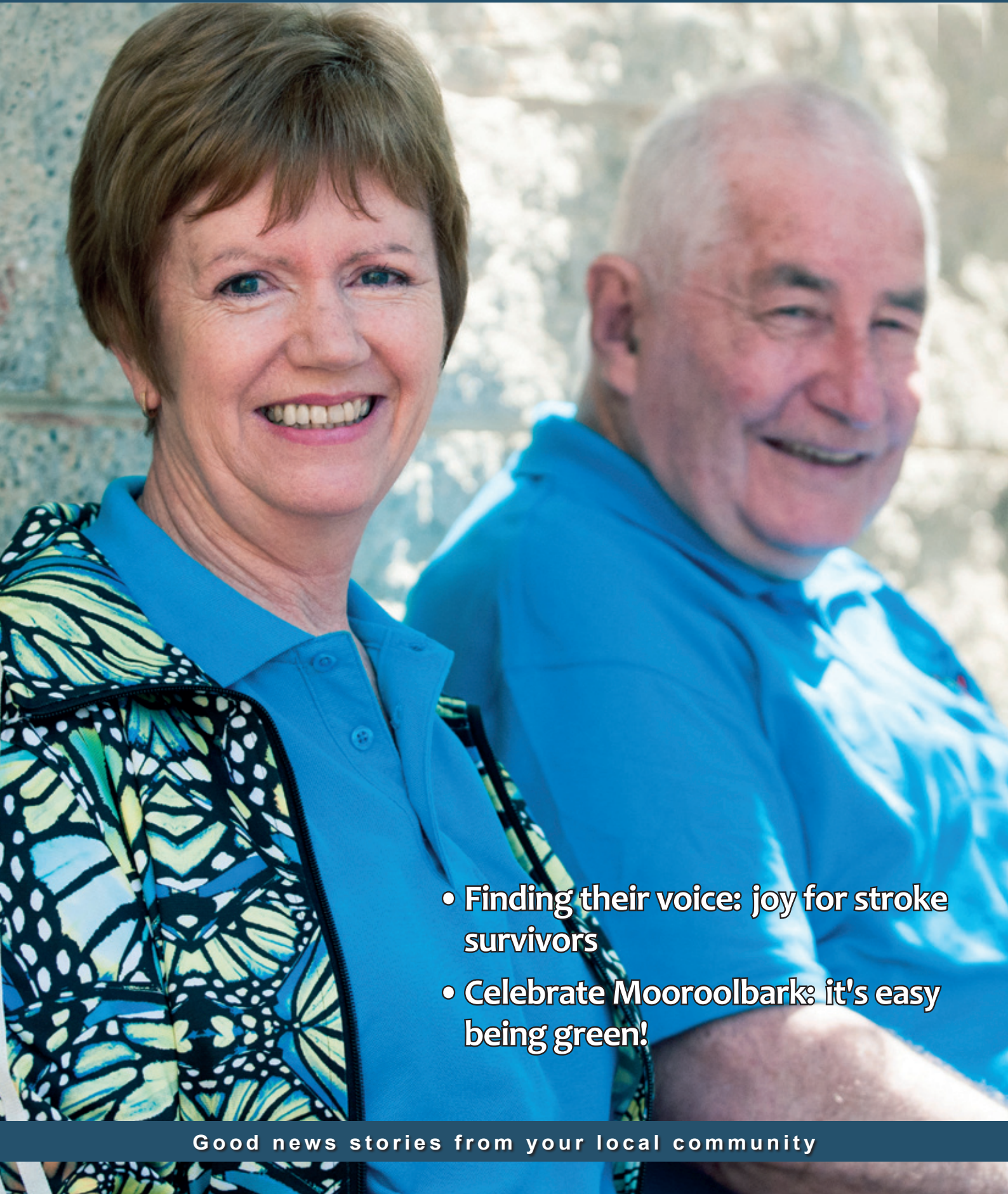


LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

NO. 58 MARCH 2017



- **Finding their voice: joy for stroke survivors**
- **Celebrate Mooroolbark: it's easy being green!**

Good news stories from your local community

Staffords' Hermitage

■ Neil Mitchell and Randall Bouchier

Imagine yourself as Val and John “Staff” Stafford, comfortably settled in Camberwell where they had raised their family, living in a well-appointed and conveniently situated house close to shops, train and Camberwell Grammar School, where John taught.

It sounds ideal—but a wonderful discovery led the Staffords away from that life to enjoy restoring and living on a heritage-listed estate, in what they describe as the best years of their lives prior to retiring to Mooroolbark in 1998.

The couple’s son and daughter-in-law had seen a property called “the Hermitage” in

mining engineer, had deposited money in a trust fund for each of the girls to access when they turned fifty. Val was now able to claim her share of the money.

“We made an offer, and the then-owners of the Hermitage said, ‘It’s yours,’” said Val. At that point, John hadn’t even seen it. He said, “I told her, it’s not my money—if you want to waste it, go right ahead.”

Val recalled how nervous she was when she took John to the property for the first time. “I knew he was looking at it through the same eyes that I had done. We went through it, down to the

1894, and the resort was officially opened for business in March 1895, with a celebratory week-end gathering of the Royal Geographical Society with Baron Ferdinand von Mueller in the chair.”

“It consisted of a number of buildings, most of which survive to this day, including the exceptional studio which had been a chapel dating back to gold rush days and which Lindt had bought and converted into a photographic studio in the grounds of his house in Hawthorn. Dismantled and brought to the Hermitage in three sections, on bullock wagons, it was reassembled



The Hermitage estate as photographed by JW Lindt



JW Lindt in the Hermitage garden

Narbethong and enthusiastically urged Val to visit the property, insisting it was “marvellous” and that she “had to buy it.” Despite having no money to spare, one morning Val drove up along the beautiful Black Spur to take a look at the property. She wasn’t impressed by what she first saw: “I was met by this old brown raggedy building and I looked at it and thought, ‘It couldn’t be this one. It couldn’t be!’” Val followed a little goat that had come out to meet her, right into the house and through several rooms until she ended up in the kitchen, where her son and his friends were. Val thought they were “mad” in their enthusiasm for the property. “There was a bit of veranda there, the rest had gone; you couldn’t get out of the lounge room—except across a couple of slats of wood—the forty-foot-long studio was just a mess. There was one half of one door left, all the rest had gone. The bathroom was just mess.”

However, when Val had looked at the rest of the estate, she decided it was “enchanting.” She said, “By the time I’d finished, I thought it was wonderful! I couldn’t see all the things I’d seen in the beginning, and I went home and talked to Staff about it.”

Val described the property to her sister Joan, who encouraged her to buy it. When Val explained that on John’s salary, with six children, they couldn’t afford it, Joan surprised her with some information: their father, a Canadian

lake and right up past a huge tree on the mile-long hydrangea overgrown walking track, up to the spring that feeds the lake. I pointed out the tree, but there was no response. The spring area was gorgeous, but he said nothing.”

“So we came back. He still hadn’t said anything until we got to the tree. He looked at it, and he said, ‘Tree, you are ours!’ And that was it; he didn’t stop talking for the rest of the day.”

The Staffords bought the Hermitage in 1979, and moved there in 1987. After purchasing it, they became more familiar with the immense historic value of the estate. Often known as “Lindt’s Hermitage”, the property had been bought originally by Melbourne-based, world-renowned photographer John William Lindt. Born in Germany, J W Lindt had arrived in Australia in the early 1860s. He became renowned for the diversity of his photographic studies, which included landscapes and society portraits.¹ Along the way, Lindt won many international and local awards. After the closure of his Melbourne studio following the 1894 financial crash, Lindt retired to his acreage at Narbethong.

John Stafford contributed to an impressive 2013 publication, *Nar-be-thong: Historical notes with local recollections*, compiled by the Narbethong History Association. He wrote, “The first trees were felled on the site on 13 August

as the first complete building on the site.”

