

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

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- Celebrating our reconnection
- Art and culture at Burrinja
- George McDonald—still going strong at ninety!

Good news stories from your local community

I'm constantly amazed by the diversity and richness of experience in the lives of local people I've written about in this magazine. Over the years each story seems to have led to yet more people to write about. They just keep popping up!

One person who has come to my attention recently is 90-year-old George McDonald. In the past two years, George has been very active as secretary of the Celebrate Mooroolbark committee, helping to plan our annual community festival.

The first time I recall seeing George was at a meeting of the Shire of Yarra Ranges Township Network. George, sartorially clothed as always, attended the meeting with the Kilsyth Township Group. At the time, I wrongly assumed that George lived in Kilsyth. But, no, he's a long-time Mooroolbarkian! Not only that, but he's a man

would crash in the fields nearby. George was amazed at the depth of the craters made by the crashed planes.

As many of the local men were away on active service during the war, sometimes there was a need for extra hands, and George recalls being given a three-week holiday from school to help harvest the potatoes from the fields. He enjoyed it so much he wanted to continue! Food parcels arrived from time to time to help families billeting children, but food rationing brought constant challenges. George didn't see a banana until he was twelve.

After he left school, George spent five years in the coach-building trade, manufacturing sturdy vehicles which were primarily for farm use—precursors to the modern-day ute. He was then called up to do two years' national service in the military, but was able to gain a six-month

In the late 1960s, George was offered employment in Australia as a sales and marketing manager for Rohm and Haas, an American veterinary supplies company that wanted to establish an Australian presence. George, Betty, their son George Jr and daughter Audrey arrived in Melbourne from Scotland in 1968.

After living in hotels in the city for some months, George and Betty discovered Mooroolbark. They had stopped in Brice Avenue to buy ice creams as the family was returning to the city from a weekend outing to Healesville.

Ninety

PHOTOS: McDONALD FAMILY



LEFT: At 14 years old RIGHT: Betty and George as teenagers at one of the famous Butlin's holiday camps



LEFT: George, Betty, and their young family in 1964 at Butlin's holiday camp; Audrey on her father's knee, George Jr front left, and Raymond front right RIGHT: George wearing the McDonald tartan



McDonald family friends Lindsay and Bev Trollope at the Red Earth Festival in the mid-1980s, where they were named that year's "Mr & Mrs Mooroolbark"

who, unbeknownst to me, has contributed much to our community since the late 1960s.

Born 1932 in Perthshire, Scotland, George grew up in the small village of Coupar Angus. He remembers being summoned by his school headmaster as a ten year old: "McDonald, pull your socks up and do your hair." Wondering what was going on, George found himself part of a delegation of six teachers and six students sent to welcome 600 children from Glasgow, who were moving to the country to avoid the wartime German bombing campaign over Glasgow. The visiting children were provided with a roll and soup for lunch, prior to them being assigned to local families for billeting. George's family hosted two boys for 14 months, and then a further two when the original pair returned home. Some of the hosted children remained in the area after the war had ended, completing their education and becoming part of the local community.

For young George, the war years were fascinating times. Although the local area was not targeted by bombing, George remembers German planes headed towards the Dundee docks, encountering searchlights and anti-aircraft shelling as they flew over the Strathmore hills. Some were hit, and occasionally a plane

postponement when his uncle had a serious accident and was unable to work. George took over the running of his uncle's dairy farm for several months before finally beginning his national service with the Royal Air Force. The RAF used George's skill in badminton to win several tournaments—and George, in turn, leveraged his badminton ability as a bargaining chip to earn a pathway to becoming a corporal, an opportunity that may not otherwise have been offered to him. After completing his training, George became a corporal and an instructor in atomic and gas warfare.

George worked as a salesman after leaving the air force, supplying stockfeed, equipment and medical supplies to local farmers. He and his wife Betty, who both came from Coupar Angus, were married in 1955. They'd been at school together since they were twelve, and became romantically involved in their late teens after they connected through church and their mutual love of badminton. They were one of several couples from their village who married former classmates.

George noticed a house with a six-car garage advertised for sale in Jim Earney's real estate window. Monday saw him back in Mooroolbark, and after a 10-minute inspection George declared, "I'll take it."

George's job required extensive national travel, and Betty struggled with homesickness in his absence. This was especially so because, not long before they left Scotland, one of their sons had been killed in a road accident. Betty's grieving was even more painful when George was away. George understood that companionship and community involvement would be helpful for Betty, so he suggested that Betty's sister migrate from Scotland. In addition, he arranged for Betty to help out in a Bayswater milk bar where she made sandwiches for school lunches.

This experience may have helped George become aware of the many people in Mooroolbark who, like themselves, had emigrated from the UK but felt that there was little to do, and had limited local community connection. In August 1968 George spoke with Bev Trollope, who

taught his children at St Margaret's Uniting Church Sunday school, enquiring about hiring the church hall to set up two badminton courts. On receiving the permission of the Reverend Charles Marshall, and with the help of Bev and her husband Lindsay, they began a weekly local competition. Ten months later, they needed to find larger facilities due to the large influx of players.

George wrote:

I met up with Jim Earney, who put me in touch with the Education Department, who were building Pembroke High School at the

in Liverpool Road known as "Mr Pink's field". Crs Alan Smith and Ray Yeates actively lobbied what was then the Lillydale Council to purchase the land.

The same builders who constructed The Terrace shopping centre in Mooroolbark built the initial stadium, which opened in 1972 with three courts. Things started off humbly enough with the stadium having no running water or sewerage toilets. Two trades toilets were on site—with our 2022 occupational health and safety regulations, in hindsight we can't help but be amazed!

the years has been wife, Betty. In honour of her many years supervising stadium catering, the stadium kitchen is known as the "Betty McDonald Country Kitchen."

It was only last year that Bev and George retired from their more than five decades of service to badminton in Victoria. I write "Victoria" deliberately, as both families were involved in running a veteran's competition each month throughout Victoria for 40 years.

There's no space left to describe the current occupational-health-and-safety-defying billy cart races that George and Lindsay Trollope

— And All Cylinders Firing!



George at Celebrate Mooroolbark 2021 with a member of the Unicycle Paparazzi and Clare Cafferty, festival committee treasurer

PHOTO: FUN ARTS MEDIA



LEFT: George outside the gas chamber building where he was in charge of testing personnel gas masks
RIGHT: George in his new dress uniform on his first day as an RAF corporal



Enamel pins for the Victorian and Australian badminton associations, designed by George

time and I successfully tied up a forward booking to turn the school gymnasium into a four-court badminton stadium every Monday and Thursday.

By this time Bev Trollope had become a very good badminton player and helped me run this new club, where we played A Grade badminton in various tournaments throughout Victoria. My wife Betty was also a very good player. The three of us coached our children who played in under 17 and under 21 state teams. Bev's son Ken Trollope captained the Victorian under 17 badminton team.

After two years we'd outgrown the Pembroke High School facility, and we began discussions with state government and council representatives about the possibility of establishing a permanent home for badminton in the area.

We were advised to set up the "Mountain District Stadium Co-operative Ltd" and invite players to invest \$10 shares. For every \$10 invested, we were able to receive \$90 from the government and with this money we were able to secure a bank loan and build the Kilsyth Badminton Stadium on local land

By 1976, the stadium was operating at full capacity. Expansion of the building took place, and another three courts, a recreation area with better toilets and a kitchen were added. By 1980 the stadium faced even greater demands. By then, Bev had become the first fulltime paid administrator of the Mountain District Badminton Association Inc., which administered the stadium. Another six courts were built, along with an upstairs viewing platform which was later enclosed by specially angled glass to prevent on-court reflections.

As administrator, Bev became the association secretary and treasurer, and was responsible for all court bookings of a 12-court stadium, while George took over as finance chairman. In later years the Kilsyth Basketball Stadium was built on the same site.

