

# livingtoday

Issue 88 // Spring 2024

Good news. **Locally.**

Mooroolbark & surrounds.



## Great Outdoors Issue

Bickleigh Vale open days • Tree planting • Community Garden turns one

# Hello from the Living Today team

As a member of the Mooroolbark community for many years, it has been a pleasure being embedded in a few aspects of the township, such as the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival, mentoring at a local primary school and the Mooroolbark Annual Tree Planting, among others. The longest-running involvement for me has been as Secretary on the committee for the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group Inc. (MUG). As a 'MUG-ger' I have enjoyed getting to know, working with and developing friendships with many in the community. I suppose recording and writing up the minutes for each meeting must have its advantages!

This year's involvement with the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group Inc. has been particularly special. The Yarra Ranges Council does much to support local community groups, including township groups, and they have judged that conditions are ripe for a new initiative in Mooroolbark. So, with Council guidance, support and partnership, MUG applied for State Government funds to establish a community house at the Mooroolbark Community Centre. Our fingers were crossed as we awaited the outcome, and it was in June this year we heard that we were successful. This is a big win for the community and will put to more good use the Community Centre and leverage off the good stuff that is already happening in the town.

The next step is to develop a Committee of Governance for the House. This is where you might come in. We are looking for applicants who love their town, who would like to contribute to the local area and who have a passion for good governance. There are contact details on the back page and page 10 features the press release from Yarra Ranges Council.

Also in this spring issue, as the weather warms up, we have an article about Bickleigh Vale and the Open Garden event, the Tree Planting Day, the Mooroolbark Community Garden's first birthday and a regular feature on Mooroolbark Street Art. All the more inviting to see in person as the days lengthen and we get out and about more.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

**Matthew Gudze, Lead Pastor, Grace Communion Mooroolbark (sponsors of Living Today) on behalf of the Living Today Editorial Team.**

## livingtoday

Issue 88 // Spring 2024

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### Like to contribute?

If you have a good news story about people or groups who are an inspiration to the community, please contact the editor on our church-office phone number or by email (details above).

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**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



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We meet every Sunday at 10.30am at the Mooroolbark Community Centre. Come along and enjoy a service and stay for a chat, with delicious tea, coffee and biscuits.

**Green Printing Credentials**



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# Treasured Babies

by Randall Bouchier

Most people, whether parents or not, can recall their sense of wonder at the miracle of birth whilst holding or admiring a young baby.

I was privileged to be present at the births of our children. It was a beautiful experience watching on as my wife's pain and sheer hard work transformed into contented, quiet joy and gratitude as she cradled our newborn.

I recently visited a group of volunteers in Mooroolbark – Treasured Babies they call themselves. These volunteers are women who are committed to caring for grieving parents who experience the loss of their child during pregnancy or childbirth.

What sets these women apart is that most have experienced the loss of a premature or stillborn baby in the past – during an era when bereaved pre-term mothers were regularly told, “Forget about it, go home, and try again.” Sometimes these women were permitted to see their stillborn child through a glass screen; rarely were they given an opportunity to hold them. For some, the location of their child's burial is unknown.

During my visit, I felt deeply privileged to hear some of the women recount their incredibly moving, distressing stories. To say I was deeply moved would be an understatement!

Thankfully, in subsequent years, much has changed for the better. These days bereaved parents are offered much greater support than in past times. The care offered to bereaved parents by the medical fraternity has improved by leaps and bounds.

Treasured Babies serves grieving families. There can be no lessening of grief, but the group offers comfort and support in ways that help parents and families navigate the distressing trauma of bereavement.

The group had its beginnings across the Maroondah Highway in a Chirnside Park lounge room before having to relocate to one of the shops in Mooroolbark's Terrace as demand for their help grew – at first locally and regionally, and later nationally.

For the 15 on-site women who devote hours every week volunteering in Mooroolbark, their serving of bereaved families is intensely personal and meaningful. Because of their own experiences, these women had no difficulty recognising a need they could respond to. Although they've never ceased to grieve the loss of their own child, they're thankful that they can offer comforting help to others who are also grieving.

They serve in very practical ways. They hand-knit, crochet and sew beautiful items of clothing for stillborn babies at various stages of gestation. Some of the items moistened my eyes – tiny booties about the size of a ten cent piece; tiny hats that could fit on the tip of your finger. Locals regularly pop in to drop off donations, not forgetting the hundreds of volunteers from all over Australia who send in knitted, crocheted and sewn items.

