

EV station opened

Charge at no charge

Buninyong's new charging station for electric vehicles (EV), located in Warrenheip Street near Desoza Park, was opened on 30 January. Mayor Ben Taylor congratulated the several community groups and individuals responsible for "this ground-breaking project."

The two-vehicle charging point was constructed with funds from *Buninyong*

Sustainability, the *Buninyong Community Bank* and the *Rainbow Serpent Festival*. The Ballarat City Council also made a substantial contribution by undertaking the works required to bring power from the nearby toilet block to the kerbside at a cost of some \$8000.

Business boost

At the opening ceremony, one of the principal project organisers, **Andrew**



Aitken, Vice-President of the BDCA (pictured), said that the new charging station should encourage "a significant boost to local tourism and business."

"It's been shown elsewhere that drivers of electric vehicles will head into and stop at a town where a charger is available when otherwise they would continue driving. Each stop might involve thirty or forty minutes or more while the vehicle is charging and this time will be used to explore the township, buy drinks or food or other local products," he said.

The charger in Buninyong was made in Victoria by *Evolution Australia*. It has night time illumination, two EV charging points, and is compatible with all electric vehicles on the Australian market. After considering the complexities of installing and monitoring a payment device, it has been decided that there will be no cost to users at this stage.

It also has an associated 1.5 amp power point for charging mountain bikes and scooters.

The Buninyong charging station is already listed on Google maps and joins other Ballarat-area EV stations at Sovereign Hill Museum, Craigs Hotel and at the Ballarat Home Centre in Wendouree.

Left: Andrew Aitken looks happy as he watches a Tesla EV being charged at the new site.





A dreamy night in the Gardens

Buninyong's beautiful Botanic Gardens was again the setting for the now-annual performance of a Shakespearean play, when *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was staged across six days by the Arts Buninyong team headed up by Director Susan Pilbeam and actor/editor Robert Kelty.

The sequence began in 2017 with the staging of *The Tempest*. This was followed by *As You Like It*, and last year by *Love's Labour Lost*.

Audience

The opening night of the eight performance run of the show was on 7 February attended by an audience of some 150 people who enjoyed pre-show music by local group *Hardies Hillbillies* prior to the 80 minute non-stop show.

In a cast of 23 players there were some standout performances. The evergreen **Robert Kelty** was in his element as the mischievous Bottom, and **Tim Harris** and **Mika Wallace** gave strong performances in their roles of Demetrius and Helena.

The gardens setting was again used to the limit with actors and fairies appearing onto the stage area from all angles amidst the trees and bushes in the north east corner

of the gardens. At various times, tiny fairies could be seen flitting about through the 'forest' at least 100m from the actors on centre stage. The only 'prop' used this year was a large painted scene of the Parthenon in Athens done by **Michael Ford**.

Flexible

The flexibility and suitability of the setting was again obvious with the actors making use of the rotunda and this year they also had access to the nearby old butter factory building with help from the Historical Society.

Local groups and businesses again strongly supported the Bard in Buninyong initiative. These included The Red Door Pizza, Greenvale Meats, the Bendigo Bank, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens and the staff and

children of the Buninyong Primary School. Support also came from the City of Ballarat.

Director **Susan Pilbeam** was delighted with the excellent turn out for the 2020 show which she said saw the "mortal, natural and supernatural worlds colliding on a special summer's night with events following at a crazed pace."



Wire ropes in, old trees out Highway stand off

In its November 2019 issue, *The News* reported on a \$26 million Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) project to install wire-rope safety barriers along the Midland Highway from Clarendon to just before the Mt Buninyong Road turnoff.

Significant community concern was expressed at the planned extensive removal of mature roadside trees, particularly in the stretch from the Scotsburn school to the Mt Buninyong turnoff, to allow for the installation of the wire barriers.

Lobby

The Buninyong & District Community Association (BDCA) and other local groups have since lobbied RRV planners to introduce an 80kph speed zone along that strip rather than constructing central barriers which would result in less tree/habitat loss

This proposal has presently been rejected by RRV on the grounds that “the Midland Highway between Geelong and Ballarat is an important transport route carrying some 4000 vehicles per day,” and that RRV believes that “the best result to improve safety while maintaining efficiency is to apply the proposed designs and keep the speed limit at the 100kmh posted speed.”

RRV spokesperson **Chris Bond** said that the agency understood community concerns about the loss of trees, and that the team “has provided a range of design updates to reduce the impact on trees wherever possible.” He said that timber was being “re-purposed” (sic), seeds collected, and “planting opportunities provided”.

BDCA President **Gayle Adams** said that the group was not convinced that the proposed 80kph restriction along the three kilometre strip would affect efficiency ie travel times by more than a minute or two. “RRV have just introduced a lengthy 80kph strip in the Clarendon area,



Local resident Glenice Wood Lake is angry at the loss of 114 large manna gums.

extensive 80kph strips have also been set for the highway in the Lethbridge and the Batesford areas,” she said.

She added that “it seems that the impact on commuters and freight drivers was not a prime consideration in those areas.”

