

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE



Edition 113 – March 2024

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Applefest Royalty 2024



King Jonathon, Lady William and Granny Smith were seen spruiking the 2024 Applefest at the Castlemaine Farmers Market.

WHO DOESN'T LIKE TO dress up occasionally? For Harcourt's 2024 Applefest Royalty, Katie and David Schofield, dressing up is taken seriously and with great joy. George Milford who has led the planning for Applefest for many years, hit upon the idea of asking the young couple after seeing David as Santa at the Harcourt Christmas Party for two years' running.

While David and Katie have busy working lives, at least once a month they visit Kryal Castle where they don medieval costumes for the day. David's children enjoy the trips to the castle as well, and also dress up for the occasion.

They will be appearing as royal attendants on the day of Applefest. David said, 'I've accepted the role of King Jonathon because I like to spread wonder, to give children something to believe in that they thought not possible.'

Katie said, 'When we moved here from Chewton, I joined the pony club and I enjoyed being in the Applefest. Having spent a lot of my youth here, being Lady William was on my bucket list. It's my community, so it's good to do something like this once in your life.'

Katie and David agreed that both sets of parents have been very good examples of giving service to the community, as they are deeply involved in volunteering in their respective communities.

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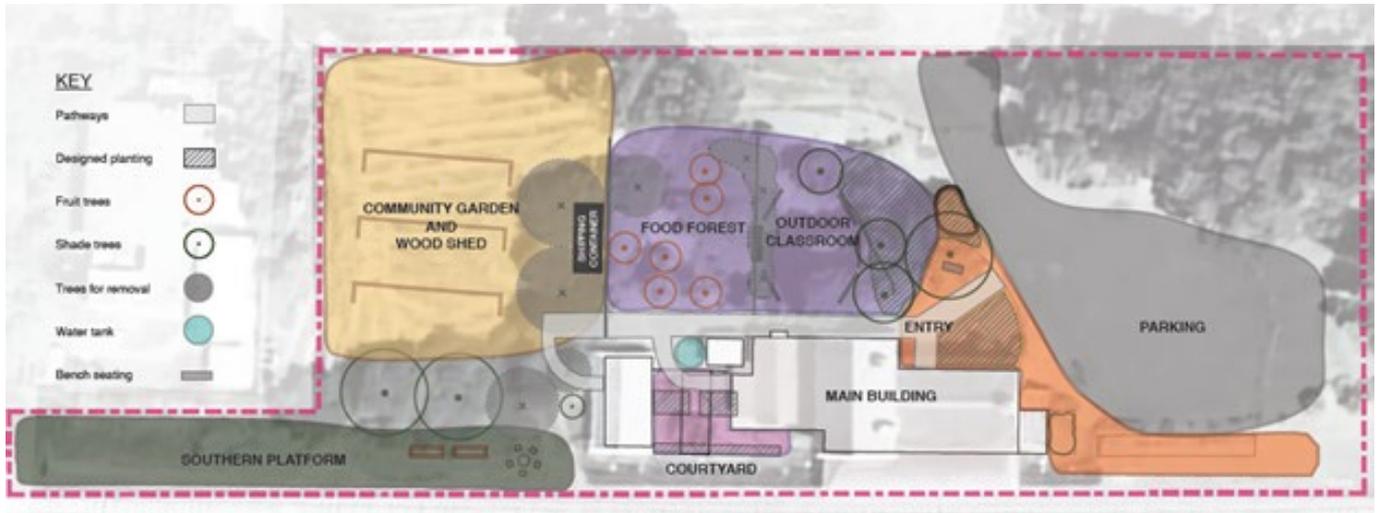
We aim to publish online by the 6th of the month. The deadline for submissions is the 24th of the month prior. Advertisers and community groups will be sent reminder emails. **There is no edition in January.**



COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

the voice of the community

MEMBER 2024



Community Garden at the Harcourt Community House

One of the exciting projects that the Harcourt Progress Association (HPA) has anticipated since we took over the lease at the Harcourt Railway Station is the community garden. We had a number of suggestions on what this might look like so to make sure we have a consistent plan, HPA engaged the services of local landscape architect Samantha (Sam) Downing from IRMA Landscape Architecture & Garden Design to carry out a community consultation and help produce a design that meets the needs of the community and the aims of the community house.

So, ten keen community members gathered at the Harcourt Valley Community House on 13 February and were led through a well organised consultation process by Sam. We spent time testing various ideas, walking through the grounds then documenting those (many) ideas.

Sam then produced a document that brought together all of our ideas into a simple but nonetheless comprehensive plan including a community garden, food forest, outdoor classroom, entry garden, courtyard and also some suggestions for use of the platforms.

The first step will be to clear some of the overgrown tree lucerne and level the ground to place a shipping container that will act as the centre of our 'Green Hub'. This has been funded by a grant from the Mount Alexander Shire Council. Make sure you follow the Harcourt Valley Community House on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HarcourtValleyCommunityHouse> for further developments and drop us a line if you would like to be involved. If you would like to undertake volunteer work to fulfil your mutual obligations for Centrelink and you like gardening then we can help you as we are now an approved volunteer organisation.

Applefest Royalty 2024

Continued from page 1.

The couple has decided that Harcourt is where they plan to stay. Katie said, 'I like living in Harcourt because it is so close to many services, attractions and opportunities, while being rural enough to have plenty of space for us and our animals. I also love the community and the vibe. In the near future, I would like to see some niche shops in Harcourt like a hairdresser or a nail salon. I would like to see more opportunities for businesses to thrive to create a thriving town centre.'

David and Katie will be officially crowned at the Applefest Art Show which takes place on Friday 8 March at 7 pm.



Repair Café

THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 10AM TO 1PM

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30 Templeton St
(enter via back door/garden)

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Feb 25
Mar 31
Apr 28
May 26
June 30
July 28
Aug 25
Sept 29
Oct 27
Nov 24

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castlemainerepaircafe.wordpress.com



Katie with David's children in the throne room at Kryal Castle.



HPA Update

Since my last update, HPA has had two planning meetings, conducted a consultation on the community garden, held a very informative Internet/Telecommunications session and started preparing for what will be a fantastic arts exhibition with Maldon and Newstead community houses, should we obtain the funding.

All this activity is to get the community house up and running and to create a strong governance structure to ensure sustainability for this very valuable community asset.

We were also pleased this month to write a letter of support for Mount Alexander Shire's grant application to Regional Development Victoria Tiny Towns Fund for the James Park Stage. A permanent stage will be a great asset for the town and make the 'bump in' for events such as Applefest and Gather Harcourt markets a little easier to manage.

Applefest looks as if its going to be fantastic this year, and we congratulate the committee. We also acknowledge all the previous Applefest committees whose hard work, inspiration and dedication laid the groundwork for Applefest to get bigger and better every year. And of course, finally, we pay homage to the new Applefest Royalty Katie Petrusma and David Schofield (never forgetting Granny Smith, Kay Francis).

HPA AGM postponed

HPA has applied for permission to postpone its AGM while we prepare a new set of Rules of Association and restructure the organisation. The planned AGM on 15 March will now be scheduled for a later date.

Volunteers: yes, we still need you!

The community house is in desperate need of volunteers to help maintain the garden and undertake some administrative work for *The Core* and the house itself. If you have an interest in gardening, administration or even have some ideas of what sessions we could run at the house please contact Paul Mizzi on paul.mizzi@harcourtprogress.org.au

Remember that the community house is registered with Centrelink if you wish to volunteer as part of your Mutual Obligation plan. All volunteers will be welcome at the house to join the fun of establishing a viable community house.

Sha Cordingley, President

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

94.9 main FM
LISTEN LOCAL



Saturday March 9th
10am - 3pm
James Park Harcourt

Highlights include

- Art Competition and show for all ages
Art Awards and opening Friday 8th 7.30pm
- Duck Cameron - the Conjuror - Master Magician
- Childrens Entertainment
- Baking competition for all ages
- Lego Competition for all ages
- Live Music on TWO stages
- Markets galore

To find out more about the day, or enter the competitions go to www.applefest.harcourt.vic.au

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Serendipitous picnic lunch

We often talk about our apple growing history in Harcourt and how we love to showcase the things that represent that part of our heritage; the museum, the apple bins in the new play space, and Applefest all spring to mind. Imagine my surprise then when my husband and I, driving back from Queensland in November, pulled alongside a small park to eat our picnic lunch and spotted a very large apple suspended over the entrance gate. By pure chance we had stopped off at Tallong, a small town with a population of 917, that was once a renowned apple growing area in New South Wales. In fact, the town had once won a prize at the Sydney's Royal Easter Show for its pyramid of apples.



By the beginning of the 1900s, Tallong had 3,000 apple trees and one of the major producers was expecting to harvest 6,000 cases of fruit. In 1978, Jim Watling, a second-generation orchardist in Tallong, commissioned Carl Zeschke to make a sculpture that represented Tallong's orchard heritage and would attract customers to his apple shed. And hence the large apple was created.

In 2015, the Watling family donated the apple to the people of Tallong as a memorial to Jim and Carl, and the Tallong Community Focus Group took charge of its restoration. Today, as you can see from the photograph, the lovely shiny apple takes pride of place in a town that is very similar to our own. Food for thought?

Sha Cordingley

Linda Newton



Some Time Ago

Sydney Morning Herald, 8 April, 1925, via Trove.

APPLE PYRAMIDS.

JUDGES' AWARDS.

Adjudication in the apple and pear pyramids, in which competition was keener than in any previous year, was continued well into the evening. Messrs. E. K. Wolstenholme, W. H. Broadfoot, and G. A. Meier, awarded the points, and expressed themselves as very pleased with the high standard reached by many exhibits.

Tallong, on the southern tablelands, a very consistent exhibitor, won rather easily against its seven competitors, with 90 points, the nearest being Hartley, on the western range, which scored 81 points out of the possible 100.

Mr. Wolstenholme afterwards described the Tallong exhibit as a wonderfully fine exhibit of apples, of high, all-round quality, and exceptionally well staged. The organiser, Mr. Davenport, showed very nice judgment in the selection of specimens for the pyramid, and in their arrangement on the stand.

Bathurst, Lavington, and Goulburn followed Tallong and Hartley in the order named, while, strangely enough, the two pyramids beyond the State, Harcourt (Vic.) and Thulimbah Summit (Q.) tied with 70 points each. Although Wamoon, with its apples from the Murrumbidgee irrigation area came last, the fact that it was only one point behind these districts called forth a strong commendation from Mr. Wolstenholme.



Saturday March 9th
10am - 3pm

Highlights
Art-show
Master Magician
Competitions
Entertainment
on 2 stages
Market
Camels

+Evening Concert

Wendy Stapleton's
Dusty Springfield Show 7pm
all at - James Park, Harcourt
www.applefest.harcourt.vic.au



WALKING TOGETHER Towards Makarrata

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

Au Revoir 'Walking Together'

Sadly, we received notice that our usual informative and always appreciated article Walking Together will be on hold indefinitely. The following was received from Floria Maschek, our regular contributor:

'Due to limited resources available for staffing at this time, Nalderun has conceded that Walking Together can no longer be guided as it was. It has just been confirmed to the Nalderun community and I that the column cannot go ahead for the foreseeable future – until Nalderun is better placed again to give time for this guidance.

'This organisation does so much for our community. While it is now as important as ever to walk together, due to funding cuts Nalderun must pour that time into their key priority which is supporting our community's young First Nations people, helping lift younger generations out of many ongoing impacts of colonialism, getting them through their schooling and into meaningful employment while nourishing Culture, Community, and general wellbeing.

'Nalderun much values the opportunities given to create positive changes and to share its story. The last entry [see the February *Core*] gave the extended community a glimpse of the organisation. For further insight I've attached their inspiring annual report here* as requested by Nalderun. The organisation deeply values the support given to the column and hopes that in time it can once again be supported. In the meantime, Nalderun gives its thanks and appreciates all solidarity in our communities.'

* Nalderun Annual Report: see the link on the home page <https://nalderun.net.au>

Editor's note: *The Core* Editorial Team wishes to thank Floria Maschek, and her predecessor Solway Nutting, for providing such insightful and important articles over the years. We understand only too well the constraints imposed on organisations struggling for funding and wish Nalderun Elders, staff, and volunteers the very best.

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Sammy O'Grady, Ranked World Number 19 in BMX

Harcourt teen and Bendigo BMX Club talent Sammy O'Grady has made the trek across the Tasman to Rotorua in New Zealand where he contested the first two rounds of the 2024 UCI World Cup BMX series on February 9 and 10. On day one, he made it to the semi-final, on day two he competed in the quarter final. Rounds 3 and 4 of the World Cup were contested in Brisbane where on both days Sammy competed in the quarter finals.

Sammy started out in BMX when he was just three years old and has had some incredible success on local, state and national levels over the last decade. He has also battled his fair share of injuries during that time, but his passion for the sport and his determination to succeed has seen him climb back on the bike time and again.

At age 17, Sammy is competing in the under-23 years group against some of the best riders from across Australia, New Zealand and beyond. Sammy's father Todd said, 'Sammy is now ranked as number 19 in the world after the four rounds. If he had made the semi-finals in Brisbane he might have gone on to be ranked tenth in the world.'

Sammy said he was grateful to have the support of experienced World Titles campaigner and coach James Lautier, and has also recently gained a new sponsor, CTD Industries/RIFT Factory Team, which has provided him with a high-performance RIFT frame and club jerseys.

After time back at home in Harcourt to work on his skill development and strength, Sammy will be heading to Portland in a few weeks and then onto Adelaide to compete in the Australian Series Races. We wish you the best of luck, Sammy, and hope to hear more of your successes.

Thank you to Lisa Dennis of the Castlemaine Mail who provided an article on Sammy before he competed in the World Cup. Some of the content in that article has been used for this *Core* article.

Photo provided by the Castlemaine Mail.



Harcourt Lions Club

Announcement of Awards



The recipients of the Community Member of the Year and Youth of the Year will be announced by President Lion Ray Rice of the Harcourt Lions Club at the Harcourt Applefest, 9 March 2023 at 12 noon on the Main Stage. Make sure you are there early so as not to miss out.

The recipients will be announced and their photos will appear in the April edition of the Harcourt News, The Core, no doubt along with lots of photos of the event.

The Lions Club will be cooking up a storm with the famous Lions BBQ preparing sausage and onion in bread, egg and bacon sandwiches, hamburgers and drinks.

If you want to learn more about the Harcourt District Lions Club, come and meet the members at the Harcourt Applefest Lions BBQ, or at least purchase a sausage. Profits are distributed back into the community annually.

Next meeting will be held at VMR on the third Thursday commencing with a shared meal at 6.30 pm followed by a general discussion to organise our next event.

Information – Ray 0409 957429, Sue 0418 372336

INVITATION

You are invited to the launch of a new book by Ken James, *Schools of Barkers Creek, Harcourt and Harcourt North* on Sunday 19 May at the Harcourt Valley Heritage and Tourist Centre.

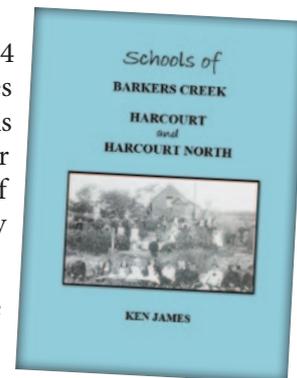
The 390-page book includes 24 chapters, surname index, references as well as many photos. The emphasis of the book is on the district's former schools, so there is only a brief mention of Harcourt Valley Primary School.

The number of copies printed will be determined by the number of pre-orders received. There will only be a very limited number of copies available for purchase on the day. Accordingly, to be guaranteed of a copy, it is highly recommended that copies be pre-ordered at the cost of \$50 per copy from Ken – Mobile: 0457 600 668. Email: knjames47@gmail.com

As it takes time to order and receive copies from the printer, the deadline for placing orders is Tuesday April 9.

Books will be available for pick up at the launch or can be posted (\$14.80).

Refreshments will be available after the launch. A donation to help cover catering costs would be greatly appreciated. Please let Ken know if you will be attending.



Chatting with Harcourt CWA

How I love the start of autumn. The worst of the summer heat is behind us, the nights are cool for sleeping, the leaves are changing colour and Applefest comes once again to Harcourt over the Labour Day Weekend.

The first Harcourt Applefest was held in 1991 and although it has grown and changed each year, the apple pie is still a stand-alone favourite for the thousands of visitors and locals who have enjoyed Applefest over the years. So, why is this so? What is that special something about apple pies? I think nostalgia has a lot to do with it. Many people associate apple pie with comfort food, the food that provides a sense of emotional well-being and comfort. Eating apple pie can provide a sense of relaxation and pleasure which can lead to feelings of nostalgia. Even today, the smell of an apple pie straight from the oven reminds me of my

childhood, cooking with my mum, family get-togethers and happy memories.

Maybe this is the year you enter your first apple pie into the Apple Baking Competition and start an apple pie tradition in your own family.

And, talking of nostalgia, it makes my day when I hear a word or a phrase from my childhood that is very rarely used in every-day speech today. The English language is full of apple idioms and, as I have an apple theme going on, here are a few.

She'll be apples.

You are the apple of my eye.

Don't go upsetting the apple cart.

All looks to be in apple pie order.

One rotten apple spoils the barrel.

The apple never falls far from the tree.

You can take a second bite out of the apple.

Sweet as apple pie.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Maybe you can think of a few more.

Of all the idioms, I like "She'll be apples" best of all: "everything will be OK, everything will work out fine." Such a comforting phrase; just as comforting as an apple pie fresh from the oven.

Well that's all from me for this month. Please come over to the CWA Stall at Applefest and say hello. In addition to our usual preserves and cakes, we will be raffling a magnificent quilt which has been made by our very own president, Robyn McConville, and a couple of great hampers as well.

See you all at Applefest.

Lyn Rule

Harcourt CWA, Publicity Officer



Harcourt Uniting Church

Music has always been an important part of most church services. The earliest known church gatherings were held under a tree or in the street, so chanting was the way to express the words from the Bible. The organ, in its simplest form, produced a larger sound than any other instrument, and preachers found that the sound of an organ could turn any space into a church.

The Jenkin family has passed down a portable organ, the size of a suitcase, which was carried to local church services by John's grandfather back in

the early 1900s. It was built in 1907 and is still in perfect tune.

We have been given this organ, and I have been able to play it at several Jenkin celebrations. The case opens up to the keyboard then the sides and pedals fall into place. The organist has to pedal to work the bellows. The pedals connect to the bellows with large canvas bands. It never ceases to amaze me that such a simple instrument can make such a full sound.

In the 1970s, we had a pedal organ at both the Harcourt and Harcourt North churches. Playing the Harcourt North organ was always a 'workout' as you had to really pump the pedals to fill the bellows. When that organ was sold, the new owner pulled it apart to recondition it and discovered two hymn books jammed inside to keep the bellows open!

When our small portable organ was manufactured in 1907, who would have thought that we'd have such modern equipment for providing music in churches today? Organs and pianos still have their place, however, electronic keyboards, guitars, bands and music from the internet have taken over in accompanying modern hymns. I still play the electronic organ for our Harcourt service, however, a Bluetooth speaker sometimes provides us with a broader range of music.

The Harcourt congregation is very enthusiastic about the musical side of worship and enjoy singing a variety of hymns, so why not join us one Sunday at 9.00 am in Buckley Street Harcourt.

A famous conductor was once asked: 'What do you need to know to play the cymbals?'

'Nothing,' was the reply, '... except when!'

Jan Jenkin



Weather & Water

In October 2023 the ABC News carried a story about a proposal that the BOM may begin using a different measure or measures to predict El Niño or La Niña as current indices were not taking into account critical information about ocean temperatures. At this time the BOM was being criticised for being slow to call an El Niño event, which they eventually did in September 2023, well after other world agencies' predictions.

As January rolled around, I started to think the BOM was correct because January was wet and I wondered if El Niño would arrive at all. We enjoyed a very green December and January, but over February there was little or no rain. The country has dried off and bush fires

are once again a reality. We received 123 mm in January which is the highest since 2011 when we received 231 mm. (My records began in 2011, probably because I was so delighted that the drought had broken.)

While it is true that we are now having extremely dry weather, some areas of Australia have suffered catastrophic floods. On March 1, the news delivered the verdict that we had endured one of the hottest and wettest summers on record during an El Niño episode. Autumn is predicted to be drier and warmer than usual. In February at least two catastrophic fire days were called in areas west and north of Harcourt. We can only hope that bushfires don't continue later into the year.

Reservoir Levels

Upper Coliban: 95% as at March 4

Lauriston: 92% "

Malmsbury: 48% "

Barkers Creek: 63% as at Feb 19

Data sourced from Bureau of Meteorology and Coliban Water web sites.



These large fungi were very out of season and photographed on February 5, 2024.



Harcourt CFA

Where there's smoke ...

The saying goes that 'Where there's smoke, there's fire.' On Tuesday February 13, a large amount of smoke drifted through the Harcourt Valley. The smoke had travelled across the state from the fires in the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. Quite a few brigades were called out to smoke sightings because of the smoke, including our brigade and some of our neighbouring brigades.

While we do NOT want to discourage anybody reporting a fire, it is important that there should be a fire directly connected to the smoke in the area of the smoke sighting. Seeing flames is always a good indicator that we need to be called, and if not, then a defined column or plume of smoke within a reasonable distance of sight will indicate that something is burning.

This is not the first occasion that this has happened, and no doubt will happen again in the future.

When reporting a fire, the more information that can be relayed to the call taker, the quicker responding brigades will arrive where they are required. The accurate reporting of the location is one piece of important information. This becomes an issue when there are smoke sightings in the distance where the details will be a bit sketchy.

If the fire spotters are up in the fire towers, then they can generally provide more detailed locations and can confirm a smoke sighting in our area. When there is general smoke drift, then their job becomes a lot harder.

On occasion, the brigade will spend quite a bit of time driving around the area trying to locate a reported fire and end up not finding anything. This of course consumes resources including fuel, manpower and time.

Summer has arrived.

While January was another quiet month fire-wise as previously reported (see February edition), February returned to more normal summer conditions and, as predicted, the grass did cure and the forests dried out. Fire activity increased for the brigade resulting in eight turnouts up to the 23rd of the month.

The first event for us was just after midnight on Sunday February 4, when we were called in as extra resources to a house fire in Chewton which occurred earlier in the night.

This was followed up later in the day with a fire on Mount Alexander south of the main camping area. It started because an abandoned campfire had not been fully extinguished. While a quick response ensured the fire was kept small, less than one hectare, more resources were called to make sure there was an adequate supply of water so the whole fire was blacked out in a timely manner. Support was also provided by aerial water bombing from the helicopter based in Bendigo and the Forest Fire Management crews.

Three days later on February 7, we were paged to support the Castlemaine Brigade to a grass and outbuilding fire in Odgers Road. The fire was also kept small.

February 13 was the day that wild storms travelled across the state causing trees and branches to be blown down, as well as lightning activity starting fires across the state. Two of these fires occurred locally, which the brigade responded to.

The first was a grass/scrub fire in the Elphinstone brigade area, and the second was a tree fire in the Taradale area. This was followed up with the third call for

the day to a smoke sighting in Blackjack Road due to the smoke drift mentioned above.

The next turnout was another support call to Vanstan Road in Castlemaine, where a tree that was being cut down, fell across power lines causing them to arc out further along the line which started a fire in grass and bush. Once again, a quick response averted a bigger fire.

As I write this, our Tanker 1, which was deployed to support the effort to contain the large fire still burning in the mountains of the Pyrenees region, has the third rotation of crew, with a fourth planned before our tanker returns home. We are part of the strike teams tasked with monitoring overnight activity, maintaining control lines and dealing with any new spot fires or breakouts.

Applefest Update

We will be present again at this year's Applefest Market with an information marquee. We will be supported by the North Central Community Education Group, and we will have a variety of information available and hopefully be able to answer all your questions. If you do not have any questions, call in and say hi anyway and have a chat about your fire plan and preparedness.

Summer conditions are likely to run into March so stay prepared and stay safe.

Tyrone Rice
Brigade Community Safety
Coordinator

The editorial team at *The Core*, speaking on behalf of the Harcourt community, extends its sincere gratitude to the Harcourt CFA Brigade for not only keeping us, and other communities, safe in the fire season but also responding to other emergencies throughout the year. Thank you Harcourt CFA.

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Councillor Comment



Hi all,

I hope this finds you all well. Some more rain would be nice to cool things down a bit.

Quite a few items were covered at the February meeting of Council. At the meeting, Council approved a new waste collection contract for a seven-year term with a possible three-year extension. All up, the value of the contract is \$36 million. This will be the largest contract ever entered into by Council, but it provided certainty over the long term. Congratulations to all involved in the tender process. A very substantial undertaking.

On planning matters, we approved the construction of a dwelling in the farming zone in Watson St, Castlemaine. This matter was deferred at the December meeting to allow planners time to develop conditions for approval. The problem with deferring things is they come back, but after more debate the matter was decided on the casting vote of the mayor. Some people think it is the end of the world when we approve these, but I know the applicant will be happy and a new house will be built. More houses, more jobs – worth supporting, don't you think? It is a bit more complicated than that, but that is planning in Victoria.

Another matter before Council was the approval of a policy on Establishing Formal Positions of Council. What this policy seeks to do is set guidelines on what Council will get involved in. Our role is to deliver services and programs that will benefit our community. Quite often we get asked to take a position on something that is outside our control and or field of influence. The policy provides a basis where Council can say that it doesn't want to take a position on that. Time will tell if this works the way it is intended.

As many of you know, this is a Council election year. I have reported previously that the ward structure is being reviewed. That work is now complete, and we will have eight single-councillor wards, four in the Castlemaine area and four in the rural areas. An even number of councillors increases the chance of a tied decision where the mayor's casting vote comes into play.

Best regards to all,

Tony
AG Cordy
0439 742 434

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Harcourt Carpet Bowls Sayonara Summer Bowls

Our Summer Bowls Season has only four more nights to play. We have been making up two teams each night and playing on one mat. This has made for some exciting bowling and competition between the bowlers. As the makeup of the teams changes each week, it gives everyone some competition, a lot of fun and good practice for the Winter Competition.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Harcourt Carpet Bowls Association will be held on 17 April 2024 at 7.30pm at the Harcourt District Leisure Centre.

All current players and anyone interested in joining the Harcourt Carpet Bowls Association can attend this meeting or show their interest in playing winter carpet bowls by contacting the number below.

The season start date will be decided at the AGM and will appear in the May edition of *The Core*, or you can call one of the numbers below. Registration and nightly playing fees are minimal, and you will learn the game as you play. Anyone eight years old and older can join in at any time and have a good social get together. We start at 7.30 pm and finish at approximately 9 pm so it's not a late night for anyone.

