

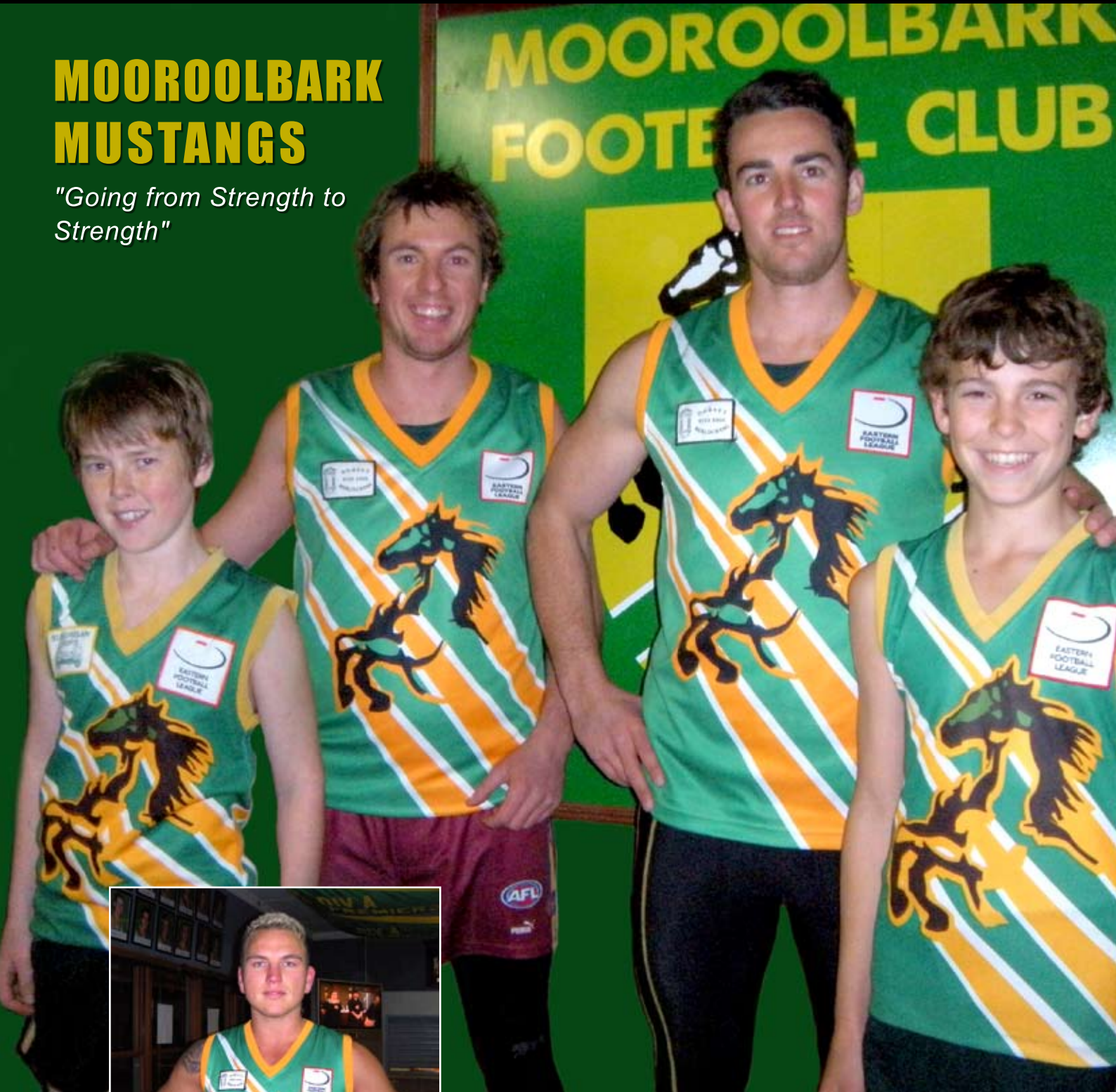
LIVING TODAY

IN MOOROOLBARK/YARRA RANGES

NO. 29 SEPTEMBER 2009

MOOROOLBARK MUSTANGS

*"Going from Strength to
Strength"*



Leading EFL Goal-kicker
Kire Talevski

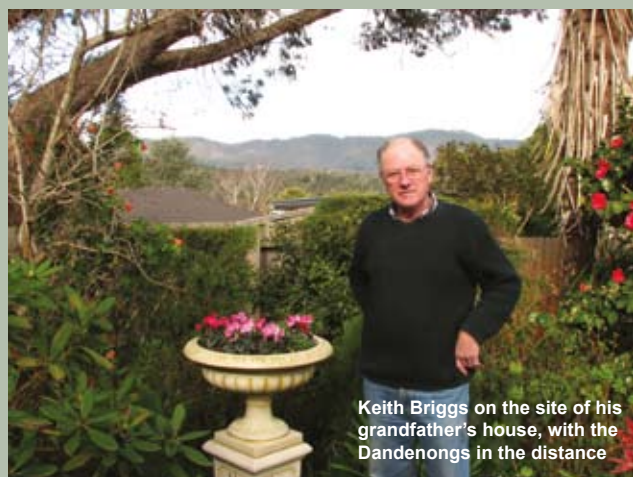
INSIDE

- TRAIN STATION PROJECT
- SENIOR CITIZENS' 40TH
- DEVELOPMENTS AT PEMBROKE S. C.
- U3A LILYDALE

A STORY ABOUT GENERATIONS!

I'd like to share with you an illustrated Mooroolbark tale about a grandfather and his grandson.

The grandson, local resident, Keith Briggs, is a retired metallurgist, who during the late 60s bought the land where his grandfather's weekender-farmhouse had once stood.



Keith Briggs on the site of his grandfather's house, with the Dandenongs in the distance

Keith's move to Mooroolbark in 1973 was enriched by memories of childhood spending holiday time with his grandparents. And for he and his wife Barbara, Mooroolbark became a great place to raise their two sons because of the fresh air, views of the mountains and the bush environment. That Keith spent years commuting to his employment with Holden at Fisherman's Bend is testimony to his enjoyment of Mooroolbark.

I had the good fortune to purchase the quarter acre block at the top of Elms Road as it is today and eventually build our home exactly on the site where my grandparents home once stood. The builders soon found the underground water well and the fishpond. My wife Barbara and I moved in to our new home in April 1973. Not long after, our first son Christopher was born, and two years later, our second son Steven. Both boys attended Mooroolbark East Primary School and later Yarra Valley Grammar School at Ringwood.¹

Keith's grandfather, Robert Gordon Fairweather (Fairlie) Briggs and his wife Mary² bought the original property in 1939 – a farmhouse on 5 acres of land in Mooroolbark³, to use as a weekender and eventual retirement location.



