches of people who made their mark on Harcourt, compiled by Harcourt Heritage Centre from the files of the CH James collection, and from the history of the 57th Battalion.



William John Quirk married Eleanor Douglas in 1919.



Councillor Comment

Hi all,

As usual, life is busy on the farm. I am busy with fencing and equipment repairs, with some tractor work as a reward along the way. How good is the weather? Perfect days: fresh air and sunshine. It is only when we watch the evening news that the reality of what is going on in the broader community sets in.

Last month's Council meeting was a victory for technology. We had four Councillors in the Council chamber and two participating in the meeting on Zoom as well as our executive staff. The whole thing was broadcast live on the net without a glitch. Congratulations to our Council staff for making this happen. It was a huge challenge, and some thought it could not be done.

Some of the matters discussed at the meeting are as follows.

Approval for expanded operations at Blume's Bakery: There has been a lot of interest in this, but I was happy to support it as I feel we need economic activity in Harcourt. We do love the fresh bread, so hopefully we will see more activity on the site.

A planning permit was granted on a small rural block at Baringhup. I understand this is now for sale, with the permit of course. Our planning scheme needs a lot of work with regards to parcels of land in the farming zone. I would like to see this addressed as soon as possible.

Council has a new set of local laws that are now available for public comment. Go to the website and submit your feedback. I am sure there will be some interesting debate on a number of the items.

Council's procurement policy has now been updated to include more weighting for local contractors. This has been long overdue and it will be interesting to see if we can get more of our ratepayer funds going back into the local community.

Another round of community grants was approved. It is great to see the interest from local organisation's, so it is very pleasing that Council can support people who are trying to do things which benefit the community. For those who missed out, there is always the next round. It is important to address the criteria in the application and make sure the request fits with our Council plan. I do hope we can see more community events as the COVID-19 restrictions are wound back.

The above mentions only a few of the matters discussed at Council. Remember the agenda and minutes are on the website and these are a good read.

Best regards to all,

Tony

AG Cordy

0439 742434

LIMERICK by The Bard of North Harcourt

Cooped up my house isn't fun.

All things I could do I have done.

I've read a good book

I've learned how to cook

And make a gigantic jam bun.

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Harcourt Bowling Club

AGM Delayed – Nominations Remain Open

By June in previous years we would be reporting on the outcome of our Annual General Meeting (AGM). With the restrictions imposed from COVID-19 we have had to postpone the AGM until a later date which also delays our preparation for the next season.

In the meantime, Harcourt Bowling Club members have been asked to nominate themselves or others to positions on the various Committees which facilitate and coordinate the activities of the Club. All of these positions are held by volunteers. Indeed the entire Club is run by volunteers and could not exist without their generous donation of their time and expertise.

We are also asking members to step up and nominate for positions on the Board – we have 5 positions to fill for the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 bowling seasons: Russell Maltby (current President), Chris Anderson (current Secretary), Ken Tribe (current Vice President), Judy Ewing (current Treasurer) and Brian Buchanan have completed their two year appointments. They are all eligible for re-election, although Chris Anderson has resigned her position and will not stand. This of course means we are looking for people to fulfil the vacancies. We have 59 positions to fill each year including the committees and the Board. Anyone interested can contact the current Secretary or any member of the Board.

Bowling resumes with reduced numbers

We are slowly seeing the restrictions relax. At the time of writing, roll-ups are allowed with a maximum of 10 people on the green at one time – while adhering to strict guidelines of pre-booking a time with Ron Douglas. A few members have already taken advantage of this.

We look forward to the time when we can resume our normal operations and welcome our community back at the Club.

Look for the latest updates on the Bowling Club website: www.harcourtbowlingclub.com.au

In the meantime, stay safe and well.

Christine Anderson

*this
Celebrant*

Vicki Polglase

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Harcourt Uniting Church

Home Projects ease the Pressure of Lockdown

In an online Church Service I watched recently, several members spoke of how COVID-19 lockdown has affected our lives. One began by saying “I’m a plumber” and held up a toilet seat complete with a lid! He went on to say that when he finishes connecting pipes he has to do a pressure test to make sure there aren’t any leaks. If there are he has to fix them!

Lockdown has been like a pressure test for us all – the pressure on relationships, families staying at home, parents trying to work online, supervising children with online school work, not being able to socialise with friends, trying to navigate the supermarkets whilst social distancing, missing visits to our grandchildren and for those who regularly attend Church, missing the fellowship between the minister and members of the congregation.

So like a plumber we have to try to fix those “leaks” as best we can. The easing of some restrictions has helped reduce the pressure a little but I’m sure we’ve all experienced some “leaks” in our lives when the pressure was applied to “stay at home.”

