

Buninyong & District Community **NEWS**

Edition 480, April 2021



Open fire

CFA station build close to finish line

When *The News* (December 2019) published plans of the new \$2 million CFA station proposed to be built on Learmonth Street adjacent to the Buninyong Golf Club, to many residents they were then just seen as an election-year political promise and lines and words on paper.

But now, with the 570m² building rapidly taking shape, many locals are taking a keen interest in and becoming curious about the various elements of the building, dominated by the high and very large central 'motor room' area with its three large vertically-folding doors to the front and roller doors to the rear.

That area will house two and at times three fire-fighting appliances. One of these will be rotated between Buninyong and the new station located on Greenhill Road, Mount Helen.

The wing on the eastern side will contain laundry and drying room to the front, and an IT room and a large workshop area at the rear.

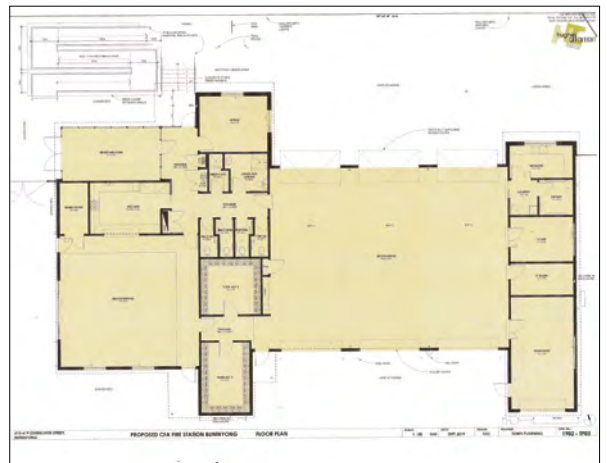
Display

The section closest to the golf club will be fronted by the station's main office and the *Merryweather* display 'museum', partly funded by the Community Bank (see story p 2).

Other key facilities in this eastern section will be shower and toilet facilities, a spacious kitchen, two 'turn-out' rooms with lockers for up to 45 fire-fighters, and a very large multi-purpose room at the rear.

Behind the building there will be a paved parking area for 20 cars, a two-bay garage, a concreted area for washing of hoses, and a gravelled area for additional parking for major crisis situations.

The project on its 3600m² site is expected to be completed in June 2021.



Proud part of brigade history

The cover story of this issue refers to the museum/display facility that will occupy a significant space in the 'west' wing (closest to the golf clubhouse) of the new CFA facility.

There will be at least three important historical items associated with the brigade that will be on display there. The first is the 1899 *Merryweather* fire engine that was imported from its London-based makers **Merryweather & Sons**.

In those days, the horse-drawn *Merryweather* appliance changed fire-fighting techniques significantly, as steam from an on-cart boiler was able to generate more powerful water pressure through the hoses.

In storage

Over the years, the *Merryweather* was featured in annual parades such as in the Gold King Festival. But after it fell into disrepair it was put into storage.

Then in 2010, the new Buninyong Community Bank gave a grant to the local CFA which enabled the old fire cart to be restored.



CFA members look on with interest as the Merryweather fire cart drawn by Clydesdale horses from Sovereign Hill passes by.



The old bell is returned to Captain Marc Cannan.

The second important historic item is what is thought to be the brigade's original large fire bell which had disappeared in 1898 after the two-storey fire station, built in 1883, was burnt down. In 2015 a call from a metal smelting yard in Noble Park to then CFA Captain **Marc Cannan**,

rescued the missing bell inscribed Buninyong 1883 (See *The News*, April 2015, p 1).

The third item to go on display will be the trophy cabinet containing trophies won by the brigade across many years of competition.

No agreement but barrel build starts

Despite there being no resolution at a recent compulsory VCAT conference concerning the application to build six barrel-shaped accommodation buildings on the slopes of Mt Buninyong, work is now well advanced on building one of the barrels.

Building of the large oval shaped structure commenced in February and the structure is now clearly evident from Yendon No 2 Road and nearby properties. It stands out starkly against the ridge skyline.

A conference called by VCAT on 2 March to consider possible common ground or concessions between the 'barrels' applicant and objectors and the City of Ballarat, remained in deadlock after a two hour 'virtual' session.

During the conference, held before and facilitated by VCAT Member **Hadjigeorgiou**, there were no conciliatory proposals

advanced by the lawyer acting for the barrels applicant, and all objectors remained firm in their position that the proposed location on the slopes of Mount Buninyong was totally inappropriate.

Council was represented by lawyer **Simon d'Angelo** with **Mimi Marcus** and **Natalie Robinson** in attendance. Local resident **Andrew Lorensini** was represented by solicitor **Shelly Fanning**, and adjoining property owners **Michele Pearson** and **Peter Coburn** spoke strongly about the problems they had with the proposal.

Firm

BDCA spokesperson **Kevin Zibell**, supported by **Barry Fitzgerald**, indicated that the group was firm that the application was an inappropriate development in such an important location. **Anne Beggs-Sunter** of the local Historical Society pointed out that the mountain was of such

significance that it had been placed on the Register of the National Estate.

Visual evidence was shown of the extensive building and earthworks presently being carried out on the site.