Contacts: President John 54742226 or Secretary Loretta 5474 2453

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VICTORIA EVERY BIT DIFFERENT



Harcourt Valley Primary School

At the beginning of March the Principal, Andrew Blake announced the students who have taken on the responsibilities of school and house captains. The elected school captains as are in the photo below.



TWT on-the-spot-photo.



There are two weeks to go before staff of Harcourt Valley Primary School take on the Run for the Kids fund raising effort to support Mack who has leukaemia. The Weekly Times recently featured a story on the fund raising efforts of the school staff. (Photo supplied by the school.)

School Council

The next School Council meeting will be held next Wednesday March 6 commencing at 6:30 p.m. The School Council AGM is scheduled for Wednesday March 20. As the tenure of School Council positions is two years, the following School Council members' terms of office have now expired: Jason McAinch, Natalie McCarthy, Christine Webb and DET member, Britanii Norris.

Andrew thanked Jason, Nat, Christine and Britanii for all of their hard work and commitment to the school during their time as School Council members. The vacant positions can be filled by new parents, or retiring School Council members can be re-elected or self-nominate.

Applefest – pies, song and art

The school always has a strong presence at Applefest with apple pies for sale, the student choir and the wonderful display of student art at the Applefest Art Show. Come along and support the school at Applefest.

Andrew extended a big thank you to the

terrific number of volunteers assisting with the baking of apple pies in preparation for the Applefest stall. The week prior to the Applefest will see all hands on deck to turn out as many more pies as possible.

Volunteers at our apple pie stall are needed, please contact Louise at reception on 5474 2266 or call in at the school.

Visitors to Applefest and family members will look forward as always to the student choir. Grade 3 to Grade 6 students in the School Choir have been invited to perform at the opening of the 2024 Applefest on Saturday March 9.

Andrew thanked Mrs Maddaford for ensuring that all students have a piece of art work to display at the Art Show. He congratulated all students on their wonderful art work. The Art Show will be at the ANA Hall.

House Sports

The house sports are scheduled for Friday, March 8 commencing at 1:00 pm Students will participate in various fun water-based activities and all parents/carers are most welcome to attend this event.

Castlemaine Secondary College Open Morning

Grade 5 and Grade 6 families are invited to attend Castlemaine Secondary College for their Open Morning on April 24 from 9:30 am – 11:30 am.

As can be seen from these excerpts from a recent school newsletter, our primary school is, as always, a busy and exciting place for students and their families.

The Core Writing Competition

Please see the following pages for a story by Zhara Thorpe who was a Grade 6 student in 2023. Zhara was presented with a certificate at the end of year graduation ceremony as a finalist in the Core Writing Competition. Zhara is furthering her studies at Highview College Maryborough.



The 2024 school captains: Sienna & Hector; vice captains: Grace & Arlo.

House captains, as of March 1 are:

Barker House: Evie and Leila

Lang House: Blossom and Rylan

Mitchell House: Elections to take place on Monday March 4

Junior School Student Council

The Principal congratulated the two students who have been so far elected to the student council. They are Callum and Charlie. Any other students interested in joining the 2024 Student School Council have been invited to apply by March 12.

Art Competition, Show and Sale

HARCOURT APPLEFEST 2024

OFFICIAL OPENING & PRESENTATION OF AWARDS
Friday 8th March 2024; 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
During Applefest

ANA Hall, James Park, Harcourt

What Sparks Within

By Zhara Thorpe

- PROLOGUE -

"I think you'll like it here, Zendah, trust me," Mum says, trying to speak over the noise of the crowd. I glance at Mum's face, then to the old, cracking and red faded building in front of me, then to all kids around me, and then back to mother's face, scrunching up my own face.

Unconvinced. "I know what you're thinking, honey, but please give me a chance!" I scrunch up my again, even MORE unconvinced.

"Mum, you say that about EVERYTHING! Like the time when I didn't want to visit my aunty Nostrie and ESPECIALLY my cousin Georgina? You told me 'I know honey, but please just trust me on this one.' And what happened?"

Mum thought about it, "Uhh, Yoouu, had a fun time?" I groan in annoyance, fury, loathing, "No! I broke my knee by Georgina whacking a fricking giant club-shaped toy! AND ON PURPOSE!"

Now some people around us were starting to look at me fighting with my Mum. I could feel my cheeks burning, so I quickly react to this. I lower my head and mumble, "Yeah, sure Mum." And thank GOD the high school gate opened and we were allowed in. I walked in with my head hung low.

Hi, I'm Zendalayah, Zendah for short and, well, as you sadly heard, this is how I started my high school.

- CHAPTER 1 -

"Brrrrng! Okey dokey, class 8.C, your next class is materials, so start packing up and I'll take you there. Hurry up 8.C! 7. A is already here!"

Okay, so you know how I started high school right? Well, we've jumped a year. Anyway, back to the story.

We all start shuffling around, grabbing all the things we have to carry for all of our classes in our bags, like our laptop, worksheets,

folder, etc. etc. Then we all travelled in a mob, well, in our friend groups, anyway. I walked alone at the back of the class mob, when someone comes running and stops right next to me.

"Hey yo, what up, Zenny!" I look at the person next to me and look back ahead of me while rolling my eyes. Cristeane, the one person I downright hate.

"Hi Cristeane, and DO NOT call me Zenny, like, ever." I say in a flat voice.

"Sure okay, cool. Sooo ... wanna hang out together?" I scrunch up my face in disgust.

"And why would I?"

Christeane looks at me in confusion, "Beecause, I'm your friend? Duh." I roll my eyes again. *'How does she not get it by now? Uugh! I've told her we're not friends, like, jillions of times! She really needs to learn and remember things. It's been like two years to get it in her brain!'*

"No, Cristeane, like I said for two YEARS straight! WE. ARE NOT. FRIENDS!"

She blinks at me in confusion again. Then she laughed in her annoying, squawky laugh.

"You're hilarious!" she said, still not getting it.

My cheeks were red hot, fuming with anger.

"I'm not joking Cristeane! I'M SERIOUS!" I storm off. I look around and see Clancy and quietly walk towards him, ducking so Cristeane won't see where I was going. *'One of the few favourite things of being small, blending in and hiding. I love it. And I think it's working.'*

And sure enough, Cristeane was looking for me, trying to follow where I went, but clearly failing.

"Hey, Clance. Mind if I blend in?" I say as I pop up next to him, making him jump in the process.

"Woah, Zendah! You gotta stop doin' that!"

I give him an apologetic grin.

"Sorry, can't help it. But it is your fault for not being prepared! You KNOW I'm small." Clancy gives me the sarcastic 'sure' face.

"Mm Hm, and how exac ..."

Clancy was instantly cut off by the sound of the emergency drill alarm coming over the announcement speakers for at least twenty seconds. *'Uh oh, that can 't be good.'*

- CHAPTER 2 -

I flinch from the noise while putting my hands over my ears.

"Could they at least warn us before they do the alarms?!" I yell over the noise.

"It must not be a drill then, if they didn't warn us about the drill," Clancy yelled back at me.

I thought about it. I was about to say 'you could be right, Clance!' when the alarm was stopped by an announcement, only giving me the chance to say 'you cou ...' before getting cut off.

"Attention Garlor High school. This is NOT a drill, there has been a breakout in the School. Please SENSIBLY jog out of the school to the front gate where your parents and buses are waiting safely outside. Have a good weekend everyone. Thank you!"

'CRASH!' I hear the sound of crashing of glass then a security alarm in the distance, a few doors down. I look around at everyone, *'Hmmm no one seemed to hear that.'* Then I noticed Ms Consuela looking at me with a sparkle in her eye. Her face is clearly saying 'I know you heard that.' So I took that in and took the chance to warn them.

"Guys, I don't think you heard that, but there's ..." Someone called Soren stepped forward, cut me off on purpose.

"But what Zenny boo? A Dracula's gonna pop out? 'cause they won't even attack us for blood!" He mocked. I scowled at him.

Ms Consuela frowned at Soren. "Sorry to interrupt, but it's actually a murderer, we know Dracula's are fantasy. And what Zendah was GOING to say is correct too. There was a crash and a security alarm go off a few doors down behind us, so I suggest we move. Quickly."

Ms Consuela winks at me while no one pays attention. The whole

group gasps and quickly runs towards the front gate. Soren frowns at me and I poke out my tongue while doing my 'see?' face right back.

"Sorry Zendah, what were you saying before?"

I jumped and realized it was just Clance. He smiled at me jumping, indicating the 'this is the medicine YOU give me' face.

"It doesn't matter anymore. You feelin' alright after that?"

Clancy thought about it. "To be honest, shaken up. DEFINITELY scared. You?"

I smiled at Clancy. "All same here. Although I was aware of the Vampire. But I was DEFINITELY not expecting this today!"