By now, I think you can understand why I had thought that George was a resident of Kilsyth! So much of the energy he, his wife and the Trollopes devoted to enhancing our district was centred in Kilsyth. George said, "You can do a lot of good with a group of people." And he acknowledges that his best supporter over

organised in the '70s on the steep hill that ran from Bimbadeen Primary School down towards the bridge on Mooroolbark Road, or George's involvement in helping organise activities for our senior citizens, many years before the current hall was built. More recently, George has been the organiser of the billy cart races at the Celebrate Mooroolbark festival, sponsored by the builders of Kinley estate. Members of the Men's Shed were also invaluable contributors, building the four billy carts and painting them in the "Kinley colours".

Gratefully, we continue to be the recipients of George's seemingly boundless energy and experience. Thank you, George, Betty, and your friends Bev and Lindsay Trollope—champions all!



Randall Bouchier

Celebrating Our Reconnection



PHOTO: JASON EAST PHOTOGRAPHY



Sublime weather, expert entertainers and Organisational prowess were just a few of the puzzle pieces fitting together to make Celebrate Mooroolbark Reconnect 2022 a huge success. Every year, local volunteers and business owners put their hands up to contribute to this event and continue to help create ongoing community collaboration. Two days of absolute joy, laughter and connectivity made this one a weekend to remember. The Yarra Valley Wool show at the community centre on the Sunday was an absolute triumph, with raffles all but selling out, and local makers showcasing their beautiful wares and talents in the glorious sunshine.

We would like to thank all participants this year for their support, time, and willingness to participate. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts. Without you all, the Celebrate Mooroolbark festival would cease to exist. Thank you to our sponsors for their ongoing support: Yarra Ranges Council, Methvens the Professionals, *Living Today*, Thomas and George Licensed Surveyors, Ross McKay Creative, Bendigo Bank, and GRV Printing. Without the generosity of these businesses, we could not bring as many specialty programs to the festival.

To our ever-supportive local schools and preschool networks, parents and teacher organisers, emergency services personnel and first aid crew: we appreciate you! Thank you for signing up at the last minute, filling our entertainment slots, sharing your joy and passions, providing free activities for kids, sewing costumes, learning songs, carpooling, sharing our events, volunteering unpaid hours, making sure we're hydrated, and overall just

being festival support superstars.

To our very important on the day high-vis volunteers, local superstar photographers, clean-up crew, stall holders, entertainers, food truck vendors, runners, water dispensers, Band-Aid putter-owners, and everyone in between: we adore you, we feel your sore feet, and know your missed sleep. Thank you for your gift of time.

We are especially grateful to our executive committee members and new life members (Randall, Mary, Marion, Liz and Barbara) for their ongoing commitment to this annual event. To the dedicated festival committee and crew members who put in thousands of volunteer hours to make this event happen: your grit and determination is what makes this festival such a joy to participate in, year after year.

In particular, we thank our gifted new festival coordinator Ashleigh Clingin, who was thrown in the deep end and swam beautifully. We would not have had such a fabulous result without our dedicated festival co-chairs Renae Jones and

Liz Ryan, who contributed tirelessly with behind-the-scenes hours, on phones, in meetings, and collating data late into the night. We must give a special mention to Helen Godfrey, our exceptional site manager and all-round team cheerleader, who came in at 5 am every morning, was always the last to leave, and made madness look seamless. Big love to the whole crew, including George, Jimmy, Jenny, Clare, David, Tom, Amelia, Bec, Liz and Tracy—you and your teams are simply amazing and we couldn't do it without you.

And last but not least, thanks to you, our wonderful repeat patrons. Putting on the event brings us so much joy, and we appreciate your participation and attendance every year. Here's to the next big Celebrate Mooroolbark festival in 2023—it will be our 21st birthday!

Rebecca Gilbert
Marketing and Social Media Manager
Celebrate Mooroolbark

In March, five community members were honoured for their longstanding commitment to the Celebrate Mooroolbark festival. Barbara Austin, Randall and Mary Bourchier, Liz Ryan, and Marion Stott have all been involved with the festival in a volunteer capacity for at least a decade. Their dedication to bringing the community together through the festival was honoured on the Sunday afternoon of the festival, when Geoff Earney presented each of them with a plaque. The Life Membership awards recognise the recipients for their untiring work and dedication to the festival committee over many years.

RIGHT: Marion Stott with her Life Membership award



PHOTO: JANET VAN DIJK

Community and Culture Meet at Burrinja

To walk into Burrinja Cultural Centre in Upwey is to enter an ever-unfolding creative space. The modern interior opens into multiple galleries, with creative studios and performance spaces behind every door, and art on every wall. Even the windows add inspiration, framing the leafy Dandenong Ranges and filling the centre with light.

"Burrinja is a thriving, contemporary community arts centre nestled in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges," said Gareth Hart, CEO and creative director of Burrinja. Reflecting on their motto "Building Community Through Arts", Gareth said, "It's a simple statement, but it centres the two things that we love—community and culture. Burrinja is a physical building that is the outcome of those two things."

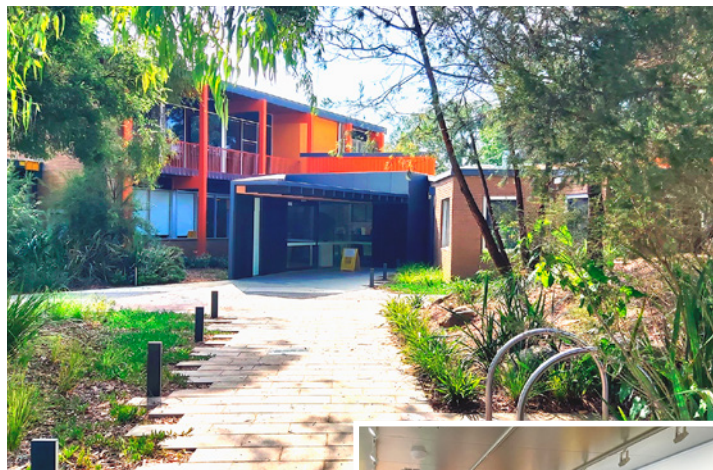
The building itself encompasses a variety of spaces including a 400-seat theatre, three galleries, nine private art studios, a music room, meeting and workshop spaces, kids "stay and play" art activities and an on-site café. Running what Gareth describes as "a sometimes overwhelmingly vast program", Burrinja hosts art exhibitions, live music, theatre, children's workshops, festivals and events. "Our program reflects that we are not part of a homogenous community—we're a community with diverse interests. We keep a very broad definition of what art and culture can be. And we look to find ways that the community can be involved and find value in Burrinja," said the CEO.



PHOTOS: BURRINJA CULTURAL CENTRE

This deep connection to community inspired the Burrinja team to open its doors to families during the devastating aftermath of storms and power outages in the Dandenong Ranges and surrounds in mid-2021. "We got power back after about a week, and the minute it was back the team got behind the idea of opening our doors the next day," said Gareth. The Parents Without Power Day invited families without power to visit Burrinja for free children's activities, music, chai tea and coffee, access to charge devices, and a warm place to reconnect during a difficult time. Such was the community response, Burrinja continued to open its doors to the community during the following weeks, offering access to warmth, Wi-Fi, power and co-working spaces.

Gareth described the experience: "This was just after another period of lockdown, and we had all been through a dark time—both mentally and now literally with the lack of power. We had three generations of one



family use our space as their first post-lockdown catch up. We had people plugging in hairdryers to dry their kids' hair. One little girl said, 'This is my favourite place in the world'. It was just one example of what we do—bringing community and culture together."



Community is clearly more than just a buzzword at Burrinja. "It was born out of the community itself," explained Gareth. When the former council office building in Upwey was placed on the market in the 1990s, the local community advocated strongly to keep the space as a community centre to be enjoyed by all. The combined efforts of community groups and individuals resulted in the establishment of the cultural centre that has evolved into the Burrinja Cultural Centre of today. The name "Burrinja" honours the role of local resident and Yorta Yorta artist Lin Onus who was a key advocate for the creation of the centre. Burrinja is a Yorta Yorta word meaning "star" and was also Lin Onus' nickname.

Today, Burrinja is an independent incorporated association and registered charity delivered in partnership with the Yarra Ranges Council. "That community involvement is still very much what Burrinja is about even now. It comes from our ethos of being connected to community for over two decades," said Gareth.

The team at Burrinja is looking forward to expanding their community engagement with a recently announced partnership with Vic Health as part of the "Big Connect" initiative to support the mental health and wellbeing of young Victorians. The funding will enable Burrinja to undertake an 18-month project to establish a Queer Arts Collective. This social connection project will use the arts to bring together young people in the LGBTQIA+ community. "It will include art workshops, visits to other cultural centres, queer exhibitions, and the collective will use their lived experience to create a piece of public art in Upwey," said Gareth. "It's part of Burrinja's real focus on bringing people together and the connectedness that the arts bring to community."

The centre has recently completed refurbishments including an upgrade of the gallery spaces, which are now built to professional museum standards, including environmental controls. This will enable Burrinja to house significant artworks on loan from other institutions. The studio spaces have also been expanded, doubling the number of artists in residence to 20 at any one time.

Following renovations to the café space, Burrinja has also welcomed a new café operator. "Tasty Az" is a social enterprise which educates, trains, and employs young adults who live with a disability. "It's such a joy to have them in the building," said Gareth. "It's another really powerful way for community and culture to come together."

Describing the Social Impact Framework that underpins Burrinja's work and approach, Gareth said, "It's about leaning more into the social impact and not only the entertainment value of art. We ask ourselves 'what is different because of what we've done?'"

Carissa Sianidis

Burrinja operates on Wurundjeri country. For more information about visits, art, and performances, visit burrinja.org.au

Japanese Dining in the Suburbs



Meimei Zhang's first Melbourne restaurant was an upscale Japanese grill in the heart of the city. It catered to a sophisticated clientele, including world-renowned singers Taylor Swift and Lorde, and Meimei enjoyed providing an excellent fine dining experience. Later, Meimei owned a café in Ringwood, and learned that suburban customers often appreciate quality food served in a more informal style. When she opened Sakura Inn Café in Brice Avenue, Meimei opted for a fusion experience, combining excellent service and gourmet cuisine with a relaxed café atmosphere.

"Australia has a really strong café culture," said Meimei. "I want people to feel comfortable walking into the café, rather than into a high-class restaurant where they might feel, 'that's not me.' People in different areas have different eating habits, and here I think they like a relaxed, easy, family style."

Meimei's aim has been to provide a welcoming atmosphere and first-class cuisine. "The food is more high-end, so maybe it will be a surprise for customers," she said. The interior design reflects the Japanese origin of the food, but Meimei has created a fusion of café and restaurant by retaining some pre-existing café features like the lighting and table settings.

Meimei's 25-year-old daughter helps manage the café. Although she initially worked in the finance sector after attaining her Bachelor of Finance, she finds that helping her mother run Sakura Inn is more challenging, requiring a wide range of knowledge, experience, and people skills.



PHOTO: SAKURA INN CAFE

The cooking at Sakura Inn is done by Meimei, who is originally from China but spent 14 years in New Zealand before coming to Australia in 2014. It was in New Zealand, surrounded by Japanese friends, that she developed her love of Japanese food and learned from a Japanese chef how to prepare it.

Since Sakura Inn's opening in January, response has been very positive, with enthusiastic praise on Facebook for both the quality of food and the service. Meimei believes that excellent customer service is just as essential to a café as to a fine dining restaurant, and she trains her staff to be responsive to customer needs. "I don't want the customer to wait for service and have to ask for help," said Meimei.

Janet Van Dijk

Sakura Inn Café, located at 38 Brice Avenue in Mooroolbark, is open every day except Tuesday, for lunch and dinner. Takeaway orders can be placed by phoning 8201 7881, or through Uber Eats and Menu Log. For more information, search "Sakura Inn Café" on Facebook.



The future of laundry has come to Mooroolbark! Gone are the days when those who relied on commercial laundromats had to jostle for an available washer or dryer in small, dimly lit laundromats. Early this year, the Ozone Clean Laundrette opened in Mooroolbark, offering customers a large, clean and bright space with banks of powerful washers and dryers that can be operated with the touch of a button and the tap of a credit card.

Ozone Clean Laundrettes use advanced technology to clean, brighten and disinfect clothes. The chemical-free, environmentally neutral Ozone Process disinfects more effectively than bleach or thermal disinfection, is compliant with Australian Standards disinfection protocols, and is gentle on fabrics. The Ozone Process comes as a standard inclusion with all wash cycles, ensuring a clean, hygienic wash.

The laundromat has a range of Ozone Empowered Washing machine sizes starting with 9 kg and going up to 27 kg machines, which are suitable for washing large items such as blankets, pillows, and doonas. The weekly laundry can be dried in record time in the industrial gas-powered dryers that can take large loads of 14 kg or 20 kg.

Mooroolbark is one of the newest sites for Ozone Clean laundrettes, which have eleven locations Victoria wide and are currently building their twelfth. Co-owner of the company, Leon Desmond, is enthusiastic about the disinfectant technology, which involves ozone gas being injected during the washing process. "It kills everything—germs, odours, mould spores," he said.



PHOTO: JANET VAN DIJK

Lengthy delays due to broken-down machines are also a thing of the past, with the new technology enabling remote repair more than 90 percent of the time. Customers who have problems with a machine simply call the 1300 number listed on the customer information board or payment kiosk to get assistance.

One of the advantages of the state-of-the-art laundrette is that payment is by credit card or via mobile phone using a QR code, with no bank transaction fees. Catherine, a customer who visited one of the new laundromats when her home washing machine broke down, was relieved not to have to hunt for piles of coins to complete her laundry. "I was very impressed," Catherine said. She described her experience as "seamless," and the technology as "cutting edge."

The Mooroolbark laundrette is located near Coles, on the site previously occupied by the Moo Bar, and is open seven days a week from 6 am to 11 pm.

Janet Van Dijk

Until recently, when Mooroolbark residents had a malfunctioning phone or chipped iPad screen, they had to travel to Chirnside Park or Lilydale to find a shop that specialised in phone repairs. Now, however, Mooroolbark has its own phone repair business, situated next to Manna Lane café, just ten metres away from Coles in Brice Avenue.

The business, named Phone Repair Guy, is owned by Laurent Zeng and his wife Eva Gao. Laurent gained a Bachelor of Science honours degree in electronics from the University of Delhi in India, and he offers a number of services including repair of Apple iPhones or iPads, screen repairs and replacements, and battery replacements for Samsung, Huawei, Oppo, Google and LG phones. Customers can feel confident in Laurent's expertise—the business supplies a six-month warranty with repairs, and advertises a “no fix, no fee” policy.

In the small but clean and airy shop, there is a shelf on which stands a microscope and a screen like a TV screen. The tiny circuit which has been removed from the phone is placed under the microscope, and the image is enlarged and transferred to the screen where Laurent is then able to view the problem and repair it, enabling him to do high-level circuit board repairs.

Laurent and Eva are new to Chirnside Park, having come from New Zealand where they spent the previous eight years. During their eight years in New Zealand, Laurent worked as an authorised Apple iPhone repair technician and Eva as a receptionist. They are now the proud parents of a two-month-old baby girl and although she keeps them very busy, Laurent still has time to enjoy a game of chess, and Eva loves to draw and paint.