Keith's grandfather and grandmother are seated on the ground second and third from left; his mother and father are on their left, seated in front of Santa

Fairlie now owned a place where he could escape the pressures of his working life. Starting out as a pastrycook in Geelong, and, later, at the Thistle Bakery in Melbourne he went on to own cake shops in Gilbert Road and High Street Preston, until retiring to Mooroolbark in 1946.

This property included a weatherboard residence with galvanized iron roof and a large undercover verandah on the 4 sides plus garage and sheds. There was no electricity or running water. They named the property 'St. Keverne' after a place in Cornwall. My grandmother's family came from Cornwall. Oddly enough, my father was named Gordon Keverne Briggs, and known as Kev or Keverne.

Their closest neighbours were Bill and Alice Elms and their three boys – Ralph, Cliff and Wal, the Dodge family⁴ and Mrs Elm's mother, Mrs Royal. Keith's father, Kev, built close friendships with the children in the neighbourhood. Friendship with the Elms boys was a given, since the boys were housed in a bungalow on the fenceline of the two properties, and the Elms and Briggs shared the same phone line⁵ – Montrose 131.



Elms family⁶

Pictured Above - The Elms Family: Bill, Cliff, Ralph, Alice and Wal.



Ralph and Wal Elms with Kev

Not long after Kev's discharge from war service in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, Kev and Marge⁷, moved to Mooroolbark.

By this time Dad's parents had become permanent residents of Mooroolbark. Dad had trained in his parents business at Preston as a pastry cook, so he looked for and soon found work in this trade in Richmond near the railway station. At about 4.58am he used to catch the first city-bound train from Mooroolbark, leaving his muddy boots at the station, and wearing clean shoes to work.

¹ Sections in italics are the words of Keith Briggs – either conversations or written documents.

² Robert Gordon Fairweather (Fairlie) Briggs was born in Kensington in 1885 and married Mary (Cis) Jane Heard in Fitzroy in 1914. Mary was born in North Fitzroy in 1884.

³ This land had earlier been part of land owned by the Brice family.

⁴ The Dodge family lived in a white painted compacted earth house, built by the Ellis family during the depression years. It sat on a brick base, and the walls were formed by ramming earth between a timber frame which was subsequently removed.

⁵ Called a 'party line' – noted for lack of privacy. Each household was able to ring the exchange from phones within their homes.

⁶ Elms family photograph scanned from Christabel James' The School at the Fiveways and used by permission of the Elms family. Additional photographs throughout provided by Keith Briggs.

⁷ Married in 1941 prior to Kev's unexpected posting overseas.

At the end of the day he would change shoes to walk home when his father did not pick him up in his 1937 Vauxhall Sedan.

My grandfather would listen for the afternoon train from the city, and on a clear sunny day could check from his garden whether my father was on that train or the next. He could observe the flashing of sunlight off a mirror held by my father at the station, and then drive down to the station to save his son the uphill walk home. I believe my father and grandfather were members of the Mooroolbark Rural Fire brigade.

My early memories of Mooroolbark are mainly from those school holidays when I often stayed with my grandparents and made good friends with the neighbours and their children, namely the Elms and Dodge families. Sunday school was held by St. Margaret's Presbyterian Church in the old Public Hall in Station Street and still brings back fond memories. And I recall Mrs. Dodge playing the Organ in the front room of her home.

On March 6, 1954... when I was 11 years old, my grandparents walked with me across the paddocks and down to the railway track just on the City side of the railway bridge and standing alongside the gum trees that still grow there. The occasion was the Royal Visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip. They were travelling by the Royal Train to Warburton for a few days rest from a very busy tour of Australia and elsewhere. We saw the Queen and her husband waving to the local residents as they passed by... from a glass-covered compartment at the end of the last carriage.

Although Kev and Marge moved to Reservoir in 1947, Keith spent holidays with his grandparents until their deaths in the late 50s.

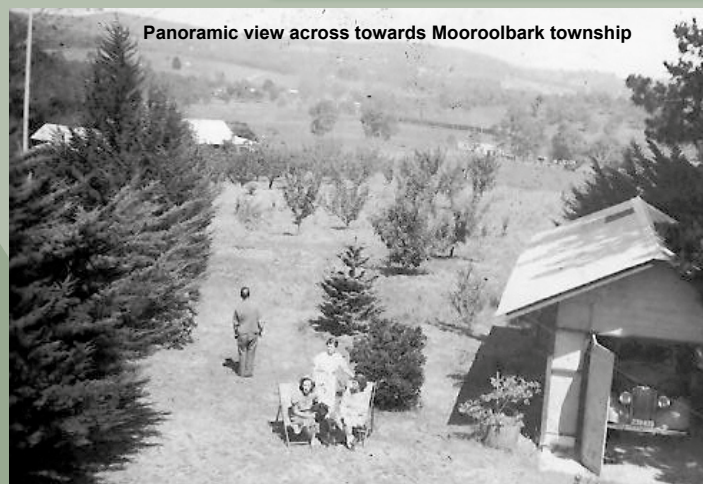
He recalls the long car trip from Reservoir, and how the family divided it into sections. You knew you were half way, when you passed the big grain store where Westfield is now sited in Doncaster. The next landmark was the clock tower in Ringwood, and then we'd stop for ice cream at the milk bar in Mount Dandenong Road Croydon, before proceeding along Hull Road past open land and wire fences, through a fairly heavily timbered Five Ways and over the low white timber bridge near the current CFA station.

I remember the creek in Brice Avenue flowing very close to the roadside through the flood plain.

We'd go up Taylor Road – gravel road, gums, wire fences... and finally Carron Vale Road, which in those days finished near where Russell Avenue is today. At my grandfather's driveway, there were two gates to open and close because the Elms sometimes had their Clydesdale in Fairlie's lower paddock. You could either sprint up across the paddock to the second gate, or ride on the running board of the car.

