

District veterans and war dead **REMEMBERED**

The President and members of the Buninyong RSL were busy on 11 November this year with Remembrance Day ceremonies at RSL Park, at the Buninyong Cemetery, and at the newly-restored Cambrian Hill Avenue of Honour.

Poppies were placed on each of the 167 trees in the Buninyong Avenue and on the 56 trees at Cambrian Hill.

At RSL Park, President **Ron Fleming** asked the 100 or so people gathered to remember “those in various wars and peace-keeping missions, especially those who made the supreme sacrifice, and who had carried on the Anzac tradition.”

Later that day the RSL members also laid a wreath at the gates of the Buninyong Cemetery. The gates were flanked by two Australian flags.

In Australia reference to Remembrance Day followed the Second World War, and was formally introduced in 1997 after a proclamation by the Governor-General who requested that the nation should observe a minute's silence in memory of all of those Australian who had fallen in all wars.

Prior to that time it was called Armistice Day because at 11.00am on 11 November, 1918, the guns on the Western front fell silent after the Germans called for a cessation to hostilities and signed a cease fire agreement with the Allies.

Above: RSL President Ron Fleming watched by Dru and Brian Parker and Tony Benda places a wreath outside the Buninyong Cemetery.

(Lower) Grade Six students from the Buninyong Primary School are shown looking at the range of wreaths later placed at the Cenotaph. (L to R) Emilia, Spencer, Sam, Zoe and Ryley.



New dentist is already a local

A few objections hit the Council table when the word got out about two years ago that a dental practice was planned for a residential property in Warrenheip Street opposite Royal Park.

But after Council gave approval for the project, and the tasteful and non-commercial nature of the renovations to the house became apparent, public opinion quickly swung to one of support for one of the few professional services not available in the village. An unobtrusive off street car park also allayed fears of traffic bottling up the streetscape in the area.

Local links

Experienced dentist, **Jaci Bolton**, is the owner and the initial practitioner. Jaci graduated with a B DSc from the University of Melbourne in 2002. She also holds a B Sc degree from the University of Melbourne, and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Dental Studies from Kings College, London. She has worked in dental clinics in Ballarat, Portland and, for ten years, in Hobart.

Living with her husband **Nathan Oldaker** in the Buninyong district since 2016, Jaci said that opening the dental practice here had been on her career agenda for at least four years. "With a pharmacy, medical centre, physiotherapy and other health practitioners here, I hope that our new clinic will now complete the range of medical services available to Buninyong and district residents," she said.

Jaci has long-term links to the Buninyong district. Her parents built one of the first houses in Mt Clear in the 1970s, and she



attended the Mt Clear kindergarten and primary school, and then St Martin's in the Pines College nearby.

Nathan's mother also has close local ties having worked in the old Shire Offices in Buninyong for many years.

Open

The dental practice, known as *Your Local Dentist*, will open for business at 1106 Warrenheip Street in early December and is now accepting new patients.

As the practice grows, Jaci plans to engage one other dentist and also an oral hygienist. A full range of dental services and treatments is available for all ages.

Equipped with all modern dental technology and treatment facilities, (including special lighting and air filtering equipment) the charmingly renovated grey and white weatherboard cottage has reception, waiting and two treatment rooms all designed to bring a quiet and homely feel to a visit to the dentist. The tasteful interior decoration and layout certainly have achieved this.

"We think that we have created a caring and friendly environment here. The way we have designed the house aligns with our core values and Well-Building Standards. We believe that it will result in relaxed, happier and healthier staff and patients," Jaci said.

Phone 7023 1888 for more information or to make appointments at the new clinic or check the website: www.yourlocaldentist.net.au.



Much interest in art classes

Over a weekend in mid-October, the village was awash with talented creative art teachers and many class members and students eager to learn about one of the fifteen or so skills that were being worked on across central-town venues.

Several halls in the town were in use along with venues as diverse as the Red Door Pizzeria, the Community House, historic Netherby, and the Da Capo Music School in Warrenheip Street.

Activities spanned classes involving water colour, charcoal and pastel art works, sculpture in paper and clay, mosaics, linoprinting, natural fibres, copper jewellery making, crochet and movement art.

Event organiser **Lisa Cressey** said that while class sizes had to comply with COVID regulations and restrictions, more than 268 registrations were made for the sessions which ran across two days.

“Given the social problems created by the pandemic, we were thrilled to have so many quality artists and so many interested enrolees,” she said.

The influx of visiting teachers and students also gave a boost to lunch venues in the town.

Above: Renowned water colour artist Jon Lam gives some advice to Ellen Waters at Da Capo studio in Warrenheip Street.

Centre: Teacher Emily van der Molen (standing) led a session on Flower Power in the Conference room at the Community House.

Lower: It was all heads down at a session on embroidery with teacher Melinda Muscat (striped top) in the small meeting room at the Community House





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Little Aths is back

The Buninyong Little Athletics club is excited to be back for another season of fun, family and fitness. After the last two years of interrupted sporting events, the club is very keen to get back out on the field, for running, jumping, throwing, hurdling and catching up with friends.

