

Historic station to come back to life



Cash for Lal Lal

After recurring media reports across nine years of moves to restore the historic bluestone buildings of the Lal Lal railway station, it seems there will soon be action.

The Courier of 1 July 2012 reported that the future use of Lal Lal station “was being considered” by Public Transport Victoria. Then in July 2018, the Moorabool News carried a story which said that the station would be restored to its former glory with the help of a grant possibly worth close to \$750,000.

Action

But a 1 July announcement by Member for Buninyong **Michaela Settle** finally has committed the State Government to funding support.

With some forty locals present, Ms Settle announced that Lal Lal was one of ten historic stations to share in a grant of

\$10 million for restoration works. While the Moorabool Shire Council will hold the head lease on the site, the restored station will be used by local community groups and for community activities.

Cr Paul Tatchell, who chairs the Moorabool Council’s Heritage Advisory Committee, said that the announcement would give the Lal Lal district a “great boost.”

Historic

The station was constructed in 1862. A branch line to the Lal Lal Racecourse and picnic areas at the Lal Lal Falls was opened in 1886. During the 1880s and 1890s, 23 people were employed at the station.

Passenger services on the line stopped in 1978. Presently the line, now branching off at Warrenheip, is used periodically by freight trains carrying grain and other goods to Geelong from as far away as

Mildura. There is 64 km of track from Lal Lal to North Geelong.

Read the full story of the Lal Lal station inside on p 8

Above: Town Crier Gavin Barker welcomes local residents (L to R) Geoff Hewitt, Yendon, Kristina Kitchingman, Lal Lal, and Anne Beggs-Sunter, Clarendon, to the announcement.

Below Cr Paul Tatchell, Moorabool Shire chats with Michaela Settle MP.



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Edition 484, August 2021



Major award to caring leader Maya's big win

Buninyong teenager, Damascus College Captain and Year 12 student, Maya Tolland recently was awarded the Helen Handbury Leadership Award for her leadership work and for her community commitment and achievements.

Mrs Helen Handbury, a sister of media mogul **Rupert Murdoch**, was a generous benefactor to many charities in Western Victoria. She lived at Hamilton, and died in 2004, aged 75 years. The valuable *Helen Handbury Leadership Award* is part of the outstanding contribution that she made over many years to community development in rural and regional Australia.

Top rural student

The award recognises Year 12 students in rural and regional areas who have shown outstanding community leadership. As part of the award, Maya will receive \$5,000 towards an international trip to experience community development in another culture.

Maya's commitment to her school, her community, and her growing leadership qualities were noted throughout her time at Damascus, she has represented students as an SRC member and as a Year 10 peer mentor.

She said that the position of College Captain has strengthened her leadership skills and qualities, and she is very grateful for this opportunity.

Volunteer

Outside of school, the Buninyong teenager volunteers her time at Mercy Place, the Salvation Army Op Shop and is a keen volunteer as part of the *Aussie Action Abroad* program – the aid program to Nepal founded by Buninyong's **Graeme Kent** – her grandfather.

"This overseas program involves fundraising, organisation and development strategies to help those living in remote villages in the third-world country, Nepal. Being a part of this team motivated me to travel and volunteer in Nepal in 2019.

"I was very excited to receive this award, it brought me much happiness and joy but also my success made me feel deep pride. My hard work and dedication to my role as a student leader has shaped the person I have become, and to be formally recognised for this, is wonderful.

Nepal again

"At university I plan to continue to work in countries that need our help. As soon as the borders open up and I have a COVID vaccine, I am grabbing my things and flying back over to my community in Nepal.

"My dream is to lead an expedition team helping Nepali families, working with Nepali school children, and providing access to healthcare for those that need it. I believe this award will help to enable me to pursue this dream."

Buninyong locals may also recognise Maya as one of the smiling young faces behind the counter at the Newsagency/BP service station. She is the daughter of **Brett Tolland**, top-line Buninyong golfer who, with his brother **Phil**, was a member of the champion district golf team featured in the July edition of *The News*.

Damascus College Principal Matthew Byrne presents Maya Tolland with her award. Below: Maya at work at the Buninyong Newsagency



Future traffic in Buninyong brings a **Stony silence**

On two occasions over the past week, driving along the new Link Road to the Lucas Shopping Centre corner, then along Dyson Road to Carngham Road, and then to the long queues at the Wiltshire Lane roundabout, brought home the scary future of traffic in Buninyong. In coming years much of this traffic will be wanting to head to the Buninyong district or on to Geelong.

A glance to either side of the road on the above trip brings the sight of thousands of new homes jammed gutter-to-gutter onto small blocks, with any vacant land now crammed full of excavators hard at work on more sub-divisions.

Count

In 2012 Vicroads undertook a traffic count of the traffic travelling through Buninyong. A May 2013 paper *Buninyong Traffic Impact Study* reported that "Learmonth Street carries a daily traffic volume in the order of 6900 vpd (west of Warrenheip Street), and 6300 vpd (east of Warrenheip Street) with heavy vehicles comprising in the order of 10-12 per cent of all traffic."