The Hermitage became a popular resort destination for Melburnians. Part of the experience for guests would include lectures from Lindt, accompanied by lantern slide presentations of some of his expeditions. Regular guests included soprano Dame Nellie Melba and botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (who is reputed to have designed some of the Hermitage garden).² Unfortunately, World War I brought a loss of business for Lindt, and, as John wrote, “Recovery



The tranquil lake

¹ adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lindt-john-william-4023

² adb.anu.edu.au/biography/melba-dame-nellie-7551

after the war was slow and Lindt was now an old man. At the height of the devastating bush fires in February 1926, J W Lindt passed away, perhaps uncertain that his beloved Hermitage would survive.”³

The years of Stafford ownership witnessed painstaking work in restoring the property to once again accommodate guests. Not only were there guests to care for, but the number of weddings and receptions increased, which placed demanding workloads on John and Val—with Val responsible for most of the cooking.

During their years at the Hermitage, the Staffords were visited by Joan Anderson, the daughter of Ellen Anderson who had bought the property in 1933 for Joan’s benefit. John explained, “Joan was the youngest of the Anderson daughters, all of whom were quite remarkable women. She was born in 1907 in Belfast, and was a boarder at MGGs (Melbourne Girls Grammar School) for seven years. She studied horticulture at Burnley... and had various gardening jobs in the suburbs before becoming head gardener at Nellie Melba’s Coombe Cottage, on the recommendation of one of Australia’s most influential landscape designers, Edna Walling. In 1928 she went to England to further her experience and returned to Melbourne in 1930. In July 1931, Joan visited the Hermitage with friends to find it in a sad state. She persuaded her mother to help her revive the place. While overseas she had experienced various youth hostels in Europe and this led to her opening one of the Hermitage buildings in 1933 as a shilling-a-night hostel.”

“Until she sold out in 1952, Joan reclaimed and maintained the spirit of Lindt’s Hermitage with severely limited means but with great ingenuity. She preserved the fading and vulnerable weatherboard main building by manufacturing her own dark brown paint and recommended adding ‘a couple of cow pats’ to give it long life.”

“When rotting stumps had to be replaced she boasted that a team of sturdy women, using a strong sapling felled for the purpose, could lever up the building to remove and replace a stump with great ease. Over the years she received great support from bushwalking clubs and Youth Hostels of Australia working parties. A group of friends, mostly associated with MGGs, were constant companions and volunteer labour.”

³ narbethong.org.au/ pp. 33-34



The Hermitage today

In the time between Joan’s management of the Hermitage and the Stafford purchase, the site had been bought by a Melbourne family and used as a “weekender”. Understandably, maintaining the property from a distance was well-nigh impossible.

The amount of restoration accomplished by the Staffords during their time of ownership was impressive, but by 1998 they could continue the huge workload no longer and retired to Mooroolbark. Photographs at the time of the sale of the Hermitage testify to their devoted restoration work.⁴

The Staffords’ move to Mooroolbark was no less inspired than their move to the Hermitage. While looking at possible places, “many of them real disasters”, Val noticed an advertisement for a residence on Mount View Parade, Mooroolbark. “Where the heavens is that?” enquired Staff. But after walking in the front door and glancing around, Val pointed her finger (in her gentle and customary manner) and ordered the real estate agent, “Don’t you dare sell this place to anyone else!”

⁴ realestateview.com.au/real-estate/161-maroon-dah-highway-narbethong-vic/property-details-sold-residential-733532/

What seemed to point to this being the place for the Staffords to live was the feel and spirit of the house, the views of many surrounding mature trees, along with a biblical quote from the Stafford’s much-loved book of Isaiah hanging near the front door:

*Even youths grow tired,
and young men will fall in exhaustion.*

*But those who trust in the Lord
will find new strength.*

They will soar high on eagle’s wings

They will run and not grow weary.

*They will walk and not faint.*⁵

Mooroolbark was also relatively close to the Black Spur and the Hermitage. And, as John said, “We discovered just what Mooroolbark had to offer, with the shops and the railway close by. It had everything you would want, and people are so friendly and welcoming.”

It did not take long for Val and John to connect with people. The past fifteen years has seen them heavily involved with people in a range of activities including the St Peter Julian Eymard Mooroolbark Parish, community support groups such as the St Vincent De Paul Society, the biography project with EACH (Eastern Area Community Health) and refugee support activities. And that’s without mentioning their commitment to being wise and loving parents, grandparents and great-grandparents to an ever-expanding family.

The spirit of ‘Hermitage’ (health, solace and hospitality) has travelled with them and is obvious to so many of their family and friends. We celebrate in sharing the courage, insight and gentle humour of Val and John, who have the ability to see “what is not there” and to do what needs to be done to create vibrant community.

⁵ Isaiah 40:30-31



celebrate mooroolbark

Saturday 25 March
2017

Red Earth Community Park, Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark



PHOTO: GREG CARRICK

It's Easy Being Green—and we're setting out to prove it! This year, Celebrate Mooroolbark is making a conscious effort to produce a more environmentally sustainable community festival. We're trying to use less energy and reduce waste—so to launch this aspect of our festival production we've taken on a green theme! New items in 2017 will include stalls with locally made items, sports demonstration areas, and a program of gardening, healthy eating and cooking demonstrations.

Discover how you too can take on a more sustainable approach in your life, by joining us at Celebrate Mooroolbark. As Mooroolbark's premier community festival, the event has recently become a major attraction on the Yarra Ranges calendar and involves a large number of schools, community groups and businesses from Mooroolbark and surrounds. It offers a low-cost family day out which caters for all ages.

You'll find us launching the event at 7:30 pm on Friday 24 March at the Mooroolbark Community Centre, with the newly branded Red Earth UnEarthed (formerly the talent quest). A program of amazing local talent—from singers to dancers and everything in between—is sure to entertain! Entry is \$5 at the door and includes a delicious supper, generously provided by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship. Red Earth UnEarthed is made possible thanks to the generosity of Lions Club of Mooroolbark, Mooroolbark Scouts and Mooroolbark Girl Guides.

The festival will continue on Saturday 25 March at 10 am with a wonderful and vibrant street parade put on by the local community. Watch the parade make its way from Station Street, down Brice Avenue and into the festival site at Red Earth Park. There you will find two

stages for live entertainment, roving performers, free activities, rides, demonstrations and more. A huge marketplace will include food and drinks; fundraisers and information stalls for local community groups, schools, and churches; crafts; recycled and upcycled goods; sustainability workshops; and more!

A wide range of fantastic local performers—including the 50-voice-strong Melbournaires Harmony Chorus—will be on the main stage right through to the closing of the festival at 4 pm.

Following its success in 2016, the Youth Stage will be back again with more incredible talent all day long. Bring a picnic blanket and settle in for some amazing free live music!

Inside the Mooroolbark Community Centre, festival-goers can make pottery, observe oil painters at work and recharge with music and refreshments in the Red Earth Gallery while kids enjoy craft activities. The auditorium will house giant jenga, and young children will also be kept busy on the Gymbaroo play equipment.

Come along dressed in your favourite recycled/upcycled vintage clothes and experience the wonderful community spirit of Mooroolbark.

For more information, follow us on Facebook or check out our website at www.celebratemooroolbark.com.

Celebrate Mooroolbark offers something for everyone in a fun-filled festival. Come for an hour or come for the whole day, but be warned—you may enjoy yourself too much!

Andrew Lang
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark



PHOTO: RUDA PHOTOGRAPHY

Carols in the Park

In December last year—despite some cold weather—the traditional Christmas carols evening at Hookey Park was, once again, a well-attended and very successful event. The Croydon Brass Band and the Melbourne Male Choir led the community singing, and six local primary schools contributed to the program with their special presentations.

The evening began with community singing of the national anthem led by the Melbourne Male Choir combined with Pembroke Primary School singers. Pembroke student Mark Rimando delighted the crowd by demonstrating how to communicate 'merry Christmas' in Auslan (Australian Sign Language).

Master of Ceremonies Neil Mitchell thanked the Mooroolbark Lions and Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship for their ongoing combined sponsorship of this community event. Lions President Peter Giddings



PHOTO: DOUG LEWIS

thanked Andrea Higgins for her special contribution in bringing the program together each year to continue this much-loved community tradition.