Catering to ages 5- 16, members across the board have a variety of options. Under 8 member **Harry** likes the throwing events, while **Ava**, one of the senior athletes, says that she loves going for the fun and to meet her friends. "Oh, and also for the sport," she added.

Helpers

The club has an incredibly hard-working committee and team of parents who assist the athletes from week to week. The Registrar, **Alicia**, believes that Little Athletics provides a great opportunity for both the children and the parents to be active within the community.

"We meet a lot of new people with one thing in common – wanting a fun sporting opportunity for their kids," she says.

Parents have an opportunity to learn new things too. The OnTrack coaching program has been designed for parents to coach their kids. This season it's being used on a

weekly basis. Parents are finding it to be a valuable resource.

Alongside the support from the volunteer parents, the club has benefitted greatly from the community's support. "The club is very fortunate to have the support of Ballarat Council, and the support of local businesses – *Maggie and Kate*, *The Red Door Pizzeria* and *Dynamite Cycles* – who supply Awards," club President **Gabby Allen** says.

Balance

Gabby believes that the club has found the right balance for the young athletes. "We focus on effort, good sportsmanship and individual improvements," she says. "While only one athlete might win a race, we also recognise PBs, and can see when kids are putting in 100 per cent. Celebrating these moments with the kids make the nights worthwhile."

While the season has started it's not too late to register. Go to lavic.com.au/membership/ or email buninyong@lavic.com.au for more details.

Training is on Wednesdays 4.30pm – 5.30pm with competition on Fridays 4.45pm – 7pm. Both sessions are on the oval behind the Tennis Club, 208 Forest Street, Buninyong.

Willow, Ruby, Patrick and Billy sprint to the finish



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COMMUNITY BARBECUE

The Buninyong Business Network invites all residents to this free event in the Town Hall forecourt on

TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER

from 5.30pm

Town Hall Pop Up shop will be open

Busy buzz at new bike cafe

When *The News* popped into *Dynamite Cycles & Café* (formerly the *Pig & Goose*) a few weeks ago to see how the new venture was going, the place was buzzing with a group of passing cyclists, seasoned coffee drinkers, and a few others curious to see what the renovated store was like.

Young couple **Trent** and **Cass Johnston**, who opened *Trialsbikes*, their first Buninyong business in 2011, have undertaken a major remake of the building – and it is impressive.

Completed

The renovations over the three rooms have been completed. Now there are large display areas for cycles of all shapes, sizes and price tags, as well as dedicated inside and outside areas for food, tea and coffee. But, what most impressed, was the enthusiasm, energy and forward thinking for its place in the future of Buninyong.

Cass is a local, while Trent is a country boy from NSW and has been here for ten years. They have big plans to encourage cycling groups to come here to ‘talk

bikes’, drink coffee and contribute to the benefit of the whole area.

Trent and Cass also intend to encourage more locals to ride, and Trent thinks that electric-powered bikes are the way of the future (See *The News*, October 2021). The rider will still have to pedal and use gears but the experience is better.

While heavy to lift off the ground they are not heavy to pedal along, and they will come down in price as they become more popular and lighter in weight. The duo at the *Dynamite* store even have some demo electric models for people to try out.

Cycling HQ

Apart from being the venue for the Australia Road Racing Championships, Buninyong is lucky to have an excellent, centrally-located skate/cycle park on Forest Street with ramps and jumps and other challenges for youngsters.

After initial funding from the City of Ballarat and the local community bank, there are now hopes that it can be upgraded.

As Trent said, many of the Buninyong youngsters are avid bike riders, and it gives the kids somewhere to go and ride without pestering the grownups and riding on the footpaths.

Bike riding teaches them balance, responsibility, social behaviour, to share information, make friends and to ride in groups. And many of the young ones, just off the school bus, wave to Trent as they trudge past on their way home.

– Cassandra Carland



IN THE NOVEMBER edition we confidently predicted that **Ray Sullivan's** BCA bowling record of 10/12 would still be intact at the end of the season. But, in the very first round of district cricket, Darley's Pakistani import fast bowler **Madushanka Ekanayaka** recorded 9/15 when crashing Brown Hill out for just 28 runs.

RSL FOLK WERE delighted with the support given to their 2021 Remembrance Day Red Poppy sale outside of Foodworks. Over \$3000 was raised for welfare projects. They are not so happy, however, with the miserable souls responsible for stealing mature plants from the gardens at RSL Park.

BACK AGAIN. Long-serving local police Sergeant **Peter Anderson** is back at the helm at the local station after a long period of illness. Sgt **Joel Dash**, who has been in charge here over recent months, has returned to duties at Ballarat HQ.

A SPATE OF TYRE slashing has been reported by owners of at least six vehicles in the Gong area recently. One car had all four tyres slashed. Police are investigating.