But it was the section on *Future Traffic Volumes* that was of most interest, and concern, to locals. In section 3.1 it was reported that

- the Ballarat West Growth Area was expected to see some 16,000 new dwellings in the period to 2045

- the Ballarat West Employment Zone would provide 250 hectares of land for industrial and commercial users before 2035
- the final stage of the Ballarat Western Link Road would 'create a continuous link between the Midland Highway and the Western Freeway

Increase

The writers of the report stated that it was considered "reasonable" to expect annual traffic volume growth to be some 1 per cent to 2 per cent on Warrenheip Street and between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent along Learmonth Street.

Basic mathematics would suggest that in the nine years since this study traffic volumes along Learmonth Street might have increased by some 20 per cent. Many Buninyong residents say that would be a conservative estimate, particularly of the truck traffic.

The increase in heavy vehicle traffic is what's causing concern. Speed and noise are getting to the serious stage.

It's all very well building super roads to get the traffic away from the airport area, the Lucas area and the Winter Valley area, but where do our planners and politicians expect it to go when it hits the Midland Highway at Magpie? That question has been asked before... with stony silence from our representatives in Spring Street and Sturt Street.



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Editor: Barry Fitzgerald

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Advertising: Gayle Adams

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Elsie, Emma and Mia, from the Scotsburn Campus, look very happy as they get set to help with the recent replanting exercise along stretches of the Midland Highway.

New trees replace highway axed ones

In June, students from Buninyong Primary School's Scotsburn campus joined forces with the Upper Williamson Creek Landcare Group to plant seedlings to help revegetate the roadside along the Midland Highway following major safety improvement works.

The trees will replace some of those removed to accommodate safety improvements undertaken between Buninyong and Clarendon to widen the road and install flexible safety barriers.

Species

The trees selected for planting along the highway include Silver Banksia, Christmas Bush, Blackwood, and Golden Wattle. The species of trees were carefully chosen to ensure they were suitable habitat for wildlife such as crimson rosellas, gliders, koalas, and possums.

The total number of trees being replanted along the works zone this year is 750 with a further 3,500 trees and bushes planned to be planted along this stretch of road in 2022.

More than 300 trees were required to be removed to make way for the Midland Highway safety improvement works. The vegetation from the native trees removed

for the project was donated to a Ballarat wildlife sanctuary to help feed their koala population. At the same time, timber from the felled trees was also repurposed by local groups and organisations, including the Scotsburn Primary School.

Nesting boxes

In addition, 30 timber nesting boxes – custom-made by the Men's Shed at St Andrews – to suit different types of animals – were installed in trees along the route earlier in the year to encourage habitat back to the area.

Member for Buninyong **Michaela Settle** helped students plant 150 seedlings, taking the total number of trees replanted along the works zone this year to 750.

This \$23 million Midland Highway upgrade is part of the Victorian Government's \$1.4 billion investment into reducing road trauma, with major works on this 12km section due for completion in late July once the centre barrier is installed.

A reseal still needs to be applied to the old road surface, however these works require warmer temperatures and will be undertaken in summer. Final line marking and rumble strips will be applied after the reseal.

streettalk

THE TWO BUNINYONGS cover story in last month's edition created some interest. Not least with **Mike Ryan** a senior tradie working on a local new build who, after saying how he had moved from Dubbo to Ballarat, also added that not only had he heard of the second Buninyong – but the actually *lived there* on Buninyong Road!

WITH ALL of the improvement works on the Warrenheip Street business strip about to start, it was sad to see the recent closure of the *Pig & Goose Food Store* and the *Three Times Blest* clothing store. There also will be a start soon on streetscape works in Learmonth Street between the old post office and the Crown Hotel corner.

WILLIAMS NEWSAGENCY in Sturt Street, opposite the hospital, and owned by local resident and Cemetery Trust member **Jo Thomson** and husband **Bruce**, has hit the Tattslotto jackpot for a second time in six months selling a recent Division 1 winning ticket worth \$829,000. They have sold eight big winners in eight years!

THE COVID REGULATIONS which required the Village Market to be totally contained within a fence may have had an unintended positive result. Seems use will now be made of the fenced grounds of the historic Uniting Church. A superb setting for the market.

AT PRESENT, the State seat of Buninyong held by **Michaela Settle**, takes in a fair chunk of the likes of Sebastopol, Delacombe, Mt Pleasant and even Bacchus Marsh. But, if the boundary changes proposed by the Victorian Electoral Commission are adopted in October, these areas will go, and be replaced by the whole of Golden Plains Shire, and a northern bit of Corangamite. Buninyong, Mount Helen and the Moorabool Shire will remain.



OBITUARY

Henk... one of a kind

One of the village's most recognisable characters, Henk Batstra, died on 28 June, aged 78 years. After cycling down from his Henderson's Road home each morning, Henk became a daily fixture downtown as he sipped a coffee outside of Espresso Depot.

He had the uncanny ability to be able to almost simultaneously carry on banter with passers-by, express his strong views on wide-ranging issues to anyone who would listen, and at the same time, work on

charming the ladies in his group of regular fellow coffee drinkers.

With his family, Henk migrated from the Netherlands in 1958 aged sixteen years. The family first settled in Clunes. He had some basic skills as a hand compositor, undertook related studies, and then was employed by *The Courier* and subsequently by the Maryborough printing firm of *Hedges & Bell*.

Start up

In 1974, and partly-funded by working as a cleaner by night, he commenced his own printing business, *Henksan Printers*, located in Humffray Street, Ballarat, just near the corner of Mair Street.

In this business he quickly became involved with the Ballarat business community. One

former client said "while he was a bit testy, had strong opinions on all kinds of subjects, Henk was an honest and excellent printer."

Design 61

Still in the same location, the business is now called *61 Design* and is run by Henk's son, **Stefan**.

Henk was farewelled by a large group of friends, clients and business colleagues on 7 July at the Regent Cinema followed by a private cremation.

Henk, himself, could have penned the invitation included in the official death notice in *The Courier* which invited those attending to "Please feel free to bring a coffee".

Seven of Henk's Buninyong friends (**Joan, David, Anna, Michael, Niki, Alan** and **Howard**) described him as "uniquely amazing... with so many stories to tell, so many opinions, and so much laughter."

But a tribute from friends and business colleagues, the **Campana** family, probably said it all. They described Henk as "funny, honest and loving... one of a kind."



Catherine KING MP

Federal Member for Ballarat

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Gardens gurus share a vision

Over sixty gardens enthusiasts met at the Buninyong Bowling Club in late June to hear about and discuss the vision and plans for the Buninyong Botanic Gardens from two highly-regarded academics and public gardens professionals.

Guest speaker at the meeting was Professor **Tim Entwisle**, Director and CEO of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria (RBGV). He was appointed to this post in 2013 after stints at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens and at the RBG Kew, London.

Welcome

He was adamant that any Botanic Gardens should be welcoming to visitors. He recalled that when he first became

involved in Melbourne's Botanic Gardens there was a large sign at the entrance telling visitors what they could not do after they entered.

He soon had the signs changed so that the 'welcome' was first and foremost – followed much later by the 'please don'ts'. "After all, these Gardens are public gardens," he said.

Buninyong resident, **Jock Gilbert**, led some twenty of his students from RMIT University's School of Architecture & Design in a joint visioning and design project entitled Project Botanica, together with the Friends of Buninyong Botanic Gardens (FOBBG) group.

Project Botanica was commissioned to contribute to the discussion that will drive

the vision and master planning process of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens which are now in their 161st year.

The planning process proposed by the Friends group for the Gardens Master Plan has been informed by models developed by the RBGV for planning at both its Melbourne and Cranbourne sites.

President of FOBBG, **Roger Permezel** said, "Project Botanica hopefully will aid the discussions amongst the community and Ballarat City Council and be a key part of the coming review to look at the structure and function of our local Gardens into the future."



Melbourne's Botanic Gardens chief Tim Entwistle (right) discusses the forum with Jock Gilbert (centre) and Roger Permezel.

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The story of the Lal Lal railway station... and of **Power and influence**

Following is an abridged version of local historian Anne Beggs-Sunter's short history of the 160-year-old railway which provides a background to the recent decision by the State Government to fund the restoration of the historic Lal Lal Railway Station

In January 1862 tenders were accepted for railway stations at Lal Lal and at Yendon (initially called Buninyong East) and for other stations on the new line to Geelong. The firm of J Campbell & Co. built all stations except that at Bannockburn.

All were fine bluestone structures. Many bluestone bridges were built, including one near Mt Doran and another at Navigators with large numbers of quarrymen and stonemasons being employed. One contractor even imported 500 masons from Germany to provide an instant workforce.

Open 1862

The line was officially opened on 10 April 1862. Passenger trains began running on 11 April, and freight trains on 20 August 1862.

The opening of the railway was a marvellous advance for passengers. Trains left Geelong four times daily, and the journey took two and a half hours, stopping at Steiglitz Road, Lethbridge, Meredith, Lal Lal, Buninyong (Yendon). Later more stops were added at Warrenheip, Navigators and Elaine, but these did not have elaborate station buildings.

At Lal Lal, a reservoir with a capacity of three million gallons was built to supply water for the steam trains at a cost of £25,000. The associated water tower was removed in 1963 when diesel engines replaced steam.

Busy

During the nineteenth century up to 23 people were employed at the Lal Lal Station. With goods for the iron mine, the lignite mine, and large quantities of timber, as well as the racecourse branch line from 1886 to 1942, it was a busy station.

There was a turntable, and an engine repair shop. Houses were supplied nearby for the gangers and the gatekeeper.

The building of a station at nearby Yendon caused considerable discussion at the

time. Why were the Lal Lal and Yendon stations so close together? And why was Yendon initially called Buninyong?

One story was that the **Fisken** family wanted a station close to their home for the convenience of themselves and important visitors to their property. In 1861 **Archibald Fisken** was Chairman of the Buninyong Roads Board and a man of some influence.

The mis-naming of the station was to give the impression that the train passed through the bustling gold-mining town of Buninyong, although in reality a cab service was needed to take passengers on the five mile trip there.

This festered with the citizens of Buninyong who finally achieved their own branch line from Ballarat East to Buninyong in 1889.

The station at Yendon was demolished in 1968, and the passenger service between Geelong and Ballarat was replaced by a bus service in the 1970s. From that time the Lal Lal railway station has been unoccupied.