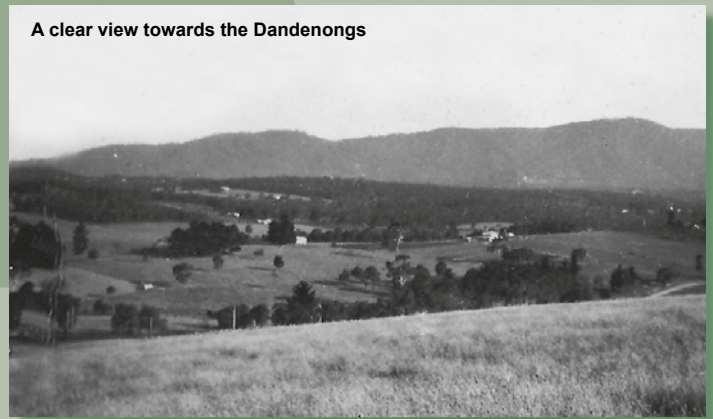


Kev on the roof looking north west towards Chirside Park



Panoramic view across towards Mooroolbark township

A clear view towards the Dandenongs

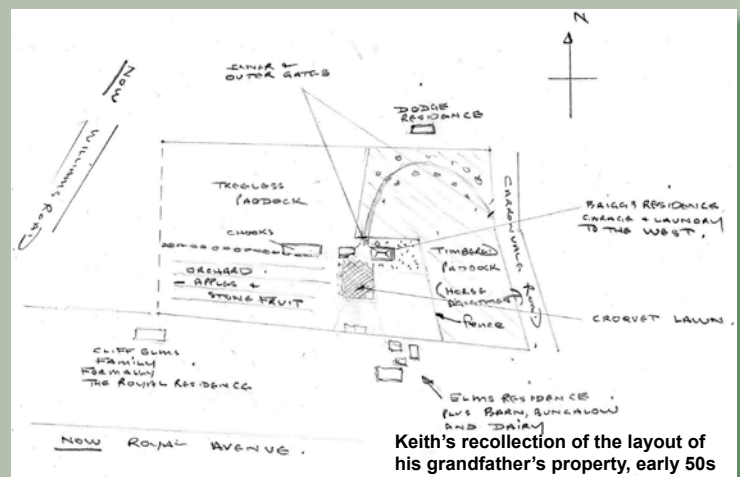


Eric Dodge and I spent a lot of time together. Eric had dug a big hole and found fossil remains in the mudrock – mainly crustaceans and ferns. The kids nicknamed him 'Fossil'. One day lightning took the top out of a nearby pine tree, and we built a cubby house there, complete with rope ladder. We also flew my model aeroplanes in a cleared paddock.

I remember going shopping with my grandfather at Mooroolbark's only shop – the General Store, where we bought newspapers and collected the mail. He also used to travel to Croydon market (where Mrs Dodge had a stall for years selling Bibles) and also to the ice works in Hewish Road. I even recall occasions going with Mrs Elms driving a horse and jinker.

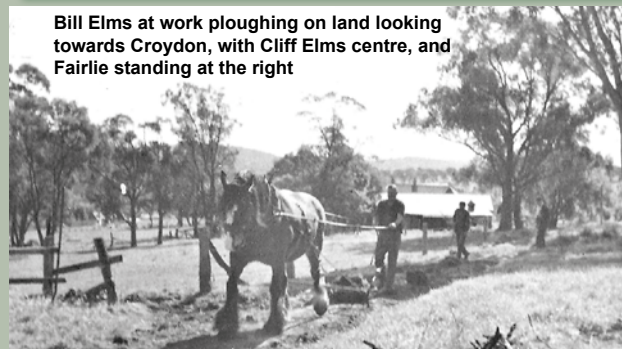
My grandfather's 5 acres contained a house block, where his weatherboard house had a shared chimney between the kitchen and the lounge room, made from bricks manufactured at the Montrose Brick Works in Cambridge Road.

Grandfather added a laundry to the side of the garage. Around the house there was garden, the chook run, a fish pond an underground well and a flagpole. His garage had simple, multi-folding doors that were kept closed with a steel bar. My grandfather was very proud of his formal croquet lawn, but there were also areas of bush, a cleared paddock and about an acre of orchard, which Mr Elms used to plough annually. I remember him ploughing a snake one year.



Keith's recollection of the layout of his grandfather's property, early 50s

Bill Elms at work ploughing on land looking towards Croydon, with Cliff Elms centre, and Fairlie standing at the right



Mrs Elms, Mrs Dodge and my grandmother were part of the Presbyterian Ladies Guild that helped raise funds for the building of St Margaret's church in Hull Road.⁸ There are family photographs of fund-raising garden fetes at 'St. Keverne' and also at Edna Walling's property – 'The Barn'.



Fundraising at St. Keverne, Keith in foreground

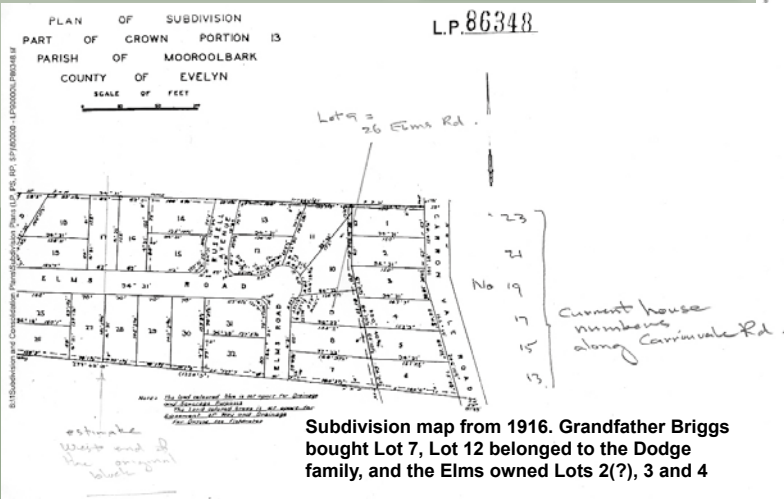
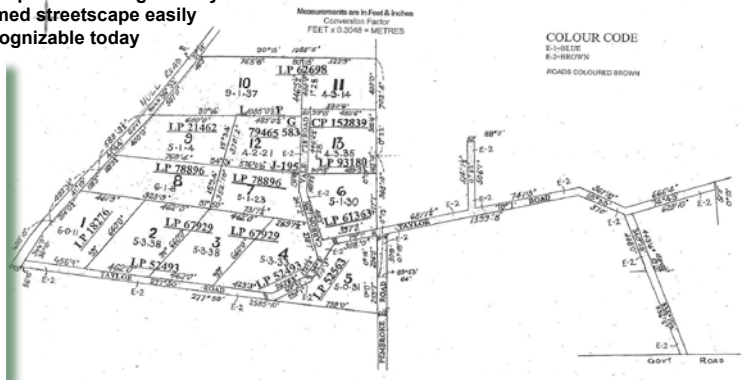


Edna Walling's property 'The Barn'

Subdivision map from around 1960. Both maps help us appreciate the way the land became subdivided with the 1960 plans showing a newly named streetscape easily recognizable today

PLAN OF SUBDIVISION OF PART OF CROWN PORTION 13 PARISH OF MOOROOLBARK COUNTY OF EVELYN VOL 2989 FOL 813

LP 6998 EDITION 1 PLAN MAY BE LOANED 20-11-1998



Subdivision map from 1916. Grandfather Briggs bought Lot 7, Lot 12 belonged to the Dodge family, and the Elms owned Lots 2(?), 3 and 4

8 According to Keith, a photo of the 1948 Ladies Guild in a published history of the church – St Margaret's Uniting Church Mooroolbark, 1926-1979 has misnamed Mrs Briggs as Mrs Bridge.