Treasured Babies offers the items of clothing, tiny blankets, and small wooden burial boxes made by men's sheds, to bereaved parents so that they can dress and prepare their child for burial. One





of the ladies told me that this represents perhaps the only decision bereaved parents get to make on behalf of the child for whom they grieve.

Treasured Babies also offers a 'naming certificate' so that parents have a permanent record of the birth details and name of a child in the absence of a state-issued birth certificate. 'Memory boxes' are also offered so that parents can keep items such as hospital identifiers together.

There's growing, Australia-wide demand for the services Treasured Babies provide. Bereaved parents are profoundly grateful to receive the items the volunteers so lovingly prepare. They find them helpful in providing some form of dignified closure in the midst of their grief.

Word has spread far beyond the humble Chirnside Park beginnings. Hospitals and funeral parlours across Australia are now able to order bereavement packs – specifically-sized clothing, blankets and so on – that they can offer bereaved families.

As midwives familiar with the work of Treasured Babies move to different locations, they make the hospitals in which they work aware of the services Treasured Babies provides. During the short time I spent with the volunteers in the Mooroolbark shopfront, a courier took delivery of several large boxes to be delivered across Australia, sometimes as far afield as several Indigenous communities near Darwin.

As demand grew, so did the need for support and funding.

Have you ever worn one of those fund-raising red noses? According to the Red Nose website, "Red

Nose Day was the first ever national fundraising day of its kind in Australia. This much-loved and iconic event began in the hope of raising awareness and funds for SIDS research. The first campaign was a huge success, raising over \$1.3 million and selling over one million red noses!

"Part of that success was due to the Red Nose Day tagline – getting silly for a serious cause – which encourages people to go out and do something fun – wear a red nose, look a bit silly and make people smile without taking away from the seriousness of the cause. To this day it still brings together communities all across Australia to make a difference for families in need."

It was a natural fit for Treasured Babies to affiliate with Red Nose, operating as part of the Grief and Loss arm of the charity. Red Nose provides not only financial help, but also helps coordinate the collection of articles of clothing donated from around the country in association with the voluntary administrative work of another local, Tracey Langridge.

I reckon that Treasured Babies provides a marvellous service! The volunteers struck me as a close-knit group of friends who enjoy each other's company. There was much laughter as they shared a cuppa together. Like many groups of volunteers, Treasured Babies welcomes anyone who would like to help. If you would like to volunteer your help, please contact [treasuredbabies@rednose.com.au](mailto:treasuredbabies@rednose.com.au) or just pop in at the Terrace on a Tuesday or Friday morning.

Thanks so much to all at Treasured Babies for all you do! It's a privilege to have you in our midst!





# Hidden in Plain Sight

by Mary Bourchier

Tucked away far from the madding crowd is an acreage of old stone cottages, modelled after a village in Devon, England, each surrounded by a large rambling garden designed by celebrated gardener, author and photographer Edna Walling.

Leading off Pembroke Road in Mooroolbark you will find the unsealed canopied road of Bickleigh Vale, with shrubs growing densely on either side. It leads you past picket-gated driveways that curve up to quaint old stone cottages, surrounded by large rambling gardens with stone walls, crazy paving and heritage trees – elms, copper beeches and oaks. And as you walk along this unsealed country road you could easily feel you are taken back to the early days when Mooroolbark was first developed.

The air is fresh with the smell of gum blossom and dainty wildflowers, the birds twitter joyfully and, best of all, the noise of traffic is dimmed. Each cottage you pass blends harmoniously with its surrounding landscape, giving you a picture of peace and rest, and perhaps mystery. How did this all come about, and why has this survived the ravages of modern urban development?

Edna Walling was born in Yorkshire in 1895 and grew up loving its “low-growing plants, mauves and soft greens, mossy boulders and gritty pathways” and simple stone cottages. Edna emigrated to Australia in 1914 and studied horticulture at Burnley College. She initially worked as a ‘jobbing gardener’ (including Dame Nellie Melba’s Coombe Cottage in Coldstream) but felt this was very uninspiring work until a pivotal day when she came upon a stone wall supporting a semi-circular terrace.

This inspired Edna to include strong architectural dimensions to her own landscape designs, featuring stone walls, pergolas and winding stone paths. Walling’s expertise and passion for landscaping were reflected in her numerous

magazine and newspaper articles as well as her highly collectible books and photography. She became a household name through her articles on gardening published in *Australian Home Beautiful*, for example, and designed many of Australia’s grandest homes and gardens.