The next stage in the 'battle of the barrels' will be a four day trial set down before VCAT on 17-20 May 2021.

The News recently captured this image which clearly shows that the construction of the project is underway.

In a Rural Living Zone one residence can be erected on the site without planning approval.

Local schools now go solar

The State Government has announced that eight Government schools in the Ballarat region are set to become greener and more environmentally sustainable while reducing their electricity costs with the allocation of some \$478,000 for solar power systems. Included in the list were the primary schools at Buninyong, Scotsburn and at Lal Lal.

A solar power system is a strategic investment that can pay for itself over several years. This program will remove the upfront costs of installing a system that may otherwise discourage schools from pursuing this option.

Member for Buninyong **Michaela Settle** said that this project will "make a big difference for our local schools. Cutting emissions and cutting costs, that is good news for everyone."

Carbon impact

"Up to 390kW of energy will be generated across these thirteen campuses every hour on a sunny day and we are expecting to save 590 tonnes of carbon from being released into the atmosphere every year," she said.

Buninyong Primary School (main campus) received a grant of \$58,000 for a 59kw system estimated to reduce some 77 tonnes of carbon emission each year. The school's Scotsburn campus grant was \$13,600 for 11kw of panels (11 tonnes), and the Lal Lal Primary School was granted \$11,000 (5.7kw, 9.7 tonnes).



An open letter to Powercor Lights go out again

OK Powercor, what's going on with the reliable supply of electricity to Buninyong and district?

When those two or three little beeps were again heard around Buninyong on 11 March, and our computers went black, EFTPOS machines became useless, household chores were impossible, and doubtless, as well as general inconvenience, emergencies of various kinds arose.

Over the past couple of months when power outages occurred on at least another six occasions, your telephone staff told complainants that the cause was a problem transformer at Magpie.

Response

But, in early March a written enquiry from the BDCA resulted in a strange response on 9 March from your Senior Reliability Officer. The BDCA was told, *inter alia*, that “the Ballarat distribution network has been upgraded to mitigate bushfires” which meant that “the network protection system is more sensitive and faster auto tripping (sic).”

While puzzled by that, consumers were consoled to be told that “more line patrols have been conducted and necessary upgrades are implanted. The new automated devices are in (sic) trial to minimise the outage areas.”

All of that is probably good. But tell that to the business people unable to assist customers, or to the dairy farmer half way through milking the cows, or to the tradies reliant on power to make a living.

Most in Buninyong will recall the Powercor announcement in September 2015 which trumpeted the investment of almost \$8 million in a battery project that “will reduce or avoid future major power outages.” (*The News*, September 2015, p 1)

The 2mw battery, then the largest in Australia, would be capable of providing back-up power to some 3,000 customers for an hour during a power outage. Great!

But by June 2016, some local residents had become angered by the noise and



Powercor's Richard Scholton announcing the installation of the battery on the Durham Lead Road in August 2015.

smells coming from the battery site and about warnings following an explosion in the battery's fire-suppression system earlier in April.

Battery move

And so, in early 2019, your senior management decided to dismantle the massive South Korean-manufactured battery and move it to a site in Kyneton. It was reported then that the battery had been used just once at Buninyong to power 760 homes for fifty minutes or so during an extremely hot day in January 2018.

At the time of the move **Steve Neave**, your General Manager, Electricity Networks, was reported as saying that, at Kyneton, the battery would be combined with a solar 1.5 mw photovoltaic system to “test the battery's ongoing operation and reliability.”

All of that is good news. But what is happening to avoid another six or eight occasions of power drop-outs here over the months ahead? It is to be hoped that the pesky transformer at Magpie is now fixed, and the line patrols looking for bushfire problems do not continue to cause the system to go into “auto-tripping”!

We'd love to hear back from you.

Buninyong & district
COMMUNITY NEWS

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Charities big winners

Village's quiet on-line Op Shop



Buninyong residents Rhonda Woodrow (left) and Christina Gollan show off their op shop finds.

The Lions Op Shop in Warrenheip Street is now well known in the district. But recently *The News* discovered a second charity Op Shop operating on-line out of a large shed on a property on the eastern edge of the township.

Lockdowns over the past year certainly adversely affected many shops and businesses. But, since it opened in July 2020, the local on-line Op Shop run and operated by **Christina** and **Steve Gollan** and **Sue Simmonds** remained open seven days each week.

On sale

Although items are put on sale daily on *Facebook*, people are very welcome to visit 'the shed' to browse and purchase on site. All the money raised is entirely donated to charities and community organisations in Ballarat and the surrounding areas.

Since July 2020 an incredible \$38,000 has been raised and donated to a very wide variety of organisations. A further \$7000 was distributed to local CFAs in early March.

Christina explained that, "All of the proceeds are donated to charity and we keep all our *Facebook* members (currently about 1100) fully informed about the distribution of the funds raised. The membership is included in the decision-making and is encouraged to make suggestions."

Success factors

According to her, what makes this enterprise such a success, is the result of three elements – the generous donations from the community, the purchasers, and of course, the committed volunteers who give their time so willingly.

Christina's enthusiasm for her work is evident when you meet her. She gives her time unstintingly, readily admitting that this is now a full-time but very satisfying 'labour of love'.

The online shop can be visited at [facebook.com/groups/1742683135881650](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1742683135881650), or call Christina on **0417 041 840**. Opening hours are between 2.00pm and 4.00 pm seven days a week.

– Rita Russell

A RECENT BROWSE through the realestate.com.au website threw up some interesting data on property sales in this area.

For example, the average number of web-site visits per property for sale across Victoria is 1740. In Buninyong it is 2227 visits. Of these visits, 29 per cent are by 'older couples and families', 18 per cent by 'established couples and families' and 13 per cent are by 'maturing' couples. The average sale price for a four-bedroom house here is now \$665,000, is \$566,000 for a three-bedroom house, and the average weekly rental is \$380.

OVER SEVERAL MONTHS *Street Talk* has been reporting on progress on the sushi shop said to be opening in the store next to the Post Office. Now it seems certain that *Kawa Sushi* will open there immediately after Easter. Will trade from 10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Saturday and will offer a wide range of sushi, chicken/beef rice dishes, dim sims, gyozas, pork buns, miso soup, corn and chicken soup and seaweed salads.

SOME UNUSUAL ITEMS of memorabilia are sometimes placed on the coffins of the deceased. Flags, photos, jewellery and football colours are common. But, at the church service of Cambrian Hill identity **Rocky Hazlett** a few weeks ago his grand-children appeared with his large silver *World Champion Rabbit-Skinning* trophy from Moyston 1999.

MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME to set up an accommodation business in Buninyong! Recent work to update the *Buninyong Visitor Guide* found that since the previous edition in 2017, five high profile accommodation businesses had closed their doors. *Brim Brim*, *Camellia Cottage*, *Galwiji* at Scotsburn and *Swallowvale* at Lal Lal are no longer offering accommodation. And, with the death of the owner, *Sinclair* of Scotsburn is also closed.

TOGETHER...in life and in death

War records inevitably reveal many sad tales of death. This was especially so in the case of World War I.

As part of the Buninyong and the Cambrian Hill Avenue of Honour restoration projects, much research work was done on the war records of the forty men from those districts who enlisted and fought in the First World War. Thirteen of the forty volunteers from Cambrian Hill were killed.

Listed one after the other on the Cambrian Hill State School Honour

Board were the names of **Robert Atkinson** and **Stanley Bray** and also the brothers **Carl** and **Ernek Janssen**. Plaques in memory of all four men are to be found in each of the Buninyong and Cambrian Hill avenues.

Gallipoli

The Janssen brothers enlisted in the same regiment, the 5th Battalion, and embarked on the same ship the *Orviato* on 21 October 1914. Together they were sent to fight at Gallipoli. Carl, 27, died of wounds there on 26 April 1915.

Ernek, 24, was killed in action on the same battlefield just two weeks later.

Sadly, neither has a "known" war grave at the lonely stretch of Turkish coastline.

Bray and Atkinson enlisted on the same day, and embarked from Melbourne on 28 January 1916 on the same troop ship, the HMAT *Themistocles*. They were both members of the 58th Infantry Battalion. They each saw action on the Western Front in northern France. On the same day, 14 July 1916, each was killed on that bloody battlefield. Atkinson was aged 21 years, Bray just 18 years.

Now these soldiers are buried near where they fell, in the Military Cemetery at Rue Petillon, at Fleurbaix, about five kilometres from the town of Armentieres. Robert Atkinson is buried in Plot 1, Row K, Grave 107. Stanley Bray lies in the same Plot, same Row, in the adjacent Grave 106.

Not chance

In the chaos of the seemingly-unstoppable German advance, and that warfare's stew of trenches, bodies, mud, explosions and heroic stretcher bearers, it is difficult to believe that anyone would have associated the close link between those two dead soldiers retrieved from the battlefield before laying them to rest side by side.

That they now lie in those two adjacent graves in a faraway corner of France suggests something higher than pure chance was at play.



Killed in action in the same battle in France on 14 July 1916, Stanley Bray (above) and his mate Robert Atkinson are buried in adjacent graves in the Rue Petillon Cemetery at Fleurbaix, France.



Ernek Janssen (above) and his brother Carl, sons of a local mine manager were killed in action just two weeks apart in the battle at Gallipoli in 1915.

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Avenue plaque Clarence's family puts things right

In 2014 the Buninyong RSL commenced a major project to restore the neglected Avenue of Honour which stretched for over two kilometres along the Midland Highway/Learmonth Street from Inglis Street in the east to past the golf club in the west.

Following the decision to commemorate each of the 167 district soldiers who had fought and died in World War I, many hundreds of hours of research went into identifying those who had died in that war, and assembling basic information about each which was to be included on a brass plaque adjacent to each tree.

This information covered full names, home district, age, regiment, service number and date and place of death.

Since the Avenue was officially 're-opened' by the Chief of the Army in a grand community celebration on 1 July 2017, only three examples of mistakes with the mass of information on the plaques have been reported.

Wrong name

One of these errors was spotted by a descendent of **Clarence Robert Allan**, coincidentally the very first plaque in the avenue. Then living and working in Hong Kong, **Alan Bell**, a great-nephew of Clarence Allan, spotted that the first name on the bronze plaque was showing as **Charles** not **Clarence**.

Strangely, while the incorrect name Charles has been cast on the plaque, Clarence Allan's name is correct on the two interpretative signs where the names of all in the avenue are listed.

Alan Bell had spent considerable time researching the war records of his relative. He had even visited the famous Menin Gate war memorial in Belgium on the

centenary of his relative's death in October 2017, and where Allan's name was listed amongst the 54,000 of war dead not having a war grave. Killed in an explosion at Ypres, Belgium, aged 26 years, Clarence Allan's body was never recovered for burial.

Home from Asia

After some 25 years working in construction management on large commercial projects in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul, Mumbai and Bangkok, Alan Bell has now returned to his native Melbourne and recently took the time to visit Buninyong with members of his family. He said that while he hoped that the mistake on the plaque could be corrected, he said that the restored Avenue here was "an absolute credit to Buninyong people and the RSL."

He told *The News* of many old family links to Durham Lead where his grandmother **Daisy Allan** lived, where his mother **Evelyn** was born in 1925, and where **William Henry Allan**, the father of Clarence, and a local Buninyong watchmaker (who had the role of maintaining the Town Hall clock), lived until his death in 1932, aged 82 years. He is buried in plot 525 in the Wesleyan section of the Buninyong Cemetery.

Buninyong RSL President **Ron Fleming** said that the mistake in the name on the Allan plaque would be rectified in the near future.

Above right: Allan Bell with daughter Joanne and grandson Xavier at the plaque.



2021 Anzac Day Service

Buninyong RSL Anzac Day Service commences at 10.15am under Tier 3 Covid-19 event requirements.

These involve attendee registration per QR code/ manual lists throughout RSL Park, observing physical distancing, face covering, cough etiquette and personal hygiene measures.

Guest speaker will be **WO2 Paul Micallef, 8/7th RVR** and the 300 ACU unarmed Catafalque Party will mount the Cenotaph guard.

President **Ron Fleming** encourages the community to participate in the driveway *Light Up the Dawn* service just before 6am, followed by the morning service in RSL Park. Wearing of medals is encouraged with recipients' being placed on their left pocket and family members on their right.

Anzac tokens will be available within Buninyong during the lead up to Anzac Day.

The 2021 RSL Golf Day is cancelled and RSL thanks all past trophy donors for their continued support.

MP's survey on bus stop issues

After lobbying by the BDCA and the Buninyong Business Network concerning the need to have the intrusive Warrenheip Street Bus stop decommissioned, local MP Michaela Settle has decided to undertake a community survey on this and other aspects of the Council's streetscape upgrade project.

She has launched a community campaign to ask whether the V/Line/PTV bus stop on Warrenheip Street should be decommissioned, potentially creating more space for car parking, outdoor seating or green spaces. An upgraded bus stop would be relocated 150 metres to the north to an existing PTV bus stop.

Funding OK

The Buninyong Streetscape Project is funded with a \$300,000 grant from the Victorian Government and major



contributions from Bendigo Community Bank and the City of Ballarat taking the project funding to \$600,000.

This project is aimed at creating transport and pedestrian improvements in Buninyong and rejuvenating the town centre through additional community areas, greenery, artwork and outdoor dining environments.

The City of Ballarat has developed plans for the streetscape along Warrenheip Street which include new seating, al fresco areas, a pedestrian crossing at the Post Office and tree planting. Draft plans were included in the February edition of *The News*.

Questions

Michaela Settle is asking the community to help decide if the bus stop should be moved, and to make suggestions of what should be in its place. Moving the services could create more car parking, outdoor seating, dining areas and tree planting. "The Buninyong Streetscape project will help transform the heart of Buninyong making it safer for pedestrians, creating new community spaces and helping local traders," she said.

The survey will close on 31 March. Community input will help inform the decision on the bus stop and all ideas will be passed onto Council to assist in the re-drawing of plans if that is what the community wants.

To have your say visit www.michaelasettle.com.au/campaigns/buninyong-streetscape-project

Ernie Neale's Monthly RAINFALL REPORT

Weather gods take leave

Each year in February, it's as if the weather gods take their hands off the levers at the end of the previous month and simply go on holidays, leaving chaos to reign behind them.

Let the February figures tell the tale. The rainfall for the last thirteen years, lined up in mm from the driest to the wettest, looks like this – 6.3, 6.6, 10.9, 11.0, 12.7, 18.7, 31.3, 37.6, 43.6, 52.2, 61.9, 81.7, 84.0!

There's no doubt that back to school weather is often frustratingly fickle as summer and autumn battle it out.

So, what about the score for February 2021? It was the third from the left – 10.9mm – a typical amount for about 20 per cent of the time. Fortunately, it followed one of our wettest Januarys ever, so the year's progressive total is 115.3mm, well above the average total of 79.8mm.

Much is still green, but little rain has fallen for weeks, so now the long wait for the autumn break begins.