I'd like to thank Keith Briggs for contacting Living Today – and offering his time, his recollections and family photographs to help our readers develop a better sense of the history of Mooroolbark in the 40s and 50s. Living Today would love to hear from others have memories of Mooroolbark's history, which if shared, give us all a better appreciation for our township.

Randall Bouchier



NOTE A Mooroolbark History Group is currently being formed. Do you have information you would like to share – to assist in this project? Contact Marion 9726 8740

Rare "White Raven" Sighted in Croydon

Rod Keeble

Ron McNamara, who has been a dedicated bird enthusiast all his life, was most excited when he recently sighted a rare "pied raven" in Croydon. (Ron explains that the pied gene takes away the main colour of the bird in a random pattern – resulting in a mottled effect. It is quite rare.)

He first observed the bird with a flock of black ravens that seemed intent on chasing it away. He subsequently saw it alone on many occasions. The bird has been regularly sighted near the corner of Lincoln Road and Allendale Road. The accompanying photograph was taken by Ron's good friend and photography enthusiast, Mr. Terry Xie of

Croydon.

Ron's interest in birds began when he was just a young boy and has continued throughout his life. At age 14 he began work with the PMG as a telegram boy. He continued with the same employer for the next 34 years – occupying a variety of roles. It was during those years that he received the nickname "Birdman" as his interest and involvement with bird-keeping, breeding and exhibiting grew.

Looking back over what is now 50 years of breeding and exhibiting, Ron takes much satisfaction from the many prizes he has won over the years. The receipt of one prize stands out as a particular moment of

great pleasure. That was the **1st prize for Best Budgerigar** in the Australian National Bird Show in Townsville in 1982. This trophy takes pride of place in his Croydon home.

Over the years, Ron has become widely known and has gained great respect for his knowledge and expertise in regard to bird life and bird breeding. Since 1970 he has been very active all over Australia in judging at bird shows. In recognition of his many contributions, he has been made a life member of a number of bird societies and associations. Amongst many other positions, he is a chief steward at the Lilydale Show.

Ron's wife, Bev, has grown to love this hobby also. She particularly enjoys the travel involved and the many friendships that have developed through their shared interests.

Both Ron and Bev give considerable time each week to supporting Animal Aid – Coldstream by working in their opportunity shop in South Croydon.



Rare bird sighting – Croydon
A rare "pied" Australian Raven



Ron admires a favourite Budgerigar

Mooroolbark Mustangs Going from Strength to Strength

Mooroolbark Football Club is a dynamic, family oriented, local club which has approximately 400 players participating in the thirteen teams it fields each week during the football season. This year the teams range from under 9's to the recently added veterans' team

JUNIORS. Due to considerable local interest, an under 8's team will be added next year. It is very likely that the under 8 competition will be run each Sunday morning at Mooroolbark Heights. It will take the form of a round-robin competition involving all teams. This initiative was prompted by the recent amalgamation of Bimbadeen (now Mooroolbark) Auskick and MFC. The two groups are independently run but work in conjunction with one another for the benefit of all involved. The registration list for Auskick alone tops 150 youngsters and a total of 250 are registered with the MFC juniors. The future of local footy seems well secured!

The present MFC junior teams (up to under 11's) participate in a non-competitive system where the aim is to provide opportunity for participation, fun and skills development with no pressure to perform and where tackling, kicking off the ground and other dangerous actions are prohibited. No scores are recorded but individual efforts and achievements are recognized by coaches at the weekly awards nights each Sunday evening. These events are regularly attended by over 200 players and parents. Junior teams and parents take turns in providing meals for everyone.

Junior Club President, Greg Winstanley, is most appreciative of the way the senior teams interact with and support the juniors in many ways – consolidating the “family emphasis” that is the aim of the club. It certainly pays off. Many of today's seniors team came up through the ranks



Greg Winstanley

SENIORS. The senior teams include Under 18's, Reserves, Seniors and Veterans. In the last three years, under coach Bernie Ryan, the seniors team has gone from being well down on the ladder to just missing out on last year's grand final by two points. This year with five home and away games



Paul Grant & Steve Noonan

left to go (as this article is written) the seniors and the reserves both remain undefeated and the under 18's are third on the ladder.

Joint Senior Club presidents, Steve Noonan and Paul Grant expressed the club's appreciation for Bernie's contribution. “His work ethic, his management skills and his ability to relate so well at all levels within the club are a major factor in their success”, they said. Their keen hope is that the end of the year will see them all sharing together in the ultimate reward – a premiership win. Watch out for finals dates and venues in the local paper

Continuing the family theme – Thursday nights each week provide social occasions for senior players, their families and all-comers. Meals are provided for \$10 each with drinks available at bar prices. This provides a great social and family time for all.

A good indicator of the great community support that the club enjoys is seen in the fact that there is never a shortage of volunteers for water-boys, goal umpires, etc. However, the club does want to encourage the community to get behind it both in attendance and financial support for the benefit of our youth and all concerned.

Please contact the club presidents for further information Steve Noonan 0413 565 273, Paul Grant 0412 077 281, Greg Winstanley 0419 371 412.

MFC is passionate about its family and youth policy which focuses on personal development through encouraging a sense of fair play, learning about teamwork and participating in leadership opportunities. It has been very active in the “Good Sports Program” which promotes good governance of sporting clubs.

In 2010 the Juniors look forward to huge structural developments at their home ground – Kiloran Park following the receipt of a \$170,000. Government and Council grant for major improvements to rooms and facilities. The seniors are also hopeful of securing a grant to extend and improve their current facilities. Congratulations to the committees on the progress being made.

Mooroolbark Mustangs are, indeed, going from strength to strength.