Safety is a key concern of the Association. In its latest response to RRV, the BDCA cited the World Health Organisation’s research which indicated that a decrease in travelling speed of one kph results in a 2-3 per cent reduction in road crashes.

Position

The BDCA also is concerned at the loss of vegetation, including significant trees, and loss of habit. It has suggested that there may be a “compromise” solution which

would deliver a win-win outcome. This would involve:

- a reduction in the speed limit to 80kph, with associated policing of that limit
- road barriers on the sides of roads only thus reducing the need for road widening and significant tree (and habitat) loss
- upgrading the intersection at the Scotsburn school, and
- providing left-turn run-offs for roads and properties along this stretch of the highway.

The Association will continue discussions with RRV to ensure the best possible outcome for the community and the environment.

Bridge danger remains

A short article in the February 2020 edition of *The News* pointed to the dangerous situation at the pedestrian bridge in Eyre Street just a few metres from Warrenheip Street. A welded wire panel of the 'railing' had been smashed down and was hanging over the pools of green stagnant water some two metres below in the Union Jack Creek.

Several strips of flimsy black and yellow plastic was all that was 'preventing' an accidental fall into the creek. It posed a serious danger as the pathway heading east is sloping and the path has a bend just prior to the bridge. Children coming down this slope on cycles or scooters or simply running carelessly could have suffered a serious accident.

Since the article appeared a ham-fisted 'repair' job has been done there by filling the gap with a tall panel of weldmesh, held in place only



by plastic ties. The damaged original panel still hangs inside it. It looks awful and while it may serve a temporary purpose, it now has been there for some five weeks.

Council should also look at the height of the railing across this bridge – it is low and would seem to be non-compliant for such a structure.

This bridge needs some serious structural work rather than being patched up with what looks like a spare gate from the cattle yards held up by strips of black plastic!

Charity doesn't need hoons

The peace of the village was shattered for a considerable period on the evening of 9 January this year as hotted-up performance cars were driven with engines roaring and wheels spinning along Warrenheip Street and other central Buninyong streets.

Earlier in the day many shining classic vehicles of all shapes and sizes were parked around the Crown Hotel. For several years the Crown Hotel has organised an excellent static display of historic vehicles in its car park and adjacent vacant lot. *The News* has reported positively on several of these Car Shows.

This 9 January 2020 event, a so-called 'car and bike show' and said to be a

Bushfire Fundraiser seems to have been organised at the last minute by a performance car club which posted a call for "suggestions" and a call for "help" on social media.

Using the Crown Hotel as a base the event was set to start at 6.30pm and end at 9.30pm. It may well have ended at 9.30pm but for the previous couple of hours the noise and the 'hoon driving' in central Buninyong, while cheered on by onlookers, was of great concern to many.

Raising funds for bushfire relief deserves praise. Reckless driving of powerful cars through Buninyong for hours at night is another matter!



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Copy should not exceed 400 words and a maximum of two photographs per item may be submitted. Material may be edited because of space, style, or clarity, or for legal reasons.

The name and address of the person submitting any material must be provided (address not for publication).

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Cathy opens new store

For many years remedial masseuse Cathy Micich has been a fixture in Buninyong's paramedical scene. Since 2012 she has operated from premises at the rear of the Old Library in Warrenheip Street, adjacent to Desoza Park.

Some two years ago she also took over the lease of the shopfront area which has seen many businesses come and go including a bookstore, home for teddy bears, a kinesiology premises, and an art gallery. When the art gallery, *Studio 408* closed during 2019, Cathy decided that she would start up a weekend small business stocked with all kinds of goods from the 1800s to the 1950s.

Although it has an emphasis on old objects of all sorts, Cathy decided that

as it was not really an antique store in the usual sense, she would call it *Not Quite Antiques*.

Presently open between 10.00am and 3.00pm on Sundays, the store's eclectic mix of curios and items includes furniture, crockery, kerosene lamps, old books and comics, vases, piano rolls, old medicine bottles, flags and knick-knacks of all kinds.

Cathy said that Buninyong has long had antique stores and she felt it was time to bring one back that would help attract visitors and browsers to the shopping strip.

The store opened for the first time in early January during the cycle races here. Cathy is shown above with daughter **Simone** who will assist in the shop.

streettalk

TOGETHERNESS. In another example of cooperation between the Community Association, the Business Network and with funding from Regional Tourism, a new 32 page colour edition of the *Buninyong Visitor Guide* is about to go to press.

NEW TRAIL. Another batch of fifteen more of those blue enamel *Historic Buildings of Buninyong* plaques has just arrived. The first lot placed around town some five years ago have generated lots of visitor and local interest. With the project funded by the community bank, the Historical Society has again done the homework, with the BDCA moving the project along.

SCOOTED OFF. That electric vehicle (EV) charging point at Desoza Park seems certain to soon give a boost to local businesses. Already Buninyong is listed as a stop-off spot for owners of *Tesla* vehicles and the new EV charger also is becoming featured widely on social media. We're still on the lookout for the first mobility scooter to be hooked up there while the owner goes off for a beer or a coffee.

THE END. It's not every day that one knows for sure when the end is coming. About thirty years ago your bold Editor took up a great offer of a *Lifetime Membership* of the Qantas Club. Cost \$850 in 1990 (currently there is a joining fee of \$399 and an annual cost of \$540 per year). A few days ago, checking on a forthcoming Qantas flight, there it was in print "*Your Qantas Club membership is due to expire on 5 August 2040*"!!!

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Pictured passing through Buninyong in February on his way to Lexton with a trial donation of grass hay is Yendon farmer Lindsay Grey (left) and Andrew Cocking.

HAIR ATTACK AT YENDON ...in memory of Rosie

In June 2017 Rosie Grey of Yendon lost a two year battle with Motor Neurone Disease (MND), a disease brought into prominence by champion footballer Neale Daniher, also a sufferer. Rosie was aged 58 years.

Rosie was an active member of the local community being Secretary of the Mt

Buninyong CFA for fifteen years and was also Secretary of the Lal Lal Catchment Landcare Group.

To raise funds to help MND research, Rosie's husband **Lindsay** organised a Shave/Colour event in 2018 – with fundraising sponsors and bidders getting the chance to shave off Lindsay's bushy

beard to a No 2 level, or to colour someone's hair. He raised \$9960 at that fund raiser.

Off again

This year a bigger event is planned. Lindsay, 61, is sporting another very healthy beard with the highest fundraiser being able to attack that, while the runner-up will be invited to shave his head.

Lindsay's 'little sister', **Lindy**, 54, will allow fundraisers or bidders to colour her curly locks. Her fiancée **Andrew Cocking** has also put his head on the line offering his head, face and chin-wisp to be shaved by the highest bidder on the day.

The action will take place at the Yendon Recreation Reserve at noon on Sunday 29 March. A barbecue and a cake stall will be there with all sales, along with the shave/colour proceeds going to MND.

Fire help

In another twist to Lindsay's willingness to help others, *The News* caught up with him in Buninyong recently, when he and Andrew were en route to Lexton with a small load of hay from his property, to see if the sheep and cattle on burnt-out properties would eat it. If so, he planned to return with a larger truck load.

Lindsay, who works for the Moorabool Shire, has a 34 acre property at Yendon on which he grows, cut and bales grass hay each year. This year he has decided to donate all of his baled hay to farmers struggling after bushfires.

To make a donation to the Rosie memorial effort (receipts will be issued) or for more information, contact Lindsay on 0409 956 512.

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Getting to know a bird called Susan

In the week before Christmas a household adjoining the golf course had a colourful visitor and it wasn't Santa arriving early. The lady of the house is well known in the area for her interactions with the local bird life but this was quite a bit different.

At her house it is a common occurrence to have the local kookaburras, currawongs, magpies and parrots often call by. But imagine her surprise when a large pea-hen flew onto the deck, walked through the door and into the kitchen.

Now named *Susan* (as in Susan Peacock) the bird has been a regular visitor since then and has even been known to perch outside the bedroom door early in the morning. The bird is obviously very comfortable around people. It will come when called and is most likely someone's pet who has gone nomad.

If any of our readers knows someone who has lost a friendly pea-hen please let us know (buninyongnews@gmail.com) and we'll reintroduce them to *Susan*.

Nancy Sullivan shares a meal with the visiting Susan Peacock.



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Township Plan still on hold because of City-wide studies

The Buninyong Township Planning exercise was carried out across several weeks following a packed-out Town Hall meeting in early September 2018. When no draft plan had been published by mid-2019, community groups approached Council planners concerning the delay. Following is a response from the key planner.

Over the next twelve months the City of Ballarat is undertaking several city-wide studies and plans. Three of these have direct implications for planning and future actions about landscape and neighbourhood character in Buninyong and surrounding areas.

The aim of this assessment is to identify neighbourhood character across the city and how that character should be retained or enhanced and protected by strengthened controls in the planning scheme.

Map

The assessment will map and describe the Residential Character Areas of Ballarat including Buninyong and provide recommendations to protect and enhance residential character including positive design responses.

Following assessment and consultation, neighbourhood character objectives will be prepared for inclusion in the residential zone schedules and new or amended planning scheme provisions, clauses, policy content and schedules will be drafted.

Draft characterisation details are being prepared for community consultation early in 2020. Once finalised, this work can then inform the *Buninyong Township Plan* along with the strategies and actions in the *Living Corridor Plan*.

Living corridors

In the overall *Ballarat Strategy* there is support for “the management and rehabilitation of a network of Living Corridors to properly manage our natural values in urban and township areas.” Buninyong will be part of the Eastern Living Corridor stretching from the township through the Woookurung Regional Park to Brown Hill and Gong Gong.

The project will involve research to define living corridors in the Ballarat context and working with the community to identify strategies and specific actions that can be undertaken to mitigate native vegetation loss and improve biodiversity along these corridors.