Clancy grinned at me, and I grinned back. I saw Christeane do the kissy face and then point at me, then to Clancy. It made me SO embarrassed. I frowned and poked my tongue out at her, then she evil grinned at me, did an 'I'm watching you' face and went to the front of the class, right behind Ms Consuela. We quickly hurry the rest of the way to the car park where parents were waiting. I find my Mum's car and once I got in, she accelerates. I look back at my school as it fades away, wondering if I'll be able to go back to school ever again. I felt so exhausted, so I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

- CHAPTER 3 -

'Bang!' I woke up in an instant, my head on the wall. 'where am I?' I think, still trying to recover from the hit. My dizziness started to wear off, and I realized I was in my bedroom. 'Mum must've put me here after I fell asleep on the ride home. Or maybe it was just a REALLY long dream. Hmm ...' I feel very confused, I also noticed that my throat was dry. I climbed out of bed to get a drink from the kitchen and stopped in my tracks, sensing something forming behind me. 'BOOOOM!' something explodes before I could turn around and see what it was, knocking me off my feet and falling on my stomach and I clenched my jaw in pain. 'Ow, that really hurts!' I swivelled my head to see what hit me. I look over to see this beautiful floating, glowing, fire diamond.

"Woah, what IS that?" I say, curiosity taking me over. I get up and look and it closely. "It's beautiful!" I whisper, trying not to wake up Mum. As silence goes on, I realize it's saying something, but it's SO quiet, I was convinced it was quieter than ANYTHING that made noise, so I tried leaning in closer to make out what it's saying. It was HARD, but I managed to make it out.

"I am the lost soul of flames,"

"What? Did you just say 'I am the post LOL of Bruce Wayne?'" I say, so confused. 'How does the post laugh out loud for Bruce Wayne? Hmmm ... maybe the post laughs at Bruce Wayne, but that makes no sense!' The diamond glows a little more red and brighter, indicating anger.

"I am the lost soul of flames,"

I back up a bit with my hands up innocently in the air. "Hey, sorry, okay? It's not my fault you talk so quiet!" It's glowing cooled down a bit as if it understood me. I edged a little closer, warming up to it. As I slowly lift my hand to touch it, I could feel it's heat, but I pushed on. WHOOSH! As soon as I made contact with the soul of lost flame, it disintegrated into wisps of smoke then disappeared. I shook my head, confused. 'What. Was. THAT?' I shook my head again. 'I must be going delusional.' I turned around and went back to bed, changing my mind about getting a drink.

Before I closed my eyes all I remember seeing was a small soul of lost flames rising from my chest and seeping in. I fell asleep instantly, only to here "*Muah ha ha ha. You're mine now.*"

- CHAPTER 4 -

"Clance? Is that you?"

Clancy grinned at me evilly "*Hello Zendah, BLaarrgghhh.*" Clancy moves towards me slowly with his hands up like he wants a hug. All of a sudden, his body started to quickly rot, some of his clothes and limbs falling apart and his skin turning a sickening dark green colour. 'Oh no ...' I step back, now full of pure terror.

"ZENDAAHHH" Clancy lifted his hand to the sky, and then other friends, family and foes came out of the ground, looking just like Clancy. The closest one was grandma, but she was ... alive. "Grandma?! You're,

you're ..."

Grandma clicked her fingers and everything else freezes. "Alive? I know. Zendayah, my sweet child, snap out of it. Snap out of the dream. It's not real."

I backed up, confused. Then I realized she had some star shaped sapphire in her hands. "Is that, a, A DREAMVISITER?! GRANDMA, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?"

Grandma barks a laugh. "Ghosts can do human things too you know. But that's beside the point, you need to wake up!"

Now I felt SOOOO confused, I felt like I could explode bigger than anything. "What are you talking about grandma? I am awake!"

Grandma sighs then clicks her fingers again and everyone unfroze.

Grandma disappeared and Clancy was in a lunging position. I screamed, shattering the house windows. Then he lunged at me.

'BAM!' I jolted awake, hitting my head again. 'What's with me banging my head lately? And all the weirdness? And WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?' I banged again to make sure I wasn't going mad, and instantly regretted doing that as pain surged through my head. 'Ow, bad idea. Should've thought of NOT to do that sooner. Ugh, I'm so tired. Oh, crap!' I sprang off my bed like a jack rabbit, remembering that I was going to have lunch and meet up with Lauren, my friend, to catch up. I quickly get dressed and head downstairs to get breakfast, only to find Mum ready, and has made me vegemite toast.

"Ready?" I nodded. "Alright, let's go!"

- CHAPTER 5 -

"Zendah! It's been so long! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME?" Lauren yelled at me as I got out of the car at the bakery by the sea.

"Chill Lauren! It's only been a year! and I'm here now, right?"

Mom waved at me, "Alright see you soon, honey!" Mum gets in the car and drives off. I wave to mum then turn back to Lauren.

"STILL! That makes NO Difference!" Lauren says complaining, embarrassing herself.

"Shh, Lauren. Keep it down!" I whispered to her. She looked around her and saw what I meant.

"Sorry," she apologized. "Maybe let's order and get an outside table?" Lauren suggested.

"Sure. That sounds like a great idea."

"Ahh, Don't you just LOVE the sea?" Lauren says to me, breathing in the salty air. I nodded.

"I agree. What were you saying about the Race?" Lauren snaps back into focus. "Oh, yeah. It was CRAZY! Like, getting chased by a lion crazy! Everyone was dropping Like flies! I managed to pass, but I had a feeling the ... Whaaa—"

Lauren's sea foam eyes rolled back into her head, turning her eyes white. She smiled evilly at me. 'Please tell me this isn't real, please, please, PLEASE. Let this be a dream,'

Lauren grinned even more. "Hahaha! Oh, Zendah, you're not imagining! You should know that by now!" she said, as if reading my

mind. I flinched. It's actually hard when weird things were happening in not just dreams.

Lauren took a step forward and I took a step back. Not a moment too soon, I turned and fled.

"Don't worry, Zendah. I will help you."

I jumped in surprise, not expecting that. "The soul of lost flames! I didn't expect you to come back!"

The soul of lost flames instantly responded. *"Of course you didn't, by the way, my actual name is Aaravos. Now, back to helping you."*

All of a sudden, a mysterious purple portal-shaped thing appeared in front of me, whispering quietly, *"Hop in. And I advise quickly."*

I see what he means, instantly, as I see Lauren gaining on me, and I jump into the portal.

I arrive on the other side and

turn around to see Lauren roar in fury and disappear as the portal closes. I look around me. 'What IS this place?' There was a pause.

"The Crimson Abyss," Aaravos responded, *"And your journey has only just begun, little Zendah."* I nodded, too shaken to say anything. *"Don't worry, I will guide you. First, go to the crimson wilderness to your left and search for the wolf fang of Echini."*

I turn to the direction I was told and head off into the start of my journey, not sure if I'll make it out of the wilderness alive.

What Sparks Within was well plotted, and the writer clearly defined the different characters and locations. The supernatural element was definitely spooky! I could tell that a lot of work went into this entry.

Susan Green, judge of the 2023 The Core Student Writing Award



Your local Landcare group has been 'out there' early this year, cleaning up the local environment.

Beginning its program of working bees for 2024, the group spent a Sunday morning in February removing plastic tree covers along Picnic Gully Road, leading to the Mountain Bike Park.

While the bike park was being developed, the roadside opposite the trail to the park was densely planted to act as a dust screen, in anticipation of the heavier traffic on the road. The plantings have mostly been successful and some trees are quite large. It was good to see the plastic removed, as it would have eventually broken down and become a wind-blown mess and an environmental nuisance. This type of tree



A good number of plastic plant covers were collected for disposal.

guard is being phased out for sturdier styles that are able to be used multiple times.

Working bees take place on the fourth Sunday of the month, and interested potential members are encouraged to come along to help the local environment, meet our members and enjoy a delicious morning tea afterwards.

For more information about the group activities, see our Facebook page and our website: www.harcourtvalleylandcare.org

More Landcare Info from the North Central Chat

Volunteering Naturally Report 2023

Volunteering Naturally 2023 is the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action's (DEECA) fifth annual snapshot of environmental volunteering across Victoria. The report includes the collection and collation of data on volunteer

numbers and hours, economic contribution, and stories of change, as well as regional data.

In the Loddon Mallee, there are 194 groups, 3581 volunteers and nearly 95,000 volunteer hours. Volunteering-Naturally-2023-Report-FINAL.pdf (environment.vic.gov.au)

Bendigo Sustainability Festival

The Bendigo Sustainability Group is celebrating the tenth festival this year, and you are invited to the sustainable garden party! This annual event aims to showcase the absolute best in sustainable living products, programs, goods, and services that are active here in Central Victoria.

Highlights include Craig Reucassel, best known for his work with The Chaser, The War on Waste, CNNNN and The Chaser's War on Everything.

- **When:** Sunday 17 March, 10:00 am to 3:30 pm
- **Where:** Garden for the Future, Hamelin Street, White Hills
- **Cost:** Entry is by gold coin donation
- **More information:** Bendigo Sustainability Festival 2024 – Bendigo Sustainability Group (bsg.org.au)

www.nccma.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/north-central-chat-march-2024



THE CORE



The group enjoyed another substantial morning tea after the February working bee.

Prestigious Award for Champion of VMR

Andrew Mierisch, President of the Victorian Miniature Railway located in Harcourt, was last year recognised with one of the most prestigious awards in the field of miniature railways in Australia.