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\$10.4 Million for Pembroke

STAGE 1:

- A community and student focus.
- Distinct sectors ('villages') for senior (VCE) students and for Year 7 to 10 students with 'learning neighbourhoods', which support modern teaching and learning approaches and allow the opening up of classrooms to allow team teaching and superior collaborative learning. In stage 1, the general learning areas and specialist classrooms for Year 7 to 10 will be constructed. These spaces will house the VCE students initially while the rest of the old school is demolished in preparation for stage 2.
- This is a two storey Year 7 to 10 building with general learning areas as well as science and technology spaces.
- New Library/Resources Centre and Administration Block.
- New internal road and car park.
- **Community Facility** – a new **basketball court sized gymnasium** – we anticipate that the community will fully book this outside school hours.

This funding is a clear expression of the faith that the Government and the Department has in the future of the school. The rebuilding of our facilities in Mooroolbark will provide great opportunities for our students from the Yarra Valley and surrounding areas for many years to come.

Aidan Ryan
College Principal

STAGE 2:

- State of the art classroom areas and learning neighbourhoods including specialist areas for Technologies (food, automotive, wood, metal), Arts, Performing Arts and Sciences.
- Community Facilities – a **performing arts centre** which will also be available for use by local Primary Schools and the community as well as a multi purpose **artificial surfaced soccer pitch** – also for use by the community – the school will partially fund this as this type of surface is 'over entitlement'.
- Food technology centre, canteen and senior students' café.
- Hard court areas and landscaped grounds.



Minister for Education, Bronwyn Pike,
Vice Captain Rachel Donovan and
School Captains, Kate Gorfine and Tim McNamara

On 15th October this year our Senior Citizens Club will be holding a special function to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Afternoon tea and vocal entertainment will be provided for all who are able to attend.



Terry Charity and Verna Harnetty

The following is a report prepared by Club President, Mr. Terry Charity, for the annual meeting.

The inaugural meeting of the Mooroolbark Senior Citizens' Club was held in the pavilion of Saint Margaret's Church, Hull Road Mooroolbark, on **October 28th 1969**. The opening of the club, on its present site, took place on Saturday December 20th 1975 with councilor R.A.Wallace, Lillydale Shire President presiding. Many alterations and improvements have taken place over the years to bring us to our present position of a vibrant, well-equipped Senior's Club boasting a record 264 membership.

Weekly activities include: Art sessions, Bingo, Indoor Bowls, Snooker, Sequence dance, Line dancing, Exercise classes and Tai Chi. Thursday is 'Club Day' when we regularly expect an attendance of between 90 and 100 members, resulting in approximately 15,000 attendances in any one year. Each year we celebrate Easter with a special afternoon tea and entertainment and also hold an end of year function where a spit roast lunch is provided. Christmas dinner and accompanying entertainment is arranged at an outside venue. Throughout the year a variety of day trips are offered. This year's highlight was the "Tramboat Cruise" on the Maribyrnong River. Other outings include visits to shows, clubs and the Casino. Each year a four-day bus trip is also made available. This year's trip, in April, was to Mildura and surrounds.

Mooroolbark Senior Citizens' Club 40TH ANNIVERSARY

The committee ensures that their fine facilities are well used. As well as serving its own needs, it is the "home" of Mooroolbark Christadelphian Ecclesia' Mooroolbark Lions, Mooroolbark Line-Dancers and the Helen O'Grady Drama Academy. Private groups also hire the facilities at times for birthday parties, anniversaries, and wedding receptions, etc., thus making sure that the club-rooms are used to their full potential.

Both Terry and Verna spoke of their enjoyment at seeing a high level of participation and enjoyment in the various activities provided. They remarked "It makes it all well worthwhile if you can help people to find enjoyment in coming together in this way."

Our local community thanks all of the committee members and others who help in serving our Seniors and wish them every success and enjoyment at their 40th anniversary celebrations.

Well done folks!



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Rocco & Lina with son, Fred

best wishes ROCCO AND LINA

In 1955 Rocco DeMaio arrived in Melbourne from a small village in southern Italy. He reached these shores with just a single suitcase and no knowledge of the English language. However, he was full of optimism and hope for the future and had a youthful enthusiasm for work. For the first four years he took whatever work he could find, in factories, on farms and in shops. One such experience, in a fruit shop set him on the path that he would take for many years into the future.

In 1960 Rocco traveled to Swan Hill to visit his godparents who had left Italy in the early 1950's. Little did he know how fruitful this visit would be. Lina, the eldest of the family's seven children soon caught this young man's eye. Rocco and Lina were married in late 1960 at the Swan Hill Catholic Church. This was the beginning of a strong and lasting partnership marked by total commitment to each other and a high sense of family values.

In 1964, with the support of his father-in-law, and in partnership with his brother, Rocco purchased a fruit and vegetable shop in Malvern. This partnership between the two brothers and their wives lasted for 20 years and was characterised by hard work, sacrifice and perseverance. It led to the very strong conclusion that Australia is indeed a lucky country and a great place to live, especially for those who are willing to work hard and who are looking for a great place to raise children with strong family values.

Eldest son, Carmelo, worked with his dad for the last 8 years of Rocco's time in the Malvern shop before taking over ownership of the business. Rocco and Lina were ready for a change. Both looked forward to a break from the long hours demanded of them in the fruit shop business. With many years experience in retail but none in gifts, "Regalo Giftware" opened its doors to the shopping public in 1990.

"The Terrace" would become a new home for Rocco and Lina. This chapter of their lives saw them develop many friendships within the Mooroolbark community – friendships that have lasted over 19 years. It was with sadness that they drew this part of their life to a close earlier this year. It was time to retire!

Rocco and Lina would like to express their sincere thanks to all who supported them and helped make those 19 years the most pleasant time it was for them.

Retirement is not the end of the roads for the Demaio's. They are planning to travel! First on the list is a trip to Italy to visit family and friends. Then, a trip around this "lucky country".

Living Today joins with many 'locals' in thanking the DeMaio's for their significant contribution to community life in Mooroolbark and wish them the best of health and a long and happy retirement.

Rod Keeble

(Special thanks to Fred DeMaio for his help in preparing this article)

Regalo giftware has now been taken over by well known Mooroolbark couple, Tony and Brenda Mc'Donald. The McDonalds also own Mooroolbark Wool. We wish them every success in their new venture.



Mooroolbark Train Station NEW DEVELOPMENTS ON THE WAY

As many in our local community will be well aware, Mooroolbark Station has been selected as one of three Victorian train stations to be included in the Victorian Government pilot project – "Train Stations as Creative Community Hubs". This exciting project, initiated by the Department of Transport, aims to transform railway stations into more attractive and safer public spaces. It seeks to do this by encouraging local pride and ownership of the station – leading to a better community facility for everyone. It encourages wide community involvement in the development, on-going improvement and care for this important and central township "hub".