One of my lockdown projects has been to sort out family photos and I’ve even managed to put many into albums. Of course these days we tend to have them stored on our phone, computer or on a “stick.”

I came across a photo of a Sunday School Anniversary. These were such special occasions in the life of the Church “back in the olden days” as our kids used to say. The children would practice singing for weeks prior to the big day. Everyone would have new clothes for the occasion and all the parents came along. We held them in the Hall as the Church wasn’t large enough for the crowd. The best part was being able to sit on tiered seating on the stage. Being able to sit right up the top was a privilege for the older children. Each child was presented with a certificate inside the front cover – you might have some of these books on your bookshelf. In typical country style the afternoon would finish with a delicious afternoon tea as only country cooks can provide. In later years we combined with the Church of Christ for Sunday School, Anniversaries, Picnics and quarterly Church Services.

We look forward to being able to hold Church Services at Harcourt again as soon as the restrictions on the number who can attend increases beyond the present 10 and the proposed 20 (from 15th June) to perhaps 40 or more.

A young minister was to hold a graveside service for a pauper who had no family or friends. Not knowing where the cemetery was he got lost. When he eventually arrived there was no sign of the hearse, the backhoe was beside the hole and the workmen were having lunch under a tree. The minister rushed over to the hole and began a lengthy, passionate service honouring the deceased man. As he returned to his car he overheard one of the workers say: “I’ve been a plumber for 20 years and in all my time putting in septic tanks I’ve never seen anything like that before”!

Jan Jenkin



with a book

CPR and First Aid Courses

CHIRP Community Health has adapted delivery of First Aid and CPR courses in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines for employees who need it for their work.

"CPR and First Aid Courses can now be delivered online, with an individual assessment on-site that follows social distancing guidelines" says Bronwyn Grieve, Community Health Nurse at CHIRP Community Health.

The changes to delivery of CHIRP First Aid courses is in line with Department of Health and Human Services recommendations, which are important in reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19. The individual assessments are conducted maintaining a minimum distance of 1.5 metres, and First Aid mannequins and other equipment are thoroughly cleaned between assessments.

Do you need to update your CPR or First Aid certificate? For bookings or further information contact CHIRP Community Health Phone: 5479 1000 or visit our website: chirp.org.au

Harcourt Walking Group Re-starting

Harcourt Walking Group resumes at on Monday 1st June 2020.

Members of the group were informed in late March that they could no longer walk together as a group due to Covid-19 restrictions. Walking group members proceeded to stay in touch with each other via phone calls and by walking in pairs whilst following social distancing guidelines.

The group is pleased to be able to walk together again. Strict guidelines have been put into place to ensure continued safety for group members, such as walking in smaller groups and 1.5 metres apart. The group will meet outside the Harcourt ANA Hall and Museum at 9.30 am on Mondays and Thursdays. Their usual post walk morning tea will not be happening for now.

Harcourt Walking Group was started by CHIRP Community Health and is supported by several volunteers who are Harcourt residents.

Anybody interested in the Harcourt Walking Group is most welcome and should call CHIRP Community Health on 54791000.



Harcourt Walking Group (pre- Covid19).

Maintaining your Emotional Health during COVID-19

CHIRP Community Health continues to deliver valued services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique event will be impacting people in many different ways such as increased economic hardship, limits to freedom of movement and curtailed social opportunities.

CHIRP CEO Dianne Couch wants the local community to know that "counsellors are still available at CHIRP to provide emotional support during these challenging times".

Changes such as working from home and home-schooling children can be incredibly stressful for some and easier for others. Information overload can occur keeping up with official restrictions and advice, and over-exposure to the news and social media.

People may also use this time as an opportunity to develop new skills, experiment, appreciate, simplify and slow down. For others, fear, suspicion, resentment and frustration may surface.

If you're feeling in need of emotional support right now, CHIRP's counselling team can help.

Call 5479 1000 to arrange an appointment. Counselling is offered through Health Direct (a telehealth service) and on the phone. After hours support can also be negotiated.



Environment
Protection
Authority Victoria

Burning off? Don't toss any old waste onto the fire, says EPA

With landholders making use of cooler weather to get some burning done, Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) is warning that the mistake of tossing waste into the flames when burning off can be costly for farmers and the environment.

EPA North West Regional Manager Dr Scott Pigdon says many waste items turn toxic the moment they go into the fire.

Fallen trees or other natural wood being burnt should be as dry as possible to keep down the volume of smoke, and farmers should make sure they have any relevant council or CFA permits. Timber from buildings, furniture or other manufactured products must not be burnt because it has probably been chemically treated.