FINALLY A DECISION has been made on the future of the clubhouse at the golf club. At the recent AGM, members voted to approve a major makeover to the lower level, while agreeing to a long-term lease of the upper level to a health care practice.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS and 75 editions of *The News*, the February 2022 edition will be the final one put together by **Barry Fitzgerald** assisted by wife **Gayle Adams**. They advised key community groups on 14 November of their decision to finish in the voluntary and time-demanding role early in 2022.

The first edition of the new-look *News* appeared in February 2015.



Cass Johnston hard at work with staff member Corey Versteegen.

Just three out of thirteen still around NEW FACES OF BUSINESS

While the coming Warrenheip Street upgrade in early 2022 may change the scenery a little, in a village like Buninyong things along the main streets seem to drift along with relatively little change.

But a photograph taken by *The Courier* in October 2014 of a group of local business people, then planning to form a traders association – the Buninyong Retail Group – suggests that businesses and faces certainly have turned over across the past seven years.

Of the thirteen business owners or operators shown in the photograph (together with a political candidate and a local Councillor, both also no longer in public life), ten of the people and most of the businesses have disappeared, moved on or changed.

From the left in the photograph

- **Gary Jones** is no longer with PRD Buninyong
- **Nicki Sing's** *Unique Garden Décor* has become the *Red Door Pizzeria*
- **Ron Delaland** and his *Buninyong Newsagency* are still going strong

- **Kerrie Lalor's** *Buninyong Beauty Therapy*. Kerrie has moved to NE Victoria
- **Phil Crosbie** has recently sold his interest in PRD Buninyong
- **Jess Donald** is long gone from the *Old Bluestone Café*
- **Randall Dreger** remains as the long-serving Manager at the Community Bank
- **Paul O'Beirne's** *Foundation Law* practice in the old Shire Offices is gone, although he still practises with a Ballarat law firm
- **Tracey Spencer's** *Lana Rose* store has become a health studio. It is now an on-line business.
- **Wendy Chalker's** quirky *Divine Vintage* shop is now selling fresh meat
- **Ashley Murphy's** *Buninyong Bakehouse* has been renovated and increased in size
- **Adam Hook** has gone, and the *Fig Leaf Cafe* has been refashioned into *Maggie & Kate*
- **Jennifer Pegler** has seen the *Sew Special* business move to Sebastopol



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Country store reborn Mabel says “we were blessed”... as does the community at Napoleons

Few people from this district would have visited or know much about Argentina. Likewise, for those living in that large country on the Atlantic seaboard of South America, Australia is a great unknown land some 11,600 km away.

But back in 1976, young couple **George**, now 71, and **Mabel Torres**, 68, took a huge, lifetime gamble in migrating from their home in Buenos Aires (population now 15 million) to Australia as they felt it would offer much greater future opportunities for their two children, **Letizia**, 4, and **Sebastian**, 1.

Ballarat

Landing in Melbourne, the family first lived in Mentone. But all of that changed in 2011 when their daughter moved her family to Ballarat to take advantage of the better educational opportunities available here.

Mabel missed her grandchildren so much that, at the invitation of Letizia (now, a Magistrate at the Ballarat Courts), she and

George also relocated to Ballarat. After looking for a business opportunity they stumbled upon the *Napoleons General Store*, then on the market in a badly run-down condition. They purchased it in 2012.

George, a motor mechanic back in Buenos Aires, then set about the massive task of carting away many truckloads of rubbish, and repairing and renovating the neglected shop front, surrounds, residence, and the spacious grounds at the rear.

“In our minds we could see where this place could be after a year or two of hard work and quite a bit of expenditure,” Mabel said.

Turn out

By 2014, the restoration project was well advanced and they invited locals from the Napoleons area to come along for a BBQ in the rear garden area. They were amazed when some 250 turned up and as Mabel said “everyone was just so nice to us. We now see all of our customers as our friends.”

She said that at first they were a little worried about how they would be accepted, being from a Spanish-speaking country on the other side of the world, but they now think that “it was a blessing that we came here to this wonderful community.” Likewise, locals contacted by *The News* think the world of their local storekeepers.

Huge range

The property and business now is a great credit to the hard work put in by the couple over the past nine years. The store is crammed with produce of every imaginable kind, attractively displayed and well-priced (including the pump price of petrol). Sales are booming (200 locally made cakes, 600 pastries and 600 sandwiches – using bread sourced from the *Buninyong Bakery* – are sold each week), and six locals are employed there.

When they took over the store there was no local post office or even a mail box. So they re-opened a community post office there. It is now handling some 300 parcels each day.

The living quarters are now almost completely refurbished, with polished floorboards, large picture windows, freshly decorated, and with beautifully landscaped rear gardens. The work is a testimony to George’s great trade skills.

If ever there was a classic Australian country “general store” this one at Napoleons is it! And the friendly staff and the wonderful couple running it are also rare gems.