– Anne Beggs-Sunter

No to village idea

I have been very concerned to read in recent copies of The News of some interest in turning the old soccer ground into a retirement village. I live quite close to this site and observe this open green space being utilised by all age groups in our community.

I have noticed a lot of recent infill development in Buninyong in the form of units. This is a much better way of accommodating older people in the village, integrated in the community.

The construction of a retirement village is counter-intuitive to village life, especially when it entails the loss of well utilised open green space.

– Anne Scott, Buninyong



Lesley shares her passion for art with others

Hale and arty

From about four years of age, Lesley Hale had a passion for most forms of art.

It started off with her drawing horses – all forms and sizes and colours of horses – on any paper or other surface that might have been nearby.

At primary school in Cheltenham, she won several prizes and competitions for her art work.

Then at Mentone Girls' College she excelled in art studies. Not only did her art work receive outstanding marks from her teachers, her fellow students also were happy to part with the occasional 20 cents to buy some of her drawings of old-time movie stars.

Lost it

After leaving school, a move to Gippsland, marriage, and health problems resulted in her art interests and practice “kinda getting lost” for about ten years.

But after moving to Ballarat in 1992 and with time on her hands being a ‘stay-at-home mum’, Lesley commenced art classes at BRACE, continuing them across the next five years. There she worked mainly in oils and water colours. During that time she was also kept busy with numerous appearances in stage productions with Ballarat National Theatre.

Even after purchasing a property in Durham Lead in 2008, Lesley still has problems with finding enough time and space to accommodate her wide range of art interests. Recently this has even expanded into an art restoration business, along with partner Chris, an engineer, expert restorer and formerly a Ballarat



antiques dealer. Metal garden art will also be an exciting new venture.

In 2020, she says she had a *Eureka* moment in her life. “It hit like a blinding flash,” she said. This was when she realised that “there was more to life than just work” and she suddenly decided that in the future she would “strive to do the things that make me fulfilled and happy.” This now takes the form of her own art work, teaching workshops, and garden. Her very own studio will be a reality in the near future.

Earlier this year she conducted the first of these workshops for a group of local residents at the Grenville Hall. Along with the twelve ‘students’ she had a great time making folk-art rabbits from air-dried clay.

Credit

Lesley gives much credit for having found her niche to friend and next-door neighbour Miranda Donald who she said had been “incredibly encouraging and supportive.” They first met while in the cast of a National Theatre production in 2007.

Now she is starting up art workshops in Buninyong. The

next one will be a four hour *Working with Clay* workshop at the Town Hall on 21 August. Enquiries can be made to 0409 317 697. Her website is at gildedgarden.com.au.

Oh, and in case she looks a little familiar, Lesley can be seen in the Customer Service and Supervisor role at the local Foodworks store on Mondays, Tuesdays and on Sunday mornings.

Above: Lesley at work in her home studio and (below) at work at Foodworks.



As student interest in farm education soars **TAFE review coming**

The agricultural industry and interested students will benefit from a coming review which will identify how TAFEs can continue to meet the changing needs of the industry and provide wider educational opportunities.

The TAFE review comes on the heels of reports that enrolments in University-level agricultural science courses have soared in recent years. For example, at the Longerenong Agricultural College at Horsham, enrolments in 2021 showed a 66 per cent jump over the previous year. Similar increases were reported in other States.

The agricultural sector is especially important to regional Victoria and directly employs about 145,000 people. It also

supports many more jobs, including many in logistics, transport and advisory services.

The thriving Victorian agriculture sector produces more than \$14.9 billion worth of meat, milk, and produce – supporting a \$41.5 billion food processing industry.

Future

The review will consider the future of agricultural training in Victoria. It will be led by Member for Buninyong **Michaela Settle** who studied at TAFE and owned and operated a family sheep farm in Ararat for more than a decade.

She said that with this background she was “looking forward to this really exciting opportunity to use my experience to help

shape the future of an industry that means so much to our community and state.”

Aims

The review aims to:

- ensure agriculture training remains innovative and relevant
- understand the factors involved in student choice
- explore how TAFE training can continue meeting the needs of employers and students

It will involve extensive consultation with industry, employers, TAFE and other training providers and students to develop a series of key recommendations to ensure the sector has the training needed to grow the agricultural industry.



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Logistics, liquor and now Lions leader David, the village grocer

David Searl may now be living in Ballarat, but his ties to Buninyong could not be much stronger. To older residents he is well remembered as the owner of Searl's Licensed Grocery for about ten years up to 1990.

But, in addition to being installed as the President of the Buninyong Mount Helen Lions Club a few weeks ago, he also is an active member of the Buninyong Bowling Club and the local Men's Shed.

Born and educated in Brisbane, David, 73, moved to Melbourne in 1970 to work with major logistics and supply company

Patterson Reid & Bruce. Five years later he was posted to Papua New Guinea to be involved with the export/import side of the business.

Move here

He and wife Jenny then moved to Buninyong in 1980 where they purchased and operated the local grocery store and liquor business, now Buninyong Foodworks. After that was sold in 1990, he worked at Woolworths until he 'retired' in 2005. He then spent six years driving the Ballarat to Airport shuttle bus.



David joined the local Lions Club in 1981, soon after coming to Buninyong. His recent installation as the President of the club marks the second occasion he has served in that role. The previous term was in 1984.

He said that the local club was now generating substantial funds from its two local ventures – the 'world famous' bookshop and the Op Shop. Both rely heavily upon volunteers to raise the tens of thousands of dollars the local club returns to charities and local organisations each year.

In addition to continuing the present activities of the Club – the two businesses, providing BBQs for local activities, and

assisting charities and the needy in various ways – David said that his goals this year were "to maintain and hopefully build on our modest membership base, so as to develop a better succession plan."

While there are no signs at all of David's cutting back on this active range of community involvements, perhaps one clue as to a major future development was his becoming a member of the Ballarat Alexander Croquet Club (pictured left). In April of this year he had already notched up a win Section 3 of the District Tournament.

"It's just near where we live, and I can easily ride my bike down there," he said, rejecting any hint of his slowing down by entering the gentle world of croquet.

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New faces now lead local Lions

There were two new faces in the key roles of President and Secretary when the Lions Club of Buninyong Mt Helen recently held its annual Changeover Dinner.

New President is well-known local identity **David Searl**, and the incoming Secretary is **Malcolm Freeman**. These and other office-bearers were installed by Lions Past District Governor **Ron Thomas** at the Dinner held at the *Barkly Motorlodge* and attended by some 45 members and guests.

Busy

In her outgoing President's report, **Barbara Voigt** detailed some of the activities of the group over the previous year.

Despite the impact of the Covid problem, the club and its volunteers has been involved with its two major front-line

projects – the Book Shop and the Op Shop – various community BBQs, assisting individuals with clean ups and wood drives, and has given funding support to many groups including five local schools, recycling, Blaze Aid, Talbot Place, the Soup Bus, Breezeway, BBRIC, the Salvation Army and the *Buninyong News*.

A continuing major commitment has been to the *Lions Youth of the Year* project. More evidence of the Lions' work will soon be seen in Desoza Park where the Club

is working with the Council to have large canvas curtains installed on the stage building.



New Secretary of the local Lions Club Malcolm Freeman (left) is installed by Lions District Governor Ron Thomas (centre) while President David Searl looks on.

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PAUL'S MOVE TO UNITING CHURCH

The Buninyong Uniting Church welcomed a new minister in May. He is the Rev. Paul Sanders whose appointment was also to the South Ballarat Uniting Church (Sebastopol), and to Meredith. He and his wife Pauline, moved here from Dunkeld, where they conducted a meditative retreat house ministry along with pilgrim walks, and also built a community labyrinth.

During the years 2010-2014, Pauline and Paul also restored and opened the *Dunkeld Wood-Fired Bakery and Café*. There, they quickly discovered the value of old historical assets, communal belonging and the difficult and hard work of small businesses. There, he says "he learnt the value of social capital and the strength of local stories."

They are delighted to be now living in Buninyong with easier access to their four children and nine grandchildren.

Growing up

Paul's early life was growing up in Queensland. His parents were in the arts – his dad a violinist, his mum in theatre. Sun, open spaces and a green landscape, he says, "is what drew him into inner spaces."

He found himself caught between visual arts, and the language of myth, metaphor and poetry. These experiences and sensibilities continue to influence. Working in the Queensland forestry industry, orchard work in Victoria, and a trade in

printing were all formative and instructive experiences which later led him to theological and ministry training.

Paul's ministry and training has largely been in the fields of contemplative spirituality, spiritual education and in leading meditation and mindfulness-related retreats. He has training and teacher appointments in Zen and Christian Contemplation.

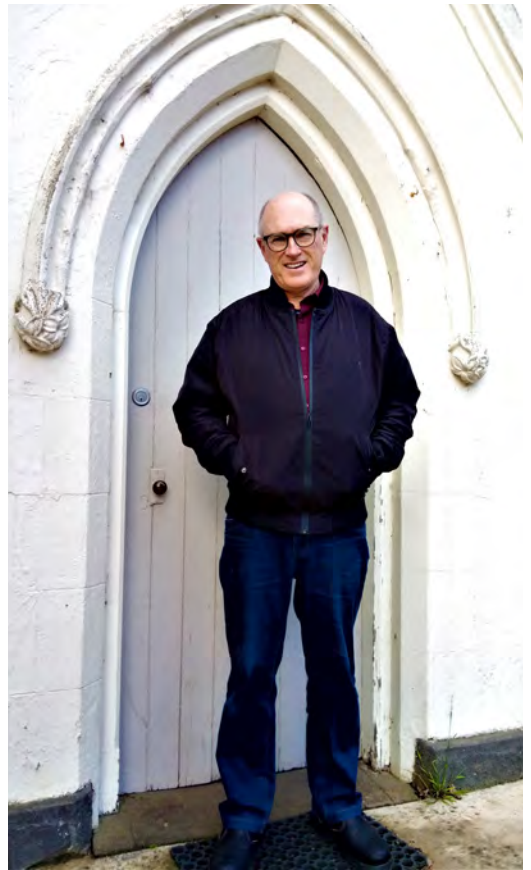
Camino walk

Paul and Pauline spent some time on Lindisfarne Island, in the North of England. They both undertook Camino walking, and were so pleased with the natural beauty and walks in the area.