"Farm waste items like silage wrap, chemical containers and old tyres don't burn properly, but it will produce toxic smoke, and can send residue into waterways and create chemical contamination that persists in the soil. Send it to landfill or a recycling facility," Dr Pigdon said.

Silage wrap, some chemical containers and tyres can be recycled into building and fencing materials and floor matting. There's information on waste disposal and recycling at sustainability.vic.gov.au or on your local council website.

EPA can fine offenders more than \$8,000 for burning anything other than vegetation-sourced matter like timber and crop stubble.

"By thinking twice about what goes onto the pile when burning off, you can protect the environment and the wellbeing of your family, neighbours and your farm, your," he said.

EPA urges people to report suspected pollution to the EPA on 1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC).



WALKING TOGETHER – Towards Reconciliation The Statement from the Heart

Little more than two years ago an elected representative of all Australians, then Prime Minister Turnbull, rejected the deeply heart-felt and generously crafted plea of representatives of the First Nations peoples of Australia. From all over Australia they had gathered in the Centre of the country in May 2017 on the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum.

The Statement from the Heart document, with hundreds of signatures surrounding the inspiring text, and set within beautifully painted symbols of the Country around Uluru, was given to the Australian people after the First Nations Constitutional Convention.

The Statement is an invitation from First Nations to “walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future”. It is a historic consensus on structural reform and constitutional change, calling for a First Nations Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling: Voice, Treaty, Truth became the theme for NAIDOC Week in 2019.

Substantive reform and a practical difference are vital if First Nations people are to be recognised with integrity in the Constitution, and they must have a direct say in matters concerning them. The Referendum Council was established in 2015 to oversee a process that led to the gathering at Uluru in 2017.

A dozen Regional Dialogues were each attended by about 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. From these, selected leaders attended the Convention, and by an overwhelming consensus, adopted the Uluru Statement.

Voice

As First Nations comprise only 3% of the Australian population, it is difficult for their voices to be heard in elections and in Parliament, and they have little say over the laws that impact them and their rights.

Currently, the Constitution allows the Commonwealth to make laws that discriminate based on a person's race. But the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states they have the right to participate in decision-making in matters that affect them. This right needs to be enshrined in our Constitution.

Treaty and Truth

The Yolgnu word Makarrata means ‘a coming together after a struggle’. To bring about genuine reconciliation between First and Second Nations, we need to make agreements and we need to tell the truth.

A Makarrata Commission would oversee the process of reaching agreement – a treaty – as a true partnership.

Truth-telling will help all Australians to understand our history – the truth about dispossession, killings, relocations, and removal of children (which continues in the present), moving us towards a more united future, where First Nations can speak for themselves.

Nalderun is a service that supports the Aboriginal Community, led by Aboriginal people. Many people and organisations in the Mount Alexander Shire contribute to Nalderun; the name is a Dja Dja Wurrung word meaning “all together”.

More information can be found at www.nalderun.net.au

Reconciliation Week – In this Together

On the first morning of Reconciliation Week, Dja Dja Wurrung elder Uncle Rick Nelson conducted a Smoking/Cleansing ceremony on Country. He and a small group built their fire at the Rock of Ages, out Maldon way, with a magnificent landscape spread out below. Using particular species of gum leaves he created smoke for all to bathe themselves in, promoting physical and spiritual well-being during this time of isolation and disconnect.

The wonderful thing about this ceremony was that he invited the non-Aboriginal people of the district to join in, at their own place with their own fire and gum leaves, using ZOOM to follow his lead.

Clearly, here in action was the theme of this year's Reconciliation Week, ‘In This Together’.

Those of us to whom the word had spread, participated in this very welcome time of healing with humble gratitude. As Uncle Rick had said, if our heart is in the right place we couldn't get it wrong.



Why Plant a Cherry Tree?

Are you planting new fruit trees this year? Thought of putting in a cherry tree? They're not one of the first fruit types to spring to mind for many people, but there are lots of good reasons to grow cherries in Harcourt.

One of the reasons many of us choose to live in this beautiful part of the world (unless you were born here and just didn't leave...) is to create a more sustainable lifestyle that's more in touch with nature, and to grow our own food. Large blocks with plenty of room for fruit trees are definitely part of the appeal. If you are lucky enough to have plenty of space, it makes sense to spread your fruit harvest out as long as possible, and cherries fit the bill as one of the earliest ripening types of fruit types that are also relatively easy to grow.

Cherries are the perfect tree for this area and climate. With Queensland Fruit Fly breathing down our neck, it makes sense to focus on growing crops that ripen early in the season, to give the fruit fly less time to get into them. You'll still need to put your fruit fly traps out to know whether they're around and if so to protect your trees with netting, but there's a good chance you'll bring the harvest home without needing to net the trees most years.