Meredith Transit BUS DRIVER

This locally-owned and operated Bus Company is looking for a casual bus driver for charter and school bus runs 40 weeks of the year.

Enquiries and applications to Dale McIntyre on 0428 838 201 or meredithtransit@gmail.com

Seniors happy to meet again

Local senior citizens were particularly hard-hit by the long period of COVID lockdowns in this State. With many having lost partners or living alone, the weekly meetings of the Buninyong Senior Citizens Club were their social highlight of each week.

Club members were thrilled to again be able to meet after restrictions were eased in late-October. When *The News* visited recently, about twelve of the Club's membership of some thirty had turned up at the Buninyong Town Hall for a BYO lunch followed by an afternoon session of cards.

The Club meets every Tuesday at the Town Hall unless a special function is arranged at another venue.

Some members noted the passing of **Betty Bunting** who brought copies of *The News* to give out each month.

Members proudly pointed to the new AED recently installed in the kitchen of the Town Hall after grant funds were secured following an approach by Club President **John Clark** to local Federal MP **Catherine King**.

Mr Clark said that it was a high quality unit with voice instructions easily followed by any users. "The Town Hall is in used on many days during the week and having a readily-accessible unit there, not just for the senior citizens, is most important," he said.

The Executive members of the Senior Citizens Club were all present for the first post-lockdown get together – (L to R) Cheryl Thomas (Secretary), John Clark (President), Val Clark (Treasurer), and Phillip Edwards (Vice-President).

Happy to be back (at rear) Emma Martin and Val Lythgo. Front : Kathleen Linnie and Jan Winder.



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Hot wheels run in the family

Lal Lal's Leoncinis love their motor sport

Motor racing is a family affair for the Engels Leoncini family of Lal Lal. It all started when his father **Giunio** migrated from Castelfiorentino, near Florence in Italy in 1950 and settled in Queenscliff. Later he opened a milk bar in Point Lonsdale.

After working at Shell in Geelong, **Giunio** moved his young family inland and settled at Yendon in 1978. Racing motor bikes and rally cars soon became a keen interest, with fourteen-year-old son **Engels** navigating for his father initially before himself racing motor bikes in Motocross and Enduro.

Soon, Engels took on rally-driving on the dirt tracks of western Victoria, with older brother **David** and younger brother **Jonathon** all working to make their cars go faster. However, these days Jonathon prefers a slower pace as a horse farrier in Buninyong.

Lal Lal venture

After completing an apprenticeship with Geelong motor racing identity **Max McGinley**, Engels and his wife, **Karren**, moved to Lal Lal where they started an automotive workshop in 1987 and soon combined this with the milk bar next door. In addition, Engels joined a V8 Supercar team as their mechanic and raced at many circuits throughout Australia.



Engels Leoncini in the Lal Lal workshop with a photo of his Commodore when competing at the Phillip Island Circuit in 2018

More recently, the family combined as a team for a shot at fast-track bitumen racing with Engels and sons on the mechanics, with Karren and daughter **Rachael** in charge of the office and the all-important sponsorships.

With **James** and **Jason**, Engels re-built a Commodore from the ground up to comply with the 6-Cylinder Saloon Car regulations. These required all the key components – engine, suspension, gearbox, differential, computer and body shape - to be standardised across all thirty competing Holden SS and Falcon XR6 cars. The purpose was to bring the ability of the driver to the forefront.

Jason, drove the resultant Commodore in his first year in 2014 and came fourth overall – winning Rookie of the Year along the way. The next year the family had a go at the V8 Super Cars so prominent at Bathurst's Mt Panorama circuit where

they competed in Tier 2, while the Craig Lowndes of this elite motor sport were in the first Tier.

Two left

Jason subsequently decided that, with a young family and the high cost of putting fast cars on a bitumen track, he would 'pull the pin' and now works as a project coordinator for Mars in Ballarat. But Engels continues rally driving when COVID permits, as does James who now lives in Yendon.

And the sport's dangers? Engels said you put that to the back of your mind because when you are behind the wheel and going fast it must be 100 per cent concentration and commitment – if you lose concentration for even a second or two you can lose it ... It's the same on the open road!

– Russell Luckock

Merry Christmas, always

Some things will be different this Christmas, but there is always something to be grateful for.

No matter what your Christmas looks like this year, make it merry.

From Randall and the team at Community Bank Buninyong.

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The Eagle Hotel: now for the next photo



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After 63 years Napoleons Hall still centre of local life

Five get service awards

At a public meeting held at Napoleons on 28 August 1953 it was decided to build and manage a new local hall. After a period of fund raising and a government grant of one thousand guineas the Napoleons and District Memorial Hall was officially opened on 21 February, 1958 at a cost of three thousand five hundred pounds.

The Napoleons Hall has continued to be a popular social venue in the Napoleons district for over sixty years. For decades, regular functions held included the Annual Hall Committee Ball, the Napoleons Tennis Club Dinner Dance and the fortnightly Friday night dance. The tennis club used the hall on a weekly basis for afternoon tea and for social functions.

Extension

In 1983 it was decided to build a clubroom as an extension of the hall. This was opened in July 1984. The Napoleons Hall has continued to be a popular social venue in the district since the foresight of the local residents in the 1950s made it possible

Since its inception there have been few changes in the office-bearers, indicating the dedication, loyalty and



Shown following the presentations of the awards are (L to R) – Terry Bedggood, Robert Thornton, Cr Helena Kirby, Geraldine Frantz, Cr Ian Getsom, Les George, Kevin McManus.

willingness of local residents to serve on the committee. In the role of President there has been Cr **J Lightfoot** 1953-1957, Mr **J McManus** 1957-1978, and Mr **K McManus** 1978-present, and as Secretary/Treasurer – Mr **J Phelan** 1953-55, Miss **A Martin** 1955-75, Mr **D Fischer** 1975-76, Mrs **P Michell** 1976-80, and Mrs **G Frantz** from 1980 to the present time.

Earlier this year five members of the Napoleons and District Memorial Hall Committee were nominated for Recognition Awards with the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP).

A ceremony was held at the hall on 9 November to formally acknowledge and present these Awards. Shire of Golden Plains Mayor, Cr **Helena Kirby** and Deputy Mayor Ian **Getsom** presented the awards to the five member who have all been involved in some way at the hall since they were children or young adults.

Receiving the DELWP awards were **Kevin McManus** who has been involved for 43 years, **Terry Bedggood**, 46 years, **Robert Thornton**, 40 years, **Geraldine Frantz**, 41 years, and **Leslie George** for his 37 years of service.

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Bank Christmas Giving Tree

For the sixth year in a row the Buninyong Community bank is again assisting the Salvation Army to collect food and gifts as part of its Christmas Appeal which aims to provide cheer to needy district families at Christmas time.

Non-perishable items, gift cards, Christmas items or food treats for children or the elderly would be welcomed.

Items may be left under the Giving Tree at the bank up to 15 December when they will be collected by the Salvation Army.



Co-op open again

The Buninyong Community Collective celebrated its third birthday on 6 November. Formed in 2018, the volunteer-based Collective provides the local community with quality dry foods and pantry staples.

They focus on healthy local produce in manageable quantities, resulting in less food waste, less packaging waste and less food miles. The not-for-profit group purchases bulk goods at wholesale cost so members are able to access quality organic, bio-dynamic and local produce at affordable prices.

Prior to COVID-19 the Collective was a thriving social space that built community connections and gave members a place to meet and chat. During the ongoing lockdowns the Collective had to close its doors, but the loyal volunteers continued working behind the scenes, adapting to a

'click and collect' style service and providing contact-free delivery if needed.

However, the doors are once again open and the volunteers are eager to welcome new and returning members back into the store.

The Collective is open every Thursday between 9:30am – 11am in the Anglican Church Hall, 405 Scott Street, Buninyong. Membership is only \$20 per year. For more information visit buninyongcommunitycollective.org.au

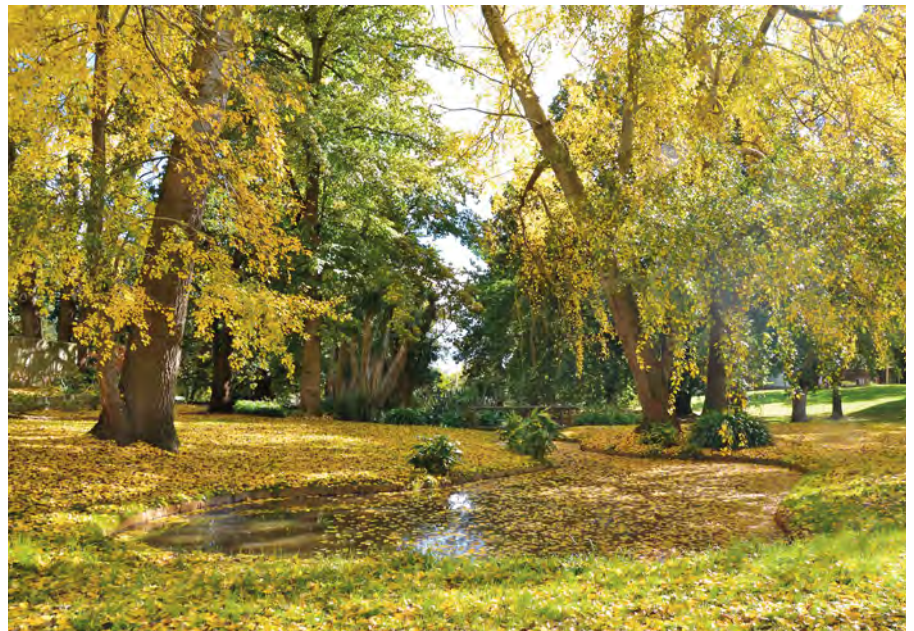
Botanic Gardens Masterplan

In July 2021, Council asked for feedback on how local residents use and value the Buninyong Botanic Gardens and the Gong.

Council officers have now taken this and other information to create a *Draft Masterplan*. The draft is ready to be released and they would like to know what community members think of it.

Prior to the next 'Open House' in Buninyong on 15 December, 2021 a draft of the *Gardens Masterplan* will be released on Council's *MySay* page and direct email to the project's mailing list. Community engagement responses will be accepted until 28 January, 2022.

Have your say through a submission to the *MySay* page, by mailing citydesign@ballarat.vic.gov.au, and/or by attending the informal drop in session on Thursday, 15 December, 2021 from 4:00pm – 6:30pm at the Buninyong Town Hall.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Action needed on old CFA site

I read with alarm the editorial column (*Unclear future of former CFA site*) in the October edition of *The News* about the soon-to-be abandoned old fire brigade site in Learmonth Street.

It seems Council is not interested in acquiring the property for community use, and local MP Michaela Settle saying that the site will be auctioned off, adds further worry to what will happen at this prime and historic downtown community location.

While some I have spoken to dismissed *The News'* concern that it might be an attractive site for a takeaway food business with deep pockets, or for a well-heeled developer with an eye to building an apartment block there, if this property goes to public auction, these possibilities will become very real ones.

The local community association and historical group should be taking on this matter as an urgent and high priority issue and fighting to keep the site in community hands.

– **Anxious resident
Buninyong**

A story of hope, determination and triumph of the local Lion's Club newest member

Brazzaville to Buninyong

After years separated from his wife, Faustin Epeabaka is now enjoying the peace of living in the quiet village of Buninyong following his arrival here in early 2020.

Faustin returned to Australia in March 2020 after seventeen years away. He boarded an Australia-bound flight from Brazzaville, Congo, to Australia just 24 hours before the borders there were closed, and arrived in Melbourne just 40 minutes prior to Australian borders being shut in the face of the worldwide COVID outbreaks.

Law studies

Faustin's amazing story can be traced back to 1985 when, as a 20 year old, he won a Congo Government scholarship to study Law at Bucharest University in Romania. He completed a five-year Masters degree in International Law.

He later moved to Lyon, France where he began PhD studies at Jean Moulin University. While completing an MBA in Administrative Law, he was unable to complete the PhD due to the outbreak of civil war in Brazzaville, Congo.



Fearing being recalled to Congo, he instead fled to Australia, arriving in Melbourne in April 1996 where he then sought refugee status. The timing was unfortunate given the tightened circumstances surrounding refugees in Australia at the time.

Battle for peace

Hoping to find a safe haven away from the civil war in his country, Faustin instead found himself caught within the legalities of the Australian immigration system. During this time the war worsened and he sadly lost beloved family members. Even so, he was not granted asylum.

He found wonderful supporters in the Uniting Church at Seddon. He enjoyed the embrace of a wonderful community even though his migrant status looked grim given the many rejections he received.

The Federal Court's final dismissal of his case in 2001 triggered the cessation of his medical benefits, and stopped study and full-time work options. Further, he had to report weekly to authorities.

In 2003, by then married to long-term partner **Gillian**, (Dr Gillian Schroeter, a lecturer at the ACU, and a Buninyong resident) he decided he would have to leave Australia to have any kind of humane life. Faustin arranged with Compliance Services, Australian Immigration to be able to leave Australia of his own volition.



Above: Faustin relaxes in a Buninyong park. (Opposite) Being inducted as a Lion by District Governor Harry Brindley.

Yet, when he arrived at the airport to leave, he was stopped by airport officials claiming he could not fly to Brazzaville, Congo as his visa was not valid for travel and furthermore the country was in a red (civil war) zone. He eventually convinced airport officials that he was within his rights to leave freely from Australia.

Work

For the next fifteen years, Faustin was unable to leave Congo. With his high-level legal qualifications, he took on a long-term role working with the Congolese government as a Tax Investigator.

In July 2019 his wife, Gillian travelled to Congo where the couple renewed their wedding vows at the Saint Jean Baptiste Church, Brazzaville. The couple then began the process of bringing Faustin back to Australia.



After Gillian applied for two visitor visas that were not approved, the two met again in Dubai later in 2019. Finally, after being informed that there were still considerable 'old' court costs stopping Faustin's return, the couple began paying these costs back to the Australian Government. This finally enabled him to return to Australia in 2020 on a Partner Visa.

Faustin began doing some sessional work as a Tutor at a university in Melbourne, working in Diversity. Currently he is

seeking professional work in the Ballarat community.

After undertaking volunteer work during this year at the Buninyong Mt. Helen Lions Club bookshop, Faustin expressed great interest in the Club as a way to meet new friends and be able to help others in his new community. He was later sponsored by local Lions Club member **Cathy Maguire** to become a club member, and was inducted into the Club in October.