Paul has also worked with the *Augustine Centre* in Melbourne, a personal growth centre and a creative Uniting Church educational ministry which offered opportunity to link and integrate art spaces, group work, community discourse and meditative practices.

Both Pauline and Paul maintain an interest in the arts. Pauline has a Diploma in Art Design and loves garden work. Paul paints, writes poetry and is presently working with a composer on contemporary sung chant responses.

He hopes to further encourage use of Church spaces for learning and



engagement for creative and spiritual/life skilling, stating that "researched evidence of contemplative practices shows stress and tension can be lessened, creativity enhanced and personal and communal connectivity restored and most importantly, burnout avoided."

They both feel fortunate to be living here with **Lucy**, their spoodle dog, and are grateful for the warm welcome received by the Uniting Church Community. Rev. Paul Sanders can be contacted on 0407833515 or on the church phone at 5341 2440.

– Rita Russell

End of VCAT barrels hearings

After almost six days of hearings, VCAT now seems set to deliver its determination on the Buninyong barrels case in about six weeks' time.

In the latter stages, most focus was on water waste, amenity impacts on neighbours, bushfire dangers and even potential damage to dry stone walls. The two VCAT members recently visited the site on Yendon No 2 Road.

Since the first period of hearings in May, the Application had been significantly modified with

changes relating to the height of the proposed 16m high *Vertigo* barrel, and the lowering of the other barrels into the hillside setting.

Other proposed changes included a much more detailed landscape plan, improvements to and partly-sealing access roads, and diminished lighting

Neighbours, representatives of community groups and the City of Ballarat attended and made submissions opposing the development at all sessions.





POLICE BEAT

ONLINE SCAMMERS successfully targeted a Buninyong resident on 3 June. The scam involved a malware notification on the victim’s computer screen. A response by the victim allowed the scammers to gain remote access to the computer. As a result, account details were located and several monetary transactions were made. To reduce the risk of becoming a victim of cybercrime, ensure you have set strong passwords and delete any suspicious emails that you receive. Avoid clicking on links or downloading anything from people you don’t know or trust. For tips on avoiding online scams, visit www.scamwatch.gov.au

A THEFT occurred in Webbs Hill Road Buninyong on 14 June. Several items including flowers, eggs and fertilizer were stolen from a stall located outside of residential premises. Disappointingly, the offenders also broke into an “honesty box” and took a small amount of cash. A Silver Ford Falcon 1 Tonne Ute was captured on CCTV in the vicinity at the time. If any one has information relating to this theft, please call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 and make an anonymous report.

A HOLDEN COMMODORE was stolen from the driveway of a residence in Forest Street Buninyong on 23 June just after midnight. Patrolling police spotted the stolen vehicle a short time later in Main Road and the offender was arrested after a brief foot chase. As a result, a 23-year-old Buninyong man was charged with a number of offences and remanded to appear at the Ballarat Magistrates Court the following day.

THERE HAS BEEN a spike in theft from motor vehicles reported to the Buninyong Police in the month of June. Areas affected include Mount Clear, Mount Helen and Buninyong. Several vehicles were targeted by opportunistic thieves who have accessed vehicles and taken items of value including wallets, cash and keys. Remember to ensure that you “target harden” to minimise the chances of becoming a victim. Lock and secure your vehicle when not in use, refrain from leaving items of value in your car at any stage and park it in a well-lit location at night where possible.

IF ANY member of the Community has any information that could assist Police in solving these or any other Crimes, please call Crime Stoppers anonymously on 1800 333 000. Remember “If you know something, say something.”

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Solar helps students

Recently Buninyong Primary School had solar panels installed at both campuses. A 59kw system has been fitted at Buninyong and a 5.8kw system at Scotsburn.

The systems were switched on in June, and despite the wintery conditions, the panels are already having a significant impact. To give an idea of that impact, the Buninyong campus on average, uses approximately 50kw on a school day in June, and the new panels are now producing an average of 60kw per day.

The panels were funded by the State Government through a *Greener Government Schools* grant.

The Buninyong Primary School Principal **Bernie Conlan** said that the school is looking forward to a saving of between \$25,000 and \$30,000 each year, and he plans to inject those savings into initiatives that will make a difference for students.

Start on signage

Ballarat City Council has installed the first of three signs delineating the Sanctuary Bushland Reserve at Mt Helen.

The Sanctuary reserve was developed as a result of a VCAT determination that, while permitting housing in the 'estate' area, a bushland corridor had to be retained as safe koala habitat. The estate is covered by four environmental overlays, and VCAT further mandated that there were to be no cats or dogs kept on any lot.

Nearby residents are urged not to throw any garden refuse (including grass clippings) into the Sanctuary. There is already evidence of gorse, broom and blackberry problems. Council has received a request for regular weed eradication to follow up on work started late last year.