There are also plenty of other reasons that cherries are highly recommended for Harcourt:

- We have the perfect climate for cherries—a combination of cold winters, and hot summers
- They don't get many diseases and don't need spraying
- There aren't many pests that bother them (except birds, of course. Oh, and earwigs. But other than that....)
- Cherries ripen from mid to late November right through until early to mid-January. With good variety selection it's possible to have fresh cherries for 6 to 8 weeks
- They are super healthy fruit, full of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants
- They lend themselves to preserving - bottling, cherry jam, cherry vinegar, dried cherries....
- They make wonderful gifts (and many varieties conveniently ripen just before Christmas)

Locals will be familiar with our fabulous local cherry orchards and the high quality fruit that's produced on our mineral-rich Harcourt soils. We've grown cherries on our farm for decades, and they've always proven to be a reliable crop, though it's not uncommon to get splitting in some varieties each year if there's too much rain. These days we also grow cherry trees in Carr's Organic Fruit Tree Nursery, so we know they're perfectly suited to grow in this climate.

They really are a wonderful crop to grow, but if you need one more reason to persuade you to consider them, it's got to be that they're SO delicious!

Hugh and Katie Finlay have been organic orchardists for more than 20 years, and offer a free weekly newsletter called Weekly Fruit Tips. They have more than 50 online courses for gardeners interested in learning how to grow their own organic fruit. Go to www.growgreatfruit.com for details. They also run free online workshops - sign up at growgreatfruit.com/webinar-landing. Carr's Organic Fruit Tree Nursery is now open for orders until June 30, go to www.mafg.com.au.

ASQ Plant of the Month

Pieris

Pieris, also known as Lilly of the Valley, is a beautiful evergreen shrub which gives a charming display of long bell-shaped flower clusters from winter to early spring.

This shrub is native to China, Taiwan and Japan and prefers full sun to part shade in cooler climates.

There is a large range of Pieris varieties available, with some of the most popular being Christmas Cheer and Mountain Fire.

Visit ASQ Skydancers during June to see our range, and take a look at our established Pieris Christmas Cheer in the garden!



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Castlemaine Bus Lines

Harcourt Services Monday to Friday

	am	pm	pm
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:56	12:11	2:26
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:57	12:12	2:27
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	9:03	12:18	2:33
Halford St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	9:05	12:20	2:35

From Castlemaine to Harcourt Monday to Friday

Castlemaine RSL/Mostyn St (Castlemaine)	8:45	12:00	2:15
Wimble St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	8:48	12:03	2:18
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:53	12:08	2:23
Coolstore Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:54	12:09	2:24
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25

Hello Garden lovers,

The cold weather has arrived with a snap. Any work in the garden will now require beanies and gloves and a little fortitude. So some turning the soil or digging over the compost may be required to get the blood moving to warm up.

It is a good time to prepare garden beds after summer and autumn; pruning back perennials, trimming hedges, edging lawns and garden beds, removing dead flowers and foliage and mulching garden beds.

It is also a good time to rake up autumn leaves to either put straight on garden beds with a little blood and bone and some mulch or to add to the compost bin. Autumn leaves are a useful and inexpensive source of nutrients for the garden. One variation is Plane Tree leaves. These require shredding prior to composting because they are fibrous and take a very long time to break down naturally. They are still useful but take a little more effort if you don't want them to blow around and around your garden.

Winter is also a time to renew the vegetable patch. Green manures can be planted to revitalise all or part of the vegetable garden. Green manures are quick growing crops often pea and grass mixtures that can be turned in before they flower to increase organic matter and nitrogen levels.

This month we are:

- Edging lawns;
- Planting green manure;
- Pruning spent annuals and perennials;
- Pruning raspberries;
- Planting winter vegetables; and
- Covering frost tender plants.

Happy Gardening.

Janyce

Free Tafe at Bendigo Kangan Tafe Supports Victoria's Recovery

In a joint announcement on 26 May from Maree Edwards, Member for Bendigo West and Jacinta Allan, Member for Bendigo East, details of the push for free TAFE courses by the State Government were released.

The focus of the announcement was on Bendigo Kangan TAFE. Figures show that the Free TAFE program is going extremely well and has had an 87% increase in commencements compared with the same courses at the end of 2018 at Bendigo Kangan TAFE.

This year at Bendigo Kangan TAFE, Free TAFE commencements increased by 46% for mature-aged students and unemployed Victorians, by 22% for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and 73% for those with a disability.

Women accounted for 87 per cent of all Free TAFE students across Victoria, with female participation surging in Diploma in Community Service which was the most popular course at the Bendigo campus.

The Free TAFE program is playing an important role in providing a pipeline of essential healthcare workers, such as nurses, during the coronavirus crisis. Free TAFE will also play a crucial role in helping re-train those facing unemployment and underemployment as the state moves towards the recovery phase.