Ernie Neale's Monthly RAINFALL REPORT

Storms, wind and very wet

With 97.4mm of rain, October was not only the second wettest month this year (after January) but also the wettest October in five years.

It opened with substantial rain moving down the east coast and closed with destruction when winds gusting to 100kph flattened ancient trees and cut electricity from the Grampians to the Dandenongs as well as delivering 21.1mm of rain.

Somewhere in the middle of the closing turmoil we reached our recent annual total of 690.3mm. At the end of the month our progressive total was 703.3mm and the average for October had been nudged to 61.0mm.

Broken trees are still being cleared away and some parts of forested Victoria remain without electricity. With BOM still predicting greater than median rainfall for November and December, 2021 may well yet end up being one of the really wet ones.

OCTOBER 2021			
Date	Rain	Date	Rain
1-2	9.0	14-16	34.8
4-5	14.0	23-24	15.4
12	0.7	29	21.1
Total		97.4mm	
Average		61.0mm	

LOCAL EVENTS ON AND OFF

Changes to several local events have recently been notified to *The News*.

- For logistical reasons associated with COVID regulations the Buninyong Mt Helen Lions Club **Christmas Carols** have again had to be cancelled.
- The **Community BBQ** arranged and funded by the Buninyong Business Network will again be held at the forecourt in front of the Town Hall

on Tuesday 7 December from 5.00-7.00pm. The Town Hall Pop-Up shop at the Town Hall will be open.

- The annual **Australian Road Cycling Championships** are on again in 2022 with the Time Trials at Federation University Campus on 12/13 January, and the two busy days in Buninyong township and over Mt Buninyong being on Saturday 15 January and Sunday 16 January.

Catherine KING MP

Federal Member for Ballarat

03 5338 8123

Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au

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www.catherineking.com.au | Standing up for our Community!

Authorised by Catherine King, Australian Labor Party, 5/9 Sydney Avenue Barton ACT.

Historical Society Project TALES OF COVID

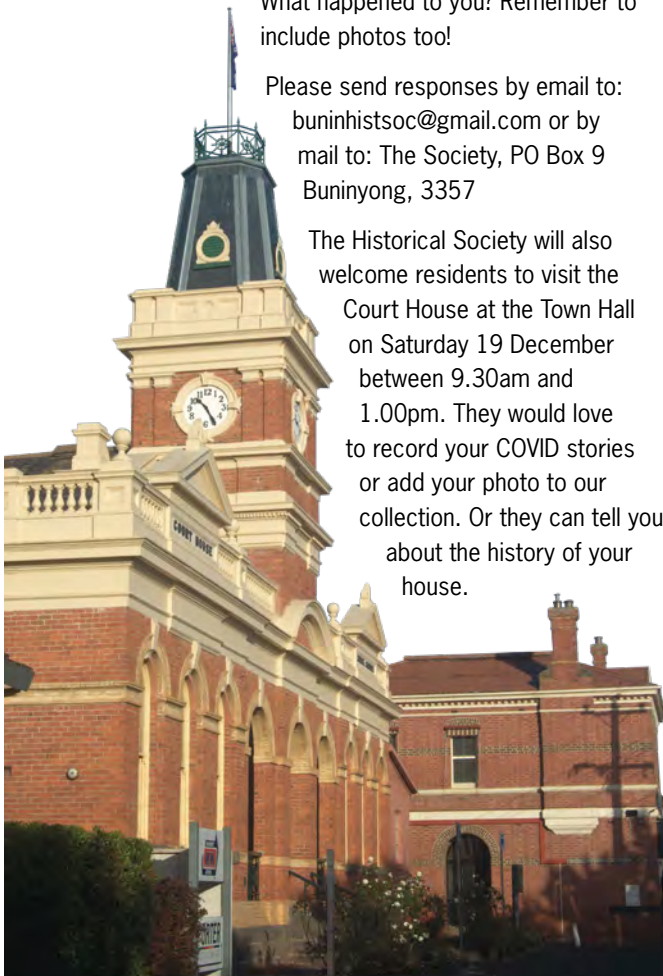
The Buninyong and District Historical Society is coordinating a project which invites members of Buninyong and district to record how the COVID pandemic affected them. Responses will be kept for the information of future generations.

As vaccination targets are reached and people learn to live with COVID it is important that they record what happened to us before we forget. For example, many enjoyed getting to know the community through regular walks. Others improved or gained sewing skills making masks or renewed their interest in cooking.

What happened to you? Remember to include photos too!

Please send responses by email to: buninhistsoc@gmail.com or by mail to: The Society, PO Box 9 Buninyong, 3357

The Historical Society will also welcome residents to visit the Court House at the Town Hall on Saturday 19 December between 9.30am and 1.00pm. They would love to record your COVID stories or add your photo to our collection. Or they can tell you about the history of your house.