Sometime around 1919–1920 Edna purchased three acres of rolling cow paddocks in Mooroolbark and built her first cottage using local stone, timbers and recycled materials, and named it ‘Sonning’ after an English village. A special selection of trees was chosen to “give it an air of completeness and restfulness”.

Edna then bought an extra 18 acres which she named Bickleigh Vale after a Devonshire village, and during the 1940s she oversaw the construction of 16 cottages and gardens on one-to two-acre allotments. Prospective owners had to agree to a cottage and garden of Edna’s design and making – she was very hands-on – and she propagated and planted many of the trees and shrubs herself.

Edna’s goal was to create an environment in which houses and gardens blended harmoniously together with the natural environment and a ‘village’ of like-minded people who would appreciate, preserve and maintain the common features of the area.

Much of Edna’s gardening principles are still closely followed today by this community who have been able to preserve its unique character. In 1978 the National Trust and the Shire of Yarra Ranges classified Bickleigh Vale as an area of ‘special significance’, and there are landscaping rules and regulations in place that ensure the village will be preserved as much as possible for future generations to enjoy.

This October will see the 100-year anniversary celebration of Edna Walling’s best-known project. In partnership with Open Gardens Victoria, the



Friends of Bickleigh Vale Village will host two open days, on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th October. Eight private gardens will be on display to the public – Badgers Wood, Devon Cottage, Downterry, Lynton Lee, Mistover, Sonningfield, The Barn and Whistlewood – from 10.00 a.m. till 4.30 p.m. Admission is \$35 adults, \$25 students.

## Downterry

I recently had the great pleasure of visiting one of the gardens at Downterry and was entranced by its charm and peaceful beauty. Though it was mid-winter, with only a few clumps of colour peeping through, I admired the simple garden layout, with its long sweeping drive past the magnificent giant elm, leading up to the pink cottage built for Edna's mother.

Edna had a hand in building the stone chimney at the back of the original cottage, which has stood the test of time! The bare branches of the deciduous trees allowed dappled sunlight to gently highlight the shrubs and groundcovers beneath, giving the landscaped garden a wonderful impression of freedom and spaciousness.

The present owner, Maryann Sporon-Fielder, has lovingly tended the one-acre garden for over 30 years. She and her late partner Alan fell in love with the house the moment they came in – “It was magical!” – and soon set to work restoring the much overgrown garden, poring over Edna's gardening books and studying old photographs, as well as receiving advice and plants from neighbours. Interestingly, it was Maryann's grandfather who introduced her to Edna Walling's designs. He was inspired by Edna's book, *Cottage and Garden in Australia* published in 1947, and made many stone walls around Alexandria.

The stone walls that Edna put in place are still intact at Downterry, as well as the trees she planted – the giant elm, copper beech, oak, plums and crab apples, to name a few. Hedges and shrubs partly conceal the wire fencing, giving shade and privacy, but also allowing little views into the neighbouring gardens, adding to the sense of spaciousness. Intriguing stone and gravel pathways meander through the garden shrubbery and lead to garden 'rooms', to an occasional chair or bench or a serene stonework pond. And the picturesque views of the garden from inside the cottage windows bring the garden 'inside' too – as Edna Walling had intended. At the same time they beckon you to go out and explore the garden more... oh, what is that fascinating ornament over there, and where does that intriguing pathway lead?

Though gardens naturally evolve over time as trees die or tastes change, Maryann has tried to keep the garden as Edna originally planned it, with plants that Edna favoured, like foxgloves, hellebores, irises and bulbs. These certainly will be a treat to see in flower this spring!

Maryann feels there is no other place she would rather be, and loves living in this green and friendly village community. She enjoys sitting under the shady trees with her morning coffee, watching the myriad birds that dart among the thickets and call overhead – eastern spinebills, king parrots, rosellas, wattlebirds, currawongs – and pottering in her rambling garden, gently fine-tuning a garden bed here or there. But keeping to Edna's way of letting the garden grow naturally, for Maryann the garden has become the “place of tranquillity and a spiritual haven” that Edna envisioned long ago!





# Tree Planting

by Matthew Gudze

On 28 July, deep in winter on a dark, wet and stormy morning, the clouds parted, the sun shone through and by 1pm Balcombe Reserve was bathed in a warming light. It was the 18th Annual Mooroolbark Tree Planting Day, and in view of the Dandenong Ranges close to 40 rugged-up volunteers with shovels, hoes and mattocks, along with two Yarra Ranges Council staff, got their hands, knees and boots dirty to dig, plant and gently protect with stakes, 1000 seedlings in another delightful community planting.

Admittedly, though doing admirably at the beginning, the young kids didn't last that long in the cold winds and went pretty quickly to the drinks, scones and jam on offer. However, the rest of us continued in the afternoon, enjoying the camaraderie of working in the outdoors together.

The planting event aligns with Planet Ark's World Environment Day, and National Tree Day in Australia, and in preparation the Council chooses the grounds and lays out the seedlings, stakes and shade covers. As with other planting days in the past, we are very much looking forward to when in 10 years' time this area too will have mature trees, grasses and shrubs to attract wildlife and beautify the area even more.



Plant icon by Rabee Balakrishnan, Noun Project



# Gratitude Breakfast



by Neil Mitchell

Pre-dawn on a July morning, 40 or so people gathered for a 'Gratitude Breakfast' to honour some of the amazing volunteers who offer so much to our Mooroolbark community. This event was made possible by the generosity of St Margaret's Church and with financial assistance from the Yarra Ranges Council.

Guests included volunteers from MUG (Mooroolbark Umbrella Group), Mooroolbark Traders, Shop 16, Goodness Gracious Network, Community Garden, Celebrate Mooroolbark and People's Pantry.

The fine spread was beautifully served and hosted by the team from Tasty As (a local social enterprise which provides hospitality training and experience for young people with disability) and the volunteers had the pleasure of listening to guest speaker Ashley Wijey. Ashley, who has been manager of the Mooroolbark Community Bank, spoke powerfully of his personal story and how that has shaped his life choices and attitudes.

Volunteers are an indication of the health of our community. They provide the 'social capital' that enables activities and enterprises to exist. In turn these activities and enterprises build and reinforce links and community networks, resilience and the sharing of resources. Interestingly, many volunteers are part of our community networks not only to give, but also to receive, whether that is in material goods or mental and social support.

It should be noted that the community would struggle to find a venue (or budget) big enough to cater for all the volunteers in Mooroolbark – think of the CFA, Men's Shed, the Miniature Railway, sporting groups, SES, service organisations, church groups, scouts, guides and Candlebark Community Nursery, to name a few.



Coffee icon by Mariyani from the Noun Project

“  
**How rich we are  
for having such  
networks and  
people! Thank you.**

”



# New Community House to be established in Mooroolbark



**On 22 July 2024 Yarra Ranges Council posted the following announcement on its website. Since then Renae Jones has been appointed as coordinator, commencing in the role at the beginning of October.**

Council is delighted at the recent news that the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) has received funding from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to establish a new Community House in Mooroolbark.

The new Community House will be situated at the Mooroolbark Community Centre, 125 Brice Avenue, which is a Council-owned facility situated close to the Mooroolbark Train Station, Mooroolbark Library, and Community Connect Shop 16.

President of the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group, Randall Bouchier, said that they were delighted that the Mooroolbark Community Centre was going to be transitioning to a Community House.

“The Community House will serve the diverse groups and needs of those in Mooroolbark, and be a place where community can gather and take part in a wide range of inclusive activities,” Bouchier said.

“There will be meeting spaces for agencies and individuals who offer services that promote social, physical and mental wellbeing, as well as spaces for the arts and more.

“We are grateful for the support of Yarra Ranges Council, DFFH and the Community Houses Association of the Outer Eastern Suburbs (CHAOS) and we look forward to learning from the many fine examples of other Community Houses around the state who are willing to share their ideas and experiences.”

Yarra Ranges Mayor, Cr Sophie Todorov, said that the new Community House would provide some much-needed services to the Mooroolbark community and surrounds.

“Mooroolbark is the largest suburb in Yarra Ranges without a community house so this fills a significant gap that will increase social connection to help reduce isolation and loneliness, improve mental wellbeing, increase safety and build community resilience,” she said.

“The facility is well-equipped with a reception area, offices, art room, gallery, auditorium, a stage and a kitchen, so I can’t wait to see how this amazing space gets used and the great outcomes that this will have for the community.”

The next step will be to establish a Committee of Governance (see back page) that is incorporated and equipped to be able to successfully manage the new Community House.

Community members will start to see a gradual increase in activity at the Mooroolbark Community Centre, building on the existing activity of the long-established community groups who already use the space.





# Mooroolbark Community Garden celebrates spring

by Helen vander-Heyden

We have welcomed spring with open arms, the seedlings are growing and we are preparing for our second summer at the Mooroolbark Community Garden.

During winter the last of our infrastructure was constructed – our learning centre for children, another polytunnel fruit tree grove, inclusion tables, inclusion garden beds and more.

We recently celebrated our first birthday with a great day of snags and seedlings and entertainment for the kids. The event was enjoyed by all, despite the overcast and windy weather.

Our monthly markets also start again on 29 September and we will hold a market on the last Sunday of the month. We have some great new stallholders and food vans to entice you to enjoy the gardens, as well as vegetable seedlings and plant sales.

There is always someone in the garden between 10am and 12 noon, seven days a week, so please come down and have a chat or enjoy the space.

*Monthly Market!*  
last Sunday of the month.

**Fresh Produce:** Enjoy a selection of farm-fresh vegetables, and herbs straight from the garden. Homemade jams, and local honey.

**Artisan Goods:** Browse handmade crafts, baked goods, and unique artisanal products.

**Live Music:** Experience local talent with live performances to enhance your browsing experience.

**Family Fun:** Kid-friendly activities, face painting, and games for all ages.

**Tasty Treats:** Indulge in delicious food from a variety of food trucks and stalls.

**MOOROOLBARK COMMUNITY GARDEN**  
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**FREE GARDENING CLASSES**  
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WE HAVE A MEETING THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH @ 7:30pm - AT MOOROOLBARK BAPTIST CHURCH 157 HULL RD, MOOROOLBARK

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY: YARRA RANGES COUNCIL, COMMUNITY BANK MOOROOLBARK, WCIG, AND YOU.

OUR NEXT SAUSAGE SIZZLE IS:-  
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 COLES MOOROOLBARK

MEMBERSHIP + VOLUNTEER FORMS ARE AVAILABLE, JUST ASK RHONDA OR HELEN

WE ASK THAT YOU ONLY HARVEST WHAT YOU NEED FOR ONE DAY. A DONATION VIA THE SHIPPING CONTAINER DOOR SLOT IS APPRECIATED. PLEASE ONLY HARVEST FOR ONE HOUSEHOLD. IF IN DOUBT - ASK A VOLUNTEER.

CAN YOU HELP?  
 WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO MANAGE OUR MARKETS IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE CONTACT US VIA EMAIL OR PHONE.

MARKET DATES  
 SEPT 29th  
 OCT 27th  
 NOV 24th  
 DEC 8th  
 22nd

THIS GARDEN IS MANAGED BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT WE ARE A NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATION

10-11





# Cardigan Cellars mural

Artwork by David Lee Pereira



mooroolbark  
STREET ART PROJECT

by Yolande Pickett

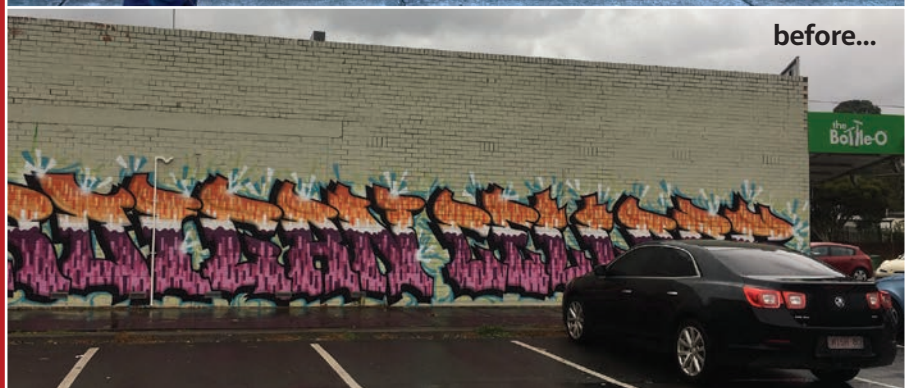
Recently completed by Victorian-based artist David Lee Pereira, our latest mural pays tribute to the renowned landscape designer, writer, and photographer Edna Walling. Pereira was tasked with capturing Walling's trail-blazing spirit and has created a stunning surrealist interpretation of Bickleigh Vale for the Mooroolbark community.

To develop the mural, Pereira delved into Walling's history, her work, personal life, and relationships. He also engaged with the current Bickleigh Vale community, documenting and collaging photographs of the gardens now, along with archival images. The mural features symbolic elements of Edna herself – the spirit of her dog, her architecture, her trousers, flora and winding portals of nature. A whimsical nod to the present, a lone white plastic patio chair, represents the continued use of these cherished spaces.

Researchers have indicated that Bickleigh Vale became a refuge for Edna and the women with whom she shared close relationships and kinship. Inspired by impressionist painters, this mural is unique to David's work, celebrating Edna Walling's gardens and architecture and her life as a fellow 'misfit'.

Located just around the corner from Bickleigh Vale, this remarkable piece can be viewed at Cardigan Cellars, on the corner of Cardigan Road and Gray Court.

A Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group initiative.





# The Confusion Fusion Reactor

Part 5 of our ongoing kids story by Ross MacKay

Parts 1-4 can be found at [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)  
in **Past Issues** from September 2023 onward.

"A long time ago in a galaxy far far..." started Abythwrd but was cut off by Nuttingale.

"It was just over that hill," she said.

"A long time ago just over that hill there..."

"You just need to take that path, turn right when you reach the wrinkly old man – he's a hoot – pass over the bridge, or under it, or just ignore it; it's mostly rotten and the river is dried up... actually is there a river? Anyway, you walk..."

"Nuttingale! I was trying to tell Alllan the story of the Confusion Fusion Reactor, you're getting carried away. He doesn't need to know the way there yet!"

I wasn't so sure. I did think it was probably useful to know which way it was so I could run in the *opposite* direction from it.

I turned to make my flight, tripped, fell flat on my face and said "Ouch!" I sat up to find that neither Abythwrd nor Nuttingale had noticed and instead were arguing.

"...is not going to run away; he's the chosen one," insisted Abythwrd.

"Well, how do you explain the fact that he's running away as we speak?" She was right. I had got up and was almost past the tree line when I was picked up by a giant tulip and placed back down at Nuttingale's feet. I tried this three more times and was met by the same fate. So I gave up. "OK, let's get this over with, what do you want me to do?" I sighed.

"Simples," said Nuttingale. "We need you to turn off the Confusion Fusion Reactor and then hopefully life will return to normal – if any of us can remember what that even is!"

"The Confusion Fusion Reactor? You keep saying the Confusion Fusion Reactor. What exactly is the Confusion Fusion Reactor?" I paused to take a breath. "Actually, can we call it something else? It takes far too long to say and this explanation is taking far too long as it is! Maybe we can simply refer to it as the CFR?"

"Ha!" laughed Nuttingale. "No way! Haha, oh my, that's funny. No, sorry CFR stands for the Custard Factory Revelation and no one wants to be reminded about *that!* Let's refer to it as cfr instead."

"What? What's the difference?"

"Uh, massive difference. It's not all in capital letters. CFR... cfr... you can tell the difference easily."

Abythwrd piped up: "Actually, I just refer to it as Morag; it's much easier."

"Ooh, good idea," said Nuttingale. "Does it have a surname? Can I suggest Fosingthwaite? I've always liked Fo..."

"*Please!*" I yelled, "Can we get back to the CFR?"

"cfr," corrected Nuttingale.

"Morag," corrected Abythwrd.

I was beginning to wonder if maybe it was these two I should be running away from and not the CERTAIN DOOM.

"OK, so Morag first appeared many moons ago," began Nuttingale.

"Or last Tuesday," interjected Abythwrd.

"Or last Tuesday, it's not entirely clear. Either way, ever since it appeared, things have gotten confused. And I mean *everything*. Nothing is as it used to be. When Morag arrived all of what we took for granted as normal, got shaken up and spat back out unrecognisable. Time has gotten muddled up, physics has changed, what's up is now sometimes down, what used to taste good is now horrible, our previous efficient transport system was turned into waterslides. Things that didn't used to talk, started to talk or came alive and started walking around..."

"Like your tulip," I said.

"No, don't be ridiculous, Fido's always been like that. Can you imagine a world where tulips weren't pets? Now that would be crazy! Anyway, we can't go on like this. We need someone to go and switch it off or destroy it and that someone is you Alllan!"

"Why can't you just do it yourself? Why go to trouble of getting someone from another reality? Dimension? Planet? I don't even know..."

"You're from another *Here*. Bit hard to explain right now, but in answer to your question, we need someone who won't evaporate the moment they get close to Morag. We Aquatians are 99% water and Morag is continually emitting a heat that means as soon as any one of us gets close we'd simply evaporate! None of us are too keen on that happening. You, on the other hand can get to Morag without breaking a sweat... Actually, no not entirely true. You would break a sweat, but you wouldn't evaporate, and that is infinitely more appealing."

"If you can't get anywhere near Morag, how did you know about it? How did you know it was too hot to approach? Did you use robots and techy science stuff?"

"No, it was the dogs."

Nuttingale went on to explain that since Morag arrived all the dogs had started talking and it turned out they were really intelligent. Being only 77.34% water, they could approach Morag with ease. They were the ones who had determined that Morag was the cause of all the confusion, that the Aquatians could not approach Morag without evaporating and that ever since Morag appeared a small portal (the little red door I had come through) kept popping up at random all across Aquatia.

"So if the dogs are so intelligent, why aren't they in charge of solving all this?"

"They ran away. Turns out that they are not man's best friend after all. They are self-serving, selfish beasts who only do things for themselves. They built a spaceship and fled the planet. Well, that's one theory – the other is that they saw a comet, thought it was a ball and built the spaceship to chase after it. Some things never change."

Except some things do. I knew now that running away wasn't an option. I knew that despite rumours of CERTAIN DOOM, I was here for a reason. I was here to save Aquatia. But maybe it could wait till after lunch, I was famished!

**To be continued...**



# No Exception to the Rule

Adapted from Greg Williams,  
Speaking of Life



The Main Ingredient was an American soul and R&B band best known for their hit song, 'Everybody Plays the Fool'. Although the song is about unrequited love, its refrain alone speaks to us all.

*Everybody plays the fool sometime  
There's no exception to the rule.*

That's hard to argue with. I'm sure we can all remember being played for a fool. It comes with a feeling of shame and embarrassment, along with the real cost we paid for being taken in by the scheme. An experienced con artist or unscrupulous salesperson claims many a victim with devious tactics. Sooner or later, the song proves to be true, "Everybody plays the fool sometime."

However, in the Christian life, we know the song is not completely true. There is one "exception to the rule". And that exception is Jesus Christ. He knew we would be no match for deceit and fraud. So, he acts for us as the one who does not play the fool.

One Gospel story illustrates this, with Jesus being put in a no-win spot. It begins with two groups who are typically opposed to one another conspiring together. They devise a trick question about paying the Roman tax that will put Jesus in the position of walking a tightrope between the Roman authorities and the Jewish people.

After an attempt to butter up Jesus with flattery, they lay out their trick question. Let's see how Jesus answers:

"Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?"

They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard it, they marvelled. And they left him and went away." Matthew 22:17-22 (ESV).

Notice first that Jesus was not tricked. He was aware of their intent to trap him. [We often only become aware with hindsight.] He then calls them out for what they are – "hypocrites".

Jesus answered in a way that avoided being accused of subversion to the Roman rule, while at the same time affirming that our allegiance really belongs to the One in whose image we are made.

And he does all this while presenting us with the choice we must all make. Do we give ourselves over to the manipulating and deceitful ways of the world about us, or do we give ourselves to God and his way of kindness to others?

In the end there's no exception to the rule.

Speaking of Life is a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website: [gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/](http://gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/)

This magazine is sponsored by Grace Communion Mooroolbark (previously known as Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship), a congregation of Grace Communion International. If you would like more information or pastoral support, our local congregational contact is Matthew Gudze on (03) 9737 0126.

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# Men behaving badly

by Simon Smart  
Centre for Public Christianity

On a recent early morning surf check, standing in the carpark overlooking my local beach assessing the waves and mesmerised at the beauty of the sunrise, I suddenly found myself embroiled in an altercation. A middle-aged man with a large dog on a lead started arguing with a young surfer who was making his way down to the beach.

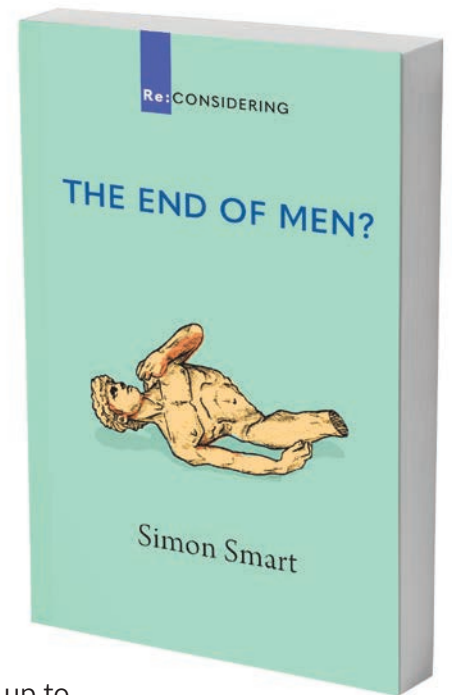
The dispute was the result of a dog fight that had occurred earlier when the surfer's dog had escaped his house. While I tried some diplomacy, the older man's abuse of the young guy started escalating. The surfer wisely decided to head for the water, and without warning attention turned to me! My peace-making efforts hadn't gone down well. I was called names I hadn't been called since Year 6, and with a viciousness that was chilling.

The rage in the man's eyes and level of fury he was able to reach at 7am was bewildering to me and others who witnessed it. It was sobering to think about what it would be like to live in the same house as someone capable of such explosive anger.

I've written a book on masculinity. It's called *The End of Men?*, focusing on the place of boys and young men today. The book seeks to promote a thoughtful conversation about how we go about creating formative environments that contribute to boys growing up to be the kind of person you would want to be around if you were a child, a teenager, a woman or another man.

The book makes the case that young boys won't simply know how to be good men. They will have to be shown. And promoting a healthy masculinity is in everybody's interests.

*This article has been republished with the permission of Centre for Public Christianity.*  
[publicchristianity.org](http://publicchristianity.org)



## Local Churches

### Grace Communion Mooroolbark

Mooroolbark Community Centre,  
125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark  
Sunday 10.30am  
[mooroolbark.gci.org.au](http://mooroolbark.gci.org.au)

### Life Ministry Church

15-49 Old Melbourne Rd, Chirside Park  
Sunday 10am & 6pm  
[lifeministry.church](http://lifeministry.church)

### Mooroolbark Baptist Church

153-157 Hull Rd, Croydon  
Sunday 10am  
[mbc.org.au](http://mbc.org.au)

### Mooroolbark Salvation Army Corps

305 Manchester Rd, Chirside Park  
Sunday 10am  
[salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps](http://salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps)

### Mooroolbark (St. Margaret's) Uniting Church

207-219 Hull Rd, Mooroolbark  
Sunday 10am  
[mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au](http://mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au)

### St Peter Julian Eymard, Mooroolbark Parish

240 Hull Rd, Mooroolbark  
Saturday Vigil Mass - 6.00pm, Sunday 9am & 11am,  
Weekday Mass: Tuesday and Wednesday - 9.30am  
[spje.org.au](http://spje.org.au)





# upcoming events



October to December 2024



## Barney McAll

### Mooroolbark Umbrella Group Forum – 17 October 2024, 7.30pm

Join us for a captivating evening featuring Grammy-nominated, ARIA-winning jazz pianist and composer Barney McAll. As a Mooroolbark native, Barney returns home to share stories from his 20-year journey in New York City and his collaborations with renowned musicians like Miles Davis alumni Gary Bartz, Sia, Maceo Parker, and Fred Wesley. In addition to Barney's performance, we will also honour local individuals with Quiet Achiever awards. Entry by gold coin donation.

Information: [rbmooroolbark@gmail.com](mailto:rbmooroolbark@gmail.com)

Bookings recommended:  
[yarranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Events/Mooroolbark-Umbrella-Group-Forum](http://yarranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Events/Mooroolbark-Umbrella-Group-Forum)



## Bickleigh Vale Open Days

Pembroke Road near Cardigan Road  
Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 October

Adults \$ 35, Students \$ 25, under 18 free.  
There will be timed-entry tickets available for purchase at [trybooking.com/events/landing/1252401](https://trybooking.com/events/landing/1252401)

## Committee of Governance

The newly established Mooroolbark Community House is seeking dedicated individuals to join their new Committee. At MCH, you will have the opportunity to shape and enhance our local programs and initiatives. Please join the information session on October 24 2024, 6.45pm - 8.30pm at Mooroolbark Community Centre. To register your interest please contact: [mgudze@gmail.com](mailto:mgudze@gmail.com)



Neighbourhood Houses  
The Heart of Our Community

## Mooroolbark Miniature Railway

27 October and 24 November, 11am-4pm with a lunch break between 1-2pm when trains and the kiosk close. Train rides are \$3.00 each, with children under four riding free.

## Community Garden Market

29 September, 27 October, 24 November, 8 and 22 December. 9am - 2pm, 8 Station Street, Mooroolbark (opposite Hookey Park)

more details on page 11



## Time for a home loan health check!

With the current cost of living, there's never been a better time to review your home loan.

Enquire online at [bendigobank.com.au/healthcheck](https://bendigobank.com.au/healthcheck) or call your nearest branch on 03 9726 5388.

Community Bank - Mooroolbark

**Bendigo Bank**

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