A Mooroolbark Train Station Consultative Group has been formed. Within the group interested individuals and people from a range of community groups, clubs and businesses meet regularly with representatives from our local council, a range of State Government departments and also rail operators to develop ideas and action plans for the development of Mooroolbark station and surrounds.

The group has recently participated in a series of workshops to explore issues and to develop ideas and action plans. These have included:

- Urban design and how it can deliver desirable social and aesthetic outcomes.
- Landscaping and architectural design for the station.
- Access and movement, traffic and transport around the station.
- Creating safe places through social engagement, design and surveillance.



Some of the members of our local consultative group after a recent meeting

- Creativity in places – how to integrate public art, interesting design & story-telling.

Action plans for the station will soon be presented to the Department of Transport for assessment and consideration for funding and implementation.

We look forward to seeing some of the ideas and plans becoming reality in the not- too- distant future.

Individuals or local organisations who would like to know more or to register their interest in the project are invited to contact the consultative group through Lisa Whitehouse at the Mooroolbark Community Centre on 9726 5488.

YOU'RE AMAZING!

Thank You So Much!

Steve Steel

If only we could bottle whatever it was that drove so many to contribute in extraordinary ways assisting and comforting the victims of the Black Saturday fires.

Everyone is amazed at how our communities rallied to deal with this tragedy together, and that made all the difference to those who faced such immense loss. We have all read and watched quite detailed reports about the fires and those caught up in them, but to actually meet some of those who served with vigour and determination for several days, has quite an impact.

They would say they're just doing their jobs, but they went far beyond the call of duty, preferring to do whatever it took to see people looked after and cared for when the need was there – and that for more than a few days. These people are natural leaders serving amongst us. Mostly unknown and definitely unheralded – they just go about their work with an eye for detail, a heart for service, and a head for finding solutions. Without their contributions to our everyday affairs, things wouldn't go as smoothly – and I'm sure we'd all notice then! But it's not just about them as individuals – it's just as much about the teams of which they are a part. They accept our gratitude on behalf of those they work with, depending on each other for their combined effectiveness and commitment to helping those in need.

Australian's National Day of Thanksgiving (NDT) is about generating an ongoing awareness of the need for gratitude and appreciation in our very fortunate land. Saying thanks is actually a healthy thing to do – it benefits everyone when given sincerely. The NDT was confirmed on the 17th June 2003 at Parliament House Canberra as an official day in the Australian calendar.

The NDT team desires to promote:

- A positive focus on life – as opposed to the natural response of complaining or criticizing when things aren't to our liking.
- Recognition of many sectors of our society where people volunteer and serve in ways not readily witnessed by the majority of us.
- Encouragement of mutually beneficial relationships to be formed and strengthened across the community.

In a short message of support for the NDT, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of Australia said. "In 2009 we pay special tribute to our leaders: those elected to serve, and those who emerge within their sectors

and communities to offer their insight, guidance and guardianship."

Mayoral Breakfast

Recently in our region, a NDT gathering was held at the Montrose 'York on Lilydale', on Saturday 30th May. It's known locally as the Mayoral Breakfast. This annual event, which is arranged by our local churches and hosted by the mayor, is a wonderful opportunity to take stock of the sometimes extreme actions of many within our community who serve and give of their time, their resources, their experience and their energies to help people in need, and also, to extend our appreciation to them. They don't seek this recognition, but it is a truly moving occasion to hear of their work and the impact they've had on many others lives.

During the breakfast several people introduced to us had contributed on the day of the most severe fires, and continued to assist others in some extraordinary ways over the next few days and weeks. Making the difference sometimes for the ongoing survival of those they'd helped. It's easy to give up when all seems lost, but when the burden is shared, we are buoyed and feel a drive to go on and get through what seems impossible. Can you imagine being called at 9pm and asked to erect 300 army tents? A team of 12 got the job done for those who would be needing them that night – we can have all kinds of trouble getting a tent up in the daytime, and we've done it several times before! Or imagine organising the serving of 25,000 meals with a team of 200 volunteers over several days.

Of course we don't need to wait for the big day to come around every year... we can grow our sense of gratitude for the things people do around us all the time – don't we appreciate 'thanks' sent our way when we've spent ourselves benefiting others. It's just as important in our own families too of course.

A final quote from Ms Quentin Bryce.... "When we see it (leadership) exercised thoughtfully, carefully, wisely, and well, we cannot help but respect it. When we feel its benefits, we cannot help but be grateful."

Spotting someone *doing something good* is a great place to start thinking about the whole concept the NDT people hope will become a part of who we are as a nation... not just something we do once a year! Remember it could be as simple as a text message, a phone call, an email or a card – they can all say the same thing... 'thanks for what you are doing, we really appreciate it, keep up the great work!'



Steve Steel

BLACK SATURDAY

A Remarkable Survival Story

"Like entering a war-zone! A totally unanticipated level of destruction! Grief and sadness beyond anything we could have imagined. We just did the best we could for those struggling and hurting. It became quite surreal. I have just not been able to bring myself to go back there yet!"

These were just some of the deeply felt emotions expressed by Jim McFee and Rob Sibbing, CFA Officers from Mt Evelyn, who had found themselves at the very core of the devastation that struck our parched region on that black day.

Earlier on Black Saturday, many units from Mt Evelyn had been sent to the seriously fire affected area of Bunyip.

When a subsequent call came, remaining Mt. Evelyn units were quickly sent to Yarra Glen.

Jim McFee is a Deputy District Group Officer and strike team leader who is very well known throughout the CFA. (A key role of a strike team leader is that of coordinating teams of 28 or so CFA members and their units in tackling major fire outbreaks.)

News came through that the Steel's Creek area was under fire-storm attack but little detail was known of what was actually happening out there and what the most urgent needs were. Jim was asked to move rapidly to the Steel's Creek area to see what could be done to assist residents who had stayed amongst the approximately 200 homes in the area.

With all of their units out, Jim had only the CFA staff car – a Ford Falcon in which to respond. Long time friend and CFA colleague, Rob Sibbing, joined Jim as they sped towards the affected area. As they arrived they found the area engulfed in smoke and embers, a great number of the houses still burning and people disoriented and unsure of what to do next.

They began moving from house to house checking on the residents and helping them to decide what they each needed to do for the best. At one property they came across a young man who had taken refuge in a dam. A large kangaroo had the same idea and was sharing the space with him. At another property they helped extinguish a flaring gas tank before it caused greater trouble.

When they met up with Joanne and Brian Spears, the couple expressed grave fears for the safety of their near neighbour and good friend – 90 year-old Vel Cross. Vel's home was burnt to the

ground and they had not been able to see any sign of her.