Many of the courses on offer are offered flexibly and include (especially at the moment) non-attendance at class.

Information sessions for some Free TAFE courses are taking place commencing in June with selected courses starting in July at the Bendigo Kangan Campus. For enquiries about courses: www.bendigotafe.edu.au/Pages/FREE-TAFE-FOR-PRIORITY-COURSES.asp or call: 13 TAFE.

From a Press Release

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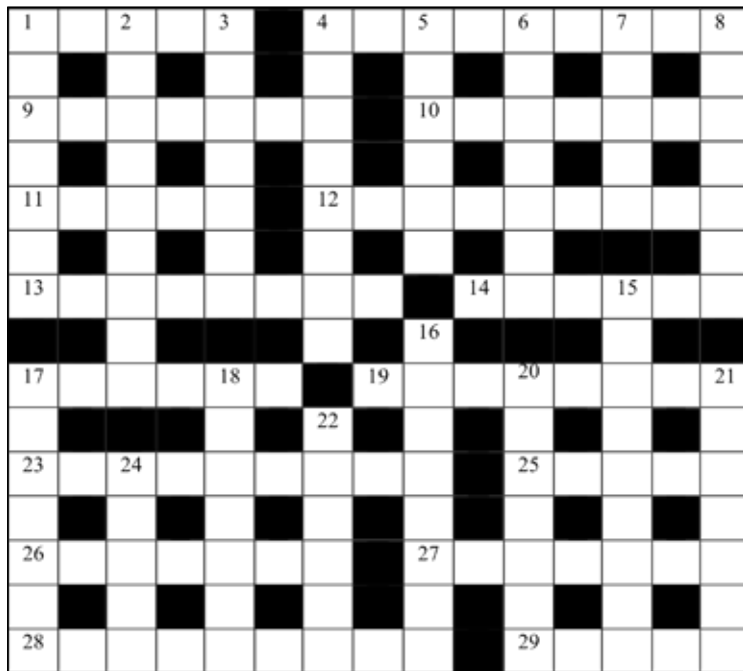
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Circulation is currently 450, and copies can be obtained at the Harcourt General Store, the Harcourt Post Office, the Harcourt Service Station, Harcourt Valley Primary School, ASQ Skydancers, The Little Red Apple and in Castlemaine: Run Rabbit Run, Castlemaine Library, Castlemaine Hospital and Castlemaine Visitors' Centre plus a number of other sites.

A full colour version of *Harcourt News/The Core* is available on the Harcourt Community website: harcourt.vic.au/news

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June Xword 2020 © McW November '17



Across:

1. Fawning in Walter Elias' dumb ambition. (5)
4. Opposed to pure sloth, the poet hurls himself into the task, proceeding to cover the chair, or at least most thereof... (9)
9. Is the dentist's conduct moral—if he still uses ether? (7)
10. Paint fake wool? (7)
11. Mob of Lords raggedly on a bender. (5)
12. Part of what seems seven tons of things made by him. (9)
- 13 and 17. Another part of the seven tons output, even making sense on TV. (2,6/2,4)

Down:

1. Trollop needs to spend less time in bed if she's to ever be among these! (7)
2. A foot ruler is 13" in India? (9)
3. Restrained prior to mating. (2,5)
4. Possibility that Trump will nuke lily-livered Republicans? (We hope...) (8)
5. What miser does sounds like lots of Goths or Vandals. (6)
6. What could ail star of the rodeo if he gets his ropes in a knot? (7)
7. With its fellows, could be gingerly walked through... possibly with me. (5)
8. Hair has ebbed, say, for a rejuvenated lawn. (7)
15. Robin's maturity? (9)
16. Chaucerian dam? (8)
17. Spots the same mix over the French plural. (7)
18. Severe demotion you appropriately have coming (without the remorse). (7)
20. Had same red-faced mess. (7)
21. Account to hang for Bishop? (7)
22. Breast over 17's underling for noble monikers. (6)
24. In Bishop's carpentry box? (5)

14. (See 19)
17. (See 13)
- 19 and 14. (8—See 28; 6—See 28)
23. The owning-up of a quest to market? (9)
25. When he put in a back-flip, she became overwrought... (3-2)
26. Not a figurative sea-shore, but an aural one, perhaps... (7)
27. Parody of a polly getting stuck into a Great Northern Diver. (7)
28. Spelt differently from Rocket-man, he wrote 1914. (9)
29. Avoid car-town! (5)

May Xword 2020 solution © McW October '17



Across:

8. Arthur's foot? [Well?]
9. Rings [00] [D] meter's capital, replacing her second to see how far she's come. [8]
10. Why the gun lobby won't be heard as victims quietly pile up? [Well?]
11. Overlap French, and [et] nice to seduce. [6]
12. On 1. [Well?]
13. The Lord's city? [Well?]
15. Fully outfitted dentist at the front? [Well?]
18. Condition of beige dweller in this loch? [Ness]

Down:

1. Gives 12. [Well?]
2. [I reveal] in the [le] French wake-up call. [8]
3. A dealer or a pack might well be in a winning position. [Well?]
4. It's OK to leave the owl [Mopoke] and wander gloomily about. [4]
5. The landlord is a character! [Well?]
6. Ceylonese shipping container to impart [teach] [set]-theory, perhaps. [3-5]
8. Laid waste to, they reckon, but we're really only down ten... [Well?]
14. Go too far above fire. [9]
20. Where street has gone? [Well?]
22. Those of inferior 22 (i.e. 'low', which = 75% of 23—without the 's') usually have 23 upward progress.
24. Way of taking up proton-loser. [8]
25. Rancid company with crab for big 'C'? [8]
26. a)Soft b)way to apply c)engine's coal-scuttle!!! [3 defs! No spare words!] [6]
16. That which will refute [rebut] [tale] of the opposition argument by de-tailing it, we hear. [8]
17. Precisely taxing. [Well?]
19. Having a [chat at] a pub might help us hook up thus. [6]
21. "No" terminals? [Well? Tony's poles? Cathodes are the +ve terminals...]
23. Social climbing speed for those of low-22. [Well?]



Weather and Water

The total of the reservoir levels reflects the excellent rainfall we have received in Harcourt to date. April's 150 mm was followed by 56.5 mm in May. To date, a total of 318 mm has been received here at Reservoir Road. At the same time last year the total was 138 and we began to suspect it wasn't going to be a great year rainfall wise. It took until October 2019 to reach 321.5 mm and only another 30 mm fell to the end of December 2019.

We have all seen dramatic colouring of deciduous trees and have noted the appearance of many types of mushrooms and fungi. The mosses have really sprung into life as well. I had thought harvest was over, but we had a bumper crop of feijoas, followed by cumquats which I will make into marmalade. We are still eating late summer tomatoes ripened on trays in the sunshine. Meanwhile I have planted some garlic, broad beans and peas and spiked out some lettuce which have grown from the seeding of summer lettuce. It's been great weather for walking the dog and enjoying the fireside - until next edition keep warm.



Current Reservoir Levels

Storage	Capacity at full supply megalitres	Current volume megalitres	Current volume % full	Volume same time last year megalitres	Volume same time last year % full
Upper Coliban	37,770	30,656	81.2%	23,526	62.3%
Lauriston	19,790	16,130	81.5%	15,890	80.3%
Malmsbury	12,034	1,926	16.0%	1,787	14.8%
Total to June 6	69,594	48,712	70.0%	41,203	59.2%
Total to May 4	69,594	47,483	68.2%	40,959	58.9%

Data from: www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels - June 6, 2020

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Experiences in Médecins Sans Frontières, Arua, Uganda

March 2008- February 2009

This story comes from the diary Judy Coram kept during her time working in Infant Mental Health Intervention in northern Uganda.

In Part 1 published in May, we began Judy's diary entry about Walter, a young child with HIV. All the children Judy and the other workers from Médecins Sans Frontières worked with were HIV positive. There was an explosion of HIV in Uganda at the time. Regular diary entries were a method of support for Judy while she worked with highly traumatised children. The diary was shared with other professionals who gave support and suggestions for Judy to consider. This story is difficult to read and does not have a "happy ending".

Part 2: Mournful, Woeful Walter from lost Child; absent and forgotten, to Walter's Fan Club

The Visit to Walter's Father's Village

One morning Patrick (another worker at the hospital) rang me to say that Walter's Uncle Ben was sending him back to his village today as he was unable to care for him. It was arranged that we would all meet together with Uncle Ben to discuss Walter's future as there was great concern over this decision. Walter was in need of starting ARV (antiretroviral therapy) treatment as his physical condition was deteriorating, but the clinicians were reluctant to start treatment until a reliable caretaker was identified. Walter's village was a long way away from the hospital and there was no family member there to care for him.

Uncle Ben, a 43 year old bachelor, worked in the hospital in the physiotherapy department and also cared for his dead sister's three other children. He was the first born of 12 children and as such was responsible for the family. He had sustained head injuries in an accident 13 years before and it was reported that this affected his behaviour at times. All of these factors made it difficult for Uncle Ben to care for Walter. Uncle Ben spoke about a young girl Beatrice whom he knew from Walter's father's village, and who was minding children there. It was decided to visit the father's village which was situated within the Arua municipality.