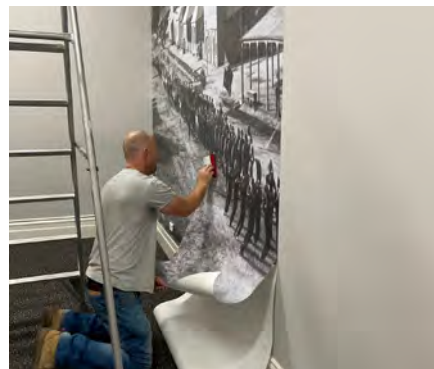
The Sanctuary reserve is a peaceful and significantly vegetated piece of retained bush. There have been 56 species of plants identified within its boundaries.

Wall art at the House

The new Community House had some exciting artwork installed on interior walls recently by Robert Young Signs. The copy of an original photo from the Buninyong and District Historical Society has been made into a large format graphic now covering an entire wall in the meeting room.

The photo is believed to be circa 1901 with a procession march associated with the Boer War. It clearly shows the streetscape of Warrenheip Street (between Forest and Eyre) where the Community House is situated.

Work is currently under way on a new website for groups to book the House online. It's not too far away now... stay tuned.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bus stop... Michaela's wrong

Like Janine (*The News*, July, p 18) I too beg to differ from Michaela Settle's stance on the bus stop. She may have observed the traffic conditions in Warrenheip Street for approximately an hour with an accomplice on a particular day from which she has deduced that all is well in the Eyre St/Forest St block.

I too use my post office box daily as well as having been a very regular patron of the *Pig and Goose*.

My observations are of congested parking (sometimes even around the corners into Forest and Eyre Streets. I have seen many traffic and pedestrian near-misses.

If Michaela does not wish to support the majority wishes found by her own recent survey perhaps she would be better to stand aside and allow another to represent Buninyong.

*Buninyong resident,
name and address supplied*

Bus stop... why the fuss?

I'd like to ask why a bus stop can cause so much of an issue for the some of the residents of our town!

We live in a beautiful place with clean air, friendly people and quiet streets. The side streets and the council carpark behind the service station quite often have numerous parks available. Is 100m too far to walk to the post office?

It is a privilege to drive a car. Have a thought for the people who may be unable to drive and have no choice but to catch public transport. On top of that public transport should be promoted, not denigrated!

**Andrew Aitken,
Buninyong**

Ernie Neale's Monthly
RAINFALL REPORT

Tempest from the South

Thanks to this year's unusually wet May, Winter opened with the ground saturated and tree canopies heavy with water. With 12.2mm falling in the first week, the score since early May came to over 100mm. Then the worst happened.

On 9 June, after two days of relative calm, the Great Tempest of 2021 roared from the south. It lasted two nights and a day, destroyed thousands of trees and everything they landed on. While we received 46.7mm of rain, the floods generated by much higher falls across the state resulted in loss of life. All types of infrastructure were wrecked, and the recovery is going to take ages.

After that, the second half of the month was routine. Regular rain brought the total to 95.6mm and the score for the first half of the year to 407.5mm, around 100mm more than average. The start of Winter 2021 won't be forgotten soon.

JUNE 2021			
Date	Rain	Date	Rain
3-4	9.1	12-20	15.2
6	3.1	23-26	19
9-11	46.7	28	2.5
Total		95.6mm	
Average		68.6mm	



**A new choice for specs
Your place or his**

If you have broken those spectacles that you need to read, look at the TV, or see way up the road, you now have a choice – head to an optical store, or call up a local bloke who has been an optical technician for 45 years.

Owner of the mobile *Countrywidespecs* business is Buninyong resident, **Steve McKee**, who started off his working life in 1975 with the famous but now defunct firm of *Coles & Garrard* in Bourke Street Melbourne. He opened the *Countrywidespecs* business in 2006.

Mobile

He's been a resident in Buninyong for seven years, and is happy to come to your place with his mobile service, or (along with his two poodles) to meet you at his home workshop where he has his technical equipment and a range of hundreds of frames from which to choose.

There's no fancy reception desks or shiny display cases at Steve's place. He won't be wearing a sharp name badge, colour-coordinated uniform or expensive suit. But you can be assured that he knows what he's on about if you need new glasses, frames repaired or lenses replaced. All you need is a cuppa and a prescription.

He also is into adding lens coatings, and supplying specs for safety, diving, shooting or for cyclists. Over the years he has even fitted lenses to the lanterns on vintage cars, repaired or improved telescope lenses, and made diving masks to prescription.

Eye testing is not available, and he's unable to provide health fund receipts.

Full contact details and other useful technical information is to be found on his website – countrywidespecs.com or call 0477 066 013.

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Natural environment under review

Green action at golf course

Golf's governing body, the Royal & Ancient (R&A), has directed clubs around the world to move to harmonise the playing quality of golf courses with the conservation of their natural environments.

Locally, the grounds of the 64 acre Buninyong golf course have significant potential to be managed to promote critical ecosystem services that provide this balance between conservation, restoration and recreational interests.

Plan

An overall course management plan to enhance recreation and conservation values for both private and public benefit is being considered by the Golf Club Board.

The Club has now developed basic aims that provide for the environmental management of the course. These are

- to protect and enhance local flora and fauna communities
- to develop an economically viable golf course which is environmentally responsible
- to ensure that any revegetation of environmental areas is carried out using endemic plants
- to educate golfers to understand that environmentally-sound golf courses are quality golf courses.