It is anticipated that these strategies and actions will be included in a *Living Corridor Action Plan* which will be finalised and considered by Council in 2020.

River review

There is also a review of the

Yarrowee River Corridor Masterplan following up on the original LINCS (Linear Network of Communal Spaces) plan of 1995.

It's 25 years since the original Yarrowee River plan was prepared. That led to extensive works being undertaken to improve habitat and bio-diversity, create walking paths and further develop the community's use and appreciation of the waterways as public spaces.

The project, jointly funded by Central Highlands Water, DELWP and City of Ballarat, will undertake stakeholder consultation, prepare a site analysis plan, and produce a business case for key projects that have been identified during the study.

– John Dyke
Heritage Advisor Strategic Planning



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Pass on Glass site moved to sports ground

The City of Ballarat's glass recycling initiative in Buninyong – referred to as the *Pass-on-Glass* program – has been moved from the Forest Street car park (rear of the service station) to a site on the west side of the car park at the main Recreation Reserve 450m further up Forest Street.

The City of Ballarat said that the new site would allow for expansion to a second skip “if required.” Entrance to the site is through the main car park gates.



The move was made by Council due to Buninyong's “overwhelming response” to the *Pass-on-Glass* initiative. More than 30 tonnes of glass had been collected in the three months up to 31 December 2019. That was about 45 per cent of the total glass collected within the city.

In response, the Council had doubled the *Pass-on-Glass* site capacity at the old site from a 1.5 to a three cubic metre skip,

and increased the frequency of collection from two to four times each week.

Council's Waste Team also reported that the glass being collected from its *Pass-on-Glass* sites has been very clean.

The move will free up several car parking spaces in the former Forest Street location and would avoid complaints from business operators about the quantity of glass often found adjacent to the bins at the former site.

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Buninyong

Cambrian Hill seeks help A little touch of Wales

Today, most travellers along the Ballarat-Colac Road would see Cambrian Hill as little more than a small local sign post and an old church tucked behind a stand of old trees just three kilometres past the turn off at Magpie.

But back in the mid- to late-1800s there was a population of many thousands of alluvial gold miners, farmers, hoteliers, storekeepers and children attending the local Cambrian Hill school which opened in 1867. A Wesleyan church was built down on the banks of the Yarrowee River. There was a rail line to Ballarat, five and a half miles away, and a bus service to Rokewood.

Wales

The village was settled by Welsh miners with the name coming from *Cambria*, an Anglicised version of *Cymry* the Welsh name for Wales. In the Welsh tradition singing was popular and eisteddfods were held at the local schoolhouse.

But the population fell away so quickly that by the 1891 Census just 207 residents were recorded.

At the time of World War I, like in many rural communities, many of the young men enlisted. Forty names of men from Cambrian Hill are listed in war records with thirteen of those being killed.

In 1917 the local community planted an Avenue of Honour on the road to Colac. Sad remnants of it can still be seen on the eastern side of the road, having suffered

badly from the intrusion of power lines and years of neglect.

New

In 2016 local residents and the Buninyong RSL, which includes Cambrian Hill veterans amongst its members, planted a new Avenue of 54 oak trees along Glassons Road which is the road immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the present large *Porter Plant* site there. With signage that is not obvious, few travellers and even locals know the new avenue is located there.

There is also a large granite stone memorial with a bronze plaque listing the forty who enlisted in WWI and another fourteen who served in the Second World War.

Now moves are afoot to seek funding from the *Restoring Community Memorials Fund* to enable the Avenue to be completed. Plaques and plinths are to be placed adjacent to all trees, new interpretative

signage and seating installed and a commemorative booklet printed.

Long-term local residents **Les George** and **Rocky Hazlett** are involved with the approach to Government submitted by the Buninyong RSL with the assistance of **Barry Fitzgerald** who was also heavily involved with the project to restore the Buninyong Avenue of Honour in 2017.



FREE BUSINESS WORKSHOPS!



BUNINYONG BUSINESS NETWORK

In 2020 the Buninyong Business Network is running free business workshops for local businesses and community. We are bringing the experts to Buninyong to share their knowledge with you. Workshops will be held once a month on Tuesday nights in Buninyong. Topics will include 'Sustainability in Business', 'HR for Small Business', 'Social Media Today' and more. Join us for the launch of the 2020 Workshop Series & for more info.

ALL WELCOME!

- DATE: Tuesday March 3rd at 6pm - pop it in the diary!
- PLACE: The Shared Table (Learmonth St, Buninyong) snacks provided, drinks at bar prices.
- INFO: buninyongbusinessnetwork@gmail.com



father. By 1968, he had met and married **Barbara**, and his father suggested he “go and get a real job.”

He did – becoming a chemist at the Port Augusta power station, living in that city with his school-teacher wife who worked for the *School of the Air*.

But by 1970 he returned to Cobar for a brief period, before a disagreement with his father saw him heading back to Adelaide where for a while he did “pick and shovel work.”