FEBRUARY 2021			
Date	Rain	Date	Rain
5-6	4.4	12	3.6
7	1.4	26	1.5
Total		10.9 mm	
Average		35.3 mm	

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Sharing bank's success story

Sam takes on new role

A key principle of the local Community Bank is that it feeds into the prosperity of the village and district and not off it. And that's exactly what it does. The Buninyong district has been the beneficiary of so many branch-funded projects it's hard to keep count.

As reported in the March edition of *The News*, in the past year over 79 local organisations and projects were supported by the Community Bank and the Bank Board is keen to keep that number increasing.

Stories to tell

The Board recognised that while it was focussed on working hard to fund and support meaningful community projects, the inspiring stories resulting from these projects needed to be told.

Consequently, **Sam Elshaug** recently has been appointed to the part-time role of *Communications Lead* with the primary purpose of sharing stories of the impact stemming from projects the bank supports in various ways.

"The Community Bank has had such a positive influence in our area and the outcomes of some projects have been significant game changers, so we're now working on the sharing and storytelling. There's so much scope for what we can do at a local level and this is what I'm really excited about," Sam said.

"The local bank has already given away more than a million dollars to support

local groups and projects, not including its major investment in the Community House at 407 Warrenheip Street. We're keen for community groups to think creatively about innovative projects the Community Bank can support," she said.

Local links

Sam is a Buninyong local who grew up in the area, has children at Buninyong Primary School and can often be seen out walking the streets. She's spent the past 21 years working in senior leadership roles with *UFS Dispensaries* primarily in marketing, business development and project management.

In 2018 she was appointed as a member of the Bank Board before resigning last year to take on this new operational role and will do so while working on other independent projects.

If any district community group or organisation is interested to find out about or to apply for funding for a *Community Investment* project funding in 2021, ask at



the branch for more information, eligibility criteria and/or an application form.

Stories of some of the bank's funded projects can be found on Facebook @buninyongandsdistrictcommunitybranch and on Instagram @bendigocb_buninyonganddistrict.



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Upset over the closure of the hotel which remains dear to his heart, former owner Rod Anderson points to some of the history of the Lal Lal Falls Hotel contained in a local community history book prepared as part of Australia's Bi-Centenary celebrations in 1988.

Rod tells *The News* Pub's closure sad for town

Newcomers to Buninyong and district areas associate Lal Lal with its waterfalls, its old bluestone railway station, its great second-hand yard... and its country pub.

Lal Lal locals, however, also will talk about the township's deep lead gold mining, the blast furnace for treating reserves of local iron ore, timber milling, the coal, sand

and kaolin mines, brick manufacturing, the racecourse and picnic grounds, with a dedicated railway branch line running to it, the swing bridge, and the five hotels which did brisk business with the miners and railway workers.

It also was an early site of the Australian Paper Mills (APM) before the company moved to Tasmania in 1986.

Much of this has been brought back into focus recently by the late-2020 closure of the last of the township's hotels, the *Lal Lal Falls Hotel*.

The original *Lal Lal Falls Hotel* opened in 1877, built of local bricks and timber carted from the forest at Bullarook, and was licensed to a **Richard James** who had previously run a butchery at Mt Doran. He later also had a butchery behind the hotel. The present hotel was rebuilt in 1926 after being destroyed by fire.

In recent times the hotel was owned by and licensed to well-known Lal Lal and Buninyong identities. **Rod Anderson** owned and operated the hotel between 1995 and 2009, and **Nick Fammartino** from 2009 to 2017.

Sold

Sold by the latter to two Melbourne-based solicitors, the licence was taken up in December 2017 by the **Harrigan** family who were licensees of a hotel in Elmhurst, a small town past Waubra and Lexton (A new face at local pub, *The News*, April 2018).

A combination of business factors and social problems, some stemming from the virus pandemic saw the hotel at Lal Lal shut, possibly permanently, in December 2020.

Chatting with *The News* recently about the pub's closure, former owner and long-term Lal Lal resident Rod Anderson said that, in the right hands, the hotel still had a lot of potential, but it seemed that the current owners plan to convert it into a country residence. He was concerned that there are still many pieces of local history, some owned by him, locked inside the increasingly forlorn-looking hotel building.

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Buninyong

Farewell to Sinclair of Scotsburn

Over the twenty or so years that he lived on his Scotsburn property, David Sinclair became a familiar face and friend to many in Buninyong, especially to the morning coffee drinker group at Espresso Depot.

David died at home at the age of 78 years on 15 December last year. A funeral service was held on the property on 9 February. He was privately cremated.

Varied career

While in recent years David ran a small vineyard and accommodation business at Scotsburn, his earlier career took many forms – grazier, scientist, teacher, chemist, consultant being just a few.