Many locals are now familiar with VMR and with Andrew, his family, and the VMR volunteers. In 2024 members of Harcourt organisations were invited to a special day where they were treated to rides on a variety of miniature trains. The open day showcased the developments on the VMR site which overlooks the township.

What some readers may not realise is that a number of the trains running that day or were on display were built by Andrew.

There is a distinct difference between a miniature railway and a model railway. Those who labour to build miniature trains and carriages make every replicated piece to the exact measurements of the originals, whereas the trains of a model railway are examples and can vary in size.

Andrew's dedication to miniature railways began as a youngster, his first project was a ganger's hand trolley built in his father's workshops. Andrew said, 'Dad (a toolmaker) would arrive home from work to find his pot belly stove firing, the workshop cleaned, and me waiting eagerly at my hand trolley to continue construction.'

At the Annual Convention of the



Showing his enthusiasm for miniature trains – Andrew at fourteen years of age at Diamond Valley Miniature Railway.

Australian Association of Live Steamers* held in 2023, the Federation of Model Engineering Societies Award was presented to Andrew in recognition of his significant achievements.

Andrew said, 'It's a pleasure and an honour to join so many outstanding names on this trophy. It was a total surprise. There are many more deserving people who have been recognised with this important award.' Andrew added, 'One of the names in particular on this award, was the recipient of an Order of Australia medal, which highlights the significance of this award within our great hobby.'

Andrew's father Colin was heavily involved in the Diamond Valley Railway. This was where Andrew gained experience and developed his skills. While at Diamond Valley he and another member constructed fifty-four bogies (the

under carriage with wheels) which were fitted to twenty-seven carriages, complete with full braking and air storage, a first for the railway, and it ushered in a new era of reliability and safety. By the time Andrew was twenty years of age, he had constructed his first locomotive. In the years since, Andrew has built two other V/Line miniature trains.

* The AALS is the national governing body of the hobby in general, covering important roles with respect to working with national insurers, WorkSafe and other important factors, along with holding annual conventions/gatherings yearly at Easter all over Australia.

Thank you to David Proctor, Chairman AALS Safety Committee, who provided much of the content of the above, which was taken from an article he wrote at the time of the award.

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Harcourt Heritage Centre

A glance inside an old Minute Book

The oldest Minute Book in the collection of Harcourt Heritage Centre was started in February 1886.

Reading the record of proceedings takes us back to a time when the residents of Harcourt did not think of themselves as Australians. They were 'colonists'. It was a word of praise. If you spoke of someone as 'an old colonist' or 'a colonist of forty years', you were saying, in effect, this person was a brave and hardy pioneer. The settlers in the Harcourt valley, in Victoria, had been encouraged to travel abroad to occupy a remote British colony. They never lost sight of that, their currency was the British currency, their government was at Westminster and British ways were the preferred ways of doing things. The colonists were under no illusions as to their nationality – they were British citizens.

As colonists far from their place of origin, the settlers at Harcourt had left behind a secure parish-based society. The colonial settler had to live without the social and economic benefit of established parish-based personal 'networks'. They were happy to copy ideas which had worked in Britain.

In 1886, when someone suggested the formation of a Mutual Improvement Society, the people of Harcourt eagerly jumped at the chance. It seems that George Robins of Woodbrook, George Symes of Harcourt and Owen Owens of Barkers Creek were the ones who established the local Mutual Improvement Society.

Mutual Improvement Societies were formed in England from the 1820s. Instruction was provided by the members themselves. Before long the typical Mutual Improvement Society was attached to a church or chapel. In Harcourt, the society began as the Christian Mutual Improvement Society. The members agreed to meet fortnightly at the Rechabite Hall, with a program of recitations, readings and, sometimes, a debate. Within a few weeks, membership had grown from twelve to sixty-nine, with members drawn from Barkers Creek, Woodbrook, Harcourt and Faraday. The list of members shows that they were from very diverse backgrounds, from every nook and cranny of Great Britain. There must have been many accents heard at meetings of the Society.

In June 1887, the members resolved to change the group's name to the Barkers

Creek and Harcourt Mutual Improvement and Debating Society. The secretary promptly shortened this unwieldy name and only ever referred to it as the B.C. &H.M.I.&D.S.

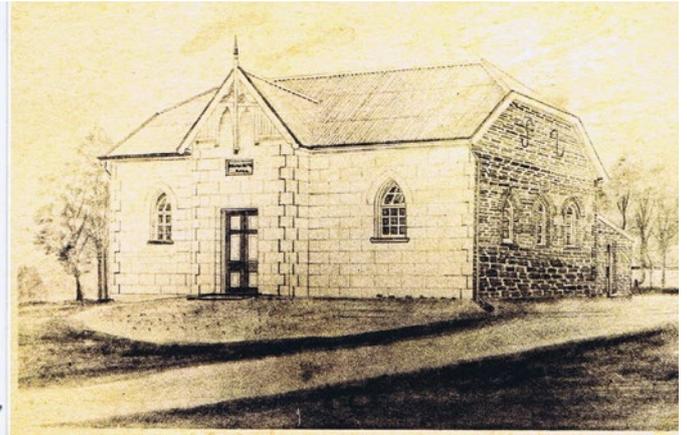
The normal fortnightly program was crammed full of recitations, (at which Mr James excelled) and readings (of a tragic nature). At the members' request the occasional debate took place. Meetings generally concluded with a prayer or the singing of 'God save the Queen'. On two occasions the members – colonists all – debated the question, 'is it desirable to put restrictions upon the immigration of Chinese to the Australian colonies?' At the first debate the answer was a resounding 'yes' but, second time around, eight months later, in a lengthy account of the debate (it must have made for a late night) the basic humanity of the members shines through, although the eventual conclusion was that the Poll Tax be continued. This question was one which was being asked across the continent, and eventually became the 'White Australia Policy'.

Strange to say, the minutes of B.C.&H.M.I.&D.S. come to an end in December 1887. The Minute Book, however, was opened in July 1893 to record the deliberations of a Loco Wood Committee.

It seems that the men of Barkers Creek had obtained a contract from the Victorian Railways to supply 1,000 tons of firewood, to be delivered at the Barkers Creek rail siding within a twelve-month period. The Committee negotiated with various locals to each cut and deliver fifty tons of firewood towards fulfilling the contract.

When we turn the pages of the Minute Book, we find that the meetings of the Loco Wood Committee soon became a forum for the gold sluicing parties of Specimen and Launceston Gullies. The sluicers made clear their need for a regular flow of water from the channel system.

After these proceedings, the Minute Book was used to record the weekly clean-up of gold by each active sluicing party,



in ozt (Troy ounces), dwt (pennyweight) and £.s.d (pounds, shillings and pence). It would be interesting to know who it was that made up the weekly table of earnings of the gold sluicing operations in the three months July to September 1893.

By the end of 1893 the old Minute Book was back on the shelf, there to lie unused until its final outing – in March 1896 – to record the proceedings of the short-lived Rechabite Rope Quoits Club.

There is not the space in this article to list the names of those who attended, entertained, or debated in the meetings recorded in the old Minute Book. If your ancestor lived within walking distance of the Rechabite Hall – and many walked long distances to the meetings – then it is probable that they featured, more than once, in the pages of the old Minute Book.

Meticulously recorded in the Minute Book are the transactions of a community then in process of formation. In the year 2024, the terms 'colonization' and 'colonist' have an unpopular meaning. They denote the influence of a dominant nation in the affairs of another country. But our predecessors in the Harcourt valley in the 1880s and 1890s took pride in the term. They were dinky-di colonists.

In quaint ways aimed at self-betterment, those colonists met, came to know each other, debated sensitive topics and filled the evenings with chatter, if not always with the business at hand, as they built the society of which we are now so proud.

Compiled for *The Core* by the Harcourt Heritage Centre. The venue for these meetings, the Rechabite Hall, was located at 8844 Midland Highway, Harcourt. It was converted into a private residence in the 1940s.



Harcourt Bowling Club

PENNANT

Pennant results

Harcourt Midweek Pennant teams will not compete in Finals this year. At season end, Division 2 holds 5th ladder position; Division 4 is in 8th; and Division 5 is also in 8th position. All midweek players gathered at the club for an end-of-season wind-down celebration after their matches. Despite the season results, all bowlers put in a good effort of which the club can be proud.

In the last game of the home and away season for Weekend Pennant, both of our Division 7 teams (Blue and Gold) had success. The win at Kangaroo Flat for Gold saved them from relegation next season. Division 2 at home were just down to Kangaroo Flat with a win and a draw and 2 rinks down; Division 4 were unable to overcome Calivil on their green. Despite not contesting finals this year, Weekend Pennant teams represented the club well during the season and finished the day and season end with a barbeque.

Annual Fours Tournaments

On Sunday 4 February, the **Annual Men's Fours** Tournament was scheduled to take place. Unfortunately, this was cancelled due to forecasted heat. At this stage there has not been another date set.