POLICE BEAT

AN EAGLE-EYED Mount Buninyong resident foiled an attempted diesel theft from a tractor in the early hours of 2 October. At approximately 2am, residents in Yendon No 2 Road heard voices on their property and promptly called 000. An abandoned Nissan Navara utility was located by police a short distance from the victims' address, which was later identified as having been stolen from Melbourne.

Several items of interest were seized from the utility including a substance believed to be methamphetamine. The Ballarat CIU is investigating several avenues of enquiry. If any member of the community has any information that could assist Police, please call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

A 47-YEAR-OLD Buninyong resident has been remanded into custody after an incident outside the Buninyong Police Station on 5 October. It's alleged the man attended the Buninyong Police Station in Scott Street Buninyong after making numerous menacing telephone calls over several days to Police, threatening to attend and burn down the building. The male was confronted at approximately 7pm by police at the front of the station where he allegedly continued making threats and subsequently resisted arrest before assaulting two Police Officers. The man was charged with numerous offences and later remanded in custody where he is set to appear at the Ballarat Magistrates Court in late November.

A SEARCH WARRANT was executed at a residential address in Mount Helen on 7 October by specialist detectives. A 53-year-old Mount Helen man was home at the time. Police located and seized several imitation firearms, tasers and cartridge ammunition. The man was later interviewed for a range of offences, before being released pending a summons to attend Court at a later date.

IF ANY MEMBER of the community has information that could assist Police in solving a crime, please call the Buninyong Police Station or Crime Stoppers anonymously on 1800 333 000. "If you see something, say something".



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Serving our community



Buninyong Lawn Bowls Club's 'Picture Perfect' setting.

ON THE GREENS Bowlers raring to go

Buninyong Bowlers picked the right day to set themselves up for a Covid delayed 2021-2022 lawn bowls season. The mid-week bowlers took advantage of some great weather and a well-prepared green to finally get in some match practice.

The setting was a picture. This little corner of Buninyong at the south-west corner of Buninyong's Botanic Gardens is "postcard perfect". It is widely regarded amongst local lawn bowlers and visitors as the

best setting of any sporting locality in the district if not the State.

Team effort

Buninyong's Green Director **Brian Wilcock** was smiling. Brian, along with greenkeeper **Scott Roberts** and the team of volunteers have put in a lot of hours to prepare the green only to be frequently thwarted by COVID rules and the weather. The green looked good and it played as good as it looked.

Eight-time Club champion Brian was drawn against fellow mid-week skipper **Wayne Morgan** with the latter managing to hold on for a six-shot win. Former popular president, Wayne has recently taken on the position of secretary of the newly formed Ballarat Highlands Lawn Bowls Association. This Association was formed as part of a State-wide restructure with an amalgamation of the Ballarat and the Central Highlands associations. Teams within the Ballarat area will remain the same.

Four fewer

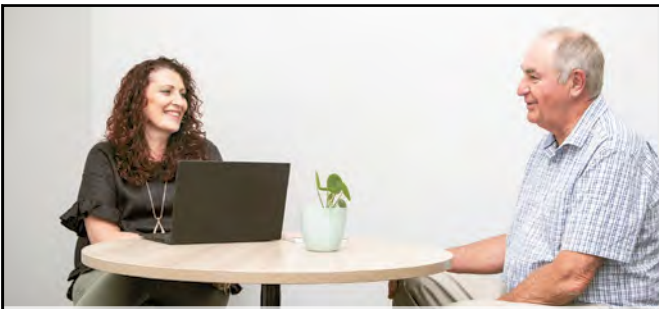
Bowlers are looking forward to the season after a tough 2021. COVID lockdowns and rules have caused the season to be shortened by four rounds. However there will be no promotion or relegation at the end of the season. Everyone is keen to finally get their competition underway. All matches will be 21 ends and will be played without a break. The mid-week competition has been moved from Monday to Tuesday.

One downside of these COVID-induced restrictions is that Buninyong's legendary afternoon teas will be on hold again this season.

After an ordinary season on the greens last season the Club is looking forward to an improvement in 2021-2022. The addition of several new players and the return of some previous top division players augers well for the Club this season.

The Buninyong Lawn Bowls Club is nearing an important milestone in its history. Established in 1873 the club is one of the oldest in the region and plans are already being discussed for the 150th birthday celebration.

– Ray Sullivan



Join our Board

Buninyong & District Financial Services Limited is a franchisee of Bendigo Bank and operates the locally owned Community Bank Buninyong.

Expressions of interest are now being accepted for the voluntary position of Director.

We are specifically looking for skills and experience in the areas of governance, strategic planning, risk management, finance, HR and marketing.

As a Director you will be motivated, well organised, self-directed and community orientated. You'll support and drive the company's strategic direction, goals and objectives to have a real say in the future direction of the branch and our community.

For more information call Joanne Innes on 0418 518 200. To apply before 19 December 2021 visit communitygrowshere.com.au/careers

Buninyong & District Financial Services Limited

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