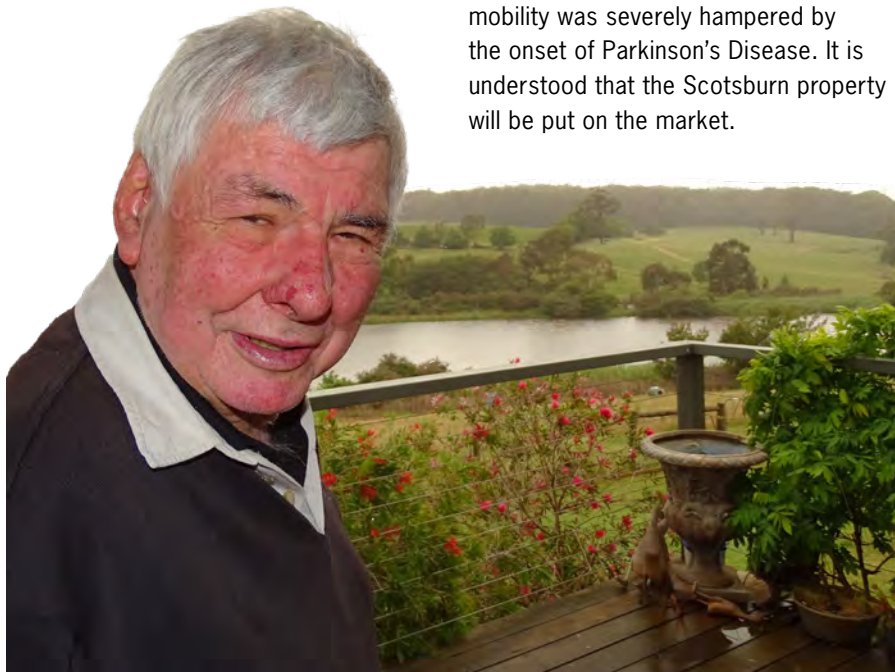
Raised at Cobar, some 700 km west of Sydney, his later schooling was as a boarder at Adelaide’s Scotch College.

Married to **Barbara** in 1968, he spent time in South Australia and NSW, before heading to Melbourne in 1994 with the metals company *Pasminco*. Around 2001 he and Barbara purchased the 42 acre property at Scotsburn which had on it about five acres of poorly-tended vines.

The Manor

The accommodation there was basic so the couple set about building their new home, *The Manor*, into which they moved in 2008. Barbara died in 2013. The couple had two sons Peter and Mark.

For some years before his death, David’s mobility was severely hampered by the onset of Parkinson’s Disease. It is understood that the Scotsburn property will be put on the market.



Progress then problems at The Sanctuary

Local residents have congratulated Ballarat City Council for the noxious weed spraying in *The Sanctuary*, Mt Helen late last year. Because of the amount of mature gorse and other weeds in the southern end of the reserve between Zoe Drive and Brodie Court, mulching machines were brought in to mulch up all the dead weeds and some undergrowth to mitigate fire risk.

However, since then a BMX track has been constructed in the reserve. There have been holes dug, jumps constructed, soil moved, logs moved, and the area raked. These will have a detrimental effect on the regrowth of the area’s native flora.

Council has undertaken to remove the BMX track and to restore the ground. *The Sanctuary* reserve is covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay and a Vegetation Protection Overlay and BMX tracks may not be constructed in this area.

Ballarat Council has been informed and is in the process of removing the track and restoring the site as well as can be expected.

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Lions youth face judges



Mount Clear Secondary College's Piper McPhan (left) faced stiff competition from Loreto College's (L to R) Annmary Chalakkal, Chloe Simpson and Grace Toohey in the Lions Youth of the Year quest.

Last year's problems were forgotten when the local Lions Club recently held its 2021 Youth of the Year quest.

The origins of the quest go back to 1964 when the Brisbane Lions Club hosted the first quest to give the city's youth a platform to develop confidence in public speaking and talking passionately about their chosen subject.

Locally this year there were four outstanding students prepared to first face a panel of judges, and then get up in front of a room full of people to deliver a prepared speech.

These brave and talented students spoke on a range of subjects – *Social Media, Travel as a Learning Experience, Learning and Education, and Ethical Consumerism.*

The top prize of the night was awarded to **Annmary Chalakkal** (of Loreto College). This win takes her to the next level in this nationwide competition.

Grace Toohey (Loreto) won the public speaking section.

NAB again were sponsors for the competition.

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Explore the gardens online

Buninyong's Gardens on international data base

There has been recent news from the City of Ballarat of a really exciting development concerning Buninyong's Botanic Gardens.

For the past year or so, Council's **Donna Thomas** has been working on inputting the plant collections of Ballarat, Buninyong and other key Council gardens into a new database called *IRIS BG* – a program that is used by many Botanic Gardens in Australia and overseas.

Buninyong Garden Explorer is a feature that will provide public access to this

'behind the scenes' data within the collections software program, and can be explored on your smart phone, iPad or computer, from both within the gardens or from the comfort of your home.

Apart from the critical task of Council's management of its gardens collections data, *Buninyong Garden Explorer* will provide public access to select levels of this information, and interstate and international Gardens enthusiasts will be able to research Buninyong and Ballarat Gardens when planning a visit.

This will also soon become a catalyst to developing Gardens tourism.

On tour

A *Tours* 'tab' allows for the telling of 'stories' of the beautiful Botanic Gardens in Buninyong.

Tours currently include

- a selection of the feature trees,
- an historical features tour
- a children focused 'fun-facts' tour.

It will also provide an opportunity to include 'upcoming events' too, including

'Friends' events, nursery opening hours, and the like.

To check out the start of this exciting development look at *buninyong.gardenexplorer.org*.

