

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE



Edition 109 – October 2023

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Welcome to the Harcourt Community House



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DEADLINES & PUBLICATION DATES

We aim to publish online 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 VICTORIAN SENIORS FESTIVAL, celebrated for the first time ever at the new Harcourt Valley Community House, was enjoyed by local Harcourt residents and volunteers alike. Despite the weather being less than perfect, the atmosphere was happy, and everyone enjoyed the lunch and the entertainment. Bernhard Boulton and John Meir provided a wonderful musical background on the newly donated and tuned piano that graces the auditorium.

A partnership between Castlemaine Community House, Mount Alexander Shire Council, Maldon Community House and Harcourt Valley Community House ensured that the festival was celebrated across the Shire and accessible to more people than ever this year. Thank you to the volunteers who cleaned up around the station, mowed the grass, picked up the fencing, donated food, gas and BBQs and cooked the lunch. Thanks also go to IGA Castlemaine for its welcome and generous donation and to Real Strength, Bendigo Amateur Radio Club, Harcourt Heritage Centre and Be Connected who spent the time to showcase their organisations.





Some Time Ago ...

HARCOURT SENIORS' TRIP TO LORNE

Harcourt (Vic.) Seniors have an excellent idea of having an annual week-end away together. They recently visited Lorne, and as can be gathered from our picture, taken at the famous seaside resort, they had an enjoyable time.



THE Seniors were accompanied by Mr and Mrs K. Bertuch.

The party left Harcourt at 7 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 21, and went down through Daylesford, Ballarat, Rokewood and Cressy to Colac, where they had lunch.

After a short look at Colac, the party went across to Forrest and down through the Otway Ranges to Apollo Bay. This part of the trip was very instructive along the winding mountain road beside giant ash trees and tree ferns among which wildflowers and shrubs in full bloom provided gay colors as far as could be seen down the steep gullies.

After a short stop at Apollo Bay the party travelled to Lorne along the

Great Ocean Road, which provided contrasting scenery precariously close to the cliff faces, above grey rocks speckled with the creaming surf of Bass Strait, reports John Straw, president.

Arriving at Lorne late in the afternoon, the party went to the guest house, where accommodation had been booked, and attended a dance and the pictures in the evening.

At 5.20 a.m. on Sunday most members of the party were awakened by two early risers who insisted that too much sleep was not permitted on this trip.

This resulted in early morning walks along the beach, and aroused the healthy appetites of members who all returned on time for breakfast.

Members then went to

Erskine Falls, about 1½ miles from the road along a steep track down into the gully. "Among the shady tree ferns beside the crystal clear stream we saw the falls in all their silvered glory," adds John.

Leaving Lorne at 2 p.m. the party went to Geelong for several hours, before setting out to go home.

After enjoying a sing-song on the way home, Seniors returned to Harcourt at 10.15 p.m. All were tired, but still enjoyed the last of a wonderful trip.

Special thanks are due to Mr and Mrs W. Hoare, who organised the trip so well. Mr Frank Tully's driving was appreciated so much that Seniors presented him with an unusual but very useful memento.

Weekly Times 16 Dec 1953 via Trove

HPA Update

They say patience is a virtue, but we seem to have been waiting a very long time to receive the promised state government funding for the Harcourt Community House. With the funding agreement finally received, signed and lodged, we were hoping to report in this month's *Core* that we are at last able to start the house functioning as a community facility. Alas, that is not yet to be, and we put programming, furnishing and Internet connection for the house on hold for yet another month. All is not lost of course as we celebrate Seniors Festival at the station, and volunteers continue in good spirit to maintain the grounds and building.

Nevertheless, *The Core* is most grateful to have a meeting place and an office where our editorial committee and volunteer team can meet. Similarly, the HPA Committee which shares the space with *The Core* team is very happy to meet in such an uplifting space. Keep an eye open for the grand opening of the community house and notice of the Christmas BBQ in Stanley Park.

The unexpectedly warm weather has brought out many of our reptilian friends looking for friends of their own, so do stay vigilant and safe over the coming weeks, especially around the garden and walking tracks.

Sha Cordingley
President

Harcourt Progress Association

Council Celebrates the Festive Season with Christmas Grants

Every December Mount Alexander Shire celebrates Christmas with decorations, music and community events.

For the second year, Mount Alexander Shire Council is offering Community Christmas Celebration Grants to help towns across the shire celebrate the festive season. We have also extended these grants so that our larger towns can also get involved.



The grants can be put towards outdoor decorations, community events, Santa visits and other celebrations.

The following grants are available:

- \$1000 or \$500 available for small towns including **Harcourt**, Chewton, Campbells Creek, Guildford, Taradale, Elphinstone, Faraday, Fryerstown, Baringhup, Sutton Grange and Metcalfe.
- A total of \$2,500 each for Maldon and Newstead.
- A total of \$5,000 available for Castlemaine.

Mount Alexander Shire Council's Mayor, Cr Rosie Annear, said that these grants are a great way for Council to support the shire during Christmas.

Memorial Garden Restoration Nearly Complete

All that remains to complete the repairs to the garden near the cenotaph is replanting a couple of the lovely red roses inside the fence and replacing the rosemary hedge on the outside of the fence.

One memorial stone will soon have its brass plate re-attached. The inscribed plate is in the care of the Heritage Centre and was ripped off the top of the stone when a car smashed through the fence in the early hours of May 21 this year. Another memorial brass has a bent corner. It will be gently flattened to restore its appearance.



"Our communities always puts on great celebrations for Christmas, and these grants will help our towns spread the festive cheer", said Mayor Annear.

"The grants can be put towards events, decorations, hampers, live music, catering or anything else you can think of!

"Last year, we saw some of our small towns host barbecues, a petting zoo, local music, family picnics, and of course, a visit from Santa!

"For smaller towns, there's one grant available per township, so make sure you speak to the other community groups in your town before you submit an application."

"Christmas is one of my favourite times of the year and I can't wait to see our shire come to life."

Grant applications open: Tuesday 3 October

Grant applications close: Wednesday 6 November

The application form is quick and simple, and available through at www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Grants, along with guidelines and more details.

To discuss your application with a member of Council staff, call 5471 1700 or email events@mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

From the Shire website.



WALKING TOGETHER Towards Makarrata

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

Place and Context

As days warm up, blue tongues sun on the garden steps. Wararak (Wattle) blossoms. Resting nearby, I am warmed knowing the generosity of Elders who have welcomed me here to Djaara Country. I acknowledge Elders past and present and do my best to tread lightly.

Acknowledgements of Country are tied into all of my entries of Walking Together. This edition considers aspects of place and context that are sometimes overlooked.

We all have ancestors, culture and context. These are important in our collective story - who we are, where we are and how we are. When we listen to Country, we both acknowledge and respond to it. Every bit of our journey is informed by time and place - as 'Country' in the First Nations use of this term.

I was born to young, working-class parents in rural Southern Germany, living my early years in a tiny town and a tiny, solitary house surrounded by fields. There the air force ignored its local impact, jets swooping low, shaking our walls every week. In the early 80s the nation, rumbling with intergenerational trauma, was feeling the threat of the Cold War - nuclear warfare. My family boarded a plane to that curious, vast, distant land down-under to a promise of safety and freedom.

My partner has Northern Italian heritage. We often reflect on nuances of our heritage. A mountain range between those countries, among other contexts, has impacted our history and culture. We similarly reflect about this great land of many nations that our families now call home.

There is so much history and context, beginning with 65,000-plus years of continuous culture and including ongoing colonisation. Australia's diverse climate and geography have impacted the ways that people have traditionally lived, managing lands, waters and seasonal foods. They have shaped knowledge systems, trade, kinship, fire practice, Lore and language over countless generations. Non-First Nations Peoples are just beginning to grasp the diversity of First Peoples on

this continent and the immense wealth of knowledge and wisdom that could benefit us all if we listen.

In an incredible act of unity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, *The Uluru Statement from the Heart* was born. It is a generous and humble invitation directly to the Australian people after so many years of injustice and failed petitions to parliament. It grew from 12 deliberative regional dialogues, each with over 100 local First Nations leaders from across Australia, who each selected representatives to attend the First Nations Constitutional Convention in 2017. An overwhelming consensus of over 250 delegates adopted *The Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

Megan Davis – Cobble Cobble woman, Professor of Law, UNSW, and United Nations Human Rights Councillor writes:

'We are located here together, we are born here, we arrive here, we die here, and we must coexist in a peaceful way. The fundamental message that many elders planted in the Uluru Statement is that the country needs peace, and the country cannot be at peace until we meet: The Uluru statement is the beginning of that.'

First People face racism every day. There is an all-too-common lack of understanding of history such as realities of displacement including white assimilation policies. These have been experienced in no short measure in Australia's most populated areas where First Peoples are diverse in appearance and have many important stories to tell. Many non-First Nations people may be surprised to learn that the majority of First Peoples live here.

First Nations have diverse needs and solutions. Yet there are very significant failings at a federal level on issues that disproportionately affect First Peoples across the continent, including incarceration, child detention, deaths in custody, child removals from families, health outcomes, intergenerational trauma and lower life expectancy.

Federal policies have not closed gaps on significant issues. In some areas the gap has widened. *The Uluru Statement from the Heart* speaks to these issues of safety and freedom.

Both resistance and unity have defined First Peoples' survival across this diverse land - Australia, and through many acts of resilience, First People continue to call for and show the way.

The Uluru Statement Of The Heart: ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement

Floria Maschek is an ally and member of Friends of Nalderun (FoN). FoN members are guided by Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation and are diverse individuals and representatives of many local community networks, supporting Nalderun's visions and work. Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation supports the Aboriginal Community and is led by Aboriginal people while providing many learning and cultural opportunities to the broader community. Nalderun is a Dja Dja Wurrung word meaning 'all together'.

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



The next Repair Café is on
October 29 at the
Castlemaine Community House,
30 Templeton Street
from 10 am to 1 pm.

Enter from the carpark and garden
at the rear of the building.

Bring along broken household appliances, sewing repairs, get help with wiping info from mobile phones, learn basic bicycle maintenance. Join the Mending Circle to learn darning and crochet.

A gold coin donation is appreciated.
For further information call Chris:
5470 5508.

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



Chatting with Harcourt CWA Spring Fashions

Finally spring has sprung! Wasn't it wonderful to see the sunshine, feel the warmth, and see the blossoms and the new green leaves seemingly open overnight? I hope you are all now sorting through your wardrobes. All those winter clothes can now be hung in the wardrobe in the spare room or boxed up and put on the shelf in the ensuite. It's spring time, and time to freshen up and brighten up all your favourite clothes.

Which brings me to our fashion parade – which we have named 'Second Hand Rose'.

We are so fortunate in Castlemaine to have the best of op shops, and one of them is the Castlemaine Salvos Thrift Shop in Forest Street. Peter Bottomley, owner of Run Rabbit Run cafe, manager of the Thrift Shop and, of course, a contestant in My Kitchen Rules in 2022, is going to be our host.

Peter will present a parade of vintage and modern recycled garments donated to his shop, and visitors will have the option to buy or try on one of the many other garments that will be made available on the day.

With the ever increasing awareness of the mountains of clothes that end up in landfill, here is an opportunity to think 'recycle'. It's amazing what treasures you can find.

So, come along to the Harcourt Leisure Centre on October 19 at 1.30 pm and see what treasures you can find. The cost for the afternoon will be \$10, which covers your entry and the usual delicious Harcourt CWA Afternoon Tea.

I have mentioned on a few occasions that we have many artistic members in our group and Diane Dooley is up there with the best. At our monthly Craft Day meeting Diane, who was a florist in a previous life, provided flowers from her own garden and from the gardens of other members living in Harcourt to each participant who, under her expert instruction, created their own beautiful floral arrangement.

Many thanks Diane, a wonderful afternoon was had by all.



I am looking forward to chatting with you again next month.

Lyn Rule
Publicity Officer, Harcourt CWA




Country Women's Association of Victoria
Harcourt Branch
and the Castlemaine Salvo's Thrift Shop
present



SECOND-HAND ROSE

Thursday 19th October 2023 at 1:30 PM.
Harcourt Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt

Your host, Peter Bottomley, owner of Run Rabbit Run cafe, Manager of the Castlemaine Salvo's Thrift Shop and a contestant in "My Kitchen Rules" 2022 will present a parade of vintage and modern recycled garments.

The event will include the usual delicious Harcourt CWA Afternoon Tea following the parade.

Admission \$10 Trading Table Great Raffle Prizes

RSVP by 12 October 2023
Helen Hand: 0448 510 996
email: harcourtowa@gmail.com

You Can Help ...

If you know someone who would like to get a copy of *The Core*, either in print or online, but is having difficulty accessing it, let us know. We can make sure they get their preferred version – we can have it put in their letterbox, or we can send a copy by email.

Let us know by sending the person's details to: news@harcourt.vic.au


Shout out to Jock Conn, a former Harcourt resident currently living in Bendigo, who now receives *The Core* by mail each month. His daughter gets her copy by email.

Blume's Bakery Update



'We aim to open in March 2024,' said bakery owner Jodie Pillinger when I contacted her this month. 'We need a date as a goal to keep the project moving along. The beautiful granite wall built by Marcus Houston has drawn a great deal of attention and favourable comments. The work underway at present is to lay a concrete pathway in front of the granite wall. The path will connect the front of the block so pedestrians can access the bakery safely without having to walk through the car park. We plan to have one or two garden beds within the car park as well. While the works are going on outside, I have been clearing up inside the bakery shop in preparation for a new fit-out.'

While all this construction is going on, Jodie continues to bake for other events in the area. Coming up soon, Jodie will be baking for a fundraiser for CFA groups which will take place at the Bendigo Community Farmers Market. 'On October 29, there is another Sweet Sisters event which I will be baking for. This will take place in the newly restored Beehive Building in Pall Mall Bendigo. And in November, I will be baking for the Castlemaine Farmers Market.'



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Harcourt Carpet Bowls

Our winter competition has now ended with the playing of the Grand Final between New Breed and Rebels, with New Breed winning by a margin of only 2 points: 16 to 14. We have had approximately 22 keen bowlers playing throughout the season but, of course, it would be much better if more people from ages 8 years old upwards came along to enable the make-up of many more teams to increase the competition and keep the Association going.

To complete the season we all met for a lovely evening meal together at the Cumberland Hotel where the Harcourt Carpet Bowls Lions Shield was presented to the winning team of (Captain) Loretta Rice, Diane Dooley, Narelle Jenkin, Sushil Code, Fay Hards, Des Rice, Myrlin Hauser.

Harcourt Invitational Carpet Bowls Tournament (Formerly Victorian Country Carpet Bowls Championships)

Unfortunately, we were unable to hold the proposed Harcourt Invitational Carpet Bowls Tournament as Bendigo & Horsham Carpet Bowls Associations have now disbanded which only leaves Harcourt, Girgarre and Kyabram actually playing carpet bowls in Victoria. We hope to continue for a few years yet!

For further Information on WINTER BOWLS, please contact Loretta: 5474 2453 or John: 5474 2226.

Summer Carpet Bowls Season

The summer carpet bowls competition will commence on Wednesday 8 November 2023 at 7.30 pm, and to be held at the Harcourt District Leisure Centre, Bingham Road Harcourt. Those wishing to participate are asked to arrive by 7.15 pm so teams can be sorted for play to start on time. We will play to early December then break and recommence after Christmas until March. Hope to see you there.

For further information on SUMMER BOWLS, please contact Peter: 0408 305 325.



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Harcourt Lions Club

The Harcourt District Lions Club Pride of Lions continues to increase with a visit from our 1st Vice District Governor Desmond Jones on Thursday 21st September to our Club gathering where he Invested our two new Lions, Colin and Desmond.

A lovely evening meal, supplied by our club members and fellowship, was enjoyed by all who attended followed by our usual discussion to organise upcoming events.

Spring is here and, once again, the Harcourt Lions Club was called on to erect its marquee at the Harcourt Valley Winery for a wedding. Thank you to those who helped with putting it up, and taking it down a few days later.

Next Club gathering will be Thursday 19th October at VMR.



Raymond Rice, Colin Mierisch, Vice-District Governor Desmond Jones, Desmond Dooley, Loretta Rice.



Marquee at Harcourt Valley Vineyard.

mainFM is an award winning radio station based in Castlemaine, broadcasting music, community news, talks and specialist programs and events throughout a large area of Central Victoria, serving our community.

With over 100 local volunteer presenters with a passion for radio, our programs are varied and diverse with over 70 shows across the program grid, transmitting 24 hours a day and streaming online via mainfm.net

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Recycling lids

Last year the Community Bank Maldon & District supported the Castlemaine Secondary College with funds for a machine that will shred and melt plastic lids which they can then pour into moulds to make products to sell. Giving new life to old plastic is a fantastic way to recycle and fits beautifully into our organisation's vision of being thriving, sustainable and connected communities.

Now that they have the machine in place at the College, they are nearly ready to be shredding and melting lids – but they are a particular type of lid – only the ones with 2 and 4 inside the recycle logo underneath the lid itself. Lids need to be washed and dried, and then can be dropped into the Community Bank branches at Maldon or Dunolly.

Students are very excited to receive the lids so they can get their 'circular economy' moving. They are just waiting on some safety guards to be made for the machines so they can safely start producing new items, such as the comb shown here.

So next time you throw a container into the recycle bin, check under the lid to see if it's a 2 or a 4 and then at least the lid can be turned into something new!

Maldon Community Bank is open Monday to Friday 9.30am-4pm, Saturday 9am-12noon

Dunolly Branch is open Monday to Friday 10am-2pm



Maldon & District Financial Services Ltd (MDFSL)

(trading as Maldon & District Community Bank)

Annual General Meeting

**5.30pm for a 6 pm start
Wednesday 1 November 2023**

Maldon Community Centre,
Francis St Maldon

Annual report and Agenda for AGM available in branch and www.maldoncb.com.au from Wed 4 October

Contact Jane Hoiting, Company Secretary, 0478 435 110, executiveofficer@mdcb.com.au

Councillor Comment



Hi all,

How lucky we are to live here, for most of the year the temperature is ideal. Over breakfast we have been discussing global warming and the damage done by air conditioning. If we all turned the air conditioning off, imagine the impact that would have.

I spent yesterday morning mowing. Keeping the grass under control at this time of year takes some work. It's all about early preparation for the possibility of a hot summer. My CFA friends will be in readiness, but are you?

Last month's Council meeting was business as usual. A couple of planning matters: One was rejected because the applicant did not provide the information requested by staff. No surprises there. The other was for a dwelling on a bush paddock, which was approved, but I have my doubts about it.

A while back I was talking to a guy who survived the King Lake fires – only by good luck. He described the fire coming towards his house. The first thing that happened was the windows exploded from the heat and the fire was in the house with him. Make sure your house insurance is up to date, and leave early if you live in the bush!!

On a more positive note, congratulations to our football and netball teams on their successes.

Council continues to invest in sporting facilities. I do look forward to seeing our new lighting – that will be great. The numbers keep rising on the 'round ball' game. At a local level we need to find those guys some space and better facilities.

Talking sport, we go for Carlton. It was a tough weekend for us. I did enjoy the first quarter, but eventually we ran out of gas.

Best regards to all, Tony

AG Cordy
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New Social Group For Older LGBTIQ+ People

Silver Rainbow Social Club is a group that supports LGBTIQ+ people aged over 50 and their friends, carers and allies in central Victoria. The group provides opportunities for social connection in a safe and supportive environment and information about local support services.



Silver Rainbow Social Club is financially supported by the Mount Alexander Shire Council Community Grants Program, Dhelkaya Health and Thorne Harbour Health. It is entirely run by volunteers from the rainbow community.

The group facilitator, Tonye Segbedzi, said, 'We know from the research that older LGBTIQ+ people suffer from higher rates of loneliness than the general population due to social isolation arising from historical discrimination. We wanted to find a fun way to help older members of the local rainbow community to connect with each other after we came out of the COVID pandemic.'

Silver Rainbow Social Club holds meet-ups in Castlemaine on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. They also have monthly guest speakers and quarterly excursions to local events. Volunteers can help participants with transport if needed.

Tonye Segbedzi said, 'Since the group started in late May 2023, we've had a great response with almost a hundred attendees at our events. Our participants were very interested to hear from the first two speakers we've had, who talked about the services provided by Thorne Harbour Country and Council. We also organised a table at a recent Trivia Night and had great fun.'

For more information on the next Silver Rainbow Social Club meet-up contact Tonye on 0422 760 693 or join the Silver Rainbow Social Club Facebook Group for more information.



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Tony: 0439 742 434
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Harcourt CFA Emergency Services Expo

The Mount Alexander Shire Emergency Services Expo is happening on Saturday October 14th from 11.00 am to 3.00 pm at the Western Reserve (opposite IGA) Forest Street Castlemaine.

All emergency services are planning to be there, and it is the ideal opportunity to, not only come and view the variety of vehicles and equipment each organisation has, but also have your questions answered. The Harcourt Brigade will have our squirty trucks operating as part of the entertainment for the children (and children at heart) similar to last year.

Preparing for Summer

With the official announcement that we have returned to an El Niño weather pattern, the predictions for this summer fire season are not very comforting.

Weather predictions and observations are showing that we are in for a very hot, dry period that will have the potential for large fires to occur. The brigade has begun preparing for the coming fire season, conducting our mandatory entrapment drills, hazardous trees refresher training and hose testing etc.

How is your preparedness going? Do you have your fire plan and have you done a review of it to ensure it is current? The brigade has information available if you need some advice on what to do. Coming along to the Expo is also an opportunity to get advice.

Brigade Turnouts

The zero turnouts for August were continuing through September until the night of the 16th when we were paged to support Lockwood at a reported fire in the vicinity of the roundabout at Ravenswood. This was reported by a train driver. After investigation by the first vehicle on scene, it turned out to be a registered burn in Hilda Drive Ravenswood.

While registering a burn does assist in reducing the number of turnouts, if an accurate location cannot be given to match it to a registered burn, then brigades need to respond to ensure it is not a second fire and a real emergency.

This callout was followed by two more calls closer to home in Harmony Way where we were paged to sightings of fires which were not registered burns. On both occasions the brigade was paged to investigate. Please ensure that all burning off is registered to assist in avoiding these unnecessary callouts.

It is worth noting that the three of these fires were at night when things look a lot more dramatic than during daylight.



Dangers of Lithium-ion Batteries

The CFA, FRV (Fire Rescue Victoria) and Energy Safe Victoria have collaborated to launch a Victorian lithium-ion battery fire safety campaign due to an increase in fires starting from them and the hazards that are associated with them when they catch fire. The key messages are that Victorian fire services are responding to at least one significant lithium-ion battery incident a week and they expect the frequency to increase.

Reasons for lithium-ion batteries catching fire include overheating, overcharging, use of non-compatible or defective charging equipment, physical damage and lack of maintenance.

Lithium-ion battery fires can present as self-sustaining, jet-like flames with potential to release toxic gas and shrapnel.

These key actions can prevent a lithium-ion battery or powered device from catching fire:

- Purchase products from a reputable supplier and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use chargers that are originally supplied and compatible with the device.
- Never charge your device on or under flammable surfaces such as beds, pillows and couches.
- Charge your device on non-combustible surfaces in a room where a smoke alarm is installed.
- Don't use batteries or devices that show signs of swelling, bulging, leaking or overheating.

If your e-product does catch fire – call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Never throw lithium-ion batteries in your regular waste or recycling collection bins. Many battery related fires start in household bins, rubbish trucks and waste facilities.

Take care, reduce your risk and see you at the expo.

Tyrone Rice
Brigade Community Safety Coordinator

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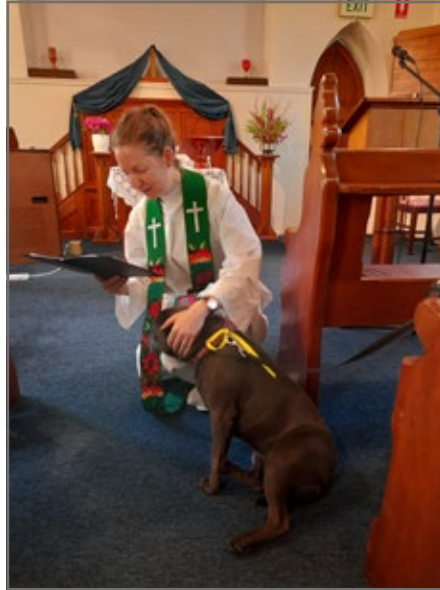
Harcourt Uniting Church

Blessing of the Animals

As I always remind you: 'Everyone is welcome to join us any Sunday at Harcourt Uniting Church.'

On Sunday 1 October three dogs, two budgies and some blue wrens came for the Blessing of the Animals at our Harcourt Church. Well, the budgies and blue wrens wouldn't have stayed still long enough to be blessed so we had a photo of the budgies and three blue wren ornaments. Rev Sarah blessed each individual animal and even had one of the dogs jump up onto her lap while its owner was giving the bible reading.

The Blessing of the Animals was first performed by St Francis of Assisi back in the 13th Century. He considered all nature as 'a mirror of God', all creatures to be treated as equals, and was known to have even preached to birds and



fish. Today we would consider him an environmentalist who was well ahead of his time. Some even speak of him as an original Earth Day advocate. In 1979 Pope John Paul XI declared St Francis Patron Saint of Ecologists. Our theme in recent weeks has been Creation, so the Blessing of the Animals was a fitting conclusion.

A 'Spring into Spring' concert held in the Castlemaine Uniting Church recently raised money to assist families finding it difficult to prepare for Christmas. Previously, we have provided Christmas hampers and wrapped gifts for these

families however a voucher means families can have the dignity of buying their own gifts and food. Students from several local schools opened the concert with an amazing performance 'Just Brass'. As the name suggests, Just Brass provides a great opportunity for students to learn a brass instrument and is supported by the Salvation Army. Search for 'Just Brass' in your search engine of choice for more details.

Sam, the local vet, also served as a part-time policeman in a small outback town. One night the phone rang and the caller asked his wife: 'Is Sam there?' To which she replied: 'He's here, but do you want him as a policeman or a vet?' There was a short pause and then came the reply: 'A little bit of both actually. We can't get our German shepherd to open his mouth and there's a prowler in it!'

Jan Jenkin



Expression of interest


Harcourt Valley Community House

We are taking expressions of interest from skilled and qualified people who wish to be involved in providing courses at the community house.

Contact Paul Mizzi: paul.mizzi@harcourtprogress.vic.au

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[Extract] – a milliner’s *felt*
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Milliner’s introduction
The
Milliner

I am not a hatter.
I am a milliner.
I “make” hats for women.
Not men!

,
To confuse me between the two,
I shall shriek a great bantering! - to rectify my own
un-“doing!”

I do not sell hats.
I make hats,
by
the use of my own bare hands.

Each hat;
perfectly arranged.
Made in such fine detail.
Silk, lace, and ribbon.
shipped from the orient of sheer exquisiteness.
Merchants. Vast open seas.
The felt ~ used to interlock each hand-crafted gem,
is somewhat “poison”.

Some say that I am “mad”.
Perhaps I am!.

, for you see,
I have what you may consider a “disease”.

I am the *mad hatter*,
but
I make hats for women,
not for men.

I got the vapours.
The toxic fumes
of my life’s work ~ has allowed me,
to speak
now ever so rambunctiously.

Maniacal
Deranged
Irrational
Quite insane.

The felt itself, is my demise.
I can *feel* [the] felt.
The felt of my life’s work, is my demise.

I can feel the felt.
Making me a lunatic.

I am; the Mad Hatter.
I make hats for women.
Feel the felt
watch *me*, turn crazy...



Photo provided by Daryl Fleay.

The Aussie Bird Count

The Aussie Bird Count will run from 16 to 22 October over National Bird Week. Register today on the Aussie Bird Count website.

The Aussie Bird Count is Australia’s biggest citizen science event, and this year it is turning ten. Join with other citizen scientists around the country to observe and count the birds around you throughout the week. This could be in your backyard, local park, or favourite outdoor space. It only takes twenty minutes to count the birds you see or hear.

Last year, Australians recorded more than 3.9 million birds of 620 different species, according to Sean Dooley of BirdLife Australia. The Aussie Bird Count collects vast amounts of data which helps BirdLife Australia fill knowledge gaps about Australian birds. It’s also a great opportunity to connect with the natural environment and a great activity to involve the kids.

(Source: The North Central Chat published by The North Central Catchment Management Authority.) For more environmental news for the north-central area see here: https://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/north_central_chat_-_october_2023.pdf

THE VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

Editor's note: *The Core* is pleased to print this article on the Voice to Parliament. We would also have published an article outlining the No case should we have received one.

On 14 September, I was among a large crowd that went to the concert in support of the YES Campaign at the Theatre Royal.

The performance encapsulated something far richer than a concert with many voices. There was an atmosphere of coming together of difference in a way where *all Australians* could stand as one. There was so much goodwill in this celebration ... such a great yearning to recognise our First Nations people. Members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sang and spoke with great conviction, together with us non-Aboriginal folk.



Yes, together we all recognised the importance of unification of all our peoples through the YES Campaign. It was a wonderful evening and I want to pay homage to all those generations of Indigenous Australians before us who worked so hard and fought wars in their own country in order to maintain their rights.

Let's make one thing absolutely clear...

I take up this opportunity to write in support of Indigenous Australians to hold a Voice in Parliament. By voting YES, we will be recognising 65,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples' continuous history in this land.

"It is a proven fact that when Aboriginal peoples actually have a say over their own peoples' outcomes there is an improvement in their circumstances."

Susannah

For Indigenous Australians to be recognised and take their rightful place within this country, they need constitutional recognition. Acknowledging our First Nations people through the Constitution will allow for the formation of an advisory committee to speak to Parliament on matters that directly affect their own communities. Australians should note that there are currently over 200 advisory groups that provide input into Federal Parliament. Groups such as the Australian Medical Association, the Pharmaceutical Industry, Unions and the mining industry, to name a few.

It is a known fact that when Indigenous Australians have a say over what happens to their own communities, the result always leads to better outcomes.

Over 80 percent of Indigenous Australians support recognition in the Constitution through a Voice.

In 2023, the Australian people have an opportunity to vote YES to an eloquent request, contained in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians be given a say, a Voice, in the Federal laws that specifically apply to them, and that their communities can be recognised in the Australian Constitution as the first peoples of this land.

It's a simple, practical, moral question, for the good of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and for the good of the whole nation. And for non-Indigenous Australians, it's a once in a generation test of our decency, maturity, dignity, and grasp of our history.

The rationale for the Voice occurred in 2017 through nation-wide consultation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders that evolved in to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Contained within the Uluru Statement is the following:

'We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.'

"We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution."

"We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of

agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. Makarrata is a word from the language of the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land. The concept captures the idea of two parties coming together after struggle, healing the divisions of the past. What could be a finer term of reconciliation.'

What an opportunity has been laid before us non-Indigenous people to unite in such a fine and stirring statement.

The Uluru Statement was thoughtfully and manifestly created to offer the best outcomes. First Nations representatives from every part of Australia participated in the formulation of the Uluru Statement. Encapsulated in the statement is the call to establish an Indigenous voice that has a permanent mark. It's beautiful in its honesty and simplicity, and it breathes life into all of us. If I think of all the injustices that Indigenous Australians have suffered, then there's something exceedingly generous for them to welcome non-Indigenous people to join with their vision.

We cannot deny the impact that 250 years of colonisation has had upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They have been murdered, incarcerated, removed from their lands, forbidden to speak their own languages, and forbidden to celebrate their ancient spiritual practices. Their children were forcibly taken away from their parents and placed on missions, removed from all their known world, their belongings, their families, and their cultural roots.

The NO Campaign

Unfortunately, the gesture of goodwill and conciliation has become politicised under so many banners, inciting fear and uncertainty. This is most unfortunate.

The NO Campaign is suggesting, if you don't know, then vote NO. Which is a sad indictment on our society, suggesting that citizens can't be bothered checking facts and information.

Former Liberal Opposition Leader, John Hewson sums up the No Campaign quite plainly, he said the NO campaign is couched in 'language that fuels misinformation and prejudice in support ... of an agenda aligning with negativity and obfuscation. All of which is meant to be divisive ... Not a thought is spared for truth and the national interest.' It is ironic



that the Opposition is ‘now accusing the government and its referendum of being divisive when that has been [their] strategy all along.’ (*The Saturday Paper*, September 9-15, 2023).

The politics has become so ingrained and ugly that Liberal Party members who support the YES campaign have been threatened with losing preselection if they campaign in favour of the YES vote. (*The Saturday Paper*, September 9-15, 2023).

To be fair, I did try and locate local people who would vote NO in an effort to gain their perspective. One person said that local Aboriginal people didn’t amount to much, and emphasised that opinion by saying a prominent local Indigenous person was always seen in the park with illicit substances. Does this person recognise that local white folk make use of illicit substances as well? The comments are racist by nature and there is no truth telling in here. It also demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the thriving community of Dja Dja Wurrung people who are doing so much good for their community and for ours. Our local Djaara people play a pivotal role in the education, well-being, and celebration of indigenous culture within our community.

I’ve tried to keep an open mind and met with some other NO voters. When I enquired of some local people, they informed me that the YES Campaign ‘was all about a money grab. Aboriginal people had already been given \$60 million; or hold on, maybe it was \$60 billion.’

If the campaign succeeded, ‘We’d have to rent our own homes and we wouldn’t be able to go on the oval anymore.’ When I suggested that here in this community Indigenous Australians were shot, the response was that it was because they stole from us. One woman commented that her son wouldn’t be able to go duck shooting any more as he would have to ‘pay for the privilege.’ ‘Albo’s a communist and you have no idea what he has in mind for us. No idea.’

To be honest, I was totally dismayed at the prejudice and misinformation that abounds in closed communities.

A NO Campaigner singled me out as supporting the YES Campaign because I am an immigrant. That’s interesting in itself. My parents came here from the Netherlands. My father was invited here to cook for the 1956 Olympic Games. My parents thought they could get a better life here because much of their home country was flattened by the right-wing extremism of Nazi Germany that killed 20 million people. The Germans took over the Netherlands. They took our produce, our cattle, and farms to feed their growing empire. They rounded up young men to dig their trenches. My father was one of them.

One may reflect on the similarities of what occurred here during colonisation when white settlers threw Indigenous Australians off their land, shot them, poisoned their flour, fenced off the land, killed their main food source, the kangaroos and grazed their sheep on their source of staple grains.

My family’s willingness to participate in this country comes from an understanding of what it is like to lose everything and be denied one’s freedom. Yes, exactly as what occurred here in Australia when the British colonised this country.

Many immigrants have come to Australia and enriched it, as have the cultures of all the various migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Australia.

We, as non-Indigenous people need to let go of long-held opinions that are out-dated and uninformed. These short-term judgements that limit vision for all the elements that make up a strong community. We are one nation. In fact, all of us non-Indigenous people have a history of coming from somewhere else. Are we not grateful to be welcomed by our First Nation people?

Why do we need The Voice?

For too long, Governments have created different representative bodies



for the Aboriginal nation. Historically, these bodies have been altered, ineffective or defunded over different governments and therefore hold little weight. But if the Australian people collectively demand an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament through the Constitution, only we can remove it.

The Father of Reconciliation, Pat Dodson says, ‘The referendum is a matter of restorative justice, of fixing up something but it’s the best we can do for future generations in how we relate to each other. That will give pride and dignity in how we relate to each other. I appeal to the young people as this is their future.’

‘If we as a nation have a representative Voice then we can, in effect, drive more effective improvements for our diverse Aboriginal communities, which in essence provides a more tangible and cost-effective means of improving Aboriginal well-being for the good of all and hopefully greater participation in restorative justice. This will give pride and dignity for all of us, particularly the young people.’

It’s time to embrace a new era. It is time to end injustice and look upon ourselves as a mature nation, ready to give and live in harmony with others. Ready to console and join hands with our willing indigenous folk (and peoples from other nations).

Thank you for your consideration.

Vera Hemkes

Photos by Stewart Carter.

Early Voting in the Referendum

From October 2, early voting centres for the 2023 VOICE Referendum are open.

Just as with a Federal Election, people can vote before Referendum Day – Saturday 14 October. It is also compulsory to vote in a Referendum.

Federal Member for Bendigo, Lisa Chesters, attended the Dymocks Bendigo Bank Central early voting booth at Bath Lane in Bendigo today to mark the start of early voting.

Another site in Eaglehawk also opens today and from next week, additional early voting sites will open in Bendigo and Castlemaine.

More information about polling centres, including accessibility information, and opening hours can be found here <https://www.aec.gov.au/referendums/voting.htm#start>

From a Lisa Chesters press release.

EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPO

Western Reserve Castlemaine

Saturday 14 October 11am to 3pm

Whether it's floods or whether it's the fire season, emergency services volunteers in Mount Alexander respond to support their communities. Maybe I should rewrite this: Weather it's floods or Weather it's the fire season! We are all now aware that extreme weather events are more common. We also know that these extreme events of storms, flooding and fires are locked in through the climate change that has already occurred.

Now is a good time to start cleaning up around the house to minimise your risks for this fire season.

The serious part is what you can do as a family to make an emergency plan for the hazards around your place, whether it's storms or floods or fires. You could check with Google for any of these. Even better, you could come and meet the people who are your first responders at emergencies near you.

Come to the Emergency Services Expo at the Castlemaine Western Reserve on Saturday 14 October, 11.00am – 3.00pm. See the equipment they use when they are volunteering in our community. Plus, as with the last two years, all the kids have a great time –



especially using fire hoses to push the squirty trucks from the Harcourt CFA along their hose 'rails'.

But, coming back to the serious stuff, El Nino has been confirmed for Australia forecasting a hotter, drier period for spring. Much of New South Wales and Queensland have been declared above average fire risk and those areas have already had fires. For Victoria, the above average fire risk is in the northwest around Mildura and along the Gippsland coast from Bairnsdale to Mallacoota.

After you've voted on the referendum, come over to the Expo, Western Reserve, Castlemaine, and make an early start for a dry El Nino fire season for yourself and to support your volunteers.



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Harcourt Heritage Centre
October Tour
1.30 Pm Sunday October 15th.

“Harcourt Flora Reserve”
Meet at Harcourt Heritage Centre at 1.30 pm
for a car-pool jaunt to the
Harcourt Flora Reserve, Bingham's Road.
Wendy Barron will lead us in an exciting walk
to discover the great variety of
orchids and wildflowers

**Please wear stout shoes as there will be
a little walking involved.**

**After our walk we will return to the
Heritage Centre for afternoon tea ...**

Please bring a plate.



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Our Business Support team can help you with:

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Scan the QR code for more information

Get in touch with the
Business Support team:
business@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
03 5471 1745





Harcourt Heritage Centre

An Energetic Councillor

James B Warren 1872-1949

JB Warren represented Harcourt on the Metcalfe Shire Council from 1921 to 1941, serving as Shire President in 1925 and 1930. He took a keen interest in council matters and was renowned for his habit of driving his buggy along each road in the West Riding to check that the gutters and mitre-drains were well-kept, noting the potholes in order to report them to the Shire engineer. His nephew Hedley James wrote:

“I used to love going with Uncle Jim in the buggy. He had a good rug, with blanket on one side and leather the other to keep you from getting wet. It had a great smell.”

J B (as he was popularly known) was ‘Uncle Jim’ to a large proportion of the residents of Harcourt because he was the eldest child in a family of 18, while his wife Ellen (née Eagle) had 9 siblings.

James B Warren was born at Barkers Creek 18 September 1872. Soon after, his father moved the family to South Ravenswood where JB started his schooling. But then the family moved again, this time closer to Harcourt, and so he completed his education at the Harcourt Primary School.

In 1890, his father, James Rowe Warren, bought the Reservoir Road property known later as Cairn Warren. JB took over his father’s orchard at 25 Twyford Street Harcourt at just 18 years of age. When he was 27, he married Ellen Eagle, daughter of pioneer William Eagle.

Social life in Harcourt revolved around the Methodist Church. Picnics, meetings of the Rechabite Lodge and quarterly tea meetings were regular features on the calendar. Those tea meetings, generally involving a number of sittings, were followed by concerts. Mrs J B Warren was teacher of the young men in the (senior) bible class. JB was appointed a trustee of the Methodist Church from 1911.

JB Warren’s Sunnyside orchard, of about twenty acres, was about a mile north of Harcourt, off Twyford Street. He grew sixteen acres of apples, two of pears, one of plums and one of cherries. The trees had been planted in the 1880s. He got good returns from the irrigated section (about seven acres) of the orchard.

He grew a lot of Cleopatra (apples), some of which were for export. He sold almost all his fruit through an agent, Silbert, Sharp and Davies Pty Ltd, Western Market.

JB usually had two men working full-time in the orchard. This was a very secure world. JB was a playing member of the Harcourt Cricket Club. He was also a Justice

of the Peace and the first Secretary of the Harcourt Fruitgrowers’ Association

JB was one of the first to appreciate the value of irrigation. To irrigate his orchard, in October 1899 he installed a pumping plant at his own expense on the Trust Channel.

In 1906 and 1907, in his role as secretary of the Fruitgrowers, JB took part in deputations to the Minister of Water Supply seeking the enlargement of the channel system. In 1910, their efforts were crowned with success when the Coliban channel was extended to the Porcupine area. The channel actually finished in the ‘promising young orchard’ of JB Warren.

The Harcourt orchardists were back in the fray in October 1914 when JB took a leading role as Secretary of the Progress Association. The irrigation channels were dry, with no prospect of water being sent from Malmsbury Reservoir. Meanwhile, the Barkers Creek Reservoir had a good amount of water in store, but it was at the wrong level to supply the channels. On behalf of the Progress Association, JB organised a six-inch pump and engine to raise the water into the irrigation channels, an action which saved the apple and pear orchards.

In May 1921, JB, by then a Director of the Coolstores, as well as a shire councillor, presided over a memorable visit to Harcourt by several parliamentarians along with Mr Cattanaach, of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

In 1910, the Harcourt Fruitgrowers Association published an eight-page booklet entitled *Short History of Harcourt*, ‘compiled by a committee consisting of Messrs J B Warren, W E James and John Stewart (head teacher at Harcourt school). W E James (later Colonel James) was JB’s brother-in-law.

During the Great War, Mrs J B Warren saw many of her Sunday school scholars volunteer for service in the 1st AIF. In June 1916, a photo montage of Mrs Warren and those of her pupils who had volunteered was unveiled at the Methodist Church. This unveiling took place in the midst of bitter public debate over an upcoming referendum (then described as a plebiscite). The plebiscite campaign of 1916 initiated the most bitter struggle in the history of Australian politics. It involved every adult’s beliefs, it brought into question the meaning of war and Australia’s part in it. At issue was the desire of the Federal government to compel eligible males to participate in military service overseas – should Australia adopt the compulsory enlistment practices

of militarist and despotic regimes? Were the anti-conscriptionists ‘pigeon livered’?

To make their opinion abundantly clear the Harcourt Methodist congregation, ably led by Mr and Mrs JB Warren, commissioned a large wooden honour roll, to be lettered in gold leaf, to list teachers and scholars of the Sunday school who volunteered for active service (the emphasis is on the word ‘volunteered’).

The Honour Roll, with 22 names, was unveiled in February 1917. Later, ten more names were added.

As for the plebiscites, the October 1916 vote produced a slight majority for ‘No’. But Prime Minister WM Hughes was determined to supply reinforcements to the AIF. A year later, in November 1917, the Australian public were asked to vote in a second plebiscite. Once again the vote was ‘No’. The Australian people were reluctant to concede power to government. The bible class photos and the Honour Roll, relics of the turbulent and divisive debate of 107 years ago, can still be seen in the Uniting Church hall,

By 1917, Mrs J B Warren was ill with abdominal pain and lung disease. She died suddenly in 1919 aged 42, leaving JB and their twelve-year-old son Travis Clyde Warren. After this catastrophe, Mrs WE James brought her children to live with Uncle Jim where Edith James kept house for the widower and his son. Hedley James, then a child, later wrote:

“This lasted until my Father came home from the war. This was not until 1920, as he was in charge of the demobilisation at Salisbury, England. Uncle Jim, of Sunnyside filled in as our father whilst our father was overseas.”

Meanwhile, JB was still immersed in public duties, becoming a trustee of the swimming pool, trustee and secretary of the Cemetery Trust and member of the Castlemaine Hospital committee.

JB later married Susan Maude Odgers (a fellow Methodist). He built a fine home in High Street, Harcourt to live in in his retirement. JB was a very keen horticulturist, and his flower garden was always worth a visit. Any student of Harcourt’s development will inevitably come across a mention of J B Warren.

This thumbnail sketch was written by Harcourt Heritage Centre, with detail obtained from the Royal Commission of 1915, the C H James Collection and the reminiscences of Mrs Rita Todner and Mrs Winsome Cordy.



Harcourt Bowling Club

The New Season is Open

Opening/President's Day

Harcourt Bowling Club commenced its season for 2023-2024 on Sunday 17 September with a combined Season Opening/President's Day.

President David Jeffries welcomed State Member of Parliament Maree Edwards; Mayor Rosie Annear; guests from Castlemaine and Campbells Creek; all members including Life Members, Ronald Douglas and Grahame Hill and new members.



Harris, Ian McMillan, Bernie Connell and Wendy Chaplin.

The day was completed with the usual sumptuous afternoon tea provided by members.

Pennant

Harcourt will field three Midweek Pennant teams this season in Divisions 2, 4 and 5 commencing on Monday 16 October. Pennant practice has commenced and will now continue Wednesdays at 10.00 am.

The Weekend Pennant will commence on Saturday 21 October with Harcourt fielding four teams in Divisions 2, 5 and 7 (2 sides).

Weekend Pennant practice is on Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

We wish them all good bowling and success for the season.

Friday Social Nights

Friday social nights are looking to be bigger and better with the Members Draw (at 6.30 pm) and generous raffles on offer. In recent weeks, there have been fortnightly meals offered. Co-ordinated by various members, these have had differing themes such as barbecue night, steak sandwich night, fish and chip night, chicken Kiev with salad and chips night. These nights have been well received and good times had by all. An invitation is extended to anyone who would like to join us – new social and bowling members are always welcome.

New Heating on the Deck

Harcourt Bowling Club was a recipient of a grant from Mount Alexander Shire as part of the Community Funding Grants awarded annually. The grant enabled the club to install new heating on the deck, as mentioned in the September edition of *The Core*.

Memberships

New social or playing members are always welcome at Harcourt Bowling Club. Applications for membership can be collected from the Bowling Club or downloaded from the website at www.harcourtbowlingclub.com.au

On The Calendar For October

Confirm times with the Club before attending

- HBC Men's Singles Championships start **Monday 2nd**
- HBC Ladies' Singles Championships start **Monday 16th**
- Come and Try Bowls – **Sunday 15th**
- Mixed Fours Tournament **Sunday 29th**
- Barefoot Bowls Tuesday night dates **TBA**



Mayor Rosie rolled the first jack, and MP Maree rolled the first bowl to mark the official start of the season. They then joined members and guests in three games of six ends of bowls, in glorious bowling weather.

The overall winners of the day were Les Harding's team with John Kays, Kevin Earl and Kay Francis. Runners-up were Libby



Grace Church

This is a statement of faith from Grace Church.

Just how many 'gods' do Christians serve?

In the Old Testament we read

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

And yet in the book of Genesis, also in the O.T., we find God expressing himself in the plural, with respect to the creation of mankind

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...."

So, which is it, one, or three? Theologians have coined the term "trinity" to explain this mystery. The term "trinity" is not actually found anywhere in the bible, and yet it is perfectly descriptive of what we encounter, which is One God expressed in three persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a person, has feelings, is capable of being grieved, and His influence can be quenched.

The well-known story of Ananias and Sapphira from the book of Acts proves that the Holy Spirit is God – that is He is a "he," a distinct personality within the Godhead, and not an "it."

Now a man names Ananias ... sold a piece of property ... he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.'

Thus, we see from this passage that the Holy Spirit is God, and is equivalent to God.

Ps Roger Thurecht, 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



Weather & Water

While many of us feel we have been blessed by the lovely weather in September, in fact it was hotter and drier than normal, with the bureau reporting a variance of 6°–8°C above normal for this area with only 4 days of recorded rainfall. On one of those days, only 0.5 mm was recorded and we received 14.5 mm in total. Towards the end of September it was clear that the soil was drying out and many of us began watering our potted plants and garden beds. As the last days of September came sections of grass were seen to be drying off.

Observations around the property included hearing Peron's Tree Frogs for the first time since 2020. In the dry years before La Niña, these frogs would be around the house during summer. So I am wondering if this is an indicator of more dry weather to come. I noticed very late in the month that the lilac had begun flowering and, at the same time, all the bird baths had dried out.



The Bureau of Meteorology reported at the end of September that it was the driest month recorded since the early 1900s and that a large number of Bureau stations had their lowest September rainfall ever. The Bureau announced the arrival of El Niño and a positive Indian Dipole on September 23, but also noted that this doesn't necessarily mean a dry summer. Locally, we are in a good position with water and the Coliban reservoirs are either full or near full and irrigators are receiving a 100% allocation.

Reservoir Levels

Upper Coliban	100% as at 3 October
Lauriston	99% as at 3 October
Malmsbury	102% as at 3 October
Barkers Creek	97.9% as at 24 September

Abundant Wildflowers



Golden wattle



Narrow leaf bitter pea



Pink bells



Golden wattle

Linda Newton



Yellow robin.

WREN FAMILY of HARCOURT

Grow Great Fruit

SUNDAY
FRUIT TREE
WORKSHOPS

AUG	27	<p>Pruning Fruit Trees 9.30 am-12.30pm</p> <p>Continuous Hot Compost System 1.30pm-4.30pm</p>
SEPT	24	<p>Organic Pest & Disease Control 9.30am-12.30pm</p> <p>Grafting Fruit Trees 1.30pm-4.30pm</p>
OCT	29	<p>Biochar Making & Correcting Compost 10am-12.30pm</p> <p>Compost Tea & Worm Farms 1.30pm-4pm</p>

BOOKINGS

tinyurl.com/2rhz4rwf



Katie Finlay's Fruit Growing Tips

Fungus, Aphids & Weeds



Hi everyone, how are you feeling about spring? Most fruit trees have had a much better start than the last two very wet years, and the fruit season is looking really promising. Depending on the variety, most of the flowers on your stone fruit trees should have fallen off by now to reveal tiny, cute fruit.

If instead you're seeing shrivelled flowers that have stuck on the tree, deformed leaves, or possibly even some dead shoots, then you might have a touch of fungal disease. Due to the rain in the early part of spring, there's still a bit of blossom blight (in apricots) and leaf curl (in peaches and nectarines) about. The aphids have also started to make an appearance. If you've seen aphids, you might also have noticed that they're targeting fruit trees that have been affected by fungal disease, as they tend to home in on weakened trees.

If you're seeing a lot of dead shoots in your trees, it's quite important to prune these out and get rid of them. It's easy to do this while you're thinning your trees. The infected shoots can go into a hot compost pile, you can burn them, or just pile them well away from your fruit trees and let them break down. The main thing is to get them away from your trees and the young fruit, because the same disease that causes blossom blight can also cause brown rot in your fruit later in the season.

If we get any more rain (which is looking less likely with each passing week), then a spray of wettable sulphur before the rain event will help to prevent any spread of fungal disease. Removing any infected or fallen fruit will also help to control it.

If you're seeing aphids on your trees, also check whether there are ants in the tree. If there are, put a sticky band around the trunk (e.g. with horticultural glue) to exclude the ants. The ants 'farm' and protect the aphids in exchange for eating the honeydew they produce. If you get rid of the ants, the many beneficial insects that love to eat aphids will come and clean them up for you. You can help the beneficials to get ahead by pruning out infested bunches of leaves, or even by washing the aphids off the tree with a hose.

Meanwhile, the ground is warming up and weeds have started growing. To decide how to manage weeds around

your fruit trees, you first need to think about the cost/benefit analysis. The cost of weeds is that they can look messy, they can make it harder to work around your tree, and they can provide a 'ladder' into the tree for annoying, fruit-eating insects like earwigs. Tall grasses (like paspalum) can also be quite competitive with the tree for water and even nutrients.

However, lots of other plants under your fruit trees are actually beneficial. It turns out that the common idea that weeds compete with your fruit trees for water and nutrients is mostly just wrong, and in fact, the benefits of plants growing under your trees are huge. This is still a difficult idea for many people, and it can be a challenge if you have the tidy gene!

If you'd like to learn more about it, have a look at one of the masterclasses we ran with Dr Christine Jones, a respected soil scientist. She does an excellent job of explaining why understory plants under fruit trees bring so many benefits to the soil. Just head to the 'courses' tab on our website and type Dr Jones into the search bar.

The simple message is that bare soil is BAD! It heats up (to at least 60°C in summer), loses moisture, loses carbon and your precious soil microbes die – in short, it can become a sterile desert very quickly. The idea that weeds under fruit trees take moisture away from our fruit trees is a myth. The soil needs total ground cover all the time to stay cool and healthy – a tall order in our climate, but in fact there's lots of evidence showing that's what this area looked like pre-European settlement.

We've known for a long time that healthy microbes (bacteria, fungi etc.) are needed in the soil to convert nutrients into a plant-available form – it's called the Natural Fertility System (NFS). The latest science is showing that the microbes actually live inside the plants for part of their lifecycle, so they are even more important than we realised.

Weeds also help to increase the amount of carbon in your soil. This then increases the amount of water your soil can hold. Weeds also provide habitat for the all-important microbes, they keep the soil cool in summer (which conserves water) and they provide food for worms and other lovely underground garden helpers. Some weeds are also very good at 'mining'

the soil for nutrients and making them available to your fruit trees, particularly the ones with a deep taproot. Flowering weeds also provide important habitats for insects in the garden (particularly yellow and white flowering plants).

And of course, you don't have to grow any old weeds! You can choose the plants you'd like to grow around your fruit trees. There are lots of herbs, veggies, and flowers that make really good companions, and if they're also edible, all the better. Most of us have diets that are way too simple. Trying to eat at least thirty different vegetables, herbs and fruits in our diet every week is hugely beneficial for our gut biome. The more different types of edible plants you grow that you can throw into a salad the better, because even small amounts can make a big difference.

So, this month's job? Aim to improve the biodiversity in your garden by planting new plants under your fruit trees. If that feels too overwhelming, start small and aim to create a new bed under a single tree.

Can you tell we like weeds? For all but the very youngest fruit trees, we reckon the balance is firmly in favour of having a 'living mulch' under fruit trees. However, they still need managing, and three good strategies to keep them under control are (1) mow them occasionally, (2) plant the things you want to grow there, like flowers, herbs, or vegetables, or (3) use animals (geese, sheep, chooks, guinea pigs ...) to mow them for you.

Mulching is also popular, and while it's better than bare soil, plants are five to thirty times better at building soil carbon than mulch. Living plants win. If you do decide to mulch, be aware that it can be just as effective at stopping water soaking into the soil as preventing evaporation. It's also a great idea to put some compost or worm castings underneath your mulch before you lay it, to help kickstart the biology in your soil. And a word of warning – don't mulch until after any frost risk has passed.

Hugh and Katie Finlay are certified organic orchardists and teach the Grow Great Fruit organic 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.



Council news

Vote for your favourite business!

The Mount Alexander Business Awards are back! The awards showcase, acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of local businesses.

Voting is now open for the People's Choice Award, where you're invited to vote for the business you think provides exceptional customer service.

There are lots of ways to vote:

- Visit shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au
- Email business@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
- Call 5471 1745

Voting closes on Monday 9 October.

Find out more at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/BusinessAwards2023.

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

Meet the friendly faces at Council

We're hosting an open day for you to come and meet Councillors and Council staff.

When: Monday 23 October, 1.30pm to 4.00pm

Where: Castlemaine Town Hall

Cost: Free! No bookings required

To find out more, call us on 5471 1700 or visit mountalexander.vic.gov.au/OpenDay2023.

Join our Public Art Advisory Panel

Are you, or someone you know, passionate about public art? Expressions of interest (EOIs) are now open for our Public Art Advisory Panel.

EOIs close on Sunday 29 October.

Find out more at shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au.



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12 months	\$120	1/2 page	\$80
		Full page	\$160

**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

Community Diary Dates

Saturday October 14: Referendum voting day for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Saturday October 14: 11 am–3 pm Emergency Services Expo. See page 14.

Sunday October 15: 1.30 pm: Visit to the Flora Reserve. See page 14

Thursday October 19: CWA Op Shop Fashion Parade with host Peter Bottomley. See page 5.

Sunday October 22: 10 am–12 pm: Check nest boxes with a phascogale expert; join Harcourt Valley Landcare at the Flora Reserve. See page 24 for more information or: info@harcourtvalleylandcare.org

Carpet Bowls: 7 pm Wednesdays, Carpet Bowls, summer and winter, Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt. Summer season commences Wednesday November 8.

CFA: Brigade meeting night is the third 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 11.00 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 Lions Club: Third Thursday of the month at the Victorian Miniature Railway, Harmony Way at 6.30 pm for dinner (something to share) followed at 7.30 by general planning and discussion.

Heritage Centre: Every Wednesday at the ANA Hall from 9.00 am–3.00 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 9.00 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 9.00–10.00 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.

Abundant Wildflowers



Leopard orchid.



Creamy candles.



Fairy wax flower.



Common hovea. Photos supplied by Janine McDonald.

This season has been a good one for wildflowers in the district. Since August, local enthusiasts have been sharing the news of sightings. In late September the Harcourt Valley Landcare group invited community members to join them on a walking tour of the Flora Reserve on Bingham's Road. One of the group's new members led the way. Janine McDonald, who recently settled in Harcourt, is a wildflower enthusiast. Over the season, Janine has regularly walked through the reserve and has discovered a favourite orchid: the tiny mosquito orchid. President Terry Willis welcomed visitors and members and provided them with the Castlemaine wildflower brochure before the group set about identifying as many flowers as possible.

Janine noted the flowers she saw on the day:

- Matted bush pea
- Twining fringe lily
- Common everlasting
- Billy buttons
- Yam daisy
- Creamy candles
- Early Nancy
- Blue fingers orchids
- Leopard orchid
- Narrow leaf bitter pea
- Downy grevillea
- Erect guinea flower
- Waxflower

New Website

Due to some excellent work by Deputy President Vanessa Chiang, in securing a specialised grant, Harcourt Valley Landcare is about to launch its new website. The group is delighted with the appearance and content and thanks Vanessa for using her professional skills to obtain the grant and develop the website to bring Harcourt Valley Landcare to the wider world via the web. See: www.harcourtvalleylandcare.org

Phascogales – Nest Box Check

Phascogales were once widespread in Victoria, however a recent PhD study by Dr Jess Lowe has established that their range has shrunk and that the Mount Alexander Shire, particularly the Harcourt area, has become a haven for them. On October 29 Landcare and community members are invited to a special session with Dr Lowe



A nesting phascogale (photo provided by Dr Jess Lawton).

when phascogale nesting boxes in the Flora Reserve will be checked for residents. For more details see the Harcourt Valley Landcare website: www.harcourtvalleylandcare.org

More Phascogale News

Landcare member Bron Willis has also had success by winning a 2023 Landcare Victoria grant which relates to phascogales. The grant is titled: 'Protecting Phascogale Habitat in the Harcourt Valley'. More information about the activities and events relating to this exciting grant will be available on our website and Facebook page as the project develops.

Plan Harcourt Stage 2 Biodiversity Assessment

Representatives of the Harcourt Valley Landcare group have continued discussions with council representatives about the progress of the Biodiversity Assessment in the proposed residential development areas in Harcourt.

Stage 2 of the Biodiversity Assessment commenced on October 2, and will be complete at the end of June 2024. The aim of the study is to confirm higher biodiversity areas, where possible, in order to inform planning decisions – e.g. controls on where and what types of development are possible, and protection of sensitive areas. The year-long assessment is necessary to cover as many seasonal species of plants and animals as possible and will be dependent on weather conditions as to what species are found; for example, a dry summer will exclude species which appear in a wet/cool summer as we have experienced for the last three years.

For more information on Landcare activities see our Facebook page or go to: info@harcourtvalleylandcare.org