We were accompanied on this visit by John; (a nephew of Uncle Ben) a young man who worked in the palliative care unit inside the hospital and who had taken a great interest in Walter. Walter appeared to look to John and was responsive to him.

When we arrived at the village we

were met with hundreds of children who clamoured around the car. This was a poor area in Arua with many social problems.

The customary chairs were placed under the mango tree and we were immediately surrounded by the whole village. I suggested we go inside the hut for some privacy and entered the dark hut. At first there was only Beatrice present as Walter's grandfather had seen the car coming and disappeared. The father, Dennis, was a teacher in Yumbe, a sub-county about three hours from Arua town and was reported to be a drunkard who since the death of his wife had shown no interest in Walter. We began to discuss our concerns for Walter's health and future, and slowly more and more men trickled into the house, including an older uncle. The discussion went between clans and tribes. Most of the important decisions are made in Uganda in this way by the village male elders meeting together. It is not seen that women have a place in these meetings and they are generally too busy with all the chores; the women are responsible for all the cooking, collecting water, cleaning, and cultivating in the West Nile Region. Women have a very hard life here while it seems that the men sit round making all the decisions.

We made it clear that we were not there to force the family to take on the responsibility of Walter, more that we could clarify what the family wanted for Walter. After some time and much debate the Uncle who lived in the village, suddenly said that we could leave Walter there with Beatrice. It felt like we were talking about a sack of potatoes. As she had four other children including a child with an intellectual disability I felt concerned that she would not be able to manage to give Walter the care he needed. However she was clearly sensitive to his needs and responsive towards him. I suggested that no decision be made about Walter today and we leave the discussion for the next day. John then suddenly announced that if there was no-one else, he would like to take care of and be responsible for Walter!

Walter and John

Later, when talking with John, he told me that he was married and that his wife was working in Kampala. When I suggested that perhaps he should first discuss this decision with his wife, he looked at me aghast saying that she had no say in it and that she will find out when she returns



John and Walter.

from Kampala. The African male is somewhat unique, I thought.

Walter's Improvement

Reports had been coming in that there were many improvements in Walter both in the Nursery group and at home. It was reported that he was talking more and had even said, 'I want to go to Nursery group.' When I visited the group today Patrick was very preoccupied with the older children reading them a story about germs and white blood cells. Walter was sitting alone and looking desolate, and as I talked to him from across the room he looked across at me and almost willed me to go and sit next to him. I went and sat with him, telling him that I had heard that he was now talking more to everyone, and that he liked coming into the group with Patrick. The next thing he lay across me in a feeding position with his head towards my breast. It was some time before I realised that he was re-enacting the feeding position with me and he even began playing with my necklace with his hand raised as seen with suckling behaviours. I was not sure how to progress with Walter but I felt that he was using me as a surrogate mother even though I have had little contact with him; perhaps he recognized that I could provide this for him at that moment.

Continued on next page ...

Experiences in Médecins Sans Frontières (from the previous page)

Sick Walter in Hospital

It has taken me some time to be able to come back and complete Walter's story. Following my last intervention, Walter commenced his ARV Treatment under the care of John. That week he was 'adopted' by some of the counsellors and spent much time with them and seemed to be happy with any pair of arms he could receive. He also began to protest if this comfort was removed as he preferred to have one on one contact. After some discussion John arranged for an 'aunty' to come and provide care for him.

After his death there was much sadness from everyone who was involved with Walter including myself. It seemed so unfair for this little boy to find his place in the world only to be taken away from it. However, when John spoke to me following Walter's death he thanked me for allowing him to have the time and communication with Walter that he had. I wondered about encouraging people here to become close and care about one another, as there is so much distress for everybody.

I have been with too many African babies dying alone in this setting. The least I can say is that I was pleased that Walter had died while surrounded by people who cared for him.



Walter's newly adopted 'aunty'. Sadly, Walter's condition deteriorated, and he was admitted to the hospital. He spent a few days fighting for his life, and in that time he had many visitors. There were many people who cared about him and visited him in hospital, and it was like Walter's fan club.



Walter's 'fan club' following his death in hospital. He was surrounded by many who cared for him, however briefly.



Like many community groups, Harcourt Valley Landcare group has had its first meeting using the computer program Zoom. It was quite successful, although because I arranged the meeting, I found I didn't have the use of my keyboard, so I had to write the minutes by hand. The minutes are very sketchy as a result!

However, here are some items of interest and dates for the coming months:

Dianella Project: McIvor Road has been chosen to plant 300 *Dianella tarda* which has a special relationship with the blue banded bee. The group's botanist Bonnie Humphreys will give advice as to the best sites for planting and for ongoing maintenance taking into account the safety of members working beside the road. The planting day will take place at the end of June.