Place the cursor on the aerial view of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens and zoom-in. It will be possible to view the various marker dots that will appear identifying all the trees and other features of the Gardens.

Donna Thomas from the City of Ballarat recently visited the Buninyong gardens to add further information onto the IRIS database.

Here she is showing images to Henry Oldaker. At rear is Karen Hulston, a member of the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens group.



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The future has already started here

Steve's keen to go electric

Steve Carter has an eye to the sustainable and safe future of transport in this country – and every journey has to start somewhere, so why not Buninyong?

For Steve is Chair of the Ballarat and Region sub-branch of the *Australian Electric Vehicle Association* and he sees the future as all-electric once the technology is cost-effective enough and the curse of coal-fired electricity is surpassed by renewables.

The start

Steve's interest was sparked a decade ago when his son, **Austin**, was studying mechanical engineering, and his research project was how to convert a *Porsche 914* from petrol to electricity.

In the very early 1900s the first vehicles were electric-powered until the limited electricity charging opportunities soon saw the rapid rise of the internal combustion engine that required highly flammable petrol/diesel fossil fuels to be transported by road and rail.

Another alternative power source for vehicles that is currently being investigated, hydrogen, also faces this transport-safety problem.

"The wider distribution of electric charging points nowadays makes EV trips easier," says Steve, "and any town or city can use these to attract tourists and visitors as the charging time can coincide with a coffee or a relaxing meal."

One here

Buninyong has its own charging station set up by *Buninyong Sustainability* adjacent to Desoza Park in Warrenheip St (across from the BP service station). It is equipped with two *Auriga* plugs that can charge two cars at the same time.

Some cable connections are available for charging bicycles at *Dynamite Cycles* 304 Warrenheip St 0402 181

943 or info@dynamitecycles.com.au.

EV owners can easily locate charging points elsewhere by downloading the *Plugshare* app onto their device as this will show the details of each, with its surrounding food outlets and public toilets.

As a crusader for electric vehicles, Steve has read the recently-released *Future Fuels Strategy* document (<https://www.industry.gov.au/news/future-fuels-strategy-discussion-paper-have-your-say>). But he says it's a pity it was not more encouraging for electric vehicles.

Confusion

"We need more thoughtful direction from government," says Steve, "especially in standardising connecting plugs as there are many of these now resulting in confusion for EV owners as to whether their plug will fit a particular charger." Public comment on the 'Strategy' document is open until 2 April 2021.

Steve is keen to foster knowledge about electric-powered vehicles and anyone wanting assistance with this technology for houses, garages, cars or bicycles can contact Steve on 0419 540 726 and he will answer the question or find someone who can.



Steve Carter (right) shows the state-of-the-art German battery for his cargo bike to Malcolm Anderson and Doug Russell. The battery contains lithium 'butter' – one of the latest advances in battery technology.

Kinder places at Steiner school

The Ballarat Steiner School, located at Moss Avenue, Buninyong, offers educational programs for students from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

With its new and greatly expanded facilities now open, the school has made available additional places in its distinctive kindergarten program – suited to children aged three and four years.

With State Government funding for 2021 the kindergarten will be able to offer free three year old and four year old sessions. This will involve six hours for three year olds and fifteen hours of kindergarten for four year old children.

Kindergarten enrolments are now open, and information can be had from the school by phoning 5341 8188. (See advertisement on p 13 of this edition).

– Russell Luckcock



Veranda still busted

The mystery as to why nothing seems to be happening with the repairs to the veranda at the *Old Eagle Hotel* building (1858) is at least a little clearer after *The News* spoke to a *Powercor* employee and a couple of builders peering up at the smashed veranda recently (picture below). A PTV bus had crashed into the veranda posts in June 2020.

Asked what the problem was in getting the repairs underway, the men responded in unison – “heritage”. It seems there is an impasse between the owner of the property who wants the veranda replaced as is and Heritage Victoria who claim that the previous veranda was not in character and want it replaced with a ‘heritage’ style which will be more in keeping with the listed old hotel.



Old church goes social

The old Catholic church building (1853) on Fiskin Street on the hill above the Gong, and abutting the modern new church building, is now used as a hall by that church community. Recently, it saw a capacity crowd of 50 persons come along and enjoy the first of a series of social evenings scheduled across coming months.

Organised by **John White** (left in picture above) and his wife **Geraldine**, the *Wine & Cheese* evening, with an early 5.30 pm start on a balmy Friday evening proved popular with the mixed group of attendees. Plenty of finger food was brought along by

guests, and ample supplies of excellent wines, saw very positive comments about the evening.

Another ‘open to all’ *Wine & Cheese* evening is scheduled for Friday 28 May, commencing at 5.30 pm. Cost is \$10 per person. To book call John White on 0402 808 299. And a more distant entry for diaries is the planned *Soup, Casserole & Wine* evening scheduled for Friday 27 August.

Choir moves to local halls

After a year with no singing, **Ballarat Choral Society** is finding new, safer ways to sing using two Buninyong venues – the **Masonic** and **RSL** halls.

The choir is leading a world-first research project to ensure its singers are protected from catching or spreading COVID-19. This involves shorter rehearsal times, larger venues, greater spacing between singers and the occasional use of special singers’ masks.

The Society secured a grant from the Regional Arts Fund to investigate pathways for choirs to resume singing in the safest possible ways. Results of the research are being widely shared with community, church and professional choirs across Australia.

Ballarat Choral Society meets every Wednesday at the RSL at 7.45pm and finishes around 9.30pm at the Masonic Hall. If you would like to join the Choir, or at least give it a go, ring **Ruth** on 0418 519 448 or **Merle** on 0419 324042.

LETTER

Bus on the tilt

I want to voice my concern about the bus stop near the Pig & Goose store. About every two months I go to Geelong on the V Line bus. When it pulls over for me to get on, it tilts at an alarming angle making it quite difficult for me to board the bus.

**Helen Stevens
Buninyong**

National cycling championships Hairdresser clips time and weight

One of the feature races in the 2021 Federation University Road National Championships in Buninyong was the Gran Fondo. Gran Fondo (Big Ride) originated in Italy in 1971 and has been steadily growing in popularity with cyclists all over the world, but particularly in Europe.

Gran Fondos have taken a while to grow in Australia with the largest being the 2018 Amy's Gran Fondo when 2500 riders took on the spectacular Great Ocean Road circuit. Conducted by the Amy Gillett Foundation, the event raises funds to help the Foundation create a safer bike riding environment in Australia.

World qualifier

The 2021 Buninyong race was a world qualifying event. The top 20 per cent in each age group qualified for the UCI Gran Fondo World Series in Bosnia in September 2021.

Riders were started in ten waves according to age groups (19 to 75+) and within 25 minutes there were more than 720 cyclists negotiating the 11.6 km course. Among the riders was Buninyong hairdresser, **Paul Tabbitt** (pictured right) who competed in the 55-59 age group.

Despite cramping going up the mount on his last lap Paul finished fifteenth and qualified for the 2021 world titles. He also competed in the *Gran Fondo Time Trial* earlier in the week finishing seventh fastest in his group. However, he has no plans to compete in Bosnia.

Tough regime

Paul took up cycling four years ago, initially to lose weight for his son's wedding. In that time he has gone from a cycling novice to a very fit competitive rider with a regular cycling regime that would test out most amateur cyclists half his age. A 30 kg lighter Paul gets

up every morning at 4:30 am and rides to Lake Wendouree to meet his cycling group, does his workout, and then rides home to Buninyong ready for his working day.

Riding with Eureka Vets or Sebastopol Cycling Club at weekends tops off a tough weekly cycling programme. Paul estimates that he would usually ride 400-450 km a week. In fact, he rode some 26,000 km last year – more than he drove in his car. His "ultimate cycling goal" is to win an Australian Guernsey in his age group next year.

He stressed how his move out to Buninyong and his introduction to cycling has had a positive effect on his physical health as well as his mental well-being. Paul also was keen to recognise the support he has had from his riding mates, his coach and from **Trent and Cass Johnston** at local Buninyong cycle shop, *Dynamite Cycles*.

– Ray Sullivan



The Hancock family of Miners' Rest recently visited the Buninyong Botanic Gardens exhibit which was part of the Begonia Festival Frame Trail. Called Paradise the white and pink floral display was the work of artist Tas Wansborough.



School kids run hot on the bowling green

The greens at the Buninyong Lawn Bowls Club saw an injection of youth over several weeks in the February-March period as the club members took on a mentor role for Buninyong Primary School students.

The School Sports (Victoria Division) Bowls Competition has been a regular fixture on the calendar for both the bowls club and the school to connect during the past four years.

“Each year the students get more enthusiastic about coming down to the bowls club and connecting with the coaches,” Buninyong Primary School PE and Sports coordinator **Claire Morris** said. “There is something special about the way in which the bowls club members connect with students and teach them so much more than the art of lawn bowls.”

Lunchtime

Across a four-week period, the school's bowls team headed over to the greens to practise during their lunchtimes. Students were taught the craft of lawn bowls in order to compete in the Eureka/Sovereign Division of the Sports Victoria Competition.

On Wednesday 3 March, the students put their newly learned skills to the test as they pitted themselves against five other schools from across Ballarat and district. The competition was the tightest seen with many games coming down to the final bowl to clinch the win. Buninyong PS finished a credible second behind the Pleasant Street PS team which has been the benchmark of the competition over the last four years.

Link

The association between the Buninyong Bowls Club and the nearby primary school has been a special one with a number of students wishing to take up membership. The mentorship program is one that provides an opportunity for the two community groups to connect.

Claire Morris said. “It is so much more than learning bowls and we look forward to this connection continuing into the future. Our school thanks to all the bowls members who have volunteered their time over the past month.”



Bank's boost to girls' cricket

One of the sporting success stories of recent years has been the rapid growth of juniors playing cricket with the Buninyong Cricket Club.

The club now boasts 120 players, fielding twelve sides (including two girls' sides). It's however the development of the Club as an all-inclusive, family-oriented organisation they are most proud of.

The local community bank has now had a four year association with the club with its support funding helping to make junior cricket affordable for all kids in the community. Particular assistance has been given to the club's launching of their female cricket program.

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