

# LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges NO. 57 DECEMBER 2016



**Men and Their Sheds**

10,000 free copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark and district



# A Visual Treasure: Men and Their Sheds

I recently discovered one of the most inspiring photographic books I've seen in a while. Those who know me might think it's a book of inspiring landscapes and evocative shots of creation's natural beauty—but no. This was a collection of expressive, intimate portraits of men in their sheds.

Boring, you say? Not at all—quite the contrary! This book contains exceptional portraits of men taken in situ—images both memorable, poetic and dignified.

Mooroolbark photographer Craig Wetjen writes in the introduction to *Men and Their Sheds*, that the “photographic project started when my wife Jo asked me to take a photo of her dad Gordon in his shed. She has grown up with the country shed culture and if there was ever the perfect location for a portrait of Gordon, the shed was going to be it. His shed defines him in many ways. It is the one place he loves to relax and just potter. There is no pressure of time, conversation is easy, and the stories that are shared are wonderful. I was so happy with the image that I began to think how great it would be to photograph other blokes in their sheds.”<sup>1</sup>

I was struck by the way so many of Craig's images suggest a deep relationship of trust and friendship between photographer and subject. There's no sense of celebrity here. Rather, Craig's portraits capture something of the fundamental dignity of personhood. Here are photographs that respectfully celebrate something of the joy of life—and the delight and contentment many of us find in personal spaces that reflect our interests and passions. There's nothing staged here. And because of that, the photographs convey an honesty, a rare beauty and a certain nobility.

On the day I interviewed Craig, he had just received word that he has been accepted as an Australian citizen. Born near Washington DC in the US, Craig grew up in Simsbury, Connecticut. He speaks with gratitude of his father, who had been drafted by the New York Yankees until an arm injury brought his baseball-playing days to a premature end. “He was a very giving father,” said Craig. “He was always there. Always played sports with us, always coached us, always was there. Whenever



Peter Ferguson

we needed him, he was there.”

From an early age, Craig loved photography and spent many hours developing his camera craft, finally graduating in commercial photography from the Brooks Institute of Photography in California. While still a student Craig was offered “the experience of a lifetime” as a paid photographic intern with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratories in Pasadena, California.

When I asked how an “all-American boy” ended up in Australia, Craig told me that while working in a commercial studio in Seattle, he was invited to move to Australia to introduce digital photography at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in 1996. It was during his time at RMIT that he met his wife-to-be, Jo, in the Downunder Bar in Lygon Street.

Craig said that he was impressed by the photojournalist approach a lot of Australian wedding photographers were taking at the time and he felt there was “lots of room for creativity” in such a business.

After twelve successful years of running a wedding photography business, life delivered some unexpected challenges! Just before the birth of Jo and Craig's first child, Craig received what turned out to be a misdiagnosis of multiple sclerosis, which led to his first engagement with depression and anxiety. He recovered with professional therapy, but with the birth of their second daughter, Jo suffered from post-natal depression.

Regardless of their personal problems, the photography business continued to thrive—until the global financial crisis nearly wiped it out. The ‘black dog’ of depression returned for Craig, and a trip to the GP for a mental health assessment resulted in a diagnosis of chronic lymphocytic leukemia, which is now under ongoing observation on

<sup>1</sup> Wetjen, Craig. *Men and Their Sheds*. Richmond, Australia: Echo Publishing, a division of Bonnier Publishing, Australia, 2016. p.10



a yearly basis with his specialist.<sup>2</sup>

Craig's book, which he had already started, became one of the major ways Craig maintained both his physical and mental wellbeing during this time. His attitude became, "Stuff the business—let's just do this for fun!" And more than five years later, Craig's photographs provide a wonderful testimony to his craft and to the friendships that this warmly personable man fostered whilst visiting men and their sheds across the country.

Craig attributes the success of his portraits to his approach of first getting to know each man, by showing genuine interest in the person and his story. "I wanted to know the individual before any equipment came out of the car," recalled Craig. "Some of the interviews took hours!"

There was a tremor in Craig's voice as he pointed to one of the portraits. "This fellow here—I spent five hours with him. Five hours before that photo was ever taken! To a businessman, there's no money to be made in that. You know what? Money will never replace the conversations and the relationships that have been built between these men and me and my family. Money will never replace the images that capture something of the legacy of each man."

Looking at his photograph of Kevin Hutchinson, Craig said, "The art of what Kevin has done is in giving back to the community by restoring—by bringing back to life—five Murray River paddle steamers. And that's what I feel about my book; it's being able to give back to the community something of the histories of the people in the book."

"I don't think as humans we give back enough," reflected Craig. "By giving to others you end up getting back manyfold. You may not notice it straight away. You don't know when it'll come back to you. Through my gift of photographic ability, I've enjoyed occasional comments from these men (and also readers) that my interest in them, and my recognition of their value, has contributed in small but significant ways to emotional and physical wellbeing... 'You've absolutely changed my world...' In lending an ear to somebody, to let them just talk. Opening up the conversation, we find ourselves giving so much to each other. We've been given so much on this planet, and if we as human beings can give more to each other we'll become much better people."

Craig has found that he loves the art of giving back. "I don't think there's enough giving," he said. "And giving can sometimes be just taking time to listen. It's such a simple concept. So often we spend too much time with our devices and not enough in the present. In my journey, I learned I'd been spending too much time between my own ears and not enough time living in the present. The past is gone. We've no control over the future. All we can do is be in the present."

I was intrigued that Beyond Blue founder Jeff Kennett and Barry Golding, a patron of the Australian Men's Shed Association, both contributed forewords for the book, so I asked



John Anderson



Liam and Adrian Ford



Pete McQualter



Stephen Cachia





Garth Torrance



Leigh Huggard



Darren Parke



Jonny Gee

about the importance of both the backyard shed, and the Men's Shed for blokes.

"The backyard shed is an opportunity for a man to 'fart around' —tinker, be in their own space, create their own mess," said Craig. "Some of the men's sheds were like a clinician's office—clean as an operating theatre. You could eat off the floor. Others look an absolute shemozzle—an absolute disaster, but the bloke generally knows where everything is. The shed provides space for unhurried reflection, the chance to create, make whatever noise or mess they want: for men to quite simply be themselves. Even as kids we all enjoyed having our personal spaces where we could create, imagine..."

In 2007, men across Australia tinkering in their backyard sheds were brought together with the formation of the Australian Men's Shed Association, which is the body representing more than 900 Men's Sheds across the country. Men's Sheds are community-based, non-profit organisations whose main goal is to provide a safe, friendly and nurturing environment for men to work on meaningful projects in the company of other men. The aim is to advance the social involvement, wellbeing and mental health of the men in our communities. The Men's Shed motto is "Men don't talk face to face. They talk shoulder to shoulder."

Mooroolbark has its own Men's Shed, which meets Tuesdays and Thursdays in Montrose. For more information, see the calendar item at the back of our magazine or check out the group's Facebook page.<sup>3</sup>

Craig doesn't feel that the Men's Shed groups are a substitute for the backyard shed. "It's an adjunct to that, where men can incorporate what they do in their own sheds—maybe help teach someone else, or help give back through emotional support, mental support. Guys get together and they rib each other, they joke. It's a place of having fun, community, and it's a place where men can talk. And there's the serious stuff. If you're not doing well, let's talk about it. What can we perhaps do? Being together in a community environment helps people get past whatever they're facing because in sharing things with others in community, people begin to more fully live in the moment."

*Men and Their Sheds*<sup>4</sup> is a beautiful book; I highly recommend it. And I'm looking forward to the next book that Craig is envisaging—a collection of portraits of people struggling with dementia. It should be a wonderfully dignified, intimately personal and sensitive portrayal of people struggling with this challenging condition—a collection that should provide us all with better insight into others' worlds!



Randall Bouchier

<sup>3</sup> Mooroolbark Men's Shed

<sup>4</sup> *Men and Their Sheds* is available from mensshedphotography.com.au and from various book retailers.

Craig will be signing copies of *Men and Their Sheds* on 3 December at Collins Booksellers in Main Street, Croydon, between 11 am and 12 noon. There will be another opportunity for books to be signed on 10 December, when Craig will be at Dymocks at Eastland Shopping Centre between 12:30 and 1:30 pm.





PHOTO: MARK SYMONDS



PHOTO: JANET VAN DIJK

# celebrate mooroolbark

Red Earth Unearthed – Friday, March 24      Saturday March 25 2017

The theme for 2017's Celebrate Mooroolbark festival is "It's Easy Being Green". The committee is making a conscious effort to create a more environmentally sustainable event through which we can celebrate this wonderful part of the world and our opportunities to care for it and to keep it for future generations.

The committee is already hard at work with preparations for this event, but we are looking for your help. To make this a truly local event, we are looking for local individuals, schools, businesses and community groups to join in. There are opportunities to participate in the marketplace or get involved in the festival parade. We have competitions for school-age children and many options for local acts and performers. We are seeking local acts for the community stage, the youth zone or as roving performers, as well as groups to provide family-friendly activities or affordable food.

Next year will be the inaugural "Red Earth Unearthed" on the Friday night of the festival. If you can sing, dance, play an instrument or entertain an audience in some other way we would love to add you to the expanding list of those who got their start in entertainment through our competition. Entry

is free, with the opportunity to win cash prizes in two categories—Under 16 and Open. There will be first, second and third prizes as well as a "People's Choice".

We are also looking for additional event sponsors, with a wide range of sponsorship opportunities available. We thank those sponsors who are already on board—Yarra Ranges Council, Mooroolbark Community Bank (a branch of Bendigo Bank), The Professionals, *Living Today* magazine, St Francis in the Fields, Ross Mackay Creative, Lions Club of Mooroolbark, Mooroolbark Traders and Community Group and Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship.

If we have not been in touch with you, find us on Facebook or contact Yolande Pickett (admin@celebratemooroolbark.com) and she will get the information out to you. **We would welcome new faces for the organising committee and volunteers on the day. Above all, save the date—March 25.**

**Andrew Lang**  
Chairman

## Queen's Scout Award



The weekend of 8 and 9 October was a very special time for local scout Rupert Lang, his family and the 1st Mooroolbark Scout Group. It was a time to celebrate the award of a Queen's Scout Award to one of its Venturer Scouts (the 14 to 18-year-old group).

This highly regarded award, which has been a feature of the scouting movement for over 100 years, is the pinnacle of a young scout's career. Fewer than 100 Queen's Scout awards are presented in any one year in Victoria. Such is the general regard for this award that five Australian universities offer recipients automatic acceptance to certain courses.

Rupert's award is the first to be achieved in the 1st Mooroolbark Group since 1998.

Rupert began his scouting journey as a six-year-old Joey Scout in Tasmania. He became a Cub Scout while living in Horsham and subsequently participated in Cub Scouts, Scouts and Venturer Scouts in Mooroolbark. He is now a member of the Mount Evelyn Rover Crew.

To achieve the prestigious Queen's Scout Award, a Venturer Scout must be able to set a goal, plan progress towards that goal, organise himself and others and maintain the determination to overcome difficulties and to complete the task. Each recipient must also have achieved the Venturing Skills Award (which focuses primarily on bushwalking and first aid skills) and complete the specified requirements in four further award areas. The four award areas are:

- **Adventurous Activities:** demonstrates that the Venturer Scout is challenged in initiative, expeditions and outdoor adventures.
- **Community Involvement:** involves activities centred on citizenship, community service and caring for the environment.
- **Leadership Development:** involvement in unit management and leadership courses and studying different vocations.
- **Personal Growth:** self-development through expressions, ideals, mental pursuits and personal lifestyle.



PHOTO: DOUG LEWIS

**Rupert Lang with his parents Louise and Andrew, and sister Esther**

Rupert was officially presented with the award at Government House on Saturday 8 October. This was followed by a local presentation and a time of celebration at the 1st Mooroolbark Scout Hall the following day.

In accepting the award, Rupert expressed his appreciation to his parents and to his sister Esther (also his Venturer Leader), for their constant encouragement in helping him to stick to the very challenging tasks associated with completing all of the requirements. Rupert estimates he spent approximately 270 hours in completing the tasks. It was a moving moment for Esther when she had the honour of presenting the award to her younger brother on behalf of 1st Mooroolbark.

For further information about the scouting movement in general or the 1st Mooroolbark Group in particular, you are invited to contact Andrew Lang, Leader in Charge, at 36 Marion Avenue Croydon 3136, on 0417 556 848 or gl.mooroolbark1st@vicscouts.asn.au.

**Doug Lewis**



For Mooroolbark businesswoman Carley Payne, customer satisfaction is paramount, and establishing a good relationship with her clients is crucial. "It helps me get the best outcome for my customers," she said.

Carley is the founder of Payneless Media, a website design business. In addition to designing and hosting websites, Carley can organise all the graphic design needs of her clients including logo design, business cards, flyers, and pamphlets. Other services offered by Payneless Media are product photography, content writing and search engine optimisation.

As the youngest of four children whose early years were spent in Croydon, Carley has been interested in art and design from an early age. When Carley was in her mid teens, her father needed an eye-catching website for a business he was starting. With the help of a friend who was experienced at website development, Carley created a site for her father's business—her first website. She enjoyed the process so much that the idea for a career was born. After finishing secondary school and studying web development at Swinburne, she officially started her own business in 2012.

The growth of the business has been steady over the last four years. Although she would like to continue to expand in coming years, Carley also aims to keep it small enough to retain the

commitment to personal service. She approaches each web-design project with the aim of providing an affordable yet individual service for each of her customers. "I don't like the one-size-fits-all approach," she said.

In line with her interest in the creative arts, Carley also has her own wedding photography business, which has been expanding at a rapid pace since its establishment only a couple of years ago. One of the secrets of Carley's success is the amount of time she spends with each couple in order to capture the essence of their relationship. Carley likes to meet with prospective clients over coffee so that she can get to know them and their needs before the big day. Unlike many photographers, she offers a full-day photographic service, from the beginning of the wedding-day preparations to the end of the reception. This gives her the opportunity to memorialise many of the unique candid moments that are missed by other photographers. Carley particularly enjoys capturing the relaxed interactions between the bridal party and guests at the reception, when the formalities of the day are over.

Carley considers it a privilege to be with couples as they start their married lives together, and she feels the same about her



PHOTO: MATTHEW SIRAANNI-DUFFY

web design customers, most of whom are establishing new businesses.

The continuing success of both Carley's businesses is no doubt a result of what she calls "the good, old-fashioned values of customer service with hard work and continuous improvement."

**Janet Van Dijk**

*To arrange for Payneless Media to help you with your website design or business graphics, contact Carley on 0415 495 063 or check out her website: [paynelessmedia.com.au](http://paynelessmedia.com.au). You can also see Carley's beautiful wedding pictures at [carleypayne.com.au](http://carleypayne.com.au) or on her Facebook page: Carley Payne Photography.*

## Mooroolbark Eyecare is a Family Affair

Many locals appreciate the country-town feel of the Mooroolbark community, where traders know them and their families personally. The local optometry practice, Mooroolbark Eyecare, is no exception—and it also has its own family focus!

Optometry has a long history in Mooroolbark, with the current practice tracing its origins back to 1962. The business has undergone a number of name changes over the years, and was renamed Mooroolbark Eyecare in 2005 by its current owner, Glenda Schubert. The business is truly a family concern.

Glenda, with 46 years of experience behind her, has been serving the eye-care needs of our community for nearly 37 of those years. She is assisted by her brother, Kent Snibson, an optometrist with over 35 years experience. Kent has worked for the business in the past, and now works on Mondays and fills in when needed. Glenda's sister-in-law, Maxine, has been the receptionist for 10 years and she is ably assisted by Desa—not a

relative but who "seems like one", and has been a work colleague for over 34 years. Glenda's husband John, a retired teacher, has been doing part-time reception work for 16 years and is still holding the fort on Saturday mornings. The Schubert children, Catherine and Carl, also had part-time jobs there while completing their tertiary studies and now the grandchildren frequently pop in to see Nana at work.

Glenda said, "I love working in Mooroolbark—it is like working in a country town. Unlike in the large shopping centres, the service from the local shopkeepers is more personal and friendly—and it needs to be, if we are going to survive the competition from the large corporates."

She is very grateful for the word-of-mouth recommendations from her happy patients and for the referrals from the local doctors, maternal health sisters and teachers.

Glenda and Kent have a special interest in children's vision and are keen to get the message out to parents about the importance of all children having a thorough eye examination when they are three years old and again when starting school. This should be followed by regular three-yearly checkups, as vision can change as children grow.

Mooroolbark Eyecare is a well-equipped practice, with the latest devices for monitoring macular degeneration and glaucoma, thus facilitating prompt and relevant referrals to eye specialists. Eye examinations attract a Medicare rebate and a referral is not needed.

Glenda finds it very satisfying to have patients who have moved away yet still return from interstate, country areas and distant suburbs for their eye care. Over the years she has enjoyed attending to the eye-care needs of four generations of some families. She and her family look forward to serving even further generations of clients, in the local area and beyond.



PHOTO: DOUG LEWIS

**The friendly staff at Mooroolbark Eyecare: Kent & Maxine Snibson, John & Glenda Schubert, and Desa Stevkovska**

*Mooroolbark Eyecare, 18 Brice Avenue, is open Monday to Friday, 8:45 am to 5:30 pm, and on Saturday from 9 am to 12 pm. After-hours appointments can be arranged by calling 9726 4060.*



# Time for a Change

After 14 years, there are changes ahead for *Living Today in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges!*

The first issue of *Living Today* magazine rolled off the presses in September, 2002. An initiative of Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, the magazine was published as a free service to the community. In the first issue, then-editor Doug Lewis emphasised the magazine's objective. He wrote, "Our intention is to identify and highlight many of the good things that are constantly happening in our neighbourhood."

The idea for a community magazine began when Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship was looking for an additional way to contribute to the community. The aim of the magazine was to strengthen neighbourhood ties by celebrating the achievements and contributions to Mooroolbark made by individuals and groups. Over the years we have been able to bring many positive stories to the community—stories of achievement, personal sacrifice, sporting and creative success, and kindness toward others. We have talked to local sporting heroes, delved into the history of Mooroolbark, and profiled Mooroolbark identities and local businesses.

We are very grateful for the hard work of our contributors, all of whom are volunteers. We rely heavily on these volunteers to provide ideas, write articles, proofread, and take photos. We are also very generously supported by our sponsors, whose financial backing is integral to our survival. One of our first financial supporters was the fledgling Mooroolbark Community Bank Branch of the Bendigo Bank, as part of its commitment to support the local community. Methven Professionals Real Estate and printing firm Publication Perspectives have also been supporters since the magazine's early days. More recently, the Lions Club of Mooroolbark, Mooroolbark Denture Clinic and Mooroolbark Laundrette have provided ongoing financial support. Many generous businesses and individuals have also provided one-off donations over the years.

*Living Today* began as an eight-page magazine and by 2010 was in its current 16-page format. Distribution of the magazine increased from a few thousand copies at its inception to nearly 12,000 copies by 2007. In 2015 the print run was reduced to 10,000 copies in a bid to cut costs, but it was soon evident that further cost cutting would be necessary—and that's where our new changes come in.

In an exciting move for the magazine, our format will now

be changing from a primarily printed format to a digital magazine. This move will begin with our next issue (March 2017) and recognises the fact that readers are increasingly more comfortable finding their reading material online. It will also enable us to reduce costs while making the magazine available to even more people, both within our community and outside it.

Of course, we understand that many of our readers enjoy the tactile experience of holding a magazine in their hands. We will still print a limited number of paper copies of each issue, which will be delivered to schools, kindergartens, shire offices, the library, Mooroolbark Community Centre, the Professionals real estate office, and local churches. Residents who want a paper copy will be able to pick up an issue from one of these locations around Mooroolbark.

*Living Today* now has a new dedicated website, which readers can access to view or download current or past issues of the magazine. A PDF of each new issue of the magazine will also be automatically emailed to those who wish to join our subscriber list.

We have enjoyed bringing you the good news stories of Mooroolbark for the last 14 years, and look forward to continuing to report on the many positive activities in our community!

Janet Van Dijk



Beginning with the March 2017 edition, our magazine will now primarily be available in digital format. To access future issues of *Living Today*, please:

- visit our new website [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au) to read or download current or past issues;
- contact the editor on [living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com](mailto:living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com) and ask to be added to our mailing list. A PDF of each new issue will automatically be emailed to you; or
- read or pick up a paper copy from one of several locations around Mooroolbark. For the first few digital issues, flyers will be hand-delivered to mailboxes in the area, letting you know where you can pick up a copy.

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# The Right to Freedom

I recently travelled to Germany and enjoyed the autobahn experience, which gives drivers the freedom to drive at speeds well over 200 kilometres per hour. I wondered: are the German autobahns *that* much better than our Australian motorways?

I also noticed that there is no German law requiring a person to wear a protective helmet when riding a bicycle. Are German heads harder than Aussie heads? Well, probably not. Nor are there signs everywhere reminding people not to litter. Do Germans still have rubbish to throw away? Yes, as do we—but they seem to do so with consideration and responsibility. These three issues are just a few of many differences I noticed in the way Germany and Australia function.

Some might suggest that Australia is further advanced, with laws designed to prevent injury and death and to guide people to live more considerately of others. Still others might suggest that a society is healthier if it operates on principle and on moral values that

reduced freedom compared to the other.

## ■ Does freedom allow us to do whatever we want?

Perhaps we must first consider what true freedom is, or is *not*. It is not license to do whatever we want. Freedom and responsibility should be inseparable, but it seems that at some time in our past, people began to believe that we could have one without the other—that we should have freedom at all costs. If that is attempted, freedom becomes a burden and responsibility, a chore. Neither seems attractive or useful anymore. But when coupled with responsibility, freedom allows us to be the happiest, the most satisfied and the most accomplished we can be. With everyone having the opportunity to be their best, all people are benefited, not penalised or disadvantaged.

All humans have the right to experience freedom. But—and this is an important 'but'—if we claim freedom without the responsibility that comes with it, we become self-centred

around them. Those who choose to drive more slowly make sure that they keep out of the fast lanes as much as possible, always moving back to the slower lanes after overtaking. In Germany there are no directions like our 'keep to the left' signs—drivers just seem to understand that it should be done.

## ■ Is freedom worth the risk?

In Germany, riding a bike without a helmet is taking a degree of risk (as is driving at more than 200 kph!) yet it is taken with a sense of responsibility that rests with the user, not the state or anybody else. No amount of law will ever replace considered and owned responsibility, and law can't deliver the freedom we all seek.

Since returning home from my trip overseas, I confess to being a bit annoyed at our measly 110 kph speed limits. This leaves me with a predicament: how do I personally reconcile these two vastly different approaches to road use and safety?



can be interpreted *by the individual*, within the reasonable bounds of common sense and courtesy.

I was intrigued by the differences in the systems forming the foundations of our two great countries. In simple terms, it seems one is driven by law and the other is driven by responsibility. In many ways, one has greatly

creatures seeking freedom at the expense of everyone else. Each individual seeks his own right to freedom, not that of the society as a whole.

Driving at more than 200 kilometres an hour on a public motorway is a freedom Germans enjoy, but they accept that it is firmly attached to responsibility. They use their freedom without neglecting the needs of those

One option would be to carp on about it and grow increasingly annoyed at the state cramping my freedom to drive at more appropriate speeds when the road and conditions allow. Another option would be to remember that with freedom comes great responsibility and that not all people driving on our roads understand this. The German way would simply not work here; as a nation, we're not prepared for it.





PHOTO: PINABAY/SLEEZE

## Family freedom

While Australia may never be like Germany in that regard, we can consider how these intriguingly different ways of living might affect family dynamics and help children grow up to be responsible adults who appreciate freedom.

All parents face the challenge of how to grant increased freedom to their children as they grow and mature. We want our children to make their own life plans and decisions wisely and responsibly. As parents, we know that freedom and responsibility go together. Children are not as aware of this, unless we make that point and live it out as an example for them. If we've been strict parents, then the transition to children having their own freedoms will need to be a steady and considered one. If we've had a degree of flexibility in raising our children, then freedom will be a concept that they will understand more readily when it is extended as they grow from children to teenagers, and teenagers to adults.

The more laws a country has, the less freedom for its citizens. It's the same in a family. If there are laws and rules governing every aspect of our children's lives, they will have trouble understanding the concept of freedom. When it comes time to transition to being on their own, children who have had a highly regulated lifestyle may find it hard to make suitable choices in the absence of the rules they are used to.

If, however, children experience a little

freedom combined with responsibility as they are growing up, they will learn how to make wise choices before they are completely on their own. Responsibility empowers. Children love to learn, especially when they are thoroughly involved in the learning process.

Children can be included in decision making when the outcome involves them. It's an opportunity for them to exercise their decision-making skills: What do they think they should do in a given situation? What do they think would be a good time to come home from an activity? What's the best way to manage a particular situation to achieve the desired outcome? Have they considered the feelings of others involved?

When teenagers over time become practiced at working through decision making and planning—while considering other people and possible ramifications of their decision—they will enjoy a freedom that has been earned. Learning to balance freedom and responsibility will become second nature to them.

Sure, kids will stretch the balance and make mistakes—as we all do. That's normal and expected. It's all part of the growing, learning and maturing process.

Perhaps some people in Germany will get to the point where they *want* to wear bicycle helmets. They will *own* their decision and think about their safety, and that of others around them in a completely different way than if they were forced to comply with a rigid law with severe penalties attached.

In Australia, there are laws for practically

everything. Many are good, reasonable and promote safety on the roads, in the workplace, at home and even in the bush. Sometimes, though, when rules are imposed people tend not to think about why certain things are so. With reduced freedom can come a lack of awareness of our responsibility for others and and for our precious country.

In families, parents can help their children move forward by implementing a few simple concepts:

- Some family rules are non-negotiable—that's just the way it is!
- Some rules are negotiable—let's work it out together.
- All other decisions and choices are up to you—be wise, be kind and we'll look forward to seeing you in action!

As children grow older and more practiced in responsible decision making, there will be more times that the third option—"it's up to you"—becomes the default setting.

We have the opportunity to raise children who know that a keen sense of *freedom* goes hand in hand with its firm friend *responsibility*—let's work to ensure that those two standards are never separated in our lives and those of our children!



Steve Steel



## The Stillness

In 1988, Rosemary Johnson was a violinist for the Welsh National Opera. Her future looked bright, until a car accident changed everything. After she woke up from a coma, doctors informed her that she would never be able to move again. And for the next thirty years, Rosemary's violin remained silent. But now, almost thirty years later, thanks to some cutting-edge technology, Rosemary is beginning to make music again. Working with specially designed software, she can alter notes and musical phrases by simply focusing her eyes on different coloured lights on a computer.

When I read about this, I was reminded of something that we sometimes forget—the stillness of God. Sometimes it can feel like we're stuck, that no matter how many prayers we may offer to change our circumstances, God remains unmoved—silent.

But does that mean He's stopped working? Does that mean He is absent? No,

far from it! At the end of His earthly ministry, Christ told his followers, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20, New International Version).

Jesus gives us both a promise and a description of His character: God's closeness and involvement in our lives is a constant, and it will never be withdrawn from us. And yet, throughout history He has used stillness to shape the character and experience of those through whom He's worked. People like Job, Abraham, Joseph and John the

Baptist all experienced it. Even Jