

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE



Edition 102 – March 2023

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HPA and *The Core* Have a New Home



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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.**



The first ever meeting to be held at the newly refurbished Railway Station was the meeting of the production committee of The Core. Members were excited to be in the new home of HPA and The Core and by the prospects of this new facility for the Harcourt community.

IT IS DISTURBING AT HOW QUICKLY a month goes by! I have the greatest respect for all the regular contributors to *The Core* who ungrudgingly produce interesting, informative, and timely articles each month – often accompanied with some really great photos.

Behind the scenes at *The Core*, there is also a hive of activity. We have skilled volunteers who proofread articles, lay out the newsletter, report on local issues, and fold and deliver hard copies of *The Core*, bringing back their observations which inform where *The Core* is distributed.

Above all, *The Core* has created a space where our community groups, essential services and institutions are celebrated, and their volunteers are acknowledged and appreciated.

Last week, *The Core* itself celebrated a milestone: its first meeting in its new home. Yes, after five years of hard work, patience, more hard work and more patience, the old Harcourt Railway Station is now the community's latest asset – a new neighbourhood house – and the new office of *The Core*.

Continued page 3



COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

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MEMBER 2023

A Personal History of Specimen Gully Road

Colleen Hall (nee Blume), aged 93, has spent the last two-plus years creating a sixty-page folder of photographs, sketches and notes related to the Slate Quarry and Gold Mining in Barkers Creek.

Her memories of a gateway at the entrance to the quarry which was built of slate offcuts, encouraged her to collect information, maps and photos from a number of people and produce

a beautiful and informative illustrated document of Specimen Gully Road Barkers Creek, including gold mining, slate quarries, residents, her ancestors' lives, homes and occupations.

The impressive folder was given into the care of the Harcourt Heritage Centre at a gathering of Colleen's friends and family and representatives of the Heritage Centre.

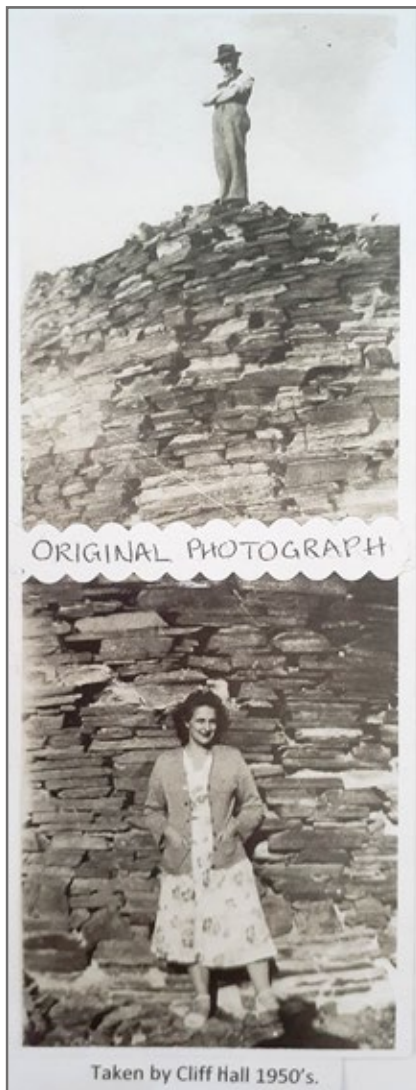
Wendy Barron



Back row (left to right): Matthew Powell, Sharon Lovelace, Karen Lancaster (nee Blume) John Blake. Front row: Wendy Barron, Joy Robertson, Lisa and Geoff Hall, George Milford, Val Blake and seated: Jean Perry and Colleen Hall (nee Blume).



George Milford accepts the Specimen Gully Road history from Colleen Hall.



These photos were taken in the 1950s and show the entrance walls to the slate quarry. The walls were made of cast off slates. Colleen's brother stands on top of one of the walls while Colleen is shown at the base of one wall.

Harcourt Carpet Bowls Association. Winter AGM

The Winter Carpet Bowls Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 April at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room

Harcourt District Leisure Centre

Binghams Road, Harcourt

Current and new members are encouraged to attend so that we know if the numbers are there to hold the competition.

If unable to attend the meeting, please contact

Loretta: 5474 2453 or John: 5474 2226 to show your interest.



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For all the information on Applefest – 11 March, 9 am – including the full program ... visit the website: applefest.harcourt.vic.au/saturday-11-march-2023/entertainment



New Home for HPA & The Core

Continued from page 1

On 17 February the Harcourt Progress Association signed a memorandum of understanding with Mount Alexander Shire Council to lease the railway station to be used as a neighbourhood house. At Council's last meeting on 21 February there was a decision for the long-term lease with HPA to be negotiated. We couldn't be more delighted.

We have a lot of people to thank: firstly Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns who originally envisaged what the railway station could become since it became vacant. A number of HPA members worked alongside Jacqueline, including Robyn Miller, to engage with VicTrack to bring about the total renovation of the interior and exterior of the station. Of course, there were delays: the first when the funding set aside for the building works was diverted to other government projects and a second by the unwelcome intrusion of the pandemic which put a halt to the process.

We will be delighted to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of HPA and the 'open day' of the station. Details to come

Revisiting the station project was a huge undertaking for HPA, and a number of people became interested in the project again. After some negotiations, the VicTrack renovation work finally began in late 2021. The Progress Association will be developing plans for the house, after consulting with the Harcourt community, and with the support of grants from the Community Enterprise Foundation and the Victorian State Government. In the meantime, we will be delighted to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of HPA and the 'open day' of the station. Details to come.

In no particular order, but acknowledged with gratitude: Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns, Robyn Miller, Jean Parsons, David Foley, Merryn Tinkler, Darren Fuzzard, Lynne Williamson, Paul Mizzi, Liesl Malan, Bronnie Dean, Alison Curtis, David Hale, John Baldock, Vera Hemkes, Community Enterprise Foundation, Mount Alexander Shire Council, Victorian State Government (in particular Maree Edwards).

*Sha Cordingley
HPA President*

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Harcourt Pony Club Open Day – April 1st

After being postponed due to floods and damage to the grounds, the Harcourt Pony Club is excited to announce that their Open Day is finally happening on April Fool's Day, and it's no joke!



Families are invited to join in the fun, starting with an Easter Egg hunt at 10:30 am, followed by a range of activities including pony patting, pony leading, pony riding demonstrations and displays, pony grooming, face painting, an Easter hamper raffle, a cake stall, a kids craft area, trash and treasure stalls, and a lunchtime BBQ, along with morning and afternoon tea. You can find the Pony Club in Bridge Street Harcourt next to the swimming pool.

This is a perfect opportunity to bring the whole family and learn more about the club's activities and membership. The Harcourt Pony Club Open Day promises to be a day filled with family fun and entertainment. We hope to see you there!

More info: harcourtpony.club/open-day

Harcourt Pony Club
COMMUNITY OPEN DAY

Sat April 1st, 10.30 am - 2.30 pm
Bridge Street Harcourt (next to pool)

Easter Egg Hunt BBQ Riding Demo
Face Painting Trash & Treasure stalls
Pony Patting & leading Reptile show
Easter Hamper Raffle Family Fun



sponsored by
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WALKING TOGETHER Towards Makarrata

Makarrata is 'coming together after a struggle, facing the facts of wrongs and living again in peace.'

Rescue and Resistance

From the earliest days of European arrival in the lands now called Australia, Aboriginal people have performed heroic feats to rescue non-Aboriginal people from life-threatening events. Hundreds of individual Aboriginal people, sometimes named, sometimes not, are mentioned in the diaries, newspaper articles and family stories of non-Indigenous survivors.

The written words, whilst praising and appreciating their Indigenous rescuers, are often disdainful and disrespectful; this was the attitude of so many explorers, squatters and colonists in former times. The British were unwilling to take on board the intimate understandings of fire, flood, seasons, navigation, transport, water and food sources developed by First Peoples over tens of thousands of years.

A story in a 1918 newspaper report tells of a family of four whose boat capsized in the fast-flowing Murray near Cummeragunja Mission Station. 'George Nelson, an aborigine...without divesting himself of his clothing, plunged in and brought the woman ashore.' He then swam to the others and 'effected their rescue.'

The story of Dundalli, a resistance leader captured in 1854, has a more disturbing ending. En route to Sydney for trial, the steamer he was on was wrecked. 'The passengers and crew were hurled into the sea ... Being a coast aborigine, Dundalli could swim like a fish...and was successful in bringing about 25 people to safety' from the shark-infested waters. He then quietly gave himself up and stood his trial in Sydney. Found guilty and sentenced to death, he was returned to Brisbane to be hanged.

A great range of assistance was given by Aboriginal people. Colonists were

rescued from wrecked ships, castaways were guided to drinking water, given food, had wounds dressed. People marooned by floods were taken to safety, fires were managed before they got out of control, children and adults lost in the bush were found by tracking.

People and stock were transported across rivers in bark canoes, either rescued or by request. An early settler described how his sheep were carried across the Goulburn, 'by placing the sheep, six at a time, in the canoe with their legs tied, when a Black punted them over'. Aboriginal men also acted as guides to new land selections or to the goldfields, carrying supplies, knowing where to find water and providing bush food.

Aboriginal men and women willingly gave humanitarian aid, often in dangerous situations. It was, and is, their Law/Lore. Their superior knowledge of how to survive was finely honed, and their actions calm and efficient. But the British mostly failed to respect their ways. The cross-cultural misunderstandings, fear and judgement have unfortunately remained in many non-Indigenous minds to this day.

When Captain Phillip and his shiploads of convicts and soldiers landed on the coast now taken up by Sydney, his instructions had been to 'gain consent from the natives'. Unable to communicate in a common language or to clearly identify leaders, he established the settlement without any agreement with the Indigenous peoples. The conflict between local Aboriginal law and foreign British law rapidly led to changes of approach on both sides. A war for the possession of land ensued.

The whites turned to brute force in a terrifying avalanche of massacres, including cutting off the heads of some unfortunate victims; identifying and executing the Aboriginal leaders; kidnapping children and forcing them into slavery; and raping, abducting and murdering Aboriginal women, whom they regarded as sub-human chattels. These are war crimes.

The 'natives' retaliated by all the means at their disposal – ambush, spearing, torture, setting fire to dwellings and crops, and guerrilla warfare. Their land, of which they are part, was despoiled, their women abused, their Lore desecrated.

A difference between the two sides of the conflict is that, in First Nations people's minds, stories of what happened to their relatives and their Country are never forgotten. There has been very little acknowledgment or justice except in some isolated incidents. But history is written by the victor, not the vanquished. The onus is now on non-Indigenous people to tell the true stories and recognise the tragedy of the frontier wars.

Note: The stories about George Nelson, Dundalli and the canoe full of sheep, and many more accounts can be found in the book *They Rescued Us: Aboriginal Heroes On Country* by Fred Cahir.

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation 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

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Councillor Comment



Hi all,

As we go along we pick things up, ideas, that is. Knowledge can come from our own experience or the lessons from others. We have a big day at Council today (February 28) as we work on the 2023/24 budget.

The budget is the financial plan or roadmap for the next twelve months. Plan for success is something that I subscribe to. While things don't always go to plan, at least we have direction. A good plan will also have some contingencies, some allowance for the unexpected so we can move forward quickly.

Sometimes people ask, 'Why pay so much attention to the budget?' For me, having a good plan and budget is the cornerstone of our success. It means we have the resources to deliver the services our community needs. If we can do that, and work together as a team, surely we will have a Council organisation that performs well.

Getting back to ideas, I learnt something when the media was interviewing Ash Barty on her retirement from professional tennis. Ash described bringing the best version of herself when fronting up to play the best tennis players in the world. That resonated with me as sometimes we let ourselves down when we don't deliver our best. I imagine it was her coach that gave her that idea. I call it the 'Ash principal'. So today, when I head into Council, I will aim to present the best version of myself. I will do my best for all of the community across the shire while also trying to deliver great results for our local communities.

The other Council-related meeting I have this week is about 'tiny homes'. They seem cute and may be an inexpensive option for some people. Of course, I would like to see everyone with a roof over their head, so I am sure it will be a positive discussion. From a council perspective, tiny homes, the ones on wheels anyway, are probably closer to a caravan than a house. As we know, house construction is highly regulated, whereas the controls around caravans are not. At the end of the day, more housing is what we need, as there seems to be more and more people who want to live in our community and share the lifestyle we have.

A dearly loved cousin of mine, Bill McKellar passed away last week. My condolences go to his wife, Clare and his family. Over the past 60 years, apart from being a great family man and probably the most liked banker ever, Bill created a fabulous collection of cars. As a small child, I remember Bill working on his first real restoration, a '27 Chevrolet Tourer. I remember him saying he attended panel beating classes and the first exercise was to make a hubcap out of a flat piece of tin.

Bill's collection grew over the years to become the Morris garage which many people have visited over the last thirty years or so. Rest in Peace Bill.

Travel safe everyone, regards Tony

AG Cordy
0439 742 434

APPLEFEST ROYALTY

King Jonathon and Lady William



Applefest royalty for 2023, Phil Musat and Di Lederman are thoroughly enjoying their new-found royal roles. They are also delighted with their move to Harcourt from Melbourne in 2022. Both are still working – Di has been called back to work because of her expertise in IT specialist products – in any week she can travel many air miles within Australia. Phil is an Honorary Fellow in the Faculty of Architecture and Building and a lecturer at Melbourne University, and he also works as lead trainer at the Real Estate Institute of Victoria.

Di and Phil were recruited into their roles by Ruth and Philip Hay, last year's Applefest King and Lady. They have taken to their positions with gusto and have attended several community functions and local farmers markets in full costume. Di said, 'At one of the farmers markets, we were giving out pamphlets and posters when a little girl approached me with a very serious expression on her face. She said, "I thought you were dead!" That really broke us up, that is absolutely my favourite story about being Lady William.'

Phil and Di have joined the Applefest committee to keep in touch with the celebration as planning progresses. Phil has taken on the task of approaching local real estate agents to advertise Applefest. No doubt, readers will see these posters in and around Castlemaine. They both agree that being Applefest royalty is a bonus as they are meeting many more people in the district. An enjoyable feature of their new life in the country is taking day trips to discover nearby regions and towns of central Victoria.

The crowning of Applefest royalty took place at the Harcourt Christmas party in Stanley Park. They both commented on the community spirit shown. Phil said, 'We are very pleased to be living in Harcourt and we look forward to the big day at Applefest on March 11. See you there!'

Robyn Miller



Chatting with Harcourt CWA

Today I'm going to have a chat about birthdays. Cast your mind back to when you were a child, how exciting it was each year as the day of your birth came closer and closer and finally was celebrated with cake and presents. Well, we may not be children any more, but our members still love to celebrate their birthday and this we do in style every month.

At the beginning of the year each member is given the name and date of birth of one other member who then becomes her Birthday Friend. Each month the Birthday friend receives a gift from that member, we sing Happy Birthday and cheers all around.

Now if it is a special birthday, and by that I mean the age has a big zero on the end, we go all-out with a cake and delicious afternoon tea - after all, turning 70 or 80 or 90 certainly deserves to be celebrated in style.

At our February meeting, our long-time member Joy Robertson celebrated her 80th Birthday with us all. It was a lovely time to sit and remember and enjoy the special afternoon tea prepared by the other members.



Helen Hand (centre) congratulates Melva Graham (left) and Alma Chaplin (right) on their milestone birthdays.

The judge for The Great Apple Cooking Competition is Ann Marston, a well-known Melbourne Royal Show Cookery Judge and Maryborough CWA member. Ann, and her fellow judge, Anne-Marie Primmer, have been judging this competition for years. You can benefit from their knowledge and experience by coming and watching the judging at Applefest and taking note of the various tips given by Ann and Anne-Marie on making the perfect apple pie, cake or muffin, and getting that jam to set just right. Come along to the Fruit Growers tent at 10:30 am to get your front row seat and watch these two dedicated and knowledgeable judges do what they do best.



Our cooking competition judges Ann Marston and Anne-Marie Primmer.



A joint celebration for Marie Twyford, Lyn Rule and Meryl Adams.

As Applefest is only a few sleeps away, many of our members are busy baking apple pies, apple muffins, making apple chutney and apple jams and preparing goods to be sold on our stall or entered in The Great Apple Cooking Competition.

Come and have a chat with us at our Applefest stall on March 11 and perhaps you might like to become a CWA member. I am sure that someone at the stall will help you to take the first few steps in that direction.

*Lyn Rule
Publicity Officer, Harcourt CWA*



At the beginning of the year each member is given the name and date of birth of one other member who then becomes her Birthday Friend. Each month the Birthday friend receives a gift from that member, we sing Happy Birthday and cheers all around.

Now if it is a special birthday, and by



Joy Robertson enjoys her birthday cuppa.

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Working with Council for Biodiversity Audit

Harcourt Valley Landcare members are passionate about preserving environmental values in Harcourt and have participated from the outset in the process of Plan Harcourt, which began in 2018. Landcare member Bron Willis said, 'The Harcourt I want to see my kids grow up in retains the things we love so much about Harcourt now. What I want for them is the benefit of a wonderful vibrant community as well as natural surroundings that can sustain that community.'

The Planning Panel decision handed down in November 2022 directed Council to prepare a Biodiversity Report for the proposed development areas as outlined in the map provided before any further planning continues.

Landcare is working closely with Council to ensure that development occurs in a way that doesn't come at the expense of biodiversity, which science tells us is critical in supporting good health. That means not just preventing endangered species from becoming extinct, but also preventing common species from becoming endangered, or importantly, highly localised populations from being lost to our valley forever.

Bron Willis said, 'We aspire to not just protecting endangered species, but to actively increasing biodiversity – something that is identified as a goal in the State Government's 'Planning for Biodiversity (2017)' document, which guides Council during their planning process. On page 17 of this document there is a specific requirement: 'It needs to be demonstrated that the environmental benefits of the planning action outweigh any costs it will impose.'

Council have a challenging job balancing the immediate need for increased housing

with needs to ensure that housing promotes a high-quality lifestyle in which people benefit from the cooling effect and lower crime rates that research tells us is associated with trees, vegetation and green spaces.

Both Council and Landcare want to see this amendment get through, but in the right way – development will occur regardless – but if it happens without a guiding plan, biodiversity and people will lose out too. The amendment is our opportunity to ensure that doesn't happen.

It's been a huge learning process for both the Council planning team and our group. We've been really pleased that our good working relationship has meant we've been able to assist Council to represent community wishes to State Government and the minister, who have the ultimate decision-making responsibility.

President Bonnie Humphreys said, 'We're really proud that Landcare has been able to use the submission process to successfully demand what the community expects - for biodiversity and sustainability to be a fundamental part of planning at the outset, rather than a list of optional choices for developers to adhere to at their whim.'

'This is the first time that a biodiversity audit has been required for a whole-of-town planning project and we're hearing that Council appreciate the opportunity to learn.'

Council's role in the Biodiversity Audit Process (from Council website: www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/planharcourt Look for 'Next Steps'; below is an abbreviated version.

As required by the Planning Panel's decision in November, Council has been directed to prepare a strategic level biodiversity assessment and revise the

Amendment to ensure proposed planning provisions adequately consider biodiversity protection. Officers have received support from the Department of Transport and Planning's Regional Planning Hub to prepare a strategic level biodiversity assessment that is to inform the amendment and to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced biodiversity specialist/consultancy firm.

As mentioned above, Plan Harcourt became public in 2018. It has progressed in the intervening years through to Stage 6 where it has been paused to conduct the biodiversity study and to prepare a commercial land demand assessment to inform the area proposed for rezoning to Commercial 1 Zone in the town centre. The final step Stage 7 is approval and therefore implementation of Plan Harcourt in full.

Below are the steps of a stage 1 biodiversity assessment, which may lead to a stage 2 more detailed field assessment, dependent upon the findings of the stage 1 assessment. Should a stage 2 be required, this is to include wider consultation with the community and other stakeholders, and feedback heard is to be considered in the preparation of the assessment.

The strategic biodiversity assessment will require the following steps to be undertaken by the project consultant:

Review of documentation associated with Amendment C94malx, including background reports, proposed policy and planning panel report.

- Undertake a desktop review of biodiversity assets at the landscape scale (across the Harcourt township being land within the study area) to:
 - ▶ Identify any high value biodiversity assets (ecosystems and species) that would warrant planning scheme protection.
 - ▶ Identify if there is a need to establish any strategic habitat and wildlife connection.
 - ▶ Identify any significant native trees.
- And to carry out:
 - ▶ Targeted Consultation: Undertake targeted consultation with knowledge groups including Harcourt Valley Landcare, Harcourt Progress Association and Djaara to inform the above assessments.
 - ▶ Site Inspections: Undertake site inspections necessary to verify findings.
 - ▶ Provide a report that details the findings of the above and recommendations on whether a stage 2 (detailed field assessment) is needed.

For full details of Plan Harcourt from its beginning, see the Shire's web page: www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/planharcourt



Landcare members enjoyed the first working bee for 2023 which was held at the plantings behind Pippin Court. The trees and shrubs planted over 2021 and 2022 received a much-needed watering.



Harcourt CFA

The Unusual Fire Season Continues

February weather conditions continued the unusual summer we have experienced in the Harcourt Valley. The number of hot days being below average has resulted in a reduced number of grassfires and bushfires the brigade has attended.

Our turnouts for the month of February have been to two more reported truck fires on the Calder Freeway, an investigation of a small blackened spot on the side of the road at McManus Road Barkers Creek.

We also attended two support calls. The first was to support the Walmer brigade to a grassfire on the side of the Bendigo/Maldon Road that had burnt into the neighbouring paddock. Fortunately, the paddock had been heavily grazed, and the first tankers on scene were able to bring the fire under control before our tankers arrived. Support was given in securing the fire edge and blacking out. The second support was to the Sutton Grange brigade – to a smoke sighting which, after location and investigation, was found to be a legal fire in a backyard.

While locally there have been no major fires, to our south there have been some bigger fires. These have been covered by the various media streams, and the photos of these events show long dry grass present. Some of these areas were also in steep rocky country and the aircraft water bombing fleet has proved invaluable in fighting these fires.

The fire at Flowerdale (which it seems was started by an angle grinder) also had some nighttime water bombing operations. Extra support for these fires was drawn from brigades further south and therefore no brigades from our area were called on to assist.

All fire fighting operations have an inherent risk. The

crashing of a large air tanker (LAT) in Western Australia reminds us all of this danger. Fortunately, the crew on board survived the crash and were able to walk away with only minor injuries.

Preparations for Applefest

The brigade has been planning to be in attendance at the Applefest market again this year. We will be running our Levantine Hill Wine spinning wheel fundraiser again this year, and, with the support of the North Western Community Education Group, we will be there for any of your fire-related questions and information brochures.

Fire Danger Period is not finished

There is always a bit of confusion around the end of the Fire Danger Period (FDP). The Fire Danger Period does NOT finish at the end of February/summer, but continues until a time when it is safe to lift restrictions. This is generally in autumn after the first significant rain period and a change to cooler weather patterns. The lifting of restrictions is published in local newspapers and on the CFA website. Also, locally, we have our message boards at the fire station and at the BP petrol station.

Maintaining our awareness and continuing to take the necessary precautions will hopefully ensure we finish off the rest of the fire season without any hiccups to the good work already done.

Tyrone Rice
Brigade Community Safety Coordinator



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Harcourt Uniting Church

I hope you enjoyed some pancakes on Shrove Tuesday! The Castlemaine School Chaplaincy Committee held their Shrove Tuesday Progressive Dinner recently. Members of several denominations gathered at the Castlemaine Uniting Church for entrees, then on to St Mary's for a delicious main course, finishing at the Anglican Church for pancakes, fruit salad and the famous pancake relay races. The coveted trophy (a small frying pan mounted on a wooden board) was won by the Church of Christ team this year. Our Uniting Church team managed to keep the pancakes in the pan for most of the race – flipping pancakes while running can be a challenge! Our Uniting Church team of Des, Rev Jim (with the pancakes), John and George did us proud.

Chaplains In Schools support the emotional wellbeing of students, staff and families by providing pastoral care services and strategies that support members of the school community. They are there to listen to students' needs, to be approachable, non-judgemental and to support students and their families

in times of grief or personal and emotional challenges. They may also be able to connect students and families with further professional help. Chaplains need to be involved in the daily life of a school so that students and staff feel comfortable approaching them with any problems.

COVID created many extra challenges for us all with isolation and subsequent lack of social interaction being the main issue. As we all try to resume some kind of 'normal life', this is being addressed by chaplains in supporting students and their families, in helping students to engage with others after spending so much time on their 'devices'.

The local Chaplaincy Committee works very hard fundraising to pay the salary of our local chaplain. Several of the local churches (including Harcourt Uniting Church) donate to this important work for our school communities. In 2023, the chaplain works part-time with Castlemaine Secondary College and Campbells Creek Primary School. Being a chaplain is really about 'being there for others'.



Knowing my husband's habit of sampling everything I bake, I left a note on a dozen small cakes: 'Counted – 1 dozen.' When I arrived home I noticed two cakes missing and the note had been altered: 'Think metric.'

Jan Jenkin

Linda Newton



Harcourt wren leaving for the creek.
Harcourt wren leaving for the creek.



Art Competition, Show and Sale

HARCOURT APPLEFEST 2023

OFFICIAL OPENING & PRESENTATION OF AWARDS
Friday 10th March 2023; 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
During Applefest

ANA Hall, James Park, Harcourt



Harcourt Heritage Centre

Roger Miller

It was quite a sensation. Motorists on the Calder Highway slowed down to look at the huge structure. Covering 2.8 hectares (the size of four football grounds) it supported hundreds of metres of white netting.

In Harcourt in March 1990, it was a new idea to protect an orchard with white polyethylene monofilament net. Trials in apple orchards at Batlow and Orange (NSW) and Stanthorpe (Qld) proved that netting was an effective protection against hail.

Some orchardists arranged insurance against hail damage. Harcourt Heritage Centre has such a policy in its files. It is on record that, as far back as the 1930s, Harcourt orchardists were successfully claiming payouts under hail damage insurance policies following a November hailstorm.

Roger and Paul Miller planted their orchard in Johansens Rd, Harcourt North in 1985. To their dismay, hail wiped out the fruit in their young orchard two years in a row.

When struck by hail, fruit suffers cuts and dents that not only blemish its appearance but make an opening for fungal diseases. The fruit is unsaleable.

With a whole year's income at stake, Miller Brothers decided to outlay the money to set up the netting as protection from hail damage. The cost, in 1990 was an enormous sum, \$24,000 per hectare. The canopy over the Miller Brothers' orchard was designed to catch the heaviest hailstones and roll them harmlessly down the sloping netting onto the ground between the trees. It would be far more satisfactory than paying insurance premiums.

When interviewed by the *Bendigo Advertiser* and the *Weekly Times*, Roger Miller added an afterthought: 'The netting will also protect the crop from sunburn and deter crows and cockatoos,' he said. Roger Miller's catalogue of woes to be prevented by netting was short. But it was soon to expand.

It may surprise readers of *The Core* to learn that in Harcourt fifty years ago white sulphur-crested cockatoos were not a common sight. But the cockies eventually found their way to the Harcourt valley, settled in the apple trees and soon destroyed the topmost fruit in their pursuit of the apple pips. Some orchardists set up scarecrows and imitation hawks to frighten them

away, but most orchardists soon bought gas-fuelled scare guns, set to fire at random intervals. When the apples were ripening, the Harcourt valley reverberated with the sound of heavy artillery, as if it were a war zone.

The 2002 season was the year of the invasion by musk lorikeets. Thousands of the noisy little blighters would descend on an orchard in search of food. Their high-pitched chattering and screeching went on continually as they ate their way through 20 per cent of the apple crop. This was during a year of drought.

During the next harvest season, the region's grey box eucalypts flowered more prolifically than they had ever done before, so the lorikeets had plenty of nectar from the gum trees and did not attack the orchards.

Mammal attacks on the orchards are a recent phenomenon. On their morning rounds, orchardists, were shocked to find the lower limbs of apple trees had been stripped of both leaves and apples by kangaroos desperate for food.

Even more worrying was the arrival in central Victoria of grey-headed flying foxes. Just a few years ago a colony of the largest members of Australia's bat population took roost in Bendigo's Rosalind Park. With their metre-wide wingspan, these fruit-eating bats can fly eighty or more kilometres on their nocturnal foraging expeditions. Harcourt's orchardists soon found evidence of their nightly visits.

It was March 1990 when the first Harcourt orchard was netted by the Miller Brothers. Montague Orchards was next, with a fixed structure of controversially pink netting. International travellers, en-route to the northern hemisphere, can still see this patch of pink from their airplane window, and know that they are passing 'waypoint apple'.

Both of Harcourt's corporate orchards, Montague's and Geoffrey Thompson's, have invested heavily in permanent, six-metre-high netting structures over their immense acreages of apple trees. This is a fully enclosed system combining netting types, with hail netting as a cover and side walls of bird netting.

This form of netting creates a micro climate that varies (ever so slightly) from that of an unprotected orchard.

Scientific study of bee behaviour, and of the trees' responses to new levels of wind, light, humidity and evaporation has guided the orchardists as they adapt to the changing environment. Hail netting has even been found to raise the temperature to save crops from frost damage.

Harcourt's private orchardists have adopted a different form of netting. To the tourist, it must seem as if a giant spider has woven its web over the fruit trees, uphill and down. This form of netting is rolled out each year along the rows of trellised trees. As soon as the bees have pollinated the spring blossom and the fruit has set, the net is rolled out along the rows by a three-person team, one driving the tractor on which is mounted a mechanical spinner which steadily unwinds the roll of netting. The net is fed out and upward via a boom, and is spread out on each side of the trees and then tied down by the two followers. When thinning takes place, the net is temporarily lifted, unwanted fruit is removed and the net replaced. The net is then left in place until harvest.

Since the pioneering efforts of the Miller Brothers, orchard netting has become a 'must have' aspect of fruit growing in the Harcourt valley. Exclusion of birds and animals has assumed an importance equal to, or greater than, the need to protect the orchard from hail damage.

Roger Miller was a newcomer to the industry, having previously worked for Telstra. His brother Paul, formerly with the Department of Agriculture, was a horticultural adviser. The brothers invested heavily in setting up the orchard and in developing their 'Apples of Temptation' brand. The Miller Bros orchard proved not to be a long-term venture.

Orchard netting was regarded as 'a horticultural breakthrough' in 1990. This gives us a point in time from which to measure the changes in orchard science, in environment and in the expanded range of orchard predators faced by apple growers in the Harcourt valley.

This is another in a series of Thumbnail sketches written for *The Core* by Harcourt Heritage Centre. Roger Miller was a founding member of Harcourt Valley Heritage & Tourist Centre Inc. He may not have realised that he was making history by his use of netting in 1990.



Harcourt Valley Primary School

School has been back for about a month now and I have been told that HVPS is off to a great start.

Twelve preps have settled into a four-day week of schooling, which will become a full week at the beginning of this month (they currently have Wednesdays off school). The warm summer February weather and no COVID restrictions has meant that all grades were able to attend their swimming Water Safety and Awareness classes for the first time for a number of years. Friday morning breakfast club is running again this year, as is the OSH Club.

The school community has welcomed two new teachers, Mrs Maddaford and Mrs Gruenhauser. Mrs Maddaford is the art teacher who will also be providing some assistance in the 5/6 classroom, and Mrs Gruenhauser provides educational support in the prep class on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. At the front office, Mrs Simpson continues to welcome everyone whilst acting in her role as Business Manager. Mr Blake informed me that this year the school has been fortunate as it has received additional funding to allow two of its teachers to participate in the Department's Primary Maths Specialist training initiative. Mrs Hargraves and Mrs Stearne expressed interest in undertaking this training and will be participating in the course. This will be a great boost to the teaching of numeracy skills within the school.

As the students settle into the school routine this year, they will be learning about the changes and additions to the way HVPS is implementing the State Wide Positive Behavioural System (SWPBS). Ms Rowland is the lead teacher for this program, and she is assisted by Mrs Norris and Mr Blake. I have Mr Blake's permission to copy what they have written in the school newsletter about the program and the changes to it, as I thought it would be of interest to *Core* readers.

The first two weeks of 2023 have started off positively with our school wide positive behaviour system (SWPBS). We have begun our year with Building Our Learning Communities (BOLC) where students have been getting to know their teachers and classmates, learning about whole-school and classroom expectations and sharing their ideas and voice about what they want their learning to look like this year. We have also revamped

our house points system for this year, introducing 'Core Points'. Students can earn Core Points for a range of different positive behaviours. This includes demonstrating our school expectations: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Curious and showing our overall school values of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Integrity.

When students earn a Core Point this goes towards their individual Core Point bank, which they will be able to spend at our House Points Store each week (soon to be renamed by our students).

Students' Core Points will also go towards their House; Lang, Mitchell and Barker. Each House is aiming for 500 Points to receive a House award. When students earn 20 Core Points in one week, they will receive an 'Apple' towards our whole school 'Apple Tree'. Once we earn 50 apples on our 'Apple Tree', the whole school will receive an award which will be decided by our Junior School Council. Our SWPBS focus for the last two weeks has been: Be Respectful by using our Manners. Our Week 3 focus will be: Be Curious by using kind words. We are seeking interest from any parents who would like to be part of our SWPBS team alongside Kelsie Rowlands, Brittani Norris and Andrew Blake. This will allow us to work together to continue to develop our School Wide Positive Behaviour System and support all students, families and community members.

By the time this edition of *The Core* is published, the school community will have chosen their captains, vice captains and house captains. Grade 6 students delivered their leadership nomination speeches to the school community and interested parents at 2.30 pm on Thursday 24 February. Grade 6 students, Reegan and Shelah baked delicious scones, overseen by Mrs Simpson, to provide afternoon tea for parents who attended the Reading Information Session on Tuesday 14 February. This session provided parents with information about the school's literacy program and strategies to assist them to improve their children's literacy skills.

After three years of COVID-related restrictions, the school community was finally able to welcome new parents to the school in an inclusive enjoyable way. On



Thursday 23 February, parents and children returned to school at 5.00 pm for a BBQ prepared by the school staff. Sausages, hamburgers and coleslaw were prepared by staff. They had also arranged for the Ice-cream Social van to attend and for Robyn to bring along her delicious Yo-Yo biscuits so attendees could purchase these treats – very popular with the children. One parent who attended the function told me that the event was well attended. It was a great opportunity for parents to socialise and for the children to run around and play with their friends.

For the past few weeks on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 8.45 am to 11.00 am, parents and friends attended the school to bake apple pies for the HVPS Applefest stall. Don't forget to come early to Applefest and visit the stall to purchase an apple pie or some of their delicious cakes, biscuits or slices. The grade 3 to 6 choir will be singing at 12.20 pm and students' art work will be on display at the ANA Hall.

The school council has already met and will be holding its AGM on 22 March and electing parents to fill two vacant positions.

And so another school year is well and truly under way!

Lois Denham



The Dja Dja Wurung have lived and thrived in this valley for nearly 30,000 years.

This one-day apple festival is situated in the centre of the fertile Harcourt Valley. Harcourt Heritage and Tourist Centre Inc, formed in 1989 as an incorporated charity, has been the governing body for this event since its inception in 1991. This association operates Harcourt

About Applefest

Heritage Museum/Centre in the ANA Hall. The museum promotes the area's rich history using museum items and extensive data base of over 7,000 entries.

The fruit growing and granite quarrying were the reasons many early pioneers chose to live in this valley nearly 200 years ago. Today these are not the reasons people live here. Working remotely from town or office is a new way of life. New residents can now combine this while living close to town in a rural setting.

In the last 30 years Applefest has brought the residents together,

to meet their neighbours, school friends along with many visitors from the surrounding region to enjoy the many and varied produce and talents that exist here. They do this accompanied by live music, also performed by local artists.

The goodwill, sporting and service clubs along with many volunteers make this highly successful festival happen. Please consider joining the committee or becoming a volunteer on the day.

Please contact us at info@harcourt.vic.au



Apple Pie Eating Contest

This is one of the highlights of Applefest and looked forward to by both spectators and contestants.

Its messy, it's fun, it's ridiculous, but it's Harcourt Applefest's moment of pure light-hearted pleasure.

Are there rules? Do we follow them? Come along and find out.

Three sections this year, each with a \$1 entry free.

- ➡ Primary School
- ➡ Secondary School
- ➡ Open

How to enter? Tick the box as you purchase your \$5 tickets, and we will have some near the main stage.



Market

The Market starts at 9 am. There will be plenty of art, makers and plant stalls from the local area, along with local producers with their tasty food, cider and wine for you to purchase and enjoy.

Come and experience the best of Harcourt Valley produce. Check out the Facebook and Instagram sites for updates on market stalls.

If you're interested in holding a stall, please use the link below: applefest.harcourt.vic.au/#market

Jake Kotevski



Jake is a palaeontologist and PhD student at Monash University. His PhD project is focused on the evolution and presence of carnivorous dinosaurs in Victoria from 125-100 million years ago.

Jake can trace his inspiration back to *Jurassic Park*, where he first learnt the words 'dinosaur' and 'palaeontologist', and grew up with no other goal in his mind. Ever since he watched the *Tyrannosaurus* burst through the gates in the rain, Jake has dreamed of working with the predatory dinosaurs known as theropods. Jake's PhD has given him the opportunity to work with the Australian theropod dinosaurs, and he looks forward to sharing information about them with everyone at Applefest!

Applefest 2023

March 11, 9am-4pm

This year we have over 50 market stalls, including foods, wines, cider, local produce, and makers from the district.

Apple products of all kinds will be available throughout the day.

Entertainment this year includes Eliza Hull and The Australian Women's Choir lead by Wendy Stapleton, along with Thompsons Foundry Band and the Harcourt Valley Primary School Choir. For the first time, we have a second stage with new and upcoming local acts on plus the legendary Jake Kotevski also known as 'The Dino Man' with his riveting facts about dinosaurs. Applefest 2023 is the place for all Dino Lovers to be.

Children's entertainment includes Toby the Dinosaur, Face Painting, Story Telling and The Connected Circus.

Lego Competition is new this year and the categories include.

- 4 years and under:
Duplo Animal
- 5-6 years and under:
Lego Animal
- 7-8 years and under:
House
- 8-9 years and under:
Zip Line
- 10-11 years and under:
Robot
- 12-17 years and under:
Structure/Construction
- Big Kids Lego ADULTS open

The second competition is for Lego lovers to demonstrate their skill at design – along with sashes, there are small monetary awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd placegetters.

- **Primary School Students:**
Apple Orchard Sculpture
- **Secondary School Students:**
Apple Orchard Sculpture
- **Open, over 18:**
Apple Orchard Sculpture

Creations need to be at the ANA hall by Wednesday 8th March between 8.30am and 5.30pm



Cookery Competition

The comforting delights of a warm apple pie.

How will your wares fare with the members from Harcourt CWA?

Test your baking and chutney making skills alongside the region's best. Applefest has an excellent cookery competition: Apple Pie gets the headlines, but there are also categories for best Apple Cake, Apple Muffins and Apple Chutney and others too.

There is no entry fee, but unlimited glory to be won by both adult and junior bakers.

The following categories are this year's much sought after prizes:

Open Category

- Apple Pie
- Apple Muffins (4 on a plate)
- Apple Cake
- Apple Chutney
- Apple and Berry Jam
- Dehydrated Apples
- Secondary school category
- Apple Muffins (4 on a plate)
- Primary school category
- Apple Muffins (4 on a plate)

Please complete this form and present to the Fruit Growers Tent by 10am on March 11.

applefest.harcourt.vic.au/team/bakers/

Art Show

An art show that is the essence of the Harcourt Valley.

The Harcourt Applefest Art Show is an intimate and distinctive exhibition for smaller works.

The exhibition and sale of high-quality original art has become central to the festival. With awards and acclaim to be won, the show has a history of impressive entries and esteemed exhibitors.

Your Applefest ticket grants every Applefest attendee access to the works on display at the ANA Hall.

The grand opening and awards night will be held on the Friday night before Applefest. Art works will remain on display for Applefest celebrations and throughout the Labour Day long weekend.

Categories and sections

There are five open award categories, including:

- Best in Show
- Best Oil/Acrylic—Cameron Lang Memorial Award
- Best Watercolour—Shirley Stewart Memorial Award
- Best Other Medium
- Best Local Subject—a work, in any medium, depicting an object, event, person or place within the Mount Alexander Shire

The Harcourt Applefest Art Show is also unique for having a significant Junior section. The engaging works submitted by younger artists ensure that the Art Show committee is always delighted by emerging styles and fresh perspectives.

- Best Junior & Highly Commended, 12 Years and Under
- Best Junior & Highly Commended, 13 – 18 Years
- Best 'Illustration' (non-digital) work on paper.
- Entry form and fees: must be returned by 24 February 2023
- Adults: \$5 per item, maximum of 3 works
- Students: \$1 per item, maximum of 2 works

The Australian Women's Choir

The Australian Women's Choir provides a unique opportunity for women of all ages to experience the joy of singing and performing Pop, Rock and Contemporary music.

The Australian Women's Choir is based in Essendon, Victoria under the directorship of Wendy Stapleton and the guidance of some of Australia's most experienced vocal coaches.

The Australian Women's Choir was formed in July 2014 by entertainer Wendy Stapleton. Having been a professional singer/dancer/actor since the age of nine, at Her Majesty's Theatre and Channel 9 Wendy is highly skilled in the art of performance.

The idea for the choir came about as a result of Wendy training children to sing and perform for The Stapleton Dance Academy and then going on to

train adults in these skills at a performance level for both professional and non professional artists.

'I saw the joy people experienced when they performed, whether it be singing, dancing or acting. So to be able to give people the chance to perform at a certain level was an obvious next step for me.'

This choir focuses on Pop /Rock and takes pride in performing some of Australia's most iconic hits along with music from all over the globe.

Since its conception The AWC has performed at numerous functions and festivals around Victoria including two years of performances with The Legendary Mike Brady at



AFL Grand Final Functions at Crown Casino, The Regent Theatre and The Foxtel AFL Grand Final breakfast televised across Australia.

We hope you enjoy The AWC.

Eliza Hull

Eliza is an award winning musician. Her music has been described as 'stirring, captivating and heartfelt' She is regularly played on radio nationally and internationally including on ABC, RN, BBC, double j and triple j. She recently performed her new song 'Running Underwater' on ABC's Q & A and performed at SXSW in Austin, Texas and Big Sound Festival to showcase and present a panel on accessibility.



Her songs are also featured in ABC KIDS TV show 'And Then Something Changed,' ABC 'The Heights' and American TV shows 'Awkward,' 'Teen Wolf' and 'Saving Hope.'

Recently Eliza was awarded the Music Victoria 'Amplify' award, the APRA mentorship for women in music, the National Leadership Award from the Australia Council and Arts Access Australia and The Women In Music Award.

Eliza has her fifth studio record coming out in late 2022, which will feature 'Here they come' and 'Running Underwater.' The EP is produced by Georgia Sallybanks (Odette) and Pip Norman.

Eliza is making change in the music industry. The time is now for greater representation of disabled musicians, and Eliza is a huge part of this movement.

**HARCOURT
APPLEFEST
2023**

**THE
CONNECTED
CIRCUS**
Wellbeing through
creativity and
movement

**March 11th 9am - 4pm
James Park, Harcourt**





Castlemaine Fringe Festival Celebrating 30 years in 2023

The Festival takes place in and around Castlemaine from Friday 17 March right through until Sunday 2 April. There are more than forty free and low cost events happening across the Shire, with a huge diversity in programming.

The seventeen-day festival starts with a bang on Friday, 17 March at the Phee Broadway Theatre and Mechanics Lane precinct. Join in the celebration on opening night featuring a ten-piece soul band, a samba band and DJs who will have you dancing in the street.

The streets themselves will be alive with art thanks to the Fringe Art Windows Trail. More than eighty artists have paired with participating businesses to showcase art installations, paste-ups and takeovers in shop windows and businesses throughout the Shire, including the Harcourt Produce & General Store. You can find the map and listing of installations at www.castlemainefringe.org.au/art-windows

Throughout the program you'll find a range of venues hosting live music, workshops and comedy events, quizzes and karaoke nights with extensive food choices and delicious drinks. There are social interest features, film screenings and literature, and an exciting theatre program from around the world, including a presentation of works brought to us by the

Ukraine Fringe Festival. Castlemaine Fringe is honoured to host a live cross with Ukrainian performers currently living in the war zone. 'Live from Ukraine' will include a presentation of a theatre work which was filmed in 2022 as the tanks rolled in and the bombs began to fall.

For our younger audiences and families visiting the shire, join us in the middle of town at Victory Park on Saturday 25 March for the MONSTER MASH, an all-ages monster-themed party with free kids entertainment from 3 pm–7 pm. This is followed by the hotly anticipated REACTIVATE street party featuring more than 100 performers, live music, street theatre and projections. It's a night not to be missed as Fringe takes over the streets of Castlemaine's CBD from 7 pm til late.

For more information and to book tickets go to www.castlemainefringe.org.au, visit our Facebook page or pick up your copy of the 2023 Castlemaine Fringe Festival program, at the Visitor Information Centre and outlets throughout the Shire..





Visitors and locals will notice a new look to the Harcourt bowling green. In the past month, volunteers have been busy installing new grab-rails and new orange matting in the gutters and around the edges of the green. We thank our sponsors, BuildPro for generously donating the fabric, and Leeches Transport for the delivery. We also thank the band of volunteers who gave of their time to install the matting. You may be able to see the difference in the images below.

By the time this edition of *The Core* goes to print, the fate of Division 6 Weekend Pennant team will have been decided. The final outcome and more news on this will be in the May edition of *The Core*.

Pennant Teams

Midweek

Harcourt Midweek Pennant Divisions 2 and 4 teams fared well throughout the season. Although they did not get a berth in the finals, both divisions provided good competition to their opponents in the first year in these higher grades. Well done. We look forward to seeing how they go next season.

Weekend Pennant

Weekend Pennant teams played their final home and away games for the season on 19 February recording a mixed bag of results. Division 2 had a draw with White Hills; Division 6 had a win against White Hills and Division 7 lost to Bendigo VRI. Congratulations to Fran Corstorphan on her debut as skip – although no win was recorded, it was a good effort. Division 6 has had a great season finishing in top ladder spot and have a chance to go further in the semi-final against Bendigo at Eaglehawk. A win will put them automatically in the Grand Final.

Champion of Champions

At the end of January, Harcourt Singles Champions, Carrol Frost and Phillip Clarke, competed in the District Champion of Champions at Eaglehawk. Carrol Frost played Nancy Tate of Marong and led for most of the game, but was unable to sustain the lead in a close finish.

After a bye in the first round, Phillip

Harcourt Bowling Club

Clarke defeated Kelvin Hamilton of Heathcote in the second round, taking him to the quarter final against Jim Brennan of White Hills. After that hard-fought game, Phil came out victorious. On Sunday 12 February, Phillip Clarke competed in the semi-finals of the District Champion of Champions against Andrew Brown of Bendigo Bowling Club. Phil was slow to start, but fought back well showing his skill with some great shots; he eventually lost to Andrew who went on to win the final. Well done Phil! A sizeable contingent of Harcourt bowlers was present to support both of the club champions who represented the club with dignity.



Phil Clarke in action.

Barefoot Bowls



A successful night of barefoot bowls and a barbeque was held on Friday 21 January with over 50 people of all ages in attendance. Another night has been arranged for Friday 3 March.

Men's Invitation Fours Tournament

On Sunday 5 February, the greens were filled with bowlers from across the state for the Annual Men's Fours Tournament. In perfect bowling weather, 24 teams from Diggers Rest, Bendigo VR, White Hills, Daylesford, Avoca, Maryborough Golf, Dingee, Gisborne, South Bendigo, Newstead, Castlemaine, Golden Square, Marong, Auburn, Talbot, Calivil and Harcourt competed in a staggered two 'Fills' in three games – one 10 and two 8 ends. Scores were very close for the First Fill with no 3-game winners, and a count back required between second and third for runners up. Sponsors, Kosmac and

Clemens, were represented by Sophie and James who attended to present the prizes to the winning team from Dingee: Leo Demeo, Bruce Lawry, Andy Hay and Lyn Demeo. Runners-up were Calivil Team, Murray Collet, Warren Miles, Lindsay Gronow and Keith Richards.

The prize for Second Fill was sponsored by Maxi IGA and presented by club president, Ken Tribe. We had three 3-game winners and the overall winners on 51 points were the Harcourt team of John Starbuck, Terry Chisholm, Brian Smith and Garry Maddern. Runners-up on 46 points were the Auburn team of Don Clancy, Richard Chapple, Michael Diorietes and Gregory Rush.

We thank Kosmac and Clemens and Maxi IGA for generously sponsoring this significant tournament on the Harcourt Bowling Club calendar.

Sponsors Challenge

On Tuesday evening 7 February, Harcourt Bowling Club held the first round of the Sponsors Challenge, a barefoot bowls and barbie night for the club sponsors. A total of 12 teams played two games of 6 ends amid a lot of laughter and some good and not-so-good bowling. Winners on the night were the Peter Douglass Excavation



Sponsors in action, round 1.



Sponsors challenge winners: Faye, Jack, Gary and Peter.



Sponsors challenge runners-up: Trevor, Ron, Brenton and Les..

Harcourt Bowling Club

continued

team of Peter, Jack, Faye and Gary. Runners-up were the Chaplin Orchards/Signs team of Trevor, Les, Brenton and Ron. Round two will be held on Tuesday 21 March with the overall winner of the two nights awarded the Chappie Perpetual Trophy.

Women's Invitation Fours Tournament

A very successful Annual Women's Invitation Fours Tournament was held on Thursday 16 February with a full green of keen bowlers from across the region and beyond. Following the ditch-to-ditch competition, the 56 women played two games of 8 ends before breaking for lunch. This was followed by a further 8 ends. After the final game they returned inside for the usual sumptuous afternoon tea and the draw of the 16 quality raffle prizes, which were all donated by members.

We thank Brian Leidle of Mount Alexander Funerals, our generous sponsor of this day over many years, who attended to present the prizes.

The Ditch-to-Ditch was won by Leads, Chris McEwan; Seconds, Jan Ovenden; Thirds, Aileen Fiedler; Skips, Judy Hall.

MC for the day, Judi Miles announced that there were three game winners overall, and a countback was held between second and third, with the Campbells Creek team just missing out.

Winners were the Bendigo team of Sue Lawson, Lorraine Trahair, Helen Champion and Jan Ovenden.

Runners-up were the Golden Square (2) team of Mavis Lea, Kristin Skinner, Judy Chapman and Mary Cusack. We thank and congratulate Judi (MC) and Mary-Anne (Co-coordinator) and the Tournament Committee; and also Carrol and Moira for the table decoration and Ron and his greenkeeping team.

Thanks also to Phil and Barry for cooking the chicken schnitzel; Ken and Barry for the Bar; Kay and the Catering Committee and everyone who contributed food and goods for the raffle.

Club 100Up Championships and Nominated Pairs Championships are well underway for women and men and already showing some surprises. Results will be in *The Core* as they are completed.

As we near the end of the season, the Club proudly hosts a number of tournaments. These provide an opportunity for Harcourt Bowling Club to showcase the quality of the green, the facilities, the catering and hospitality we are well known for; and for members to gather with fellow bowlers in a friendly environment. In doing this, we also encourage and invite new members to join us.

Coming up in March/April

Thursday 9 March: Ladies' Drawn Championship Pairs (evening)

Thursday 16 March: Men's Championship Gough (Drawn) Pairs (evening)

Saturday 18 March: Grant Mixed Pairs (3 bowls) Tournament

Tuesday 21 March: Sponsors' Challenge (Final) (evening)

Saturday 22 April: Rice Memorial Mixed Triples Tournament

Saturday 22 April: Season Breakup and Presentation Night

Sunday 21 May: Annual General Meeting



Do you have an over-abundance of fruit on your backyard trees that you need help harvesting so it doesn't go to waste? We are also putting the call out for volunteer harvesters.

We would love to hear from you!

Contact Madeleine at: hello@growingabundance.org.au



Repair Café

March 26

Since starting in 2017, the Castlemaine and Surrounds Repair Café has kept 1,842 kilos of waste out of landfill.

The next Repair Café is on March 26 at the Castlemaine Community House, 30 Templeton Street (the old Continuing Education building) from 10 am to 1 pm.

Enter from the carpark and garden at the rear of the building to the back door.

You can bring along broken household appliances, sewing repairs and mobile phones for advice on technical issues on parts, settings or phones with flat batteries to have information wiped from the phone. There's also basic bike maintenance, and the Mending Circle where people can sew, crochet, knit, darn, swap tips and learn together.

We try to repair rather than throw away, and you can save money. It's one item at a time. If the Café is busy, the last item is at 12.30 pm.

A gold coin donation is appreciated.

For further information call Chris: 5470 5508.

The Repair Café is held on the last Sunday of each month February to November.



Council news

We're starting by asking

We want to make sure everyone can access information about Council, and has an opportunity to 'have a say' on local issues.

We're asking YOU to tell us the best ways to bring you into the loop on Council news and decision-making processes.

There are lots of way to have your say:

- Complete an online survey at shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au
- Come along to an upcoming drop-in session
- Call us on 5471 1700
- Email us at info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

Don't miss out - feedback closes on Sunday 19 March 2023.

Working together for a healthy, connected shire

mountalexander.vic.gov.au (03) 5471 1700

Give your business a boost

Our free, small business workshops are kicking off for the year with a series dedicated to helping local business owners improve skills and network.

The small business bus will also be stopping in Castlemaine and Maldon for one-on-one support.

Find out more at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/BusinessResources.

Thanks for a great summer!

Our outdoor pool season is wrapping up, and we'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who visited over the summer. We'd love to hear about your experience at our pools so we can improve what we do next year.

Have your say at shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au.



ADVERTISEMENT

Maree Edwards MP

STATE MEMBER FOR BENDIGO WEST

Listening Posts are postponed until further notice.
My office is still available for assistance, please
contact us on 5410 2444 or
maree.edwards@parliament.vic.gov.au

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U3A Art Workshop class enjoy the autumn sunshine

Classes for the 2023 U3A year began on February 6 – and there are still plenty of places available for retired or semi-retired people in the district looking for some enjoyment and learning in their schedule.

U3A Castlemaine has nearly 400 members enjoying more than sixty different classes across the year.

A modest yearly subscription gains access to activities to suit every interest and energy level – from learning a language to bushwalking with friends.

U3A members share their expertise and passions with other U3A members in non-threatening, informal situations. You don't need to have any expertise to share, simply be open to learning new things or enjoying activities that interest you.

Classes are conducted throughout the year and are open to all U3A members. You can begin classes at any time during the year, with no prerequisite qualifications needed. There are no exams and no qualifications or certificates awarded. Classes may be held weekly, fortnightly or monthly and run for the whole year or just one session.

Membership and class enrolment details are on the website home page. Find out what classes are available at: www.u3acastlemaine.com/courses.html

For more information:

Anna McGowan, Class Coordinator:

m: 0407 925 636

e: u3acm.courses@gmail.com

Terry Murphy, President

m: 0425 712 362

e: u3acm.pres@gmail.com

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Grace Church

Why do Christians take communion?

Communion is a commemoration of the Last Supper Jesus took with his disciples on the eve of his betrayal. Regarding the elements, the bread and the wine, Jesus said Firstly, with respect to the bread

This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Thus, the bread represents Jesus' body which was about to be broken for us on the cross at Calvary.

Secondly, with respect to the wine, Jesus said

This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many.

Thus, the wine represents the blood of Christ, which was shed for many in Christ's crucifixion – for example, when the crown of thorns was thrust upon his head, and when he was whipped. There was also blood shed upon the cross itself, as nails were driven through Jesus' hands and ankles.

What was the purpose of this cruelty? Jesus said

For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

What motivated God the Father to send his son to such a cruel death? After all, the Apostle John tells us *God is love....*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Thus, Jesus paid the price for all sin – past, present, and future, for all of those who place their trust in him.

How often should we as Christians take communion? Paul's writings imply that it is *when you come together*. So, for most Christians that would be at least weekly.

Roger & Glenise Thurecht at Grace Church.

Grace Church

Service: 11.00am Sunday
All Welcome
Pastors: Roger & Glenise Thurecht
0422 605 897
gracecastlemaine.org.au

30 Buckley Street, Harcourt

Harcourt's Little Library

Harcourt's Little Library is outside the ANA Hall
It's available any time.

Leave, Borrow
or Take a Book



Katie Finlay's Fruit Growing Tips



Hi everyone,

We'd like to give a special hello to all the locals who just completed our Fruit Tree Action Plan live online course. A few hundred people did the course, and we helped them to write a plan for looking after their fruit trees for the next 12 months. If it sounds like it would be useful but you missed it this time around, keep an eye on our newsletter (sign up details are below) because we'll probably run it again in a few months.

Farm Open Day: Sunday 19 March

We're holding our Farm Open Day on Sunday 19 March (not Saturday 18 March, as it said in last month's *Core*), and you're all invited! We'll be offering lunch, and doing tours of the four different enterprises (dairy, market garden, orchard and nursery). Here's the link to book your tickets for the tour: www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=1018352& – Hope we see you there!

If you come to the Open Day, you'll be able to see our new driveway. Like many others around Harcourt, we got smashed by the rain in spring, and most of our driveway ended up on Dann's Road. We were relieved to get a grant to fix it under the Vic Primary Producer Flood Relief Program. Graeme Jennings from local firm Jennings Earthmoving Services spent a couple of days with his big machines, and now there's a new freeway in town! (However, the speed limit on this one is only 25kmh!) We're very grateful to the Victorian Government and to Graeme for doing such a fantastic job.

Gardening Australia Visit

We enjoyed hosting the Gardening Australia team on the farm last month. They filmed pretty much everyone on the farm from every possible angle over two days. As you can imagine, they've got a very full schedule, so it might take up to 12 months for it to be aired. We'll let you know when it's going to be on.

After a disappointing stone fruit season, the Orchard Keepers (who lease our orchard) have had good crops of plums, apples and pears. Hopefully, you've been able to catch up with them (and our other co-op members) at the weekly farmers market in Castlemaine

at the Camp Reserve each Wednesday from 2.30 pm - 5.30 pm.

Fruit Fly Season - Tips




It's been a fruit-fly free season up until now, but the danger period is a long way from being over. So, if you have a fruit tree in your garden (which still has fruit on it), here's what you can do:

- 1 Put monitoring traps out if you haven't already - "Biotrap" is one that's recommended for monitoring (you can buy them from Mount Alexander Timber and Hardware in Campbells Creek, or online at biotrap.com.au).
- 2 Monitor your traps at least every week.
- 3 If you find flies in your trap, or you notice infected fruit on the tree, take next steps like netting or spraying (with organic spray, of course!). The most effective way to protect your fruit is to net your trees, so it's worth having some nets on hand in case you need to use them.
- 4 Continue to practise excellent hygiene by picking all your fruit, including picking up all the fruit from the ground.
- 5 Get more information from our website (we highly recommend you watch the fruit fly master class, if you haven't already), or the council website.

Summer Pruning

On other topics, it's just about time to start thinking about summer pruning of apricots and cherries. These trees are particularly prone to fungal disease. Pruning them in the warm, still weather of late summer/autumn can minimise the risk of disease, rather than waiting until the cold, wet weather of winter (when most other fruit trees are pruned).

However, in some circumstances, it's also fine to prune your cherry or apricot trees in winter. For example:

-  if they're still young (in the 'establishment' pruning phase);
-  if the trees are disease-free, and
-  if you're still learning how to prune and will find the job easier when the leaves have fallen off, and you can see what you're doing.

Before you start any pruning, make sure your secateurs are very sharp and clean, particularly if they've been used on diseased trees. It's easy to clean them in a 1:10 solution of bleach, or wipe the blades with eucalyptus oil. Some gardening experts recommend painting the pruning cuts, but we've found it preferable just to let the cuts dry naturally. Therefore, it's always best to avoid pruning if there's a threat of rain.

Top Tips for March

Here are our top three tips for successful fruit growing in March:

- 1 If you've drape-netted your trees, remove the nets as soon as you've picked the fruit. The heavy nets can weigh down the growing tips of your trees and make it harder to prune them into a good shape, and it's also easier to get the nets off while there are still some leaves on the tree.
- 2 If you want to try growing your own peach trees this year (and save yourself the expense of buying trees), save the seeds from any peaches or nectarines that you eat. Any peach or nectarine would do. At this stage all you need to do is save the seed every time you eat one and just let the flesh rot off them. Then store the seeds in damp sand, keep them moist over winter, and they'll be ready to plant out next spring to grow your own rootstocks (which you can then graft).
- 3 Pears are one of the few fruit that need to be picked before they're ripe, and then ripened off the tree (some varieties can go floury if you ripen them on the tree). However, you still need to make sure the fruit is mature before you pick them. A great way to tell is to cut one open and look at the seeds – they should be dark brown and plump.

Hugh and Katie Finlay are certified organic orchardists and offer Grow Great Fruit organic home fruit growing courses. They're also founding members of the Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op. Head to growgreatfruit.com to sign up for their free Weekly Fruit Tips newsletter and register for one of their free online workshops.

Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op Success

World Wildlife Fund Grant– Innovate to Regenerate

Katie Finlay speaking on behalf of the Harcourt Organic Cooperative told *The Core* of their successful bid for a grant from the World Wildlife Fund. Katie said, 'The cooperative has been running for some years now and we feel ready to look to the future, to make it sustainable for ourselves and our tenants and thus for their customers. There are many challenges our small farmers face, not the least being to make a moderate income while producing ethically grown products.'

As many readers will be aware Katie and Hugh Finlay became organic orchardists some years ago. In a move which some may have seen as radical, they decided to open up their farm as an organic cooperative in July 2018. They leased out the orchard, now run by the Orchard Keepers, set aside land for organic vegetable growing for Gung Hoe Growers and leased land for a dairy, run by Sellar Farmhouse Creamery. Katie and Hugh also run Grow Great Fruit, while Katie, her sister, and their father run Carr's Organic Fruit Tree Nursery. You can read about the co-op at: hofcoop.com.au

The WWF grant will allow the cooperative to identify gaps and needs in their businesses and to plan for success in the coming years. Katie said, 'We are hugely grateful to the World Wildlife Fund as the grant will give us the means to produce a number of plans for the future. We have grown and have more stakeholders, more

employees and volunteers. There are many voices now that can have input into the co-op's future. We can also learn from others as there are many people around the world doing similar projects.'

'One of our major initiatives will be to investigate a land-sharing model which provides long-term security for tenant farmers. There is a big question here: Can the food produced on the cooperative be affordable to purchasers and provide a living wage to the producers? We will also produce a whole-farm plan.

We will be looking at land-use capability, investigating soil health, hydrology, biodiversity and asking the questions: Are there better uses for the land, can we fit anyone else onto this amount of land and, how do we ensure long-term access to farmland that is leased out?

'We also want to record the indigenous history of this piece of country and very importantly we need to develop a comprehensive fire plan, taking into account the changing climate.

'To cap all this off we will be sharing our model, first by documenting everything we have discovered and we will produce templates of farm processes which we will make freely available. We will also produce



a film about the process and the outcomes. We are excited and challenged by this project and look forward to sharing our experiences. The project will be finished in June 2024.'

There are two other innovative and regenerative projects in Castlemaine and surrounds which have received funding from the World Wildlife Fund. Look out for news of their launch in local media.

Innovate to Regenerate is a program that aims to support regenerative, community-led solutions that encourage impact investment in priority areas such as food, biodiversity and climate, and to establish a powerful network equipped to regenerate Australia. (From the WWF website.)

Robyn Miller



Weather & Water

Are we entering a drought?

February began with much cooler weather than normal. In fact, it felt like a 'cold snap'. After enduring two or three cool days we lit the wood fire on February 4. A week later hot temperatures returned, faded away, and then returned a week later. Saturday 18 February began a run of temperatures in the low 30's and high 20's. The last week of February had a distinctly autumnal feel and on Saturday 25 there was 1 mm of rain.

Everyone is commenting on how dry it has become. We received 25.5 mm of rain in December, only 11 mm fell in January, and 12 mm in February. Dry grass predominates across the landscape in many places and while it was a relatively cool month, across the state grass fires sprang up with a few of them threatening

properties and lives.

Our not-so-grand total of rainfall for the year is 23 mm compared to 2022 where at the end of February we had received 103.5 mm of rain.

The Bureau of Meteorology is predicting below median rainfall for most of Australia away from the south east coast; with temperatures likely to be warmer than usual for the time of year. The outlook predicts the end of La Niña and a neutral ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation index) during autumn.

The Bureau is expecting a dry outlook for eastern Australia with warmer than normal days and also that the autumn break will be later than usual.

On the climate influences page of the BOM website the following concerning trend statement appears:

Longer-term trends: Australia's climate has warmed by around 1.47 °C in the period 1910–2021, leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events. Southern Australia has seen a reduction of 10 to 20% in cool season (April–October) rainfall in recent decades, especially in the absence of a strong 'wet' climate driver.

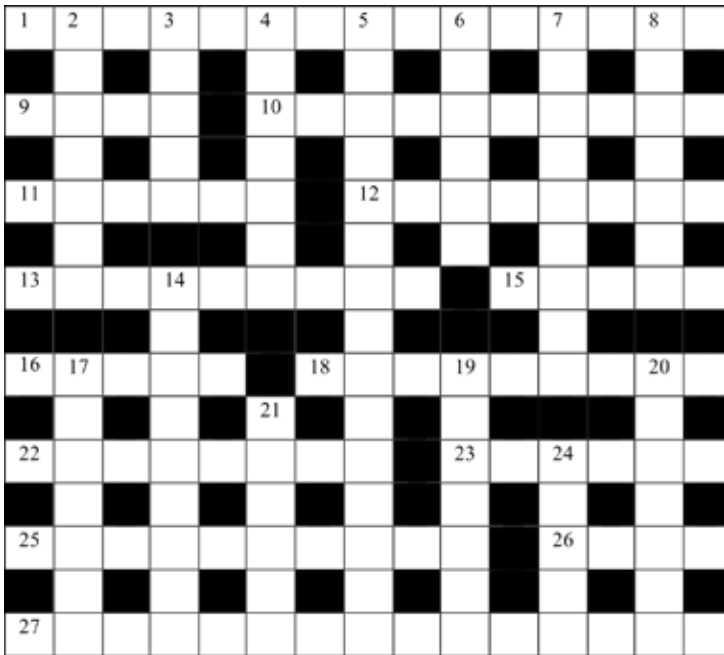
Reservoir Levels

Barkers Creek (as at 27 Feb): 59.2%
Malmsbury: 51%
Lauriston: 90%
Upper Coliban: 98% (as at 4 March)

Robyn Miller

March 2023 Xwd

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Down:

2. Incognito hawk in a Dane's toolbox? (7)
3. Retains what is wired-in after losing head and foot in the scramble. (5)
4. Ursula mixes 500 to gratify their wishes. (7)
5. No handicap on the Isle of Man? (5-6,4)
6. Under direction of sunrise, Henry's number is up after contorting his thigh. (6)
7. Maybe get the real tally sideways? (9)
8. It is said that we hear this way. (7)
14. Overworked and pedestrian ALP promissory notes? (9)
17. Stuck on board at the start, but constantly moving... (2,3,2)
19. Fashionable left dictator won't get the 72 virgins? (7)
20. Ran up over speed to tell it how it is. (7)
21. Bipedal Vauxhall dragon? (6)
24. The moving finger that points at modern technology? (5)

Across:

1. Since this healer has been operating, she has been mired in a morass of legal threats and innuendo. Maybe she needs to hire steel chains to extract herself from the mire, and to prove that she is above this murkiness. (3,2,2,3,5)
9. Just in case you thought the Spanish were cruel, this mob of insiders had its work cut out to resist them... (4)
10. This sort of negative review is coming out—ready or got! (10)
11. A toff, also? (2,4)
12. Pole-slayer hypnotises... (8)
13. How one's rel. stewed in the sauna. (9)
15. Sloppy deployment—cunning manoeuvres after losing one of the solution's starters. (5)
16. Bud to take root in eventual paranoia? (5)
18. That guy filing just decomposes, making modern life insightfully. (9)
22. Architectural levels repeated in oral narratives? (8)
23. Something to make a milliner chuffed, or a head-covering better than a hankie. (6)
25. Prior to workman? (10)
26. Last note of the guitar on the dark veranda might come back to bite you. (4)
27. Beware! Open not! Reptiles have written it! (6-3,6)

February 2023 Xwd solution

© McW Feb '19



Across:

1. After the deletion, don't sign here!
9. How long the first half of the first half of twelve has to ferment? [Well?]
10. Stained window-smasher—cool antics!
11. I sound scared enough to come apart.
12. Choice of two solutions: a) product of non-distilled process (8), or b) consuming bird with sting? (3,5) [a) beverages; b) bee eater]
13. The tree Rambo pulled apart gauges emotional intensity, weather, etc...

Down:

2. It raises air (e.g. in) a part of Africa).
3. I'm aghast! Your premature exposure was premature...
4. The wind led a backflip around it to fade away.
5. Other (sober) louts might stand in for the drunks firing problems! [Well?]
6. Does he reverse Pole-dancer's parents' anti-marriage stance before he races her off?
7. They're lusable, ill-formed or not, to get the progeny asleep.
8. Strange to think that, in the present fraught climate over franking credits, one Steggles chook could provide for retirement.
15. [Native] Dog that slinks out to stop the noise?
16. Sharp, not thick... [Well?]
18. Hero meets two others for fun in bed.
22. First Nation's minor ego misused as term of exhilaration!
23. Titans arranging rocks in N. Ireland? [Causeway...]
25. Teenager in charge, shortly: she's my relative.
26. Fashionable polar [N/S] watering-holes?
27. Who scorns the solemn disavowal of it in Scotland? [Hoots!]
14. Skeleton-shaker shot a poet.
17. We were just young start-ups looking for that niche... Er... IOU heaps, I guess, but I'm outa here—see ya later! [And thanks for all the fish!]
19. One Assumption was that he was a Spanish Cretan... [who painted it...]
20. Can we meet in a cinema for an afternoon romp?
21. He's got the upset face in the motley crowd at the stag night!
24. Indian opera diva's songs could be deconstructed into her garb. [A sari...]

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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

Community Diary Dates

Saturday March 11: 9 am–4 pm Harcourt Applefest, James Park, Harcourt.

Thursday March 16: 6.30 pm Harcourt Valley Landcare meeting, ANA Hall/Heritage Centre.

Sunday March 19: Open Day Harcourt Organic Farming Cooperative. For information and bookings: www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=1018352&

Sunday March 26: 10 am–12 pm, Working Bee Harcourt Valley Landcare; details on Facebook.

Friday April 7 to Sunday April 23: School holidays in Victoria.

Friday April 7 to Monday 10 April: Easter ... Good Friday (9 am) and Easter Sunday (9 am) services at Harcourt Uniting Church.

Carpet Bowls: 7 pm Wednesdays, Carpet Bowls, summer and winter, Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt.

CFA: Brigade meeting night is the 3rd Monday of each month starting at 8.00 pm; Sunday morning equipment checks and maintenance runs starts at 9.00 am; siren is tested at 9.15 am. Contact: Captain Andrew Wilson for further details 0428 387 339. CFA is located in Bridge Street, Harcourt.

CWA: First Thursday of the month, 1.00 pm at Harcourt Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt.

Grace Church: Tuesdays at 10.30 am: Morning tea and prayers; Sunday Service at 11 am; 30 Buckley Street, Harcourt. Tuesday evenings at 7.30 pm: Zoom Bible Study: A Christian discipleship course covering the basics of the faith. All welcome, you can commence at any time. Please contact the Pastor for a link: pastor@gracecastlemaine.org.au

Harcourt Bowls Club: See page 16.

Harcourt Lions Club: Meetings every third Friday of the month at 7.30 pm at the Victorian Miniature Railway, Harmony Way.

Heritage Centre: Every Wednesday at the ANA Hall from 9 am – 3 pm or by appointment: 0400 916 527.

Pony Club: Second Sunday of the month. Contact Peggy Mills, 0419 902 400. The Pony Club is located next to the swimming pool.

Uniting Church: Sundays at 9 am in the Uniting Church, Buckley Street, Harcourt. The service is followed by morning tea. All welcome. Donations of food and other household needs for St Vinnies can be left at the Church door on Sunday mornings 9–10 am or contact, Jan 5474 2226, to arrange for collection.

Walking Group: Monday and Thursday at 9.30 am. Meet at the ANA Hall. The one hour leisurely walk is usually followed by morning tea, and new members are always welcome.

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