Chemist

After a job as a Chemist at the Port Pirie smelter came up the family headed back north. Then he became a Science teacher at the local high school. Later he took up another position as a chemist and later Chief Chemist with Broken Hill Associated Smelters, which became CRA.

In 1994 it was off to Melbourne with the company (which later became Pasmenco) where he stayed until they went bust in 2001. Retrenched, he became a consultant.

Around that time Barbara spotted a small advertisement in *The Age* for a 42 acre property at Scotsburn. They purchased it knowing that it was only a little over an hour’s travel to Tullamarine as David was still travelling a lot in Australia and overseas.

The Manor

After living in converted sheds for a time the couple moved into their new home, *The Manor*, in 2008.

The property had about five acres under vines but the previous owners were only picking “a few buckets” each year. Although they bought the property without having an interest in wine grapes, they soon were selling grapes to Ballarat’s *Tom Boy Hill Winery*, and more recently David has set up a ‘share’ relationship with Geelong winemaker **Scott Ireland** who now does the “heavy lifting” in the vineyard.

Under the *Sinclair of Scotsburn* label, David now produces some 80 cases of Chardonnay and 60 cases of Pinot Noir each year.

Barbara died in 2013. The couple have two sons.

Sinclair of Scotsburn A Laird of the Manor

One of Buninyong’s readily-recognisable characters is the man behind the Sinclair of Scotsburn wine label who often can be found amongst the daily morning coffee drinkers at Espresso Depot.

With his walk now reduced to a slow shuffle because of Parkinson’s Disease, **David Sinclair**, 77, has led an active life across wide areas of Australia that even few of his ‘coffee’ friends could guess at. Grazier, scientist, teacher, chemist, consultant, and wine maker all are on David’s CV.

Cobar

His Scottish heritage included a great grandfather who fought at the Battle of Waterloo. That was a world away from the isolated copper-mining town of Cobar (700

km north-west of Sydney) where, at the end of the second World War, his father bought a property of 130,000 acres. There, as a four year old, David started his life-long links with the land.

Adelaide

His early schooling was by correspondence, followed by a stint as a boarder at Adelaide’s Scotch College. When his mother became ill, while retaining the Cobar property, the family bought a home in Adelaide and he became a day student at Scotch. He went on to the University of Adelaide completing an Honours degree in Science, majoring in Chemistry.

But he “always wanted to be a grazier.” So in 1965 back to Cobar he went, running the property in partnership with his

After 20 years Chris steps back from Guide group Guides looking for more leaders and girls



Parents looking to develop their girls' self-confidence, life skills and ability to relate to adults and others of their own age, while having fun, now have the chance to find out about the local Buninyong Girl Guides group.

The group is about to start a 'new' life with their weekly sessions being held at the Buninyong Masonic Hall in Warrenheip Street after spending the past 25 years at the smaller RSL Hall.

Move

For much of that period at the RSL Hall, a key leader in the group has been Buninyong's **Chris Kerr** who has decided now to step back and leave the care of the group in the hands of younger Guide Leaders **Tanya Burrows** and **Melinda Stewart**.

Chris said that over the years she has derived great satisfaction from "seeing girls' confidence grow as they achieve new skills and develop new friendships." She recalled one five year old who came clinging to her mother's legs, and who now

In the midst of a clean-up at the RSL Hall are (L to R) Melinda Stewart, Chris Kerr, and Tanya Burrows.

as an eight year old is confident in many skills including public speaking.

With the nickname of *Kanga*, Chris first became involved as a leader some twenty years ago when her own three girls joined at the ages of six and seven years. They are now in their late twenties. She was introduced to the Guides by a friend, and also by long-term local leader **Jenny Colvin**.

Helpers

The Guide group is seeking the help of some more women interested in becoming leaders or 'unit helpers'. Tanya Burrows (0417 151 070) is happy to give more information about what is involved in those roles which largely involves two hours of a Wednesday evening. Training is provided.

Girl Guides are usually aged between eight and sixteen years and enjoy a program of activities that can involve the girls 'finding their place in the world', social activities, outdoor and camping experiences, and learning a wide range of life skills such as cooking, crafts, and environmental and sustainability activities. Working with animals is also part of the program.

Melinda Stewart said that while the local Guide group now has about twelve members they would love to see that boosted up to a group of about twenty girls. She said that parents could either call Tanya or just come along to the Masonic Hall around 5.30pm on any Wednesday where they will be warmly welcomed.



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Top retreat for quilters

Slavery in the USA during the Civil War and quilting don't seem to have much in common. But a visit to or a stay at the *Emu Lodge Country Retreat* at Lal Lal will provide the answer

Rae Fairweather is a talented and experienced quilt maker, who became interested in the craft whilst living in West Virginia, USA with her husband **Ian**. Not allowed to work in the US, she occupied her time by joining a quilting group and she became 'hooked'. After eighteen months there the couple returned to Bacchus Marsh and Rae developed this interest further, establishing a group of quilters in that area.