Jim and Rob quickly checked out the house on its 17 hectare property. As they circled the house, fearing the worst, they came to a point overlooking the property's dam which was some 200 meters away. They saw a tiny figure at the dam. When they reached her, sitting on the edge of the dam – feet in the water, they soon saw that Vel had been quite badly burned on the face arms and legs. This had happened as she hurried as best she could to the dam through the burning paddock.

She was greatly comforted by the men's presence but was obviously in deep shock. Neighbour, Joanne, cried with relief at the great news of Vel's miraculous survival.

Having maintained radio contact, Jim was able to call the Victorian Ambulance Service who advised that, because of the fires all around the area, the two CFA men would have to get Vel to Yarra Glen in their own vehicle.

Of the many people they met and helped that day, Jim and Rob felt a special need to follow up on Vel – and are so glad they did. Visiting the Maroondah Hospital on subsequent days they met with Vel again and established a close and warm tie between the unlikely trio.



Rob Sibbing and Jim McFee

Vel, a very brave and strong lady, was already fighting back and talking about returning to the property she loved so much. However, the guys soon learned that she was not covered by insurance.

Since that time, with their support and that of a case-worker for fire victims allocated to Vel, funding has been approved to purchase a "relocatable" home which Joanne found on the internet. As this is being written, the old home site has been cleared and the new home established in its place. With support from local businesses, CFA

members and friends the house has now been re-painted, re-carpeted and water and electricity services installed.

After being discharged from hospital, Vel was looked after for some weeks by neighbours Joanne and Brian in their Holly Lane Mews B&B before arrangements could be made for her to stay in a nursing home in Healesville – where she continues to recover from her trauma.

Vel has now been out to visit her new home and loves it. She is most appreciative of the unexpected level of love and help she has received from so many. Everyone hopes she will be able to see her dream of returning to her beloved, tranquil, Steel's Creek property come true very soon.

A big thank you to all who contributed to this great example of community love and support out of such tragic circumstances. A number of lives were lost in Steel's creek that day.

Almost unbelievably, after this gut-wrenching experience, Jim and Rob spent the next four – five hours working their way through Healesville, over the Black Spur and on to Alexandra. Certainly putting themselves at significant risk as they helped others – as they had done in Steel's Creek. Jim commented, "At the end of that trip our mud-flaps had been affected by the heat and were hanging off and the Nav-Man was melted to the windscreen"

Jim and Rob do not see themselves

as heroes. "We were just doing our job – like so many others on that day", they said

We sincerely thank Jim and Rob for sharing their moving and inspiring story with us. And we thank again all those who showed such bravery, kindness and generosity of spirit through this harrowing time.



40th Anniversary

Girls' Brigade is part of an international Christian youth organization which supports the family, serves the community and meets the needs of girls today.

This year Mooroolbark Baptist Church is proudly celebrating the 40th anniversary of its Girls' Brigade. Church records show that over 500 young girls have participated in the program over those years. A wonderful service to our local community.

Enrolment is open to all girls in our neighbourhood and wider community. Currently there are 42 young people enrolled in the program which ranges from Cadets (grades prep-2 students), through to Juniors (grades 3-6) and Seniors (Yr. 7-8).



Older girls have the option to move on to the Pioneers group (Yr. 9-12) where awards, including the "Queen's Award" can be achieved. It is also from the "Pioneers" group that future Girl's Brigade leaders are trained and drawn. Over the years, many of the local leaders have come through the ranks of the club and have moved on to serving the next generation in this way – a great indicator of the success of the program.

Pioneers is also a great place for the development of a variety of personal skills in communication, administration, organizational matters, etc. These skills are great to have on a personal profile and help to prepare girls to enter the work-force with confidence.



Girls' Brigade is a great place to meet new friends, do cool stuff and learn exciting things. Activities include craft projects, cooking, camps and sleep-overs, outings, dress-up theme nights, singing, dancing, drama, and learning biblical truths and life skills.

Special family nights throughout the year and state and interstate camping opportunities cap off a well rounded program.

Participation in Girls' Brigade is a great way to "hang out" with other girls.

Mooroolbark Girls' Brigade meets each Thursday night during school terms. Cadets begin at 6pm and the older groups at 7pm. For further information, please contact Wendy Sinclair at the church office on 9725 3700 (www.girlsbrigadeaustralia.org).

Wendy coordinates the local program and is also State Commissioner for Girls' Brigade, Victoria.

St Margaret's Annual Fete

**Sat. Nov 14th
Commencing 8.30am**

Cakes, Plants, Books, Jewellery, Gifts & Toys, Children's Clothing, Trash & Treasure Café, Lucky dips, etc.

St Margaret's enjoys a close relationship with a number of smaller churches in the Wycheproof Parish. Fete proceeds will help provide much needed assistance to those churches.



FREE FAMILY FILM NIGHT

ALL WELCOME

Come along to Mooroolbark Community Centre

**Wednesday Sept 23rd
"ICE AGE 3"**

"Dawn of the Dinosaurs"
Commences at 7.30pm.

The usual free ice-cream, tea & coffee will be available.

This school holidays program is a joint community service extended to young families in our neighbourhood by...

Mooroolbark Christian

Fellowship & Mooroolbark Community Centre

Please visit or contact Mooroolbark Community Centre to **reserve your seats phone 9726 5488**

Tickets may be reissued if not collected by 7.15pm, and there is a wait list.



Mooroolbark Baptists Celebrating Marriage Week

Sept 13th-20th has been designated as a special time to celebrate and promote the benefits of the marriage relationship.

At MBC it is also the culmination of a marriage enrichment program that has been conducted over an eight week period –

aiming to help couples to build on their relationship.

To celebrate the completion of this program, a dinner will be conducted for participants and for any others who may be interested in finding out more about the marriage course. Anyone interested is invited to contact the MBC office for more details. The dinner will take place on the evening of Saturday, 12th September. Cost \$20 per person.

The next marriage course at MBC will take place in term 1 next year.



Hey there Hoopla! The circus is in town. – not quite! By Rosey Cullinan

Rouseabouts and ring-ins alike have been hard at work in Mooroolbark with rehearsals well underway for the latest production from FAIRDINKUM ENTERTAINMENT – the SPJE Revue Group.

A biennial event, the 2009 show is Circus? Faidinkum... you're dreamin'!

The cast and the band are clowning around learning songs and lines and even some new skills for the two performances on Saturday October 17th.

Normally a revue format, the production team were keen to try something different this year, so the show tells an original story,

based on a concept by Technical Director, Neil Mitchell that provides opportunities for the inclusion of various acts.