Pippin Court Project: 200 plants have been ordered for planting out near Pippin Court at the end of July. Barkers Creek Landcare and Wildlife Group will join us.

Fruit Fly in Castlemaine

Our Fruit Fly guru, Terry Willis, reported: "There are five different places in Castlemaine where fruit fly has been detected. Council has issued emergency kits (developed under our banner), and fruit fly traps have been distributed. The Harcourt Valley Fruit Fly action Group is working with Council Officers on a game plan to get ready for next season."

Community members should still be placing and checking traps. While it is a period of dormancy for fruit fly, and the frosts will discourage them, they often find ways of hiding out for the winter. For example, some people in Bendigo have found them keeping warm behind hot water services which are fitted externally to the house. Any forgotten fruit under fruit trees should be cleaned up too.

Next Meeting: Thursday June 11.

For details about any meetings, projects and working bees, please contact: Robyn Miller, Secretary, 0467 670 271



Back to it! Harcourt Valley Landcare members relax after a morning's work at Barkers Creek. Members were pleased to be able to return to meeting outside to tend and weed previous plantings by the creek.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

The Victorian Government recently announced COVID-19 restrictions will start to ease from Monday 1 June. The message is no longer stay at home but stay safe as we transition to a life under a new norm. It is important we continue to use common sense and follow the restrictions to keep our community safe.

Please continue to maintain good hygiene and physical distancing, and check in on your family, friends and neighbours. We also urge you to shop locally to keep every dollar in our shire.

Remember to stay home if you are unwell and get tested if you are experiencing mild symptoms of coronavirus. Make an appointment with your local GP or head to a nearby testing centre in Bendigo, Kyneton or Maryborough. For more information visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

Council is continuing to deliver a range of services within the directives from State Government and health authorities. Help keep our community safe by downloading the free COVIDSafe app. It's part of a nation-wide effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. The free app helps find close contacts of COVID-19 cases. This means health workers can quickly notify you if you come into contact with someone who has coronavirus. It also reduces the chances of passing the virus on to family, friends and other people in the community.

Visit www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/coronavirus for updates on Council services.

COVID-19 support

To help and connect our community at this time we have created a dedicated COVID-19 support number and email. For local information or a referral to a community organisation or service, call us on 1800 512 446 between 8.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday or email covid19@mountalexander.vic.gov.au. We have also expanded the COVID-19 support service to provide an online virtual emergency relief centre (VERC). The online centre provides a one-stop shop for assistance, similar to what would be in a physical emergency relief centre.

Visit www.connectmountalexander.com.au for information about programs and services to help residents and business deal with the impacts of coronavirus on the road to recovery. There are links to service providers and assistance programs, frequently asked questions such as where to get tested, and an online form to make a request for support.

Looking after your health

CHIRP Community Health can offer support to help you get through these challenging times. Call CHIRP on 5479 1000 weekdays during business hours or visit www.chirp.org.au. For crisis support and suicide prevention services contact Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 www.beyondblue.org.au; Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 www.kidshelpline.com.au; QLife 1800 184 527 www qlife.org.au or Lifeline 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au. If you, or someone you know are at risk of family violence call Safe Steps on 1800 015 188 or visit www.safesteps.org.au.

Update on Plan Harcourt

Council has been working on finalising Plan Harcourt, taking into consideration the submissions and feedback received on the draft plan. We are planning to present the final Plan Harcourt to Council for consideration at the Ordinary Meeting on 21 July. Subject to the plan being adopted by Council at the meeting, we will seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare an amendment to the planning scheme to introduce the policy, zoning and overlay changes. For more information, including a project bulletin that outlines the key considerations for the final plan, please visit www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/PlanHarcourt or contact Council's Strategic Planning team on 5471 1700.

Help stop fruit fly

Don't forget to check your monitoring traps for Queensland fruit fly (QFF). QFF are small brown flies with yellow markings. Remove unwanted fruit from trees and pick up fallen fruit off the ground. If you suspect you have QFF contact Council on 5471 1700. See photos at www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/FruitFly.

Draft budget available soon

We will soon release our 2020/2021 Proposed Budget on Wednesday 17 June, with submissions required by 5.00pm on Wednesday 15 July. The draft budget will be available at www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/HaveYourSay.

Council meeting

The next Council meeting will be at 6.30pm on Tuesday 16 June. It will be broadcast live via YouTube. Search Mount Alexander Shire Council. Send a question you would like raised by 12noon on the day of the meeting to the Governance Team at governance@mountalexander.vic.gov.au or to Mount Alexander Shire Council, PO Box 185, Castlemaine 3450 VIC.

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