Project

When Ian retired six years ago, after 27 years at Bacchus Marsh, they relocated to *Emu Lodge* at Lal Lal as Ian wanted a 'project'. The idea was to establish a retreat for groups or anyone interested in quilting to have a few days of peace and quiet in which to enjoy the company of other quilters, exchanging ideas, learning from each other and, for novices, acquiring new skills.

Rae now spearheads a close group of likeminded quilters from many areas, organising trips and camps on a regular basis. One such trip has been to mainland USA, another to Hawaii, and more locally to Lake Dewar. The annual three day camp at Lake Dewar regularly attracts 40 people with participants coming from Wangaratta and Sydney.

Inspiring

The quilts that Rae has beautifully crafted are truly inspiring and imaginative with many differing styles and myriads of colours. She explained that "quilting is such an enjoyable, relaxing activity, practised by women and men of all age groups and is a great way to make new friends."

As well as the ongoing task of developing and landscaping the gardens, eighteen months ago Ian and Rae took on the task of totally renovating the redundant rooms adjacent to the house. They undertook all the work themselves, resulting in a two bedroomed self-contained holiday unit which can accommodate up to five people for bed and breakfast.

This area can also serve as an 'overflow' for any larger groups of quilters (up to eight people) wanting to stay at the retreat. The property is set on 25 acres of rolling hills with stunning views and an abundance of wildlife, including emus, alpacas, cows, sheep, kangaroos and chickens, as well as the native birds – an ideal place for a peaceful and relaxing holiday with children who love animals and the outdoors.

Ian and Rae are delightful hosts. It is obvious that they really enjoy meeting people and sharing their lovely home and gardens. For more details of group bookings for quilting retreats, or for the B & B contact Ian and Rae Fairweather at 0400 892 614 or at emulodgecountryretreat@gmail.com

– Rita Russell

Pictured (below) is a view of the beautiful property from the homestead.



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Ernie Neale's Monthly
RAINFALL REPORT

Happy start to the year

I was preparing for the worst at the start of January. We had fair warning through December of just how dangerous this Summer might be. All that was green had quickly turned to brown and December closed with a heatwave that lasted for days.

The only beacon of hope was the BOM seven-day forecast, which heralded mild temperatures for the opening of 2020. Amazingly this pattern persisted, with the new forecast each day holding the trend.

It took a while to accept that January in Buninyong was actually unfolding as one of the mellowest in a long time. Rain even started to fall, as it proceeded to do so at weekly intervals for the rest of the month.

Unfortunately, the skies told the tale of just how awful it was for others elsewhere. Winds from the east brought blankets of smoke, the Sun rose and fell in shrouds of angry orange and winds from the west carried red dust from inland soils. Even the lovely rain that fell later in the month came down an ochre red.

JANUARY 2020			
Date	Rain	Date	Rain
5-6	2.4	20-21	6.4
11	14.0	23	26.5
16	6.8	24	3.5
Total		59.6 mm	
Average		39.5 mm	



Hot acts at the hall

After a successful 'Teens' group acting workshop on 15 January, the Junior holiday acting session got off to a flying start the following day when twelve young budding actors (pictured above) were put through their paces at Buninyong Town Hall.

Teacher Adam Turnbull, featured in the December issue of *The News*, was delighted with the response and popularity of the workshops and as a consequence had to schedule an extra holiday class. It was a new experience for half of the students and judging by their enthusiasm they thoroughly enjoyed it whilst also finding it quite challenging at times!

The youngsters worked on scenes from *Stranger Things*, the science fiction TV

series. Based on their performances the current professional actors had better look out!

Comments from the youngsters included Tian's "I like learning the script", Hayley's comment that "learning how to do an audition is great", Sadie said that she "liked being in front of a camera", and "we are learning how to act truthfully" came from Violet. It looks as if Adam soon will be having even more successes coming through on the screen and stage.

Adam's regular 'Teens' and Junior workshops are on Tuesday nights at the Buninyong Town Hall. For bookings and enquiries call 0419 593 257 or visit the website – ataactingstudio.com

– Rita Russell

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AUTHORISED BY CATHERINE KING, 5 LYDIARD ST NTH BALLARAT 3350



War grave fix up

In late 2019, two Albury-based contractors were at the Buninyong Cemetery to repair the damaged grave of a veteran soldier. The concrete ledger (cover) over the grave of G G Cornell in the Presbyterian section of the cemetery had developed holes and cracks.

The father and son team of **Greg and Jake Reid** (JFR Concrete) has the contract from the Australian War Graves Commission to repair 'war' graves in the State of Victoria.

Inspectors from the Commission periodically inspect all war graves in Australian cemeteries and report details of any that are in need of repair. Contractors are then sent to complete the work.

After completing the work at Buninyong, which involved repairs to the concrete and filling the top with granite chips, the contractors were then heading to the Cohuna cemetery for more repair work before returning to Albury.

Right: Jake Reid at work on the Cornell grave at Buninyong.



Young children ambushed by CFA

During the last week of the school year the Buninyong-Mt Helen Fire Brigade had its annual water fight with the Grade 2 students at Buninyong Primary.

Instead of having their own *Kris Kringle* these wonderful kids do jobs around home to raise money. Then, to show their gratitude they invite the CFA up and individually present that money and explain what they did to raise it.

They all then produced their super soakers, the CFA fired up a pump with clean water (not from the truck) and a massive water fight followed.

The children donated an incredible \$710 to the brigade. A lot of credit must go to the Grade 2 teachers who get the children actively involved in expressing their gratitude and understanding the importance of giving back to their community.

Collective's hours

The Buninyong Community Collective is open at the Anglican Church Hall, 405 Scott Street from 9.00 am - 11.00 am and 5.00 pm - 7.00 pm each Tuesday.

Buninyong

VILLAGE

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Autumn

MARKET

Philip rows his own boat

At a time when many old-fashioned skills are dying out, Buninyong's Philip Meaney has been keeping one very much alive – the age-old craft of wooden boat building.

Philip is a builder, carpenter and joiner by trade and lived and worked on the Mornington Peninsula for many years before joining the Police Force there in 1990. Five years later he was promoted to a position in Ballarat and immediately “fell in love with Buninyong”.

Inspired

After taking early retirement from the force in 2002, Philip has concentrated on his

building, carpentry and joinery business. Six years ago, however, after “wandering in” to the *Wooden Boat Centre* in Franklin, Tasmania, he was inspired to learn the craft of wooden boat building. He attended an intensive two month clinker boat construction course at the Centre and soon after was heading back to Buninyong with his almost finished row boat.

The now completed boat is truly beautiful. Made from Huon Pine, a tree native only to the south western corner of Tasmania, it is one of the best boat building timbers known and a small part of the wood on the boat is reputed to be 1000 years old.

Philip named the boat *Norma* after his late mother and one of her brooches touchingly is embedded in the woodwork. Boating holidays are high on his agenda with travels to such venues as the Murray River and the Sapphire Coast as well as to Lake Wendouree.

Active

However, Philip's interest in wooden boats goes beyond their construction. He is a volunteer for the *Living Boat Trust* in Tasmania and participates in the biennial *Australian Wooden Boat Festival* in Hobart, which attracts the largest and most beautiful collection of wooden boats in the Southern Hemisphere.



When not enjoying rowing, Philip likes to travel. He has just returned from Vietnam where he has spent many happy months over the years. He also lists one of his achievements as climbing to the base camp of Mount Everest. Later this year he is also hoping to visit Ullapool in Scotland to see some of the best traditional Viking boat builders.

When not pursuing boating activities Philip's other interests include playing the guitar, gardening, yoga and pilates. Anyone interested in Philip's skills as a boatbuilder, carpenter or joiner can contact him on 0427 338 866.

– Rita Russell

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History excursion on Sunday Gold mining in Lal Lal

An interesting history excursion is set for Lal Lal on Sunday 1 March. It will trace the historic gold mining waterways of Lal Lal from the nineteenth century. In particular the *Chinaman's Water Race* and the associated Lal Lal Dam (1858) will be visited.

Alluvial gold mining in the district in the mid-1800s needed large volumes of water to wash gold from the dirt. Miners excavated extensive networks of races and dams.

The Lal Lal Waterworks was set up in 1858 to deliver water to miners on the



Moorabool goldfields at Dolly's Creek, south of Ballarat. The system included dams and many kilometres of water races. But ultimately it failed to deliver as promised because of high costs and other problems.

The afternoon will start with a short *Power Point* presentation on the Waterways topic at 1.00pm in the Lal Lal Hall. This will be followed by an excursion to the sites and remnants of the water races and the dam.

Theme

Returning to the hall there will be an afternoon tea with a Chinese/Australian food theme. There will be a modest charge of \$5 per person for afternoon tea and presentation.

If you would like to come and bring interested friends or relatives please contact either **Ursula Diamond-Keith** (Co-ordinator of the Lal Lal History Group) on 0407717626 or email gudiamond-keith@live.com.au. The other contact is **Sue Witherspoon** of the Lal Lal Land Care Group, on 0402746411. It will be an interesting history afternoon out for all.

THE LAL LAL GOLD-FIELD.

(BY OUR SPECIAL REPORTER.)

FRIDAY, DEC. 21.

To designate the locality of the present diggings near Lal Lal, with the very primitive style of working the ground by the small population now in it, a "gold-field" may be considered an exaggerated picture of a very small reality; but, from the facts I have gleaned and am about to detail, as well as from the appearance of the surrounding country, it is by no means improbable that in the course of time the district will have proved itself by no means unworthy of so high-sounding a name. Some three years ago a rush took place to a spot not far from where the present workings are situated, and although at that time good paying dirt was found at Shallow Creek, the ground was soon abandoned, from the impossibility of obtaining water for washing; and although in many cases two pennyweights to the load were common, it would not pay to cart the dirt the required distance to water. Then, also the surface was untouched generally, except for the purpose of breaking through it to reach the washdirt. About two years since Messrs. Hall and Davis—two of the parties now on the ground—commenced working on the present field of operations, varying the scene of their exertions over a wide stretch

Above: From The Argus, 26 December 1866.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gong shock

Many Buninyong citizens are shocked at Council's plan to permanently remove all trees from both sides of the road embankment that separates the Gong from the lower Botanic Gardens.

The front-page article in the February edition of *The News* misled by unsubstantiated statements such as "community feedback has been positive" (Council's 'My Say' responses have not yet been published).

Community consultation was minimal. At two poorly promoted meetings, the consultants admitted they had not sought any other solutions to their \$1m plus, drastic plan. What tests were done to prove there is a problem? Underground water, a feature of this area, helps keep the Gardens green, and may be critical to trees with surface fibrous roots. Has an environmental study been done? This 19th century lake is quite shallow and many of its springs have dried up, making an embankment failure unlikely.

The lake and Gardens will lose aesthetic appeal, with only low shrubs on the Gardens side and a bare rock wall on the lake side. In summer, heated rocks will replace habitat, shade and protection for bird and aquatic life. Modern understanding of willows suggests they stabilise atmospheric moisture and, by the short water cycle, effect environmental repair.

An experienced local civil engineer has suggested that excess lake water could be piped via the Garden's ponds to storm water drains.

The entire Gong and Botanic Gardens area is State Heritage listed for high social, heritage and environmental significance. This proposal would considerably lessen its significance.

Merle Hathaway, Liz Lumsdon, Peter Lumsdon, Russell Nicholls, Stewart Kelly, Bernadette Cheesman, Peter Hiscock



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Sue's field of dreams

For several years the driving force behind the booming Buninyong soccer club, the Redbacks, has been its President (and secretary and treasurer) Sue Mroczkowski. Now, after years of having its teams shunted to muddy, distant and outdated facilities, Sue's Redbacks have finally been given access to a much-improved but yet unfinished playing field at Royal Park.

After years of promises by politicians and councillors, finally major moves were seen last November with the City of Ballarat calling for tenders for Stage 2 of the Royal Park complex. This will include two full-size pitches, fully irrigated and with lights. Sue was over the moon to see the first signs of real action on the project she refers to as her *Field of Dreams*. It is expected works will start at the end of the 2020 season.

2016 plans

Let's hope that Sue's dream comes to fruition without any further delays. There have only been very small steps taken since *The News* reported in September 2016 on Council's release of draft plans for Royal Park. Construction of one pitch took place in the 2017 season and the Redbacks eventually played their first game on their new pitch in June of that year.

Minor works were carried out in 2017 and this enabled the Redbacks' Senior team to play its first game at home.

But in that season the Club had over 160 players and still had to play the majority of their games elsewhere.

Stage 2 and beyond was then still on the Council's priority list. Four years later Stage 2 will be completed for the 2021 season but what about "Beyond". The proposed concept plans for the full development of the whole Royal Park area were displayed at last year's Smart Living and Building Expo. Twelve months on where are we with that plan?

In 2017 the Redbacks were the largest sports club in Buninyong with the worst facilities. There are first class football, netball, cricket, lawn bowls, golf and tennis facilities in the town. Surely it is soccer's turn to get a slice of the pie

Struggle

The last two seasons have been difficult for the club. With little progress on the project, Sue says that it has been a struggle to maintain enthusiasm and a number of teams have had to be withdrawn due to lack of players.



Sue Mroczkowski's *Field of Dreams* vision goes way beyond two soccer pitches. As well as for community use, the scope for school use, touch football, over 35s soccer, walking soccer, ultimate frisbee and other informal sports using the space is a no-brainer. Maybe it's time there was a Buninyong Sports Club to help many more in the community to get active.

Anyone interested in supporting the development of soccer in Buninyong is welcome to contact the club. There is a coaching course in Ballarat on 14 March at 9:00 am, and Mini Roos (U/8s to U/11s) coaching courses can be arranged at Buninyong in March. For more details email buninyong.soccer@yahoo.com.au.

– Ray Sullivan



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Toddlers' adventure area open

Set on a bed of soft timber mulch under the shade of old trees near the rotunda in Desoza Park, Buninyong's new toddler play space was completed just a few days ago.

This certainly is a playground with a difference. Natural logs and timber replace the plastic and steel of other playgrounds. There are mounds, cubby houses, winding coloured paths, mushrooms and water play areas. It is described as "a safe adventure area" for the very young.

Design of the area was done by PLOT landscape architects and construction carried out by Ballarat Groundworks. Company director **Mathew Ashton** said the project was a "really satisfying and fun one to work on." Construction works spanned thirteen days.



One third of the funding for the \$60,000 project was provided by the Buninyong Community Bank and the balance by the City of Ballarat.

Heath Stevenson (left) and Mathew Ashton were pleased with the final look of one of the cubby house 'shops' in the new Desoza Park adventure area.

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Looking back

For the past six years the new-look *Buninyong Community & District News* has taken on the key role of recording local events and happenings, raising and discussing local issues, featuring local personalities, and reporting major or minor local news stories each month.

These are the front covers of the 2019 editions of *The News*.