Director, Ann O'Connor, has cast performers of all ages with primary and high school students working alongside more mature fellow cast to create a colourful, energetic show.

Amongst the cast are Chris Barnett and Laura Duivenvoorden, two of the winners from the Faidinkum Talent Show at last year's SPJE Community Fair. This other regular production for Faidinkum Entertainment provides a showcase for local talent with generous cash prizes donated by local sponsors such as the Mooroolbark Community Bendigo Bank.

With well-known songs and gags galore, there is sure to be something for all ages of audience to enjoy.

Lilydale Heights Performing Arts Centre will have the ringside seats, with one show at 2.00pm and another at 7.30pm. Patrons have ample opportunity to juggle their social commitments to decide which time suits them best and purchase tickets.

Tickets are available by calling Ann O'Connor on 0417 598 308 or Denise Rash on 0433 839 600.

Special thanks to sponsors – The Tech Doctor, Longmores and Five Ways Mower Services.



fairdinkum entertainment presents

Circus? Faidinkum...you're dreamin'

17 October 2009
2:00pm & 7:30pm

**Lilydale Heights
Performing Arts Centre**
Nelson Rd, Lilydale

Tickets will be on sale in September

Any enquiries, please Call
Ann O'Connor on 0417 598 308



U3A Yarra Ranges Louise Rockne

U3A Yarra Ranges has become pleasingly international in recent years. Now there are more than 20 countries of birth represented by its members. Besides of course Australia and England, members come from Poland, India, Greece, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy and many more countries. To celebrate this international flavour an international lunch was held consisting of typical food from each country. There were Eccles cakes, a Polish hunter's stew, curry, Holland rusk cake, kedgeree and

of course the ever faithful pavlova among other treats. A recipe book including all the recipes and enlarged with additional recipes from these countries will be printed.

Other social events such as trivia nights, film soirees, quarterly luncheons and art exhibitions enhance U3A Yarra Ranges' list of 31 classes which include something to energise body as well as mind. Yoga, Feldenkries, line dancing and walking groups are provided for members who want to keep fit, and for the mind's stimulation there are language courses, philosophy, book discussion groups, Australian history among others. For the artistically inclined there are classes in folk art, painting, doll making and crafts.

U3A Yarra Ranges belongs to the growing international movement of U3As which are designed to keep the minds and bodies of older people in tune. They are not for profit and the class leaders are also members who have a skill or knowledge to share. Because there are no paid staff, membership fees are only \$35 for the whole year. For this small sum, members may enrol in as many classes as they wish.

There are no academic requirements or tests or grades given ... only self-directed learning for the pure joy of it. **Friendships are made and the relaxed atmosphere shows that learning can truly be fun. For more information and an introductory package, please telephone either Louise on 9756 6879 or Dorothy on 9739 0953.**

Quotable Quotes

"Peace is not something you wish for; It's something you make, Something you do, Something you are, And something you give away."

Robert Fulghum (b.1937); author, pastor

Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	Farmers Market. "Bellbird Park", Swansea Rd (next to Lilydale Lake). Combined Rotary Clubs. All proceeds go to local and O/seas projects. Contact Bill Sutherland on 9727 0037 for more information.
Friday Sept 25 th / Oct 30 th / Nov 27 th	MCC Lounge Sessions. Local musicians/original music. M/B Community Centre 7pm start. Entry \$6. Free tea & coffee.
Saturday Sept 12 th	2nd Hand Book Fair. St Francis Parish Hall, 218 Hull Road.
Wed. Sept 23 rd	Free Film Night. Mooroolbark Community Centre. Showing "Ice Age 3". Commences 7.30pm. Ring the Centre on 9726 5488 to book seats.
Thursday 24 th Sept. to 15 th Oct	Vintage Art Show. See details below.
Friday nights / school term.	Fridays @ Kid's Domain. Activities for Primary School Age Kids. 4pm – 6pm. Oxley College Stadium. For details: Tel. 9726 8111 or go to www.lmc.org.au
Saturday 17 th Oct	SPJE Revue. Circus? Fairydream...you're dreamin! See page 11 for details.
Saturday Oct. 3rd. 10am-4pm	Open Garden Day. 3 Front gardens in St John's Ave and 3 in St George's Cres Croydon. Gold coin donation.
Sunday Oct. 4 th @ 3pm	Blessing of Pets. Hookey Park. Gold coin donation to Coldstream Animal Shelter.
Oct. 20 th to 26 th	Mooroolbark Childrens' Film Festival Exhibition. Details – M/B Community Centre.
Oct. to Dec.	Art Classes–Painting, Pottery, Folk Art, etc. Contact M/B Community Centre for details.
Nov. 5 th to 7 th & 11 th to 14 th	Mooroolbark Theatre Group production. "Wild Goose Chase". Adults \$15. Includes program, sherry, tea & coffee and cake. Bookings on 9726 4282.
Nov. 14 th	St. Margaret's Annual Fete. For details see notice on page 10.
Nov. 14 th	Trivia Night. 7.15pm for a 7.30 start. St Francis Parish Hall, 218 Hull Road.
Nov. 29 th @ 2.30pm	Pipe Organ Concert. Featuring Kieran Crichton. St Francis Parish Hall.

Our new "Community Events Calendar" offers a service to local clubs and organizations. To include entries for your group's community events in future issues please contact the editor on 9761 1121 or 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 lodged one month prior to the distribution date.

Yarra Ranges "Vintage Artists" Art Show 2009

St John's Park Social Club is pleased to announce its coming Art Show – to be presented in the "Red Earth Gallery" at Mooroolbark Community Centre (Brice Ave. M/bark) from September 24th to October 15th. All works of art will be available for purchase and all proceeds from the show will be donated to the Maroondah Hospital.

The Opening Night will be conducted on Thursday Sep 24th commencing at 6.30pm. Admission price \$10 per person. The show will be officially opened by Mr David Hodgett M.P., Guest speaker for the evening, Judy Seath, is a Nursing Manager for the day procedure unit at the Maroondah Hospital.

Special Afternoon-tea. An afternoon of music and art will take place on Thursday Oct 1st. The gathering will be addressed by our Mayor, Cr Len Cox. Musical items from Shirley and John Collins, Carol Inglis and Peter McDougall will follow. Cost \$5 **All welcome!** For bookings please ring M/B Community Centre on 9726 5488 or Vicky Power on 97259794.

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LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark

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Like to Contribute?
If you have a good news story about people or groups who you believe are an inspiration to the community, Please contact the editor through our church-office tel. number or by email (as above)

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