Doug Lewis

Stroke a Chord Choir: A Voice for Aphasia

In December of last year, my wife and I received a brochure advertising a Christmas carols concert to be presented at Federation Estate in Ringwood, by the Stroke a Chord Choir. It invited the community to “come along and witness the power and magic of song.” The brochure informed us that “Stroke a Chord is a choir of stroke sufferers who have aphasia—loss of speech and language after a stroke. Despite being unable to speak they can, however, sing.”

Intrigued by this concept, we decided to attend the event, which turned out to be a most moving and inspiring experience for us.

To see the joy and enthusiasm on the faces of the participants, who had suffered major and debilitating set-backs to their lives, was quite an emotional and uplifting experience. The very evident friendship and mutual support among the group was an absolute delight to witness and a strong testimony to the value of this activity as an aid along the pathway to rehabilitation.

At the concert we obtained a copy of a book entitled *Voices: The story of the Stroke a Chord choir*. The book is a collection of inspiring stories that detail the personal journey of various choir members as they face their new-found situation with courage, strength and determination.

In his foreword to the book, clinical neuropsychologist Dr Stuart Lee notes that in 2010 it was estimated that approximately 60,000 strokes occurred in Australia. He wrote:

“The Stroke a Chord Choir was created for stroke survivors experiencing language difficulties and was never intended to be a formal rehabilitation activity. Instead, it was an opportunity for interested persons to come together and establish friendships with like-minded people. What stemmed from Stroke a Chord, however, has been something that has positively enriched the lives of those who participated in it and has extended to their family members and to the broader community.

“Through working with people following brain injury I knew that many survivors find it hard to socialise due to their difficulty in communicating. This can mean that they miss out on important benefits that supportive friends can give for mental health recovery and general well-being. Those involved in establishing Stroke a Chord were interested to find out whether participating in such a group could help to promote social activity and improve mental health. As an audience member in the Choir’s first concert, in 2011, I believe this goal was achieved. I saw the



Anne, Robyn, and Janette



Annette and Inger

PHOTOS: JONASBERNIE

camaraderie between members congratulating each other after a solo or a particularly enjoyable song, and uniting together as a group. The primary motivator for establishing the choir was Wendy Lyons who witnessed fellow stroke survivors singing despite being barely able to speak.” The book and the choir website explain the history of the group and its benefits to those who have had a stroke:

“The Stroke a Chord Choir members are all stroke survivors who have had a left side brain stroke. They are paralysed on the right side of their bodies and cannot speak due to a condition known as ‘aphasia’. Aphasia is a loss of speech (and sometimes comprehension of language) when the language centre of the brain is damaged. However, they can sing as music and singing is processed more diffusely in the brain and predominantly in the right side of the brain (their undamaged side).”

In 2010, after stroke survivor Wendy Lyons noticed that those unable to speak after their stroke were still able to sing, the Stroke a Chord Choir was formed with the support of an initial partnership of Croydon Stroke Support Group, Maroondah City Council, and Yooralla. The choir, which is now in its sixth year, meets weekly—every Tuesday afternoon—to rehearse. Participants enjoy the opportunity to express themselves through song and to hear their voices once more. Belonging to the choir also gives members the chance to socialise with others who understand through their own experience what it is like to live with limited communication.

Wendy Lyons said, “The choir members all know exactly how devastating it is to have a stroke. We are all travelling the same path and can help each other along the way. We have experienced the frustration of trying to control our damaged bodies and of learning to overcome the difficulties we face. This joyous group of people gets on with life and have become my heroes. I

am so proud to be involved with such a group.”

Jack Mullholand, Metro Access Coordinator for Maroondah City Council, has played a significant role in establishing the choir. He said, “The Stroke a Chord Choir is an innovative community development project built on partnerships, which is making a huge difference in the lives of people who have experienced stroke.” He added, “Perhaps the most significant outcome is that this model of choir for aphasia survivors is spreading nationally—ensuring an incredible legacy.”

Yooralla speech pathologist Bronwen Jones has been deeply involved with the choir from the start and now holds the position of project manager and speech pathology consultant to the choir members. “The choir has been, and continues to be, a life-changing experience for me,” said Bronwen. “We often underestimate the power of vocalisation in communication—laughing, sighing, crying, exclaiming, humming. Most weeks someone in the group will report a personal success—singing, moving, speaking, the magnitude of which can only be appreciated by other members of the group. I learn something about courage, friendship and happiness every week.”

Doug Lewis

Our cover photo shows choir members Rhonda and Graham enjoying the sunshine.

The Australian Aphasia Association web page lists a range of useful resources designed to help people with aphasia, their carers and friends, and health professionals. Anyone wishing to obtain further information about the choir is invited to visit strokeachord.com or contact Bronwen Jones on 0411 079 701 or [facebook.com/strokeachord](https://www.facebook.com/strokeachord).



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Twenty Years of Snipping and Cutting

Barbara Austin

Employed at 9 am...

unemployed at 10 am...owner of a new shop at midday...

That—amazingly—is how Lee-Anne Thomson became the owner of her hair and beauty salon, Shapers. Twenty years on, she still owns Shapers but has moved from the original location to 64B Brice Avenue, which was an empty shop with better opportunities.

Living in Seville with her husband Scott and dog Larry, Lee-Anne travels each day to Mooroolbark and looks forward to opening up the salon and starting the day with people who over the years have become friends as well as customers.

Lee-Anne began her training as a hairdresser at Box Hill TAFE, doing a four-year apprenticeship (three years schooling and one year on a salon floor). She describes it as a hard trade to learn with long hours and dealing with the public, among other things.

When Lee-Anne had completed her training, she took a job in Heathmont, where she stayed for five and a half years before coming to Shapers in Mooroolbark. She was employed for eighteen months



PHOTO: BARBARA AUSTIN

before the eventful day when she became the owner.

Lee-Anne and Scott love high-altitude trekking and bushwalking and have indulged this hobby by visiting places such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Africa, India, Cambodia, Morocco, Vietnam and Thailand—countries which offer good package deals in mountain climbing. Recently they visited Ladakh, one of the most significant mountainous regions in India, and climbed to 6,150 metres.

For Lee-Anne, public holidays or long weekends are meant to be filled travelling to parts of Victoria where there are interesting bush walks or mountains to climb. Hearing

about Lee-Anne's travels and seeing some of her beautiful photos is always part of the pleasure of having your hair done at Shapers.

Some of Lee-Anne's other hobbies are cooking, photography—she has completed four courses—and any sporty exercise. Lee-Anne loves to talk and always has something of interest to say to clients by keeping abreast of the local news and sharing her experience of running a business, among other things.

Asked what advice she would give to those wanting to run their own business, Lee-Anne replied, "Work in a few different places and see how it's done. Learn from other people and learn from your mistakes. Don't be a quitter, and be prepared to put in one hundred percent." As an afterthought, she added, "It also helps to be good at your job and know what people want."

On 30 April, Lee-Anne will celebrate twenty years of 'cutting and snipping', and plans are already in the pipeline to make it a special day.

To make an appointment at Shapers Hair and Beauty, call 9727 0333 or drop into the salon in Brice Avenue.

In Good Hands



"It's not just about what we do here on our tables," said Dr Andrew Ziakas of Optimal Wellness Chiropractic in Mooroolbark. "It's about the lifestyle that we promote as well. We want our educational work to be transformational for people."

Led by chiropractor Dr Andrew Ziakas, the Optimal Wellness team provides chiropractic care, myotherapy services, remedial massage, and health and wellness advice. The family-owned business has been caring for locals since 2004 and sees clients from Mooroolbark, Croydon, Ringwood and the surrounding areas. The team's chiropractor, two myotherapists, and chiropractic assistants are committed to helping people of all ages live happier and

healthier lives. It is obvious that the members of the closely-knit team love their work and clients.

"We're not your typical 'sterile' clinic environment," said Andrew. "Our patients and clients are very much our friends. It's a very friendly atmosphere."

The Optimal Wellness team has a passion for educating and equipping people to lead full and healthy lives. Every few weeks the clinic runs free workshops for its clients and the community. The workshops cover topics such as nutrition, sleeping habits and stress management, and focus on practical advice for improving these aspects of life.