The Annual Ladies' Fours Tournament Champion of Champions took place on Thursday 15 February. -

Wendy Chaplin, Harcourt Women's Champion for 2023-2024 Season, competed in the Champion of Champions last Sunday at Marong. In this knockout round of bowls, Wendy was up against Brooke Davies of Kangaroo Flat in the first round. Although playing some good bowls, Wendy was unable to catch Brooke, who went on to win 25 shots to 18. Given the heat on the day, those who competed are to be applauded for taking part and representing their clubs.

Unfortunately, Harcourt Men's Champion, Brian Leech, was unable to participate in the day.



Ladies' Annual Fours Tournament

Another successful Annual Ladies' Fours Tournament was held last Thursday 15 February with 48 women entering from across the Division. We were blessed with perfect weather on the day, which commenced with morning tea followed by a Ditch to Ditch competition won by: Leads Jill Harding (Campbells Creek); Seconds Helen Wilson (Campbells Creek); Thirds Bev Luke (Golden Square); Skips Joan Bath (Woodbury). The break for the usual sumptuous lunch was held after 10 ends. Following a further two games of 8 then 10 ends, the day concluded with delicious desserts of home cooked apple crumble and a selection of slices.

Mount Alexander Funerals were the generous sponsors of the tournament and director, Brian Leidle attended to present the prizes. Winners of the tournament were the Eaglehawk team of Jan Robertson, D Gibbs, Pam Hughes and K Rowe. Runners-up of the day were the Dingee team of Sue Cail, Val Sproull, Megan Grieves and Lyn Demeo. Co-ordinator of the day, Judi Miles thanked



The winners of the Ladies Annual 4s Tournament, from Eaglehawk, with Brian Leidle. Below: the runners-up from Dingee.



Brian for his sponsorship; her team of Kathy and Mary-Anne; the catering committee; greens keeper; bar staff, and all who donated the goods for the great array of raffle prizes.

See the attached photos taken on the day - left: the table of raffle prizes, bottom right: ladies at lunch, random photos on the green

Men's Over-60s Pairs

Four Harcourt bowlers competed in the Bendigo Division Men's Over-60s Pairs on Wednesday 14 February.

Phillip Clarke and Darrell Normington played in a close final match against Gary Beckham and Neville Boland from Golden Square (both Premier Division bowlers). Harcourt got off to a slow start but fought their way back from 9-1 to go down in hard fought contest 14-7. A super effort to be runners-up in the Bendigo Region over 60's pairs beating more fancied opponents to make the final. (Pictured)



Brian Smith and Brett Jenkinson got to the semi-finals; unfortunately they were well beaten by the Golden Square combination of Beckham and Bowland.

Overall it was a fantastic result for the club's over 60's for four players to reach the semi-finals of the over 60's pairs for the region.

Afternoon Jackpot Bowls

Afternoon Jackpot Bowls commenced on Wednesday 21 February and has been well received. This will continue on Wednesday afternoons while it is being well attended. It is 2-bowl triples or 3-bowl pairs depending on numbers. Names in by 12.00pm for 12.30pm sharp start. This is open to any registered bowlers and



Harcourt Bowling Club

Harcourt Bowling Club social members for \$5.00 per player. There will be a limit of 14 teams so have your names in early. Games will finish with drinks and nibbles.

Sponsors' Challenge

The annual Sponsors' Challenge will take on a new format this year and will be held on Saturday 16 March at 1.00pm for a 2.00pm start. Organisers are hoping this weekend format will make it easier for our sponsors to participate – more about this in the April *Core*.

FRIDAY SOCIAL NIGHTS

Friday social nights continue with member's draw at 6.30pm followed by the ever-popular raffle draws. Our bar manager, Barry has stocked the fridges with a great range of non-alcoholic drinks, as well as the usual drinks on offer all at reasonable prices. So come on down and join us.

GIRLS ON THE GREEN

Harcourt Bowling Club will be running a 'Girls on the Green' competition, commencing on 6 March for four consecutive Wednesday nights. No experience needed, novices can be guided by experienced club members: 5.30pm for a 6.00pm start – finish at 8.00pm: Entry \$10 per head per night.

It is expected that each team (of three or four) will play the four nights. You can register up to six team members to allow flexibility.

Contact secretary, Diane Marsh to register your team – 0438 722 566.

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

COMING UP IN MARCH/APRIL:

- **Ladies' Drawn Pairs** – Thursday 7 March (evening)
- **Men's Drawn (Gough) Pairs** – Thursday 14 March (evening)
- **Sponsors' Challenge** – Saturday 16 March (afternoon)
- **Grant Mixed Pairs** – Sunday 17 March (afternoon)

Grace Church

Service: 11.00am Sunday
All Welcome

Pastors: Roger & Glenise Thurecht
0422 605 897
gracecastlemaine.org.au

30 Buckley Street, Harcourt

Grace Church

An open air, outdoor baptism...

Pastor Roger Thurecht of Harcourt-based Grace Church conducts baptisms, but as Grace Church meets in hired premises, the baptisms are usually held in a heated baptistry at the Church of Christ, hired outside normal church hours. But, occasionally, an open air, outdoor baptism is requested, because Jesus had been baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.

That was the situation that unfolded when Claire Gamble recently joined Grace Church and found renewed faith in Jesus. This was helping her to cope with the vicissitudes of life and its challenges, so Claire, as a disciple of Christ, wanted to walk in his footsteps as closely as possible. She specifically requested an open-air, outdoor baptism

Roger had baptised a lady in the Loddon River at Newstead in 2005 and recalls that it was cold and the river was stony underfoot! He was also aware of four other baptisms conducted at the Expedition Pass Reservoir in the early 2000s, by the then Castlemaine High School Chaplain Bruce Horden. Being local and accessible, the Res was obviously the place that ticked all the boxes for Claire's baptism.

Invitations went out to family and friends, and arrangements were made for the afternoon of Sunday, December 10. After a lunch for guests in Harcourt, the Res was the meeting place. Fortunately, it was Goldilocks weather – not too hot, so parking spots were plentiful, and not too cold, so no-one was braving the depths. Preparations didn't take long. Claire, ready in a white dress, and Roger in waders, while witnesses found casual seating spots.

Claire addressed the witnesses then moved into the water, accompanied by her baptiser. Holding her hand, Roger placed the other on her head and Claire submerged. Smiles broke out as Claire's baptism was acknowledged by the onlookers, a significant step in her religious journey.

A change into dry clothing and Claire was ready to take part in a family photo, a memory of a memorable day recorded.

Reprinted with permission from *Chewton Chat*, Issue 299, January 2024





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 how to look after their fruit trees for the next twelve months. If this 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.

Like everyone else, we've had a cracker crop of stone fruit and plums this year, and the apples and pears are looking pretty good, too! The best times to get fruit directly from the farm are at the weekly farmers market at the Camp Reserve in Castlemaine each Wednesday, 2.30-5.30 pm, or from our Farm Shop (69 Danna Road) every Friday, 10 am-4 pm.

We've been relatively lucky with fruit-fly this year, 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:

- ▶ 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)
- ▶ Monitor your traps at least weekly.
- ▶ If you find flies in your trap, or you notice infected fruit on the tree, take the next step 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 them.
- ▶ Pick up all your fruit from the ground and make sure you kill any potential

fruit fly larvae inside it before you dispose of it.

- ▶ Get more information from our website (we highly recommend you watch the fruit fly masterclass, if you haven't already), or the council website.

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.

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

- ▶ 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.

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 will 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).

- ▶ 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 it. A great way to tell is to cut one open and look at the seeds - they should be dark brown and plump, or at least starting to go brown.



Hugh and Katie Finlay are certified organic orchardists (The Orchard Keepers) 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

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Council news

Hello from Mayor Driscoll

It's the beginning of autumn, and there's no better place to be than our shire.

We've got beautiful weather, and there are so many opportunities to get out and see live music, art, film, enjoy nature and much more.

We've had some fantastic local events of late, many of which Council have supported through our Event Grants program, which is now open - hurry, applications close soon!

On other matters, we're often looking for your input to guide our decision-making so visit shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au, sign up for updates, and have your say.

Keep reading at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/News.

Sign up for Council updates on affordable housing

Find out what actions we're taking to address affordable housing in a bi-monthly e-newsletter.

Sign up for updates at shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/affordable-housing.

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.

Working together for a healthy, connected shire
mountalexander.vic.gov.au (03) 5471 1700



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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
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March 2024 Xwd

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1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9						10								
11						12								
13						14					15	16		
											17			
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Down:

- I shot vehicle inspection device haphazardly. (5)
- Only a pseudo git with a stupid ego would disregard this semiotic help. (5-4)
- Hands-off sort of philosopher? (8)
- Where the hidebound churchman came from? (5)
- Mean hide to strike sparks? (9)
- Snake may revert to tight posture from effect of firearm. (6)
- The 10% that bind, by the sound of it... (5)
- Reflected wisdom? (9)
- Brazen and shaven... (4-5)
- Not a lot weighs on it for me, so you can proceed tunefully for all I care... (2,7)
- Taxpayer forcibly removed by Bronnie's chopper? (6,3)
- Chew rellies and steal game. (8)
- Five plus three of these to get all the way round. (6)
- Where the Real Self should be aimed? (5)
- Ground a near thing, poles apart and lacking a small amount. (5)

Across:

- Porcine abluion? Rot! (7)
- What to do to Indian bread to make pizza? (7,4)
- Dark Freudian force has me coming back from Chartres with their characteristic form of expression. (5)
- Phil the Greek a heavyweight at uni... (9)
- What corruption commission lacks... (5)
- Helpers to dress FIFO workers. (9)
- Poser now "humbling" (twit!) is just self-promoting... (7,3,3,7)
- ...and removed from robber in wild terrain, leaving prison on board. (4)
- (see 5)
- (see 13)
- I ran chefs at a chain of restaurants. (9)
- When Con emigrated to Athens, it left the island less specific and definite. (5)
- Machine might cramp coot, or any other bird trapped inside. (9)
- Tied by Ronnie? (5)
- Not the full monty for diner? (7)
- Bunch of fives in one's grasp? (7)
- Please locate something I can use to paint. (5)

February 2024 Xwd Solution

© McW 14 August '15

B	A	T	T	E	N	S	T	H	E	H	A	T	C	H
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C	O	S	M	E	T	I	C	S	U	R	G	E	R	Y

Down:

- After Alaska, coming here to balmier climes in the US might reset our circadian rhythms.
- Most men can't mend their ways even after hearing these.
- In poetic Oz I find animal version of mistletoe.
- Secure these, else chaos reigns at the bottom of things.
- Yo Bro! You mush it up to form growing part of terra firma (just drop the Yo, Bro...)
- Good cape, Bob, no? [Well?]
- Surgeon's evil arm entering the cranium dismembers bunch of three.
- Steady-state man on the cards? [Well? Two of them...]
- Can't see, hear or feel if knocked this way. Can't smell or taste, either...
- Fungus and magazine both sound like an overly possessive name for our sun. [sorry]
- It's not a cheesy pad, the school gym, but a seedy chap might have cased hype here, as one hyped case after another was made from the platform on this occasion...
- The Pasha vocation contains the seeds of disorder.
- Early electronic bacterium? [Well?]
- Tardy spirit [gin...] component?

Across:

- Prepares Golf for roofing? Certainly closes it down... [Well?]
- Shape of a hippie casserole dish? [Well?]
- Dunny in the know? [Well?]
- He thinks smashing statues and breaking windows are cool antics.
- Dole out flesh, they say. [Well?]
- Car for lazy Australian wizard? [Sorry...]
- Are they Darwin's type? [Well?]
- Before the sound of Erin. [Well?]
- Japanese martial arts weapons (nunchakus) lose snake with missing tail, but keep its head [s] and regain tail [e] for lost-ball boys...
- Tell story of past run [ran] rate going backwards half the time. (7)
- Rope weed factor? [Well?]
- One sure way to reach the ethnic Pole (10)
- I escape lesser sin [venial] for the money-grubbing one. (5)
- Large rubber endowment of US beach buggy indicates that it's past its bedtime [sorry].
- Lipstick liposuction? [Well?]

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**Castlemaine Bus Lines
Harcourt Services Monday to Friday**

	am	pm	pm
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:56	12:11	2:26
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:57	12:12	2:27
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	9:03	12:18	2:33
Halford St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	9:05	12:20	2:35
From Castlemaine to Harcourt Monday to Friday			
Castlemaine RSL/Mostyn St (Castlemaine)	8:45	12:00	2:15
Wimble St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	8:48	12:03	2:18
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:53	12:08	2:23
Coolstore Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:54	12:09	2:24
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25

Community Diary Dates

Friday March 8: 7.30 pm to 9 pm. Applefest Art Show Opening at the Heritage Centre, High Street

Saturday March 9: 10 am to 3 pm, Applefest, High Street, Harcourt.

Saturday March 9: Midday, announcement of the Harcourt Lions, Community Member of the Year and Youth of the Year at the Applefest.

Saturday March 9: 7 pm Dusty Springfield tribute concert with Wendy Stapleton.

Thursday March 14: 6.30 pm Harcourt Valley Landcare Meeting at the Heritage Centre.

Sunday March 24: 10.100 am Working Bee, Harcourt Valley Landcare, for details see FB or web page.

Wednesday April 17: 7.30 pm AGM of the Harcourt Carpet Bowls Association Harcourt District Leisure Centre.

Sunday May 19: Book Launch, *Schools of Barkers Creek, Harcourt and Harcourt North*, by Ken James at the Harcourt Heritage and Tourist Centre. Time will be available in the April edition of *The Core*.

Carpet Bowls: 7 pm Wednesdays, Carpet Bowls, summer and winter, Leisure Centre, Bingham's 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, 1.30 pm at Harcourt Leisure Centre, Bingham's 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 Bowls Club: See page 17

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.

Note new time



Drug driving? The consequences will blow your mind.

Police are conducting drug tests across Victoria, which helps to keep our roads safe. Being caught with illicit drugs in your system could result in a minimum fine of \$577 and possible licence suspension. Drug driving? Chances are you will be caught. Anywhere. Anytime. Anyone.



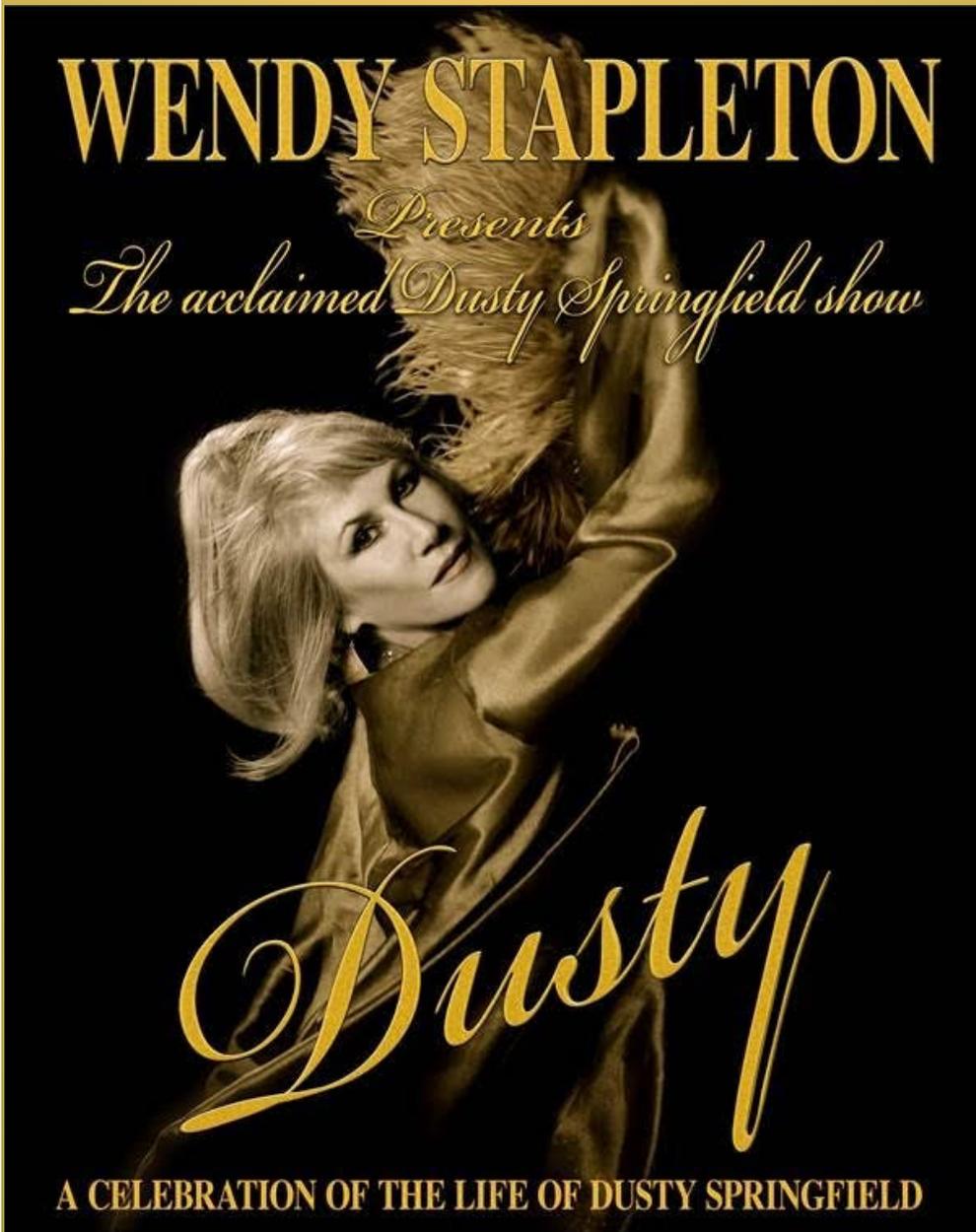
HARCOURT

James Park

Saturday March 9th - 7pm

To purchase your \$30.00 tickets go to

<https://events.humanitix.com/applefest-evening-concert>
or www.applefest.harcourt.vic.au



HARCOURT
APPLEFEST
2024



APPEARING:

James Park, Harcourt

March 9th 7-9.30pm