Action

To achieve these aims the following action is proposed

- to revegetate to connect small and large natural areas to better provide natural corridors that facilitate wildlife movement, particularly koalas, both through the course, and from the course to neighbouring natural areas.
- to maintain or plant a diversity of endemic plant species of varying heights from ground cover to shrub and tree layers in habitat areas.
- to leave dead trees standing when they do not pose a safety hazard.
- to promote and enhance aquatic

vegetation found in water bodies on the course.

- to avoid disturbing known bird nests or den sites, particularly those of ground-nesting birds such as plovers
- within designated non-playing environmental areas, to restore degraded habitats, such as eroded slopes, compacted soils, polluted water sources, or areas overrun with invasive exotic species.

Sensitive areas

Two main environmentally sensitive areas have been identified. These are on the left of the 6th tee in the vicinity of the dam, and to the left of the 14th tee.

The surrounds of the dam adjacent to the sixth fairway provide an example of a uniquely variable ecosystem dominated by native grasses and orchids. The area

is environmentally significant both for its diversity and relatively undamaged condition.

To the left of the 14th tee is an area of ecological significance primarily because of its high plant species diversity typified by several native grasses, wildflowers and many species of orchids.

Appropriate management will be undertaken after further assessment of both sites. This will include further weed removal, seed dispersal, off-site plant propagation, limited soil enhancement,

These areas have the potential to not only enhance the environment of the golf course, but provide an opportunity for members to better understand and become involved in the conservation of the club's natural resources.

– Greg Horrocks



Greg Horrocks is a Research Fellow in the School of Science at Federation University, and is a recent appointee to the Board of the Buninyong Golf Club.

When Zero means a lot

The jumper of a senior Buninyong footballer carried an unusual number in a recent game. Leaving his usual number 4 in his locker, Alex 'Bomma' Bomitali wore the number zero for two reasons

Firstly a major sponsor of the club is the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) which heavily markets the *Towards Zero* slogan.

Memory

But the main reason that Alex wore that number on his jumper was in memory of his team-mate **Shannon Murphy** who was tragically killed in a road trauma accident some twenty years ago during an end-of-season football trip to Bendigo.



Shannon's death devastated the football club and many in the local community.

Alex said, "It was a great honour to wear that number in memory of my good mate, and also in memory of others from the sporting and local community who have lost loved ones on the roads."

A son of Buninyong's **Keith and Rose Murphy**, Shannon was also well known for his role as Assistant Greenkeeper at the Buninyong Golf Club, having completed his apprenticeship under the Club's long-standing Greenkeeper **Maurice Cartledge**.



300 mark rolls on by

A HUGE MILESTONE was recently passed by veteran Bombers footballer **Mark Phelps** who passed his 300th game with the local football club in the game against Dunnstown on 12 June. A presentation was made to him by the club at the following home game. He clocked up game No 306 playing with the Buninyong Reserves against Learmonth on last Saturday 24 July.

Day out... night out

Buninyong's football and netball teams each had a big day out recently when visiting Clunes. The footballers won by 27 goals, and the netballers had a 67-14 goal win over the home team.

The 'hot' netball team is undefeated for the season with a huge 400 plus percentage, while the footballers remain hopeful of making the Finals with a current 6-3 record.

That big day on the sporting field rolled into the evening with the Club's Annual Ball held at Federation University.

Shown enjoying the night at the Ball was club stalwart Gerard McCarty with granddaughters Eden (left) and Ella.



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Driving women's golf forward Golf Australia's leaders in town

Two key officials from Golf Australia (GA) recently visited the Buninyong Golf Club to discuss future directions for women's golf. They were GA's Female Engagement Officer Megan Carr, and GA's Development Officer Tony Collier.

They discussed a national project referred to as *Even Par* which is designed to support golf clubs in developing initiatives to encourage greater female participation in the sport. It commenced in 2018 when the female participation rate in golf had fallen to under 20 per cent – the lowest on record.

New ideas

Written reports and several videos of Initiatives already introduced by golf clubs are available.

Some of the examples include one at the Bannockburn Golf Club where the club changed its constitution, dissolved the women's committee, and reformed the board including several women.

At the Huntingdale and Kew golf clubs, club championships are now offered on weekends to cater for women who work or study midweek. At the Northern Golf Club, the club sought a government grant and ran a *This Girl Can* campaign. Other clubs have introduced shorter games to allow for women busy with other activities.

Megan Carr admits that trying to change the ideas about how a club should be run

to better cater for women golfers isn't an easy task. She said, "There is resistance sometimes, and you hear things like 'we've tried that before and it hasn't worked'."

Possibilities

After the Golf Australia visitors addressed about fifteen women golfers at the Buninyong club, they met with Club President **Ron Delaland**, Board member **Betty McGuinness**, and Match Committee members **Helen**

McSparron and **Matt Burdon** to discuss possibilities for the local Club.

Coming from Sydney to Shepparton some fifteen years ago, Megan Carr had a brilliant record as a soccer player before taking up golf.

Tony Collier is a Ballarat-based PGA Professional who has received national awards for his work in coaching junior golfers.



Champion soccer player, Megan Carr is now also an accomplished golfer.

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