For Andrew, wellness is all about balance: how good eating, good movement, good sleep, and good emotional health combine so that the body can capably adapt to changing environments. "My emphasis within the clinic has a lot to do with health, wellness and lifestyle."

A recent development at the clinic is the incorporation of new scanning technology which analyses stress and strain on the nervous system. The CORE Score technology allows the team to assess how daily stress may be affecting clients' bodies and health,

and provide a tailored treatment plan. "It's changed the way we practice and has allowed us to help a lot more people," said Andrew.

Andrew shared his motivation for the job after 17 years of practice: "For me, it's knowing I'm making an impact in people's lives in a positive manner. It's not necessarily getting people out of pain, but what getting people out of pain means to them: for people to be able to play golf on the weekends, or for people to be able to pick up their grandchildren again."



PHOTOS: CATTI LIA MARR PHOTOGRAPHY

Chiropractor Dr Andrew Ziakas

Carissa Sianidis

You can find Optimal Wellness at 22 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark, or contact them on 9726 0098. Details about the clinic's services and free information nights are on the website: optimalwellnesschiro.com.au.



The team at Optimal Wellness



A Walk Through Bethlehem

There was a buzz of excitement in the air on four balmy nights last December, as thousands of cars wound their way up Hull and Swansea Roads, along quiet tree-lined Edinburgh Road and onto the Edinburgh College campus for a powerful theatrical depiction of an important event in ancient Israel.

Road to Bethlehem, a free event presented by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and supported by a number of local sponsors, is a live production bringing the story of the birth of Jesus to the community. Based on the biblical story of Christ's birth in Matthew and Luke, the event began in Nunawading in 1995 and has since been performed in locations across Australia and New Zealand, with Nunawading being the Victorian location since its inception. 2016 was the first year the production took place at its new home at Edinburgh College, and the result was spectacular.

The Edinburgh College campus was a hive of activity as hundreds of families waited for their turn to see the production. Behind a gate, part of the college campus had been transformed into the world of ancient Bethlehem. Ticket-holders set off in groups for scheduled walking tours which led them through a series of scenarios illustrating the story that led up to the birth of Christ. The streets of Bethlehem were recreated with the help of elaborate sets, colourful costumes and even sheep, donkeys and camels. Tax collectors, Roman soldiers and shepherds mingled with the audience, contributing to the feeling that the crowd was travelling to Bethlehem to take part in

the census. While maintaining the integrity of the biblical story, the narrative was filled with humour and creativity, drawing appreciative laughs from the crowd. Children ran excitedly from each scene to the next, eager to claim their place in the front of the audience. The drama culminated in a heartwarming final scene that depicted the birth of Christ.

While many families with young children chose to attend the pre-dusk sessions, the after-dark tickets were very popular: it was after nightfall that the eye-catching sets and impressive lighting effects could be most appreciated.

Children enjoyed the free activities while awaiting their turn to take part in the hour-long tour: face-painting, balloons, craft activities, and a climbing wall. For the adults it was a chance to sit and unwind as the sun slowly set, enjoying the live music provided by Edinburgh College students. There were refreshments available from a variety of food and drink stalls, and local community members sold summer delights such as fresh berries, fruit smoothies and organic ice cream.

Over the course of four nights, more than 13,000 people walked the "road to Bethlehem". Donations, which allow the free event to continue being staged each year, were gratefully received. Also crucial to the success of the project was the participation of hundreds of volunteers of all ages—from babies playing the part of the infant Jesus, to technicians operating the complex behind-the-scenes arrangements of lighting, sound, and costumes. Edinburgh College students enjoyed their part in the fun:

providing music, participating in the production, acting as guides, helping with the children's activities, and serving food and drinks.

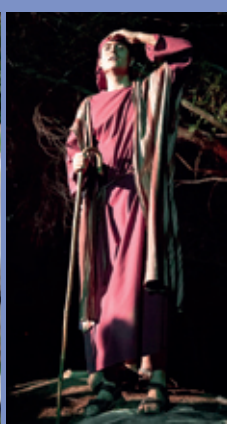
Having the event at Edinburgh College gave residents from suburbs such as Mooroolbark and Montrose the opportunity to see the production close to home, but it was also attended by people from all over Victoria, from Queensland and NSW, and even several visitors from overseas. The event will continue to be held at Edinburgh College in subsequent years, so if you missed out this year, mark your diary for 2017. Once released toward the end of November, the free tickets are always snapped up quickly, so keep an eye on the website: roadtobethlehem.org

Visitors were full of praise for the production. Many locals were there for the first time, while others had been regular attendees at the Nunawading site. For some, Road to Bethlehem was a childhood highlight that they are now sharing with their own children. Many commented that they enjoyed their first experience so much that they plan on making it a new tradition for their families. Jess, who described herself as not particularly religious, said the experience was "absolutely beautiful... I just felt so wonderfully inspired and welcomed by the night." Tarna described the night as "fabulous... funny, poignant and deeply engaging."

The gratitude and admiration of so many seem to be echoed by this comment from a visitor: "It is such an amazing and inspiring production. Thank you for spreading such joy and goodwill."

Janet Van Dijk

PHOTOS: JESSICA SYMES





The **D** Word

Discipline. It is not a word we hear much anymore. Are we even allowed to mention it? It seems that to many people it's a concept that's not 'politically correct' any more, and it doesn't seem to be a popular topic for today's parents.

Before we go any further, let's settle on an appropriate definition of what I mean by 'discipline'. To discipline a child is to encourage, guide, teach and inspire. I'm *not* talking about harsh punishment, unkindness, hitting or abuse—these behaviours are hurtful and damaging to children. Appropriate discipline is responding to children in a loving and thoughtful way so that they develop enduring qualities that will enrich their lives and those of people around them.

Reflect for a moment on the way you were parented. We tend to parent the way we were raised, unless we determine to make some changes and give our kids a better chance than we were given. As I write, I think of things I have done as a dad that could have been different and delivered much better results. We are all responsible for generating change for the better, not just doing what we have always done. There is *always* room for improvement.

Our challenge as parents is to guide children in a positive way: to avoid methods that belittle, discourage, humiliate, hurt or frustrate.



Some parents believe that children will be happiest if they are given everything that they want. That doesn't work with adults and won't work with children either. We're all happier when we've worked for what we want and earned our rewards. Undisciplined children set their sights low. They focus on unimportant things that offer instant gratification. They make poor judgements, bad choices, mix with the wrong crowd and find it a significant challenge to achieve good outcomes with their life. When faced with difficulties they may have few methods to deal with those difficulties positively.

Children naturally look to their parents for boundaries. When those boundaries are clearly and firmly provided, children thrive: they are free to play, dream, wonder and explore their world, knowing that their parent or carer will guide them back on track when needed. There are multiple distractions for children: there will always be more fun, seemingly important and instantaneous alternatives to what their parents want them to do. Through discipline, parents can help children steer a course that allows them to develop, progress and mature.

As with many things, disciplining children starts with our ability to govern ourselves. How do we deal with stressful and difficult situations? Do we treat others with respect and kindness? Are we able to defer self-gratification and work towards our goals? Can we express emotions in appropriate ways? Our children will often notice and emulate what we do much more than what we say.

Our challenge as parents is to guide children in a positive way: to avoid methods that belittle, discourage, humiliate, hurt or frustrate and instead look for parenting approaches that encourage, develop and uplift our children. It is vital for parents to be attuned and compassionate to each child's

emotions and encourage them to express how they feel. Love and concern should be the basis for all we do as we train and steer our children towards the days when they can take charge of themselves and integrate the methods of discipline we use into their daily lives. Discipline is not just a tool we use to manage children—it's a tool we give them to manage themselves!

We won't always be around. We won't always be able to give a word of advice or caution—certainly we won't always be there to yell, 'STOP!' The idea is to pass our expectations on to our kids, so they carry them forward in their lives. Here are a few ways that we can potentially have a substantial impact on our children's lives if we remain firm with them:

Discipline is not just a tool we use to manage children—it's a tool we give them to manage themselves!