Phone Repair Guy is open from 9 am until 5:30 pm Monday to Friday, and from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturdays. More information is available by phoning 0420 204 469 or visiting the Facebook business page or website:

facebook.com/Phone-Repair-Guy-MooroolbarkVIC-108297391714055

phone-repair-guy-mooroolbark.business.site/?hl=en-GB

Barbara Austin



PHONE REPAIR GUY
FIX YOUR PHONE RIGHT NOW



PHOTO: BARBARA AUSTIN



MOOROOLBARK
COMMUNITY CONNECT



Do you still have a DVD player? If you do, you might be at a loss to know where to find new viewing material—due to the popularity of online streaming services, there is now only one DVD rental store in all of Melbourne! The good news is that Mooroolbark's new Community Connect Project at Shop 16 The Terrace has got you covered. As part of its goal to be both useful and a place of connection between people in the community, the shop has set up a DVD library.

Shop 16 in The Terrace shopping centre is the base for the Community Connect Project,

first proposed by Mooroolbark Umbrella Group with the support of the Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group. The owner of the shop has generously waived a year's rent, and a grant from the Yarra Ranges Council covers administrative expenses and the cost of utilities.

Community members have donated hundreds of DVDs to the library—so many that no more DVDs are needed! The shop hosts a book library and food pantry as well, also as a result of generous donations from the community. These services help make the shop a great place for people to meet, exchange ideas and goods, and get to know their neighbours.

The food pantry is there for everyone, said Renae Jones, coordinator for the Community Connect Project. “If there's something that you want, you're welcome to it,” she said. “It's similar to the ‘Food is Free’ movement, where people bring their excess and other people can take it. There's no requirement to be needy.” While non-perishable foods like pasta and canned goods are preferred, sometimes people have an excess of fruit, vegetables, or bread. When fresh items do come in, the information is posted on social media to ensure that food isn't wasted.

The shop space is also available for hire

for meetings, exhibitions, and workshops. Money raised from the very reasonable hire cost goes back into running the project. An after-school homework club meets there a few times a week, and the shop also served as a base for the Celebrate Mooroolbark committee before and during the festival.

The Community Connect Project is open weekdays, except Tuesday, from 10 am to 3 pm, and is currently seeking more volunteers to enable it to be open for longer. Renae explained that volunteers only need to be available for two or three hours a week, and that the role is primarily a social one, greeting people and talking to them about what is available at the community hub.

Renae is pleased that the project is bringing more foot traffic into the shopping centre. “We have already noticed a lot of people coming in who haven't been in The Terrace for years,” she said. “They're coming in and they're talking to people—it's fulfilling its purpose as a coming-together type place.”

Janet Van Dijk

To participate in the project by volunteering, sharing ideas or hosting activities or workshops at Shop 16, contact Renae at renae@cumulusrising.com



These homegrown vegetables were recently brought into Shop 16 by a local horticulturalist, along with homemade jams and relishes and seeds for growing tomatoes, beans, and other vegetables.



PHOTOS: ROSEBELL

Cheaper Than Therapy

In his 1965 book *Countryman*, nature journalist Hal Borland deftly captured a sentiment shared by many home gardeners the world over. “Knowing trees,” the world over. “Knowing trees,” he wrote, “I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence.”¹ There is no arguing with this observation—particularly when one is referring to crabgrass, and particularly when it has chosen to nestle cosily among the roots of one’s favourite rose bush.

Nevertheless, as much as this statement may resonate with some, others may be too far removed from nature to fully appreciate the truth of it. More than half of all people in the world now live in cities, say global think tanks², and this trend is not expected to reverse. In fact, by 2050, urban areas may contain as many people as now make up the entire planet’s population.

With this in mind, global non-profits such as the New Cities Foundation³ hope to find innovative ways to make green spaces more accessible to the burgeoning population of urbanites. Of course, city planners have always been pretty good about sprinkling the vast cement seas with a variety of parks, community gardens and other landscaped islands. New York, by some counts, has more than 700 community gardens. But is the occasional oasis of green enough? How important is it for people to have a garden to call their own?

One study published in the June 2012 issue of the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* argues that individual household gardens are very important—in fact, their value, especially in urban settings, may be routinely overlooked by policymakers. Undertaken by a team of researchers from the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand, the study finds that “gardens matter, they constitute substantial proportions of the urban fabric, provide opportunities for supporting and interacting with nature and provide a range of social and health benefits.”

It’s true that multiple studies reveal people reap great physical and mental health benefits from nature in general. For instance, in comparison to patients in hospital rooms with brick wall views, patients with tree views have been shown to require statistically shorter stays and less medication. Other studies have shown improved coping ability for psychiatric patients after exposure to natural environments. But beyond simple exposure, argue the researchers, “actual physical contact with nature has been shown to be essential.”

Most research tends to focus on the benefits for those who are ill or elderly, but children have also been identified as a group for which hands-on contact is essential—and some schools are responding with on-site student gardening projects. These may be mainly ornamental in some cases, while in others they supply some of the produce used in the school’s lunch program.

Certainly school and community gardens are important ways to provide intimate contact with nature (as well as providing social opportunities), but encouraging domestic gardens may be another important step for urban



(And You Get Tomatoes)

planners to consider. Although they are “curiously under-researched,” say experts in the emerging field of ecopsychology, domestic gardens attract and support native wildlife while also offering urban dwellers a host of important social and emotional benefits. The results of the Dunedin study suggest that these include the mental and physical health benefits attached to having: escape from the stresses of daily life, a sense of ownership and identity, a connection to nature, and a place for social sharing between family, friends and neighbours. Participants also referred to increased satisfaction derived from taking personal responsibility for environmental care and producing food for their household.

“Some saw gardening as a duty to nature,” wrote the researchers. And while some householders grew vegetables primarily to connect to the earth, for others it eased financial burdens or provided a source of chemical-free produce. Several respondents commented that they had learned a great deal about native plants while developing their gardens and expressed interest in using them to support native birds and other animals.

The garden’s influence on social relationships was also illustrated through a variety of comments from study participants. One grandparent said his garden was a point of communication with a grandson, who had lately been “in trouble.” Others talked about connections made through flower shows, gardening groups, produce swaps with neighbours—even “letting neighbouring children pick flowers for their Mum.”

The benefits of the domestic urban garden seem unbounded indeed. And while some city dwellers will always need to “go to nature” for their daily dose of green, even some high-rise occupants may be able to put their hands into a small patch of dirt without leaving home. All it takes is a balcony with access to a few hours of sunshine per day to put together a container garden large enough to hold a tomato plant and a few flowers. Is it worth the trouble, though? The answer suggested by the research is a resounding “yes.” That is, provided one would welcome even small improvements to physical and mental health.

Gina Stepp

California-based Gina Stepp holds a master’s degree in forensic psychology with an emphasis on trauma, resilience and attachment. As an editor and family psych writer, she has interviewed top researchers in a range of fields including sociology, psychology and neuroscience. Gina’s website Mom Psych has a range of family and psychology-related articles, with a particular emphasis on the neurobiology of interpersonal relationships.

¹ Borland, Hal (1965). *Countryman: A Summary of Belief*. JB Lippincott Company

² npr.org/2012/05/18/153029926/as-more-move-to-cities-a-new-take-on-urban-design

³ newcities.org

For the Love of Mooroolbark

When Monash University lecturer Matthew Loads designed a locally themed T-shirt for himself, it started gaining attention—not all of it entirely positive. “These T-shirts are really loved by weird old people,” said his nine-year-old daughter, Hannah.

Matt’s T-shirt features a simple line drawing of the iconic Mooroolbark Five Ways roundabout. The idea was inspired by 1970s-style band T-shirts worn by some American country artists, promoting their home town or state. “I wanted to see something like that celebrating Mooroolbark,” said Matt. “Something simple, fun, not very colourful, and a bit daggy.”

Using a basic graphic design program and a public domain image, Matt designed the T-shirt and sent it to a screen printer. He initially ordered just one T-shirt, for himself, but several friends asked him to order one for them, too. Wider community interest came about quite unexpectedly when Matt wrote a Facebook post seeking a babysitter. He added a picture of the T-shirt simply because he knew that posts with pictures gained more attention than text-only posts. He was surprised by the reaction—nine out of ten people were asking questions about the shirt, not about the babysitting position. Before long, Matt was receiving orders from other Mooroolbark residents.

Matt isn’t seeking to make a profit, charging customers only a few dollars more than the printer charges him, to cover postage. He has also ordered stubby holders, hoodies, and some fridge magnets. He only sells the T-shirts, but he’s been putting a free fridge magnet in with every order. He also bought hoodies for his daughter and 12-year-old son Alex. “They love them, which I’m surprised about—they’re very fickle about their clothing. They both wear them all the time.”

Matt grew up in East Doncaster in the 1970s, and Mooroolbark reminds him of his childhood, with lots of family-owned businesses and suburbia right next to open spaces. “Mooroolbark is like that now, on the fringes of development. There are still fields where you can walk the dog. I love that.” Matt thought that the iconic roundabout—which is often baffling and difficult for drivers from other areas to negotiate—was worth celebrating. “It’s unique.”

Matt has been pleased with the reaction to the T-shirts: “People are taking it in the fun way that I meant it.” And he takes his daughter’s honest assessment with a grain of salt. “The kids have loved this whole thing and really encouraged me to do it,” he said. He added, “There are so many things in the world that are mass produced, so I think it’s great that it’s something that’s a big daggy and not available anywhere else.”

Janet Van Dijk



PHOTOS: LOADS FAMILY

If you would like to purchase a Five Ways T-shirt, go to facebook.com/groups/1411207132658192



Kilsyth East Netball Club

Kilsyth East Netball Club (KENC) is a small, family-oriented club with decades of history. “It’s the kind of club that people come back to,” said Sara Barber, the club secretary. “Some of our coaches are now coaching the grandchildren of people who coached them.”

KENC has a strong connection to Mooroolbark, having initially been based there and with many of the players still coming from Mooroolbark. Founded in 1975, the club was named for the now-closed Kilsyth East Primary School. The club relocated in 2015 to Pinks Reserve in Kilsyth, where it trains on Thursdays and plays on Saturdays during the two netball seasons (March to September and October to December). Most of the KENC players are female, with boys under 13 able to play in mixed teams, and men in supporting roles such as umpires and coaches.

While other clubs often rely on the competitive strength of their junior teams, KENC currently has six valued teams, from Under 9s to Open, with members ranging in age from 6 to 60. “People are drawn to the family atmosphere, and the friends and the fun,” said Sara. However, that doesn’t mean that the teams don’t play to win—one of their open teams took out the premiership last year.

Sara loves the fact that in netball, people of all ages and abilities can play and every player has a role, rather than one player dominating the game. “Everybody contributes and everybody has a moment to shine,” said Sara. “I love seeing the joy the players have when they’re part of that chain that gets the goal.” Sara said that netball is one of the lowest-cost sports to play, and KENC is further helped by the generous sponsorship of the Mooroolbark branch of Bendigo Bank.



PHOTO: SARA BARBER

Sara is enthusiastic about her club and the sport. “As part of a netball team, you can have a bad day and everyone will rise around you,” she said. “For that hour, everything else just fades away.”

Janet Van Dijk

For information about how to become a part of KENC, search Kilsyth East Netball Club on Facebook or Instagram, or email kilsytheastnetballclub@gmail.com.

The Great Disrupters

In the 2008 musical comedy *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*, the main character Dr Horrible struggles to explain his reason for being a villain and wanting to mess up the world. He tells his audience, "And by the way, it's not about making money, it's about taking money. Destroying the status quo because the status is not... quo. The world is a mess and I just need to rule it."



Like Dr Horrible we can also struggle to explain how to fix the world. All we know is that the "status is not quo" and something needs to change.

In first-century Jerusalem, the political and religious leaders found themselves dealing with a gang of agitators dedicated to changing the status quo. This upstart group of ordinary fishermen and tax collectors had the nerve to accuse their leaders of an absurd crime: of murdering God!

The leaders arrested them and placed them under lock and key, warned them to be quiet, and considered the matter resolved. But the next day they found the men at it again—somehow they'd escaped the prison without a soul noticing, and now they were in the courtyard, talking about the new life brought by this Jesus who had been crucified.

But their teaching confounded leaders, who were defined by the status quo. When these agitators came with an exciting and hope-filled message, they had thrown them in jail. They couldn't handle the inverted world order implied in Peter's words.

Brought again before them, the apostles declared:

*If we have to choose between obedience to God and obedience to any human authority, then we must obey God. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from death. You killed Jesus by hanging Him on a tree, but God has lifted Him high, to God's own right hand, as the Prince, as the Liberator. God intends to bring Israel to a radical rethinking of our lives and to a complete forgiveness of our sins."*¹

Peter chose his words carefully. By referring to the crucifixion as Jesus being hung on a tree, he pointed to Israel's ancient law, which declared such a man cursed. For the Jewish leaders this was inconceivable. Here was this man Jesus, who should be cursed by the death He died—yet now raised and exalted by God? Such a thing could not be! Who were these men that they would make such claims?

Peter and the apostles were the great disrupters, the forerunners of all the Christians since who have endured imprisonment, torture, and deprivation even to the point of death for the same message. And for obeying God rather than man.

Christians today are no strangers to acts of social disruption designed to bring about societal change. Yet in the clamour of opposing voices, the solutions being put forward too often aren't much better than Dr Horrible's desire to "rule". But unlike Dr Horrible, Christians have been given some insight into what needs to change. We acknowledge that the world's a mess, but we also acknowledge the mess is because we humans are trying to sort it out without reference to God and His message of new life.

Peter reminds us we are called upon to obey God before man. When we do, we bring a message of hope that can transform the world. We share the good news that God has lifted Jesus up as Prince and Saviour. He is the great disrupter. Disrupter for the good! He is the solution to all the messes we see around us. Let's participate with him in his work of bringing beauty out of our messy world.

Greg Williams

Adapted from "Speaking of Life" a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website. (gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/)

This magazine is sponsored by 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.

¹ Acts 5:29b-31, The Voice

Pirates of Penzance in Concert

Avast ye lads and lassies!

'Ere be musical treasure! Hoist the mainsail, weigh anchor and set ye a true course for St. Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road, Mooroolbark. Arrgh! Be ye sure to make landfall by 2 pm, Sunday 5 June, for a rollicking afternoon of swaggar, romp and musical mayhem with arrrfters in the stern at the captain's table. Yo Ho!

What Pirate Pete is trying to tell you is that Singularity Choir is ready to entertain you with a presentation of Gilbert and Sullivan's much-loved **Pirates of Penzance**, with stunning costumes, live music and great company. This fundraising event will raise money for Rubaga Youth Development (RYDA) in Uganda. Tickets are \$10 per person at the door, or reserve yours by ringing Janet on 0418 567 591. All proceeds will support RYDA's work of providing life and vocational skills training for orphaned and vulnerable Ugandan girls and boys aged 12 to 18.

Douglas Williams

Singularity presents in concert

The Pirates of Penzance



Goodness Gracious—Helping Families in Need



Over a decade ago, Lisa Currie developed her vision for Ripple Kindness Project: initially with kindness cards to distribute in the local community, then cards for primary school children, followed by free kindness printables and Social-Emotional Learning resources for primary school children.

Contacts through the council and local primary schools soon highlighted the opportunity to support parents and guardians in need of a helping hand. Over time, it became clear there was a need for a place where families could access food, services and daily needs while being able to connect and be supported through friendship, encouragement and what eventually became “family”.

With the support of a small but very generous team of volunteers, Nourish Network has served the community over the past five and a half years. Nourish has met weekly during school terms with a café-style morning tea and fresh food hall, with supplies of non-perishable food, clothing and other essentials, and also services such as haircuts, massage, yoga, and personal development.

When reflecting on the experience, Lisa said, “I’ve been absolutely humbled by the generosity of the people in our community. They have supported my dream for a long time and this allowed Nourish to in turn support others who are less fortunate. Without all of these amazing people, none of this would have been possible.”

The COVID-19 pandemic, of course, tested the resilience of Nourish and, to its credit, this willing team of volunteers stepped up by establishing a drive-through facility, where an increasing number of families and members could collect prepacked hampers. More recently, the café-style morning tea and fresh food hall have been reintroduced.

Lisa recently made the tough decision to step back from the program and further develop her original vision and resources. She was insistent that Nourish live on, and that prompted some local discussion, especially among members of Mooroolbark Umbrella Group, who agreed that “we cannot let this gift disappear from our community!”

A small support group has formed around the band of willing volunteers to maintain the weekly gatherings and the network. The name has now changed from Nourish Network to Goodness Gracious Network (GGN), with the aims and the spirit of the group remaining

the same. To see more about what GGN is achieving and how you can help, search for Goodness Gracious Network on Facebook.

Many local individuals, businesses, schools, and community organisations have generously supported Nourish Network through sponsorship or offering skills and donations. Lisa’s message to these people is: “If you have given your time, goods, or offered your skills, please know that the Nourish family and I are exceptionally grateful for your gifts. I hope you continue to support GGN to help it reach more people.”

Thank you, Lisa, for the gift of Nourish Network. We wish you the very best with your endeavours to educate our children, and we thank the amazing volunteers who work their magic.

Neil Mitchell

- Check out the social-emotional education resources available at Ripple Kindness Project, many of which are in use across the globe: ripplekindness.org
- Is your school registered with GGN? Schools can contact us to refer families in need. If we’re not already working with your school (near Mooroolbark), please ask your chaplain or principal to get in touch.
- Would you like to help? If you’re interested in sponsoring our program or can offer skills to help a family in need, we’d love to hear from you via nmmitch9@gmail.com or Facebook.



PHOTOS: NOURISH NETWORK

Never Forgotten

Mooroolbark’s Anzac Day service on 25 April was once again held at the rotunda in beautiful Hookey Park’s native gardens, with shady trees providing shelter from the bright midday sunshine. The park is the home of the Anzac Memorial Garden, where people from the community are invited to lay floral tributes and wreaths.

The service was conducted by Greg Earney, and included music, poems, and presentations by community members. 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the final withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, and a moving tribute was given by Sylvia Condon, the widow of Trooper Ronald James Condon, acknowledging his contribution to the Vietnam Veteran’s community. Sylvia spoke about the apprehension that a young man felt when his number came up in those days of two years’ conscription—apprehension of the training and of being in a strange land, and of troopers and tanks. Above all, there was apprehension about the likelihood of returning home safely, and of the soldier’s return to society. Ron’s time in Vietnam was to have a profound impact on his life for many years.

The Victoria Military Vehicle Corps (VMVC) also attended the service, with a display of some of its military vehicles. VMVC is a not-for-profit group dedicated to the preservation and restoration of ex-military vehicles.

If you wish to contribute to future Anzac Day services with stories, poetry, songs or music (especially original items), please contact Mooroolbark History Group on 9726 8740, 0439 726 181, or email mooroolbarkhistorygroup@gmail.com.

Barbara Austin



PHOTO: REVAE JONES

On the Move

Even for those who know very little about Mooroolbark history, the name “Hookey” is probably a familiar one—most locals know Hookey Park, named in honour of Jack Hookey, the head teacher at Mooroolbark’s first primary school. Jack and his wife Connie first moved to Mooroolbark in 1937, and since then the Hookey family has lived in many different homes in Mooroolbark and the nearby suburbs—and now, Jack’s son Peter and his wife Beth are one of the many couples preparing to move to the new Mooroolbark retirement community of St John’s Rise in Reay Road.

Along with many people I’ve spoken to, I’ve very much enjoyed Celebrate Mooroolbark’s move to Hookey Park for the past two annual festivals. As our long-time readers know, the Hookey family and Hookey Park have featured regularly in this publication.¹ We’ve previously written about Jack Hookey and his twins, Peter and Marjorie.²

By the time he was ten, Peter and his family had moved four times. At first, they had lived in Brice Avenue, which was followed by a move to a farming property near Chirside Park. When the children began primary school, the family moved again to a small farm in Manchester Road. Finally, in 1948, the family moved to a new residence in Station Street opposite what we know today as Hookey Park.

The family attended the Presbyterian church congregation, which prior to the building of St Margaret’s in Hull Road, met in the former public hall in Station Street.³ Peter was given the job of bringing and distributing the hymnbooks and collecting them again after the service. In addition, it was his responsibility to remove the potentially service-disrupting stray fox terrier that would appear some Sundays.

Not wishing to follow in his father’s footsteps as a teacher, Peter enrolled at Box Hill Technical School after completing his primary schooling in Mooroolbark. Technical schooling led to an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic, and his first job was for a Lilydale business, servicing and repairing anything mechanical: potato planters on farms in Kinglake, tractors, trucks, and mowers.

During this time, his twin sister Marj—who had chosen to follow in her father’s footsteps—was appointed as a teacher at the Smythesdale primary school about 20 kilometres southwest of Ballarat, where she lived with the parents of local girl Beth—and as these things go, the rest is history! During the 1961 March long weekend, Peter had travelled to Smythesdale in his beloved Morris Minor to visit his sister. Beth, who was furthering her teacher training in Melbourne as a home economics teacher, had coincidentally arrived by train from Melbourne to visit her family for the long weekend. Beth recalls her first sight of Peter “as he strode into Mum’s kitchen to pick up his sister.”

The following day, the twins invited Beth to travel into Ballarat with them for the motorbike races, and the next day Peter offered to drive Beth back to her accommodation in South Yarra. Beth recalls their easy conversation and comfortable friendship. Not long afterwards, Peter invited Beth to partner him to his cricket end-of-season dinner dance, and the relationship continued to blossom, leading to their wedding on New Year’s Eve 1963.

As the life-needs of their growing family changed, Peter and Beth began the first of their six moves together.



Beth & Peter’s first house, in Felix Grove—above, in the early days of their marriage and below, about five years later



Preparations for their first had been in place prior to their wedding. Peter wrote:

When I was about 18 years old, Dad advised me to buy a block of land. So, I went to Rex Wyatt, who had the second grocery shop in Mooroolbark (on the site of the current Commonwealth Bank) who I had helped to stock the shelves some six years previously. Rex, who was also the first estate agent in Mooroolbark, showed me this half-acre of land near the north end of Felix Grove that was covered with blackberries. The price was about £900, but I only had £700 in the bank. Mum and Dad lent me enough to purchase the block, and I paid them back £200.

About the time of our engagement Beth and I decided to build our first house. I registered myself as an ‘owner builder’ and took out a building permit, then hired a local contractor to dig and lay the foundations.

I then ordered a truckload of framing timber from a sawmill in Toolangi, whose truck I had serviced years before at Fleming’s, and hired a tradie whose car I serviced to put up the frame. Another to lay the bricks, another to tile the roof and others to plaster the interior, the plumbing, electrical wiring, and install the aluminium windows from Dowell Industries. I didn’t want to paint window frames!

Peter and Beth moved into the house as a newly married couple in January 1964, when it was at the “lock-up” stage, with a front and back door fitted, but no internal doors or cupboards, and just a toilet and laundry trough. Peter used the lounge room as a workshop: “... it took five years of weekend and evening work to build cupboards, install doors, architraves, skirting boards and window linings, shower base, bath and wardrobes, cupboards and bench tops, etc until at last it was finished”.

¹ Bateman, Gary (2010, September). A Master Plan for Hookey Park. *Living Today*, Issue 33, p.15.
Bateman, Gary (2011, March). Mooroolbark Activity Centre Structure Plan. *Living Today*, Issue 35, p. 14
Bourchier, Randall (2014, June). Mystery in the Park. *Living Today*, Issue 47, pp. 12–13.

² Van Dijk, Janet (2020, June). Side by Side. *Living Today*, Issue 71, pp. 8–9.
Van Dijk, Janet (2020, September). Going Places. *Living Today*, Issue 72, p. 14.

³ Prior to the establishment of what we know today as St Margaret’s Uniting church



The Hookeys also lived in Sheldon Avenue (left), McIlraith Court Croydon (centre) and Pine Road (right). They named the McIlraith Court house “Pelmah”, an acronym of their names (Peter, Elizabeth, Lucinda, Mark, Andrea). The house in Pine Road was named Chiffon Vale, after their daughter’s horse Chiffon, and because of its proximity to the Bickleigh Vale Estate.



Beth and Peter are looking forward to the next chapter in their lives at St John's Rise



Peter with Mark, Andrea, and Lucinda in 1971

As their family grew, Peter and Beth moved several times in and near Mooroolbark, each time to a house that suited the particular ages and needs of their three children.

Beth and Peter worshipped and served at St Francis in the Fields Anglican church, directly across the road from St Margaret's Uniting church, where Peter's sister Marj currently serves as the church council chairperson, an elder, and organist. I asked the obvious cheeky question, and Peter replied that "the family that prays together stays together". He'd happily joined Beth in her Anglican confession.

Beth's church responsibilities were varied and demanding. Suffice it to say that she was personally involved in the international aid arm of the church, working at different times in the agency's responses to varied international challenges—refugees from Myanmar, the HIV crisis in South Africa, genocide in Kenya, aid work in Solomon Islands, Palestinian territories, and other places. I'm planning a follow-up article about Beth in a future issue to explore her lifelong faith commitment expressed in care for others.

Peter was ultimately employed by Mercedes Benz, and his work involved him being away from home, travelling nationally. Beth, at home, had many responsibilities to juggle. Each year, Peter would borrow a Mercedes Benz truck which would be decorated for the Red Earth festival parade. One year, the decorations promoted the St Francis Player's group forthcoming pantomime "Cinderella". And in another reference to cars, Peter mentioned that his company provided him with the latest Mercedes—very much an expensive car, which, Peter explained, "cost more than the house!"

Given their long association with Mooroolbark, I asked the Hookeys about its attractions for them, and they explained that it's the beauty of the area, trees, and Mount Dandenong, which they've been able to see from most of the houses they have lived in. Both love the "country feel" of the town, and the interesting landscape that is so different to the western part of Melbourne.

Now, they are facing their sixth move with some trepidation, and yet optimistic anticipation, as they await the completion of their new home in the medium density housing at the Benetas development at St John's Rise in Mooroolbark.

In some senses the move has the feel of "coming home" for each. Their new unit is sited on land owned by the Mackay family, on which as



Jack and Connie Hookey with granddaughter Lucinda



Jack Hookey helping his son build new front steps at Pelmah

At an afternoon tea arranged by Benetas for the "Pioneers" Beth discovered they already had connections with some other residents, including one who will be moving into the unit opposite them. "Coincidentally two other couples who worshipped at St Francis, who are now part of St James and St Peter Anglican Church in Kilsyth congregation with us, are also 'Pioneers'. We found at the pre-Christmas gathering that we have other connections with people also committed to purchasing a unit, including a woman Peter's father taught at Lilydale Primary School in the early 1950s."

These connections don't surprise me, given the Hookeys' decades-long presence in the area. I know that they are looking forward to exploring the richness of the community already taking shape at St John's Rise with its ready access to the wider Mooroolbark community.

Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas has bluntly suggested that, in contrast to the rampant individualism of our age "a human being left to himself cannot be a person."⁴ One of the Hookey granddaughters displayed a wisdom beyond her years when, after asking multiple questions about their upcoming move, she concluded, "Oh! It's all about community". Perhaps she'd been reading Zizioulas!

Randall Bouchier

⁴ Zizioulas, John D. (1985). *Being as Communion*. Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, p.107.



Jack and Connie Hookey's house in Station Street, built in 1948, opposite the land now known as Hookey Park



Beth and Peter with their children (L-R) Mark, Lucinda, and Andrea, standing outside Peter's parents' Station Street home



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Find Your Wings

Artist Graeme West was delighted to be asked to create an art installation for the outer walls of the Mooroolbark Library, to encourage people to spread their wings after the difficult time of the pandemic. "I was honoured," said Graeme. "Such public pieces are special to an artist."

The artwork was commissioned by the Celebrate Mooroolbark festival team and funded by the Yarra Ranges Council's "Art Attack" program. The two sets of wings—in hues of blue, green, pink and purple that reflect the festival's logo—have been secured to the outside of the library, with one set facing south and the other facing west. Graeme was pleased to see how well the bright splashes of colour have brought interest to the plain building. "It's quite striking," he said.

The wings are designed to lift the spirits of all who see and interact with them. In keeping with the 2022 Celebrate Mooroolbark theme of "reconnect", the wings represent being freed from the constraints of the pandemic, and symbolise community resilience and reconnection after the challenges of the last couple of years. Community members—particularly the young—are encouraged to snap pictures of themselves 'wearing' the wings. The two sets of wings are in different sizes, to allow accessibility for everyone: the larger set is for adults, while the smaller set, placed lower on the wall, is ideal for children or those with movement impairment. In the days surrounding the festival, pictures of the wings were splashed across social media with hashtags such as #mooroolbarkwings, #reconnect, and #community, as people shared pictures of themselves posing against the vibrantly coloured art.



PHOTO: JASON EAST PHOTOGRAPHY

"This community street art project is for all to enjoy, hopefully for many years to come," said Bec Gilbert, who coordinated the project on behalf of Celebrate Mooroolbark. "It's a symbol of celebration, of us being able to stretch our wings once again."

As Graeme West enjoyed the sights and sounds of the two-day Celebrate Mooroolbark festival in March, he was happy to see how many people were admiring the wings and taking pictures. "It was delightful to see people stop outside the front of the library and be engaged by the artwork," he said.

Although initially designed to be part of this year's Celebrate Mooroolbark celebrations, the installation is expected to be in place for at least five years—a creative and colourful reminder of the joy of community and connection.

Janet Van Dijk

Graeme is an art teacher who runs informal group art sessions at his studio in Park Orchards. To see examples of Graeme's work, to enquire about his classes or to commission artwork, contact him on Instagram (graeme_organart) or on 0407 500 357.



#ReturnYourself



Mooroolbark Library has returned to its pre-pandemic operation, with everyone welcome to visit the library, attend events and, of course, borrow items! June will see the start of our regular group programming including our monthly Gardening Club, Bookchat and puzzle group.

Libby by Overdrive

Did you know that your library card gives you access to more than 100,000 free eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines with Libby by Overdrive? By simply downloading the free app on your smartphone, tablet or compatible e-reader, you can instantly access the digital library collection anywhere in the world! Libby is the perfect travel companion, as you can download titles to be read or listened to on long flights, road trips or in rural areas with no connection. Staff are able to assist in downloading Libby onto your device, to get you reading or listening straight away.

Events

We have a wide range of events returning to Your Library. All events currently require bookings which can be organised by asking a library staff member, calling 9800 4680 or visiting events.yourlibrary.com.au

Begin Your Toastmasters Journey

Come and learn some tips on confident public speaking in a fun environment. Toastmasters isn't only for improving your communication skills—by giving speeches and working through a learning program, you learn how to structure presentations, incorporate tone and body language and truly engage with your audience.

Tuesday 14 June, 10 am

Mooroolbark Library, 7 Station Street, Mooroolbark.

Backyard Insects: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly with Olwyn Smiley

Olwyn will identify some of the insects that can be found in our gardens—the helpful ones, the troublesome ones, and the ones that are just part of the garden ecosystem. She will suggest ways of safely dealing with the troublesome bugs without endangering the others, and how to encourage the beneficial species: a kind of 'who's who in the garden'.

Tuesday 26 July, 2 pm

Mooroolbark Library, 7 Station Street, Mooroolbark.

Tales from the Grave

Join our family history team for a fascinating look at cemeteries and the graves within them. Discover the stories of the people who are buried beneath the headstones in our graveyards and cemeteries to complete your family history.

Friday 5 August, 2 pm

**Mooroolbark Library,
7 Station Street, Mooroolbark.**

Popular titles

Enjoy a great selection of the latest books at Your Library. To place a free reservation on any of these titles, view the catalogue at yourlibrary.com.au.

We are so excited to welcome everyone back to the library—be sure to pop in and say hi!

Angus Cooke, Team Leader
On behalf of the Mooroolbark Library team:
Hanna, Isabell, Margaret and Robyn



A Different Perspective

An innovative new exhibition is currently on display at the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum in Castella Street, Lilydale. The travelling exhibition, developed by Newcastle Museum, was the winner of the 2021 Museums and Galleries National Award (MAGNAs) for best temporary/travelling exhibition, and is showing for the first time in Victoria. Named 1X4, the exhibition was launched at the Yarra Ranges Museum on 26 May and featured a curator talk by David Hampton from Newcastle Museum. The exhibition will remain open until 11 September, and entrance is free.

The 1X4 experience allows patrons to view each object on display from four points of view—enabling the patron, rather than the museum curator, to choose the interpretation of the story. Visitors to the museum can access an audio tour, as well as information and a song for each object, via their mobile phones or tablet. The four perspectives for each display can be read or listened to at the dedicated website, 1x4.com.au.

Newcastle Museum director Julie Baird said, “The exhibition begins as many conversations as it concludes, allowing visitors to enjoy deeper engagement and a more philosophical view on rare, beautiful and ordinary objects. We are hoping visitors leave the show and go home to explore the links, songs and stories more after they have visited in person.”

One piece featured in the exhibition will be of special interest to museum visitors because of its local provenance: “The Lime Kiln, Lilydale, 1935”, a painting by impressionist landscape artist Arthur Streeton, will be among the items inviting visitors to embrace a new perspective.



According to Yarra Ranges Mayor Cr Jim Child, the 1X4 exhibition reveals the storytelling potential of our heritage collections and museums. “We don’t yet know all the stories that can be told through these objects, but over time different perspectives and understandings will create new social, cultural and historical meanings,” he said. “Collections such as the one held by our own Yarra Ranges Regional Museum are incredibly valuable assets, as our shared heritage shapes our identity.”

Janet Van Dijk

Major Trail Projects Feature in Council’s Draft Budget

Major trail projects will get under way across Yarra Ranges, along with continued storm recovery work and delivery of Yarra Ranges Council’s services to the community, as part of the 2022-23 budget. The draft budget, which was released for community engagement and submissions on 11 May, outlines council’s expenditure on services, recovery efforts and its annual capital works program.

Yarra Ranges Mayor Jim Child said a highlight of this year’s budget would be delivery of significant stages of the Yarra Valley Trail,

RidgeWalk and the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination. “This year we’ll be taking big steps forward with our Ridges and Rivers projects across the Yarra Valley and Dandenongs,” he said. “We’ll be hoping to finish Stage 1 of the Yarra Valley Trail, connecting the existing trail at Yering to Yarra Glen Station, while working on a northern loop of the trail that connects up. In the hills, we’ll be working on the first stage of RidgeWalk, which will be a 26 km trail connecting towns and displaying the histories, cultures and artworks inspired by the Dandenong Ranges.”

Cr Childs noted that the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination is awaiting a decision from the Minister for Planning. “If approved, this year will be the start of one of the largest projects we’ve ever undertaken, which will provide world-class recreation opportunities for community members and visitors alike,” he said.

Other capital works projects for the year include:

- construction of the Chirnside Urban Park.
- new playspaces in Carmen Reserve, Lilydale and Glenvalley Reserve in Seville East.

- new sporting pavilions in Chirnside Park’s Kimberley Reserve and Kilsyth’s Pinks Reserve.
- more than 19 kilometres of roads constructed as part of the Roads for Community program.

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the June 2021 storms will continue to be a key focus for council, with \$3M allocated to recovery projects in the coming year. The budget allocates \$86.4M towards council’s 120 services.

Cr Child said that council would be meeting the state government’s rate cap of 1.75 per cent, with staff working on improvements to services while keeping costs down.

“We think this draft budget offers value in service delivery and infrastructure investment for ratepayers in Yarra Ranges, while balancing the financial reality—that costs are rising and our revenue is constrained—in a sustainable way,” he said. “We’re committed to providing you with the services and assets you need to have a healthy community.”

For more information, visit shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au.

Yarra Ranges Council
Customer and Communications Department



PHOTO: JESSE GRAHAM



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Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	Craft and Produce Market: 9-2 pm Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Rotary Club of Lilydale. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Rotary Club Lilydale: 0423 558 833.
Monday evenings March to November	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 Helen Linnie: 9726 0477.
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am-2 pm. Cnr Ellen Road & Croydonvale Drive, Mooroolbark. For more information please contact President Ken Reid on 0493 084 646.
Tuesdays	Home League: 10:00 am-11:30 am. A fun, inspiring and educational time where women fellowship with other women. Salvation Army, 305 Manchester Rd, Chirnside Park. Enquiries 9727 4777
Tuesdays - Thursdays during school term	GymbarOO: Formative Sensory Perceptual Motor Program for babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. Mooroolbark Community Centre. More info: mooroolbark@gymbaroo.com.au or Facebook.
Wednesday mornings	Disabled People's Company: 10 am - noon. Disabled People's Company meets for coffee and a chat at the Mooroolbark Community Centre. For more information please ring Elsie 9726 4004.
Thursdays during school term	Music Together Program: 0-5 years. St Margaret's Uniting Church hall. 9:45 am. Morning tea and playtime included. \$10 per session per family. Contact Nancy on 0413 389 441.
Monday mornings	Free English Classes: at St Peter Julian's Church, 240 Hull Road, Mooroolbark. Call Jan Reilly on 0414 763 801 for bookings.
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.
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 lmc.org.au
Every second Friday	People's Pantry: 6-7 pm. Three course home-cooked meal for the homeless and lonely. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Rd. Enquiries Barbara: 0417 381 542.
10 June	Tex Perkins and Matt Walker: With special guest, Mooroolbark local Harmony Byrne. 7:30 pm, The Memo, Maroondah Hwy, Healesville. Tickets: phone 1300 368 333 or online at culturetracks.info.
15 June	UNSUNG: 7:30 pm, The Memo, Maroondah Hwy, Healesville. Tickets: phone 1300 368 333 or online at culturetracks.info.
26 June	Celtic Illusion Reimagined: 4 pm, The Memo, Maroondah Hwy, Healesville. Tickets: phone 1300 368 333 or online at culturetracks.info.
Saturday 2 July	Book Sale and Devonshire Teas: 9 am-12 noon, St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Also stalls with items including jams, jellies, chutneys, plants, lined fabric shopping bags, cakes and biscuits.
9 July	Kutcha Edwards: Circling Time—Songs & Stories: Co-presented with Oonah. 7:30 pm, The Memo, Maroondah Hwy, Healesville. Tickets: phone 1300 368 333 or online at culturetracks.info.
11 June 9 July 13 August	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
Term 3	Pottery Workshop: Weekly pottery lessons incl wheel work, hand-building, sculpture in relaxed, friendly environment at Mooroolbark Community Centre. Details online at culturetracks.info.
Term 3	Pottery Workshop for Kids: Wed 4:30 pm. Give little ones the opportunity to get messy working, creating and playing with clay at Mooroolbark Community Centre. Details at culturetracks.info.
Now until 11 September	1X4 Exhibition: A travelling exhibition by Newcastle Museum. Museums use objects to tell stories. It sounds simple but it's complicated. Various times. Details: culturetracks.info or 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 Janet Van Dijk on 0407 110 051 or email calendar@livingtoday.org.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.

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LIVING TODAY in Mooroolbark



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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 0407 110 051 or by email at editor@livingtoday.org.au

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 editor@livingtoday.org.au

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

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