- They may eat more healthily. They'll understand what's good for them and when to say no to food that doesn't have much nutritional value. Statistics show that startling numbers of people who lose a significant amount of weight put it all back on again. Very few keep it off—some surveys put this at only 3-5 percent after three years. Discipline taught early may very well stop the weight gain in the first place.
- They will work more effectively. They'll be on time, have a better work ethic and want to do their best. Advancing to more senior positions will be a natural progression in their chosen vocation. Having and keeping a job will also be the norm rather than the exception.
- They will have more emotional stability.

Expressing feelings in appropriate ways and being empathetic to the feelings of others will help them to develop well-rounded relationships and reduce conflict.

- They will manage money better. Having sound financial goals will be a strong foundation for a prosperous and generous lifestyle. A person needs self-discipline in order to save effectively and to be free of debt sooner.
- They will manage time better. Balancing time pressures and external demands will be more achievable. Having time for the important things of life will be more of a natural focus rather than a struggle.

Discipline is one of the primary keys to a successful and rewarding life. It outranks skill, talent, intellect and ability. People with those gifts and no self-discipline are not guaranteed to do well, even though it might appear to be a natural outcome for them. Those

who understand and practise discipline will leave the talented ones behind—and those with both discipline and natural aptitude will be unstoppable! The leaders and society shapers of tomorrow are the ones who have a good plan and stick with it till it's done. The ones with true values, and the determination to live by them, will no doubt thank those who gave them the head start by teaching and modelling discipline.



Steve Steel

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As announced in our December issue, *Living Today* will now be available primarily in digital format. You can access a regular copy of the magazine in one of the following ways:

- visit our website livingtoday.org.au to read or download current or past issues;
- contact the editor on living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com and ask to be added to our mailing list. A PDF of each new issue will automatically be emailed to you; or
- read or pick up a copy at one of several locations around Mooroolbark. A limited number of paper copies will be delivered to schools, kindergartens, shire offices, the library, Mooroolbark Community Centre, the Professionals real estate office, and local churches.

A True Masterpiece

Steinway grand pianos are legendary for their craftsmanship. Since 1853, the New York company has created iconic instruments, working for an entire year to assemble a single piano from twelve thousand individually handcrafted pieces. The focus and dedication necessary to create these beautiful instruments is amazing. But as advanced as a Steinway piano is, it falls impossibly short of a human being. We are true masterpieces! As the Psalmist writes: "For You shaped me, inside and out. You knitted me together in my mother's womb long before I took my first breath. I will offer You my grateful heart, for I am Your unique creation, filled with wonder and awe. You have approached even the smallest details with excellence; Your works are wonderful..."¹

Think about that for a second. The same hands that created galaxies personally wove your DNA. That same breath that commanded the sun to shine also breathed life into you.

¹ (Psalm 139: 13-14 *The Voice*).



It's an overwhelming and humbling thought, but one that can easily be forgotten. From commercials, to magazines, to billboards, we're surrounded by non-stop images of "ideal physical beauty," images that often prompt us to think about what we lack, instead of giving thanks for what we have that is so special. The truth is, every human being who has ever walked

the earth, no matter how "imperfect" by human standards, is a unique and masterful work of art, created with perfect love and care by our heavenly Father. Although our human failings have tragically intervened, God, through his Son, is working to bring to completion and perfection all of his creatures and the entire cosmos in which we exist.

So the next time you hear the beautiful notes of a concerto played on a Steinway, remember the care and love your heavenly Father has taken in crafting you, and give thanks that the Creator of the universe loves you so much that he is taking the care to shape each and every part of you.

Joseph Tkach
Speaking of Life

PHOTO: PIXABAY



Reaching Out to the Community

The Salvation Army in Chirnside Park has once again had a changing of the guard. The church recently said farewell to Majors Steve and Christine

Black, who have served the area for the last five years, and welcomed two new officers.

Christine has retired, and her husband Steve will do so in the next year. In the meantime, he will be working in administration. At their farewell service in January, the church was filled with family, friends and other Salvo officers. Two of the Blacks' sons gave humorous but moving tributes to their parents, which revealed much of their dedication to their work over the years. The service was followed by a luncheon, where many people gathered round Christine and Steve to say goodbye and wish them well in the next stage of their life.

In their place, the church welcomed Lieutenant Ashley Proctor and wife Yvette, and Major Catherine Spiller with husband Rhys, who are all settling in to their new positions. Catherine has been an officer for 15 years and has experience in different areas to Ashley, who had a sales and marketing background before becoming interested in the ministry. Their different skills complement each other for the task ahead.



Ashley at the Salvation Army Thrift Shop

PHOTO: BARBARA AUSTIN

I spoke to Ashley about his background and his new role in Mooroolbark.

Ashley was born in the UK and came to Australia in 1987. He travelled extensively before settling in Rockingham, Western Australia, where he worked for seven years—first as a chaplain and then as a

lay minister for the Salvos. He came to Melbourne at the age of 41 to do his college training and from there he went to Morwell and the Latrobe Valley. Ashley commented that the demand on welfare in the area has increased substantially as many people are experiencing financial difficulties, and will continue to do so with the closure of the Hazelwood Power Station in March.

Ashley and his wife have three children, and he enjoys caravanning in the bush with the family, watching NRL (definitely not AFL) and listening to music. Ashley is keen to be involved in the local community and has already visited the Lions Club and attended a local ecumenical ministers' prayer meeting. It is his wish to visit all the local businesses and to reach out to more people through the Mooroolbark Salvation Army Thrift Shop. When asked what he dislikes most, he said: "Seeing or experiencing any injustice to people, especially the underdog."

Those wishing to contact Ashley may do so on 0419 594 647 or 9727 4777. I'm sure the community will look forward to meeting Ashley Proctor and Catherine Spiller and their families, and will make them feel welcome over the weeks and months ahead.

Barbara Austin

Innovative and Visionary

Time Will Not Fade Sally Broadley's Legacy



In May 2016, Pastor Graham Nelson announced the retirement of Oxley College Principal Mrs. Sally Broadley. Her distinguished career in education, spanning an incredible 47 years, has been formally recognised by the Australian Council of Educational Leaders (ACEL), which has awarded her a lifetime fellowship for having made an extraordinary contribution to the improvement of student and organisational outcomes. Sally retired from her position as principal at the end of the 2016 school year. She is still as passionate as ever about education, and optimistic about what lies ahead for Oxley College.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Inside Oxley's entrance foyer you won't find imposing portraits of former principals glaring down from their lofty perches. Nor will you see artworks like those that often adorn the walls and corridors of Ivy League schools. Instead, the bright, light-filled space is a testament to what Sally Broadley values most—students. Perfectly and professionally displayed paintings and sculptures—"the latest offerings of our fledgling artists"—fill the foyer, adding to the room's natural warmth and grandeur, but it is all in honour of the young artists and their efforts.

Prior to coming to Oxley, Sally worked at several schools including Leongatha Technical School, Methodists Ladies' College, Camberwell Middle School, and Doveton, Upwey and Monash high schools. In each of these postings she was recognised and appreciated as an exemplary teacher whose sharp focus was always on nurturing and enriching the lives of each individual student in her care.

Commencing at Oxley as a teacher in 1992, Sally has held various leadership positions, including college coordinator, which involved administering the new VCE and managing the first international student intakes and timetabling while also teaching art and English. In 1992, Sally took over as principal and has grown the school to its current impressive position of a highly respected school with over 120 staff and 1,000 students from many nations around the world.

Always a classroom teacher, Sally has often been heard to say that there is no greater honour or calling than being in the classroom. She remains, first and foremost, a dedicated teacher who would have been happy to remain in the classroom had she not been called to take on the

role of principal in 1992.

Pastor Graham Nelson described Sally's contribution to the development of the school's buildings and surrounds—taking it from four portable classrooms in a paddock to the comprehensive, state-of-the-art facility and campus that it now is—as a remarkable achievement. He put this down to Sally's ability to see the big picture and to have a clear vision, but also stressed her incredible eye for detail. He commented, "In every corner of the school, her designer fingerprints and her DNA are clearly visible." He added, "Whilst the accomplishments, and there are many, are hers, the results belong to and are a great benefit to the whole school community."

Asked about those early days in the school's development, Sally said: "There was so much to do! I was given a blank canvas with respect to designing the school and the opportunity for radical and thrilling change was an exciting challenge."

In those early years, Sally also worked very hard to carve out a clear identity for Oxley College. Her unyielding commitment to excellence has led to Oxley College becoming one of the state's leading Christian schools—well known for its academic excellence, its world class facilities, its nurturing and compassionate environment and its total commitment to its core Christian values.

"Educational excellence" may sound like a hollow slogan, but for Sally it is a meaningful synecdoche which has defined an important aspect of the school's culture. Whether it is an academic achievement, wearing the uniform or hosting an event or function, there is an insistence that it be done to the best of one's ability.

Today, visitors to the school can hardly fail to be impressed with the quality of the facilities and also with the immaculate condition in which buildings and grounds are kept. The school considers that the cumulative effect of maintaining the facilities in the very best condition possible is that it inspires a sense of appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to work and study in such beautiful and well-kept surroundings.

Sally's teaching background and love for teaching has meant that she has also played a pivotal role in shaping the educational culture of Oxley. She has been determined in her desire to build a united team of teachers who are passionate about engaging students in deep, relevant learning. She has also fought hard to provide teachers with time to concentrate on their core task of teaching, by providing support from educational assistants, administration staff, technicians and maintenance staff. Many creative and outstanding programs have resulted.

Sally says her happiest and most moving memories have come from watching students flourish in their learning, overcome adversity, develop leadership and service skills and grow in their appreciation and development of important life skills.

First and foremost, Sally's heart is for students. Whether it be honouring their achievements or helping them through a crisis, Sally is a leader who has not allowed administration responsibilities to get in the way of the needs and priorities of students.

I guess a principal like Sally never retires. She will continue to do the things that will inspire children and teachers wherever she is.

■ Michael Mancev

Free Family Movie Night

Ten-year-old orphan Sophie is in for the adventure of a lifetime when she meets the Big Friendly Giant. Although scared of the BFG at first, Sophie soon realises that the huge giant is gentle and kind—however, not all the giants are as friendly and charming. As Sophie's friendship with the BFG grows, they travel to London together to try to convince Queen Victoria to help them get rid of all the bad giants once and for all.

118 minutes – Rated PG



Mooroolbark Community Centre

7:30 pm, 5 April 2017

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee available

This is a joint community service extended to families by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship & Mooroolbark Community Centre

To reserve your tickets phone 1300 368 333 or book online at www.culturetracks.info

Bookings commence from 22 March 2017

A Night at the Drive-In



Former film projectionist John Cordon tells us about a typical night at the Croydon Drive-In, which was located on Whitehorse Road from 1954 to 1990. John says, "While the world is going relentlessly digital, here lies a study of an age, very much analogue, not so long ago when we viewed films as film, in this case at one of the first ever Aussie drive-in theatres. This was an age when the craftsman was indispensable to the equation, because a great deal of tactile skill was required to get the movie onto the screen." The story takes place in 1955, a time when the drive-in was a popular source of entertainment for locals. John dedicates his story to his colleague Charlie Griffin, whom he describes as a "cinematograph operator supreme."

Tonight, in the days before the arrival of television, Charlie Griffin and John Cordon have arrived to set up for the evening show.

For many of us, Saturday night at the drive-in was the highlight of the week, but absolutely nothing happened without the unseen heroes: the craftsmen in that little room called the "bio box". They picked up the film from the railway station, threaded up the film into the projectors, and performed a myriad of checks and adjustments, until finally that tiny image was enlarged to fill the massive screen. The public sit back comfortably in their own motor cars, totally oblivious to the craftsmen busy at their sacred duties behind the scenes in the bio box.

Another type of clientele altogether, maybe a touch older, patronises the drive-in for a completely different activity, leading to the term "passion pit." Our story, though, is set in the bio box, a separate little room placed in a central position among the car ramps, and low enough to project the very large images onto the massive central screen to allow all patrons a clear view of the movie.

As you can imagine, the drive-in can only really function once the sun has set, but projectionists Charlie and John ensure all is ready for the big moment. As usual tonight they are to kick off with the Val Morgan advertising slides. The music is supplied from a collection of easy-listening LP vinyl discs. After fitting replacement negative and positive carbons to the Kalee lamp house, John connects to the DC power supply and "strikes up" with an intensity of light similar to that from an arc welder. This very intense light—possibly about one hundred million candlepower—temporarily floods from the slide projector. John trims the arc and readies the first slide. When all is ready he opens the shutter to see the first slide's image on the screen.

Now comes the all-important moment when the lights on the access roads are dimmed right back and the first movie projector's image hits the screen. The support includes a montage of current news clips and then a wildlife documentary, which has been edited by Charlie earlier.

The last slide is faded to black with John's smooth operation of his dimmer control as Charlie rolls the first projector—which has been carefully cued, allowing pre-roll to get the machine up to speed before Charlie opens his dowser—checks image focus, sound head focus and trims the sound levels by reference to the master amplifier's meters, sending sound out to the ramps.

It is normal practice for John to operate the

slide projector while Charlie threads up the first reel. In fact, tonight's first reel includes a montage of newsreel and then some coming attractions. This is when the important dialogue between Charlie and John takes place: it's most important to avoid any "stuff ups." So much of their task is in working closely together, which requires great synchronisation of effort. Certainly they take pride in the smooth way they perform the transition from the final slide to the beginning of the compile reel, all done with an agreed system of nods. On the rare occasions when something does go wrong, the patrons are quick to find the horn button and flash the headlights in the hundreds of cars out there. Our projectionists have fallen into a couple of routine nervy habits where they tend to absent-mindedly look at the upper spool box to check the remaining time. Other little habits include the routine checking of focus on the projected image, focus in the sound head and burning of the carbons.

Tonight, the comforting sound of the print clattering its way through the projector is soothing music to their ears; however, they both stand ready to react instantly to anything sounding a bit abnormal.

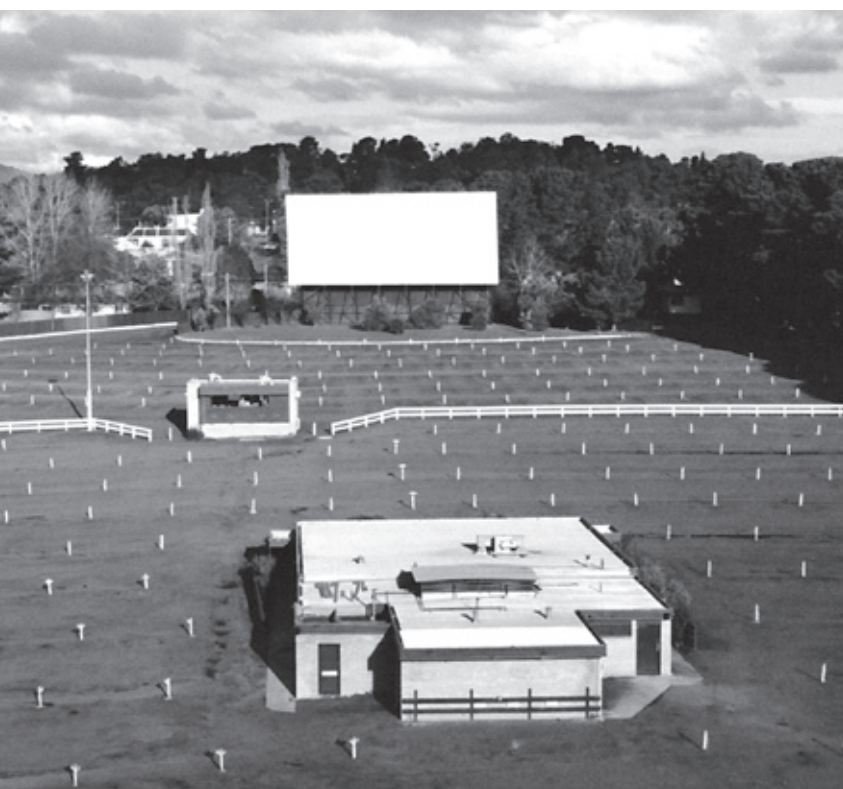
Finally, the movie winds to a close. The end credits are rolling on yet another feature, and as Charlie and John suppress a yawn, they get ready for the inevitable shut-down tasks. There's the usual knock at the door from a guy with a flat battery. This time it's a Holden FJ ute and Charlie comes to the rescue with his jumper cables and his little Austin.

Looking around the ramps, the men notice there are a couple of speakers whose cables have been ripped off as the cars have left for home with the speaker still attached. Amazingly, there's a couple who have fallen asleep in their car and need to be woken up with a gentle tap on the window.

Now finally it's time to close for the night. Charlie and John turn all the lights off and head for home. It's 1955 and the end of yet another successful night at the Croydon Village Drive-In.

John Cordon





Doomsday at the Croydon Drive-In

In 1966 I was an eight-year-old boy who lived by the television set. I loved *Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone*. But my favourite place on earth was the Croydon Drive-In. I'd only been there once before, the previous year, and saw my first film in colour. I was blown away by the huge image and the colour. I even liked the sound out of the little speaker balanced precariously on the car window. But nothing could prepare me for the earth-shattering experience that was to come.

In August of '66 my uncle took me to the drive-in to see *The Time Machine*. I knew a bit about H G Wells. I knew he had written *War of the Worlds* which I had seen on late night TV and that he was a prophet of sorts, able to predict the tank, the atom bomb and even the Second World War. So I was really looking forward to this.

In those days there wasn't street lighting like there is today. The night sky was full of stars and it all added to the magical atmosphere of the drive-in. It was like the opening credits of *The Twilight Zone* come to life. The beginning of the film included the fearsome crack of an atomic explosion followed by dramatic music and the title *The Time Machine*. I was hooked. The special effects astounded me and the Morlocks were probably the scariest creatures I'd ever seen. But the real terror lay in a certain date. Having visited the First World War and whizzed through the second one, the time traveller stops to investigate the world on the very day that nuclear armageddon erupts, destroying all civilization and most of the earth's population. Most shocking to me was the 'odometer' on the time machine, showing that the day was 18 August 1966. The day I was watching the film was 3 August 1966. Knowing of Wells' gift of prophecy and with the Cuban missile crisis still fresh in my mind, I was chilled to think that we all had 15 days to live. To an impressionable young boy this was a disturbing revelation.

For the next two weeks I drank every glass of Fanta as if it were my last. Every individual Twistie from the packet was savoured. I watched the news for clues and scanned the skies for atomic satellites zeroing in. I even pondered which books I would take with me if I should survive the apocalypse. There was no point sharing my fears with other people—they were no better than the Eloi in the film, human vegetables who would only mock me. I just sat and waited.

Doomsday eventually came and went. The danger had passed—but the impact on me was profound and cemented my passion for cinema. I steered my way to a career in the film industry, eventually working as a film scorer. My first big film, *Romper Stomper*, was distributed by Village Roadshow, the company that owned the Croydon Drive-In—the place where it all started. The hauntingly beautiful music to *The Time Machine* is still among my favorite scores. The Croydon Drive-In is one of my favourite memories—and I am still obsessed with doomsday!

John Clifford White

Raising Cyber-Safe Kids

For parents, the idea of releasing their children into the vast, somewhat unknown world of the internet is a scary thought. Naturally, parents are concerned about the safety of their children—but we can't ignore the fact that the internet is here to stay and is, in fact, increasingly necessary to our children's lives.

These days, even small children use the internet for learning and playing games, and internet usage is a core part of the educational process. Parents know that young children should always be supervised to ensure their safety online. As children become teens, however, it's not always practical—or even helpful—to constantly monitor every minute of their internet activity. Teenagers themselves need to thoroughly understand how the internet works and what behaviours are risky, rather than relying on their parents to keep them safe.

Internet independence has to be built up gradually over a period of time, and with guidance. As their children grow, parents have usually already laid the groundwork in imparting their family values to their children, and should have an idea of how well their teenagers can be trusted to follow the guidelines that have been set.

Parents themselves also need an understanding of the internet. Unfortunately, when it comes to technology, many of our children know more than we do! It's important for us to educate ourselves. Some parents are unaware of many online pitfalls, and also may not understand how their own children may think or act in certain situations.

Fortunately, there are many online resources to help parents learn about internet safety. While schools provide cyber-safety information to students,

it is important for parents and children to discuss the issues at home, too. The following are some of the things parents need to know when considering their children's use of the internet:

- **Children—including teenagers—should not befriend people on social media who are unknown to them in real life.** While it might be obvious to adults that fake identities are easy to create and that the person hiding behind that online persona could be literally anyone, astounding numbers of children and teenagers have online 'friends' that they have never met.
- **Many online games allow children to converse with strangers if they are connected to a public server.** Gaming consoles such as Nintendo DS, PlayStation and Xbox also have internet capability that allows users to talk to others around the globe or around the corner. This can make gaming lots of fun, but it's essential that children are taught not to share any personal information with other players. This includes seemingly innocent information which, when pieced together, can reveal important facts such as location of the child's school or the neighbourhood park.
- **Some seemingly innocent phone or tablet apps present a danger to children and teenagers.** There are apps popular with tweens and teens that have troubling features such as the capacity for kids to connect with strangers, hide information and activity from parents, engage in cyberbullying, and send sexually explicit material without detection. While most kids are simply using these apps as a way of staying in contact with friends, some children are being placed in potentially dangerous situations.¹
- **The geotagging feature on devices such as phones and cameras—which embeds location data in messages and photos—can be disabled.** If children take pictures with their phone or camera while GPS location settings are enabled, and then post the pictures online or message them to friends, others may be able to determine their whereabouts. Most social media sites now automatically remove the metadata from uploaded pictures in order to protect user privacy. However, not all sites do this, so children should be taught the importance of turning the geotagging feature off.
- **Many teens—and even children as young as ten years old—are sending sexually explicit texts and pictures.** A significant number of young teenagers think that "sexting" is acceptable and normal. At least one study has found a link between sexting and becoming sexually active at a young age.²

Despite some of the risks, we do have to allow our teenagers to start making online decisions as they prove their capability and maturity. We won't always be there to instruct and protect, so it is important that our children have the appropriate tools to take them into adulthood. We need to make opportunities to talk our kids about cyber safety—and about our standards, their reputations, and the trust that we are placing in them.

By maintaining the lines of communication with our teens and keeping ourselves educated about rapidly changing technology, we will feel much more comfortable about our teenagers' ability to use the internet with maturity and good judgment.

● Janet Van Dijk



PHOTO: PHAKAN

¹ foreverymom.com/parents-kids-10-dangerous-apps-timehit-delete/

² cbc.ca/news/health/sexting-by-tweens-linked-to-real-life-sexual-activity-1.2692015

Supported Playgroups

For babies and toddlers, playtime is not just about having fun—it's a learning experience which helps with vital brain development. While playing, children learn about how the world around them works, and how to behave in that world. They learn physical and social skills such as language, coordination, and self-confidence.

To assist local families with the essential role of learning through play, Yarra Ranges Council runs Supported Playgroups. Funded by the Department of Education and Training, the playgroups are founded on an evidence-based program called *smalltalk*. The program recognises and supports parents and caregivers in the crucial role they play in shaping their children's early learning through everyday quality interactions, such as creating a stimulating environment and reading to children from birth.

Yarra Ranges Council's Supported Playgroups, which operate throughout the municipality during school terms, are free and available to families with a current Health Care Card or equivalent. The playgroups are held weekly, and are run by qualified facilitators. The group size is small and the emphasis is on parental confidence, self-care and learning about relevant local facilities such as preschools, community services, activities and events.

In each session, children have the opportunity to make friends with other children while feeling secure that their parents are by their sides. They play games, sing songs, and explore outside. There is plenty of movement through dancing, climbing, balancing and jumping, as well as quieter activities such as listening to stories and craft activities.

Families can also access in-home support if a playgroup environment is not quite right for them. A facilitator will attend the family's home and do a one-on-one program with parents, carers and their children.

These comments from parents show the valuable role the playgroups have had in the lives of many Yarra Ranges families:

"From the very first moment that we walked through door, I knew that *smalltalk* was the right program for us. Creativity and revelry buzz around the entire room. We love the singing, the dancing and the craft activities. I do a great deal of this at home with my daughter but it is wonderful to have new ideas to spring off. My child's favourite activity at *smalltalk* is the Old MacDonald parachute game. She frequently insists upon us re-enacting this game at home."

"Playgroup has been great for my son's language development. It has given him the opportunity to see and hear other kids his age talking. Mat time has been great for language development as well!"

"An opportunity to find what your child likes as you cannot offer all play experiences in the home environment."

"Home visits provided hands on opportunity to implement *smalltalk* strategies. Due to illness my child was unable to attend playgroup sessions regularly and home visits provided opportunity to engage and experience some of the playgroup elements such as singing, reading books together, art and craft."



21-month-old Jennifer enjoys the playgroup activities

PHOTO: RAKHI KHANNA

For more information about Yarra Ranges Council Supported Playgroups, go to www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Family-children/Support-for-families or contact the Early Years team on 1300 368 333 or earlyyears@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Rakhi Khanna
Supported Playgroup Officer

Mooroolbark Community Centre Events

Over the next few months, some exciting events are coming to the Mooroolbark Community Centre at 125 Brice Avenue. Ticket bookings can be made by phone on 1300 368 333, or online at www.culturetracks.info.

Wala: the Spirit of Ghana: Thursday 13 April, 11 am

The Mooroolbark Community Centre is presenting an outstanding live performance in the upcoming school holidays: *Wala: the Spirit of Ghana*. Bring the whole family to love and celebrate life through music, as three passionate, exuberant and talented performers mesmerise with an exciting display of Ghanaian culture. With flutes, stunning costumes and fifteen hand-made African drums, Odai, Ago and Abli engage their audiences in call-and-response song, invite them to try out different instruments, and to lose themselves in dance. Their enthusiasm is utterly contagious as they rejoice in the live sounds and rich heritage of their people.

Tickets: \$12 full / at venue or \$6 library member / book online

Shirley Valentine: Monday 22 May, 2 pm

Another brilliant live performance at the Mooroolbark Community Centre is *Shirley Valentine*.

Come along for a midlife adventure brought to you by the award-winning Willy Russell and starring Mandi Lodge (*Menopause the Musical* and *Always...Patsy Cline*). *Shirley Valentine* is the story of a Liverpool mother whose self-esteem has been battered by school, marriage and life in general. When her best friend wins

a Greek vacation for two, Shirley grasps at the chance to head into the sunshine, rediscover herself, follow her dreams and get a new lease on life. With much humour, warmth, human insight and a great deal of empathy for his female protagonist, Willy Russell brilliantly celebrates Shirley's escape from the mould in which she was cast.

Tickets: \$22 full, \$18 concession, \$12 Three's Company (group of 3+)

Australian Youth Band: Sunday 4 June, 2 pm

Renowned for its marching band program, one of Australia's most internationally recognised youth touring bands will visit Mooroolbark for a rare stage concert appearance. Aged between 13 and 28, the brightest stars of the classical and concert performance scene have been plucked from a galaxy of emerging talent to form the Australian Youth Band. Together they bring their prodigious energy to the work of some of history's most beloved composers including Handel, Mozart and Rossini. The Australian Youth Band is led by former US-based director Richard O'Toole, who has worked with and arranged music for many of Australia's finest artists including Rhonda Burchmore, Judi Connelli and Silvie Paladino. Prepare to be dazzled! Afternoon tea provided in ticket price.

Tickets: \$12 full, \$6 concession

Adrienne Lia

Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	Farmers Market: Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Combined Rotary Clubs. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Bill Sutherland: 9727 0037.
Friday nights during school term	Fridays@Kids Domain: Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 pm. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or www.lmc.org.au
Monday evenings each week	Scottish Country Dancing: Mondays 8 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9725 9074
Second Monday of each month	Mooroolbark Country Women's Association: 1 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. New members always welcome. Contact Coral Cunningham: 9728 4479.
Thursdays during school term	Music Together Program: 0-5 years. Run by trained music therapist. St Margaret's Uniting Church 9:45 am. Morning tea & playtime included. \$10 per session. 2017 enrolments now being accepted. Call Yvonne: 9726 9347.
Thursday evenings each week	Maroondah TOWN Club: (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 pm. St Margaret's Uniting Church. Hull Road. For more information call Kaye: 0414 984 062.
Wednesdays during school time	Kilsyth Primary School Playgroup: Painting, story time, activities and games for children birth - 3½ years. 9:15 am. More info: 9725 4320 or www.kilsythps.vic.edu.au .
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am-3 pm. Now meeting at 91 Swansea Road, Montrose. More information: president Greg Andrews on 9728 4439, or secretary John Lowry on 9726 9970 or 0419 366 969.
Tues, Wed & Thurs during school term	GymbaROO: "Fun and Learning TOO." A formative, sensory-perception program for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Contact Marion on 9726 8740.
24 March	Mooroolbark Talent Quest: Mooroolbark Community Centre; commences 7:30 pm. Entry \$5 per person.
25 March	Celebrate Mooroolbark: Your local community festival. 10:00 am-4:00 pm. Red Earth Community Park, Brice Avenue.
11 March 8 April 13 May	Urban Harvest: Backyard fruit and vegetable growers—swap your excess produce. Red Earth Community Park, second Saturday each month, 10-11:30 am. Enquiries: Claire Coutts, 0425 700 280.
25 April	Anzac Day Service: Hookey Park. Commences 12 noon. All welcome. Mooroolbark History Group's book <i>Celebrating Mooroolbark</i> will be available for purchase
March - June	Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Sessions: 9:30-11:00 am. 7 March, 4 April, 2 May, 6 June. Mooroolbark Community Centre.
March, May, June	Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Sessions: 1:30-2:30 pm. 28 March, 23 May, 27 June. Mooroolbark Community Centre.
March - June	Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation Sessions: 5:30-7 pm. 8 March, 12 April, 10 May, 14 June. Mooroolbark Senior Citizens Centre.

Mooroolbark Community Centre and Montrose Town Centre

The following special events will be held at Mooroolbark Community Centre (MCC) or Montrose Town Centre (MTC). Unless otherwise indicated, bookings can be made by phoning 1300 368 333 or online: www.culturetracks.info

April	School Holiday Fun! FREE family movie and pottery workshops. MCC.
13 April	Wala: The Spirit of Ghana: School Holiday Performance 11 am. Tickets \$12 full / \$6 online/library Member. MCC.
17 April	Term 2 Workshops Commence: Pottery, Oil Painting, Tribal Bellydance, Craft & Pottery 4 Kids. MCC & MTC. Bookings online or MCC 9726 5488 / MTC 9761 9133.
19 April	Yarra Ranges Council Citizenship Ceremony: Mooroolbark Community Centre 7:30 pm.
22 May	Shirley Valentine: 2 pm. Tickets \$22 full, \$18 concession, \$12 Three's Company. MCC Red Earth Theatre
23 May	Yarra Ranges Council Grants Information Session: 6 pm MCC. For more info: 1300 368 333.

Our Community Events Calendar offers a free service to local clubs and organisations.

To include entries for your group's community events in future issues please contact Doug Lewis on 9761 1121 or email lewisdm@bigpond.net.au

Note: *Living Today* is distributed quarterly—in the first week of March, June, September and December. Calendar entries need to be submitted one month prior to the distribution date.

LIVING TODAY in Mooroolbark

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Like to contribute?

If you have great local photos—current or historical—or a good news story about people or groups who are an inspiration to the community, please get in touch with the editor (contact information above)

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of *Living Today* can be accessed at:

livingtoday.org.au

To join the email distribution list please send a request to living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com

MISSION STATEMENT

To contribute towards and to help to foster a **growing community spirit** within our neighbourhood.

We seek to achieve this by:

- highlighting the many positives within our community
- encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns

OUR SPONSORS

Living Today greatly appreciates the valuable contributions made by several businesses which partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. Their financial sponsorship makes the magazine possible, and we gratefully acknowledge those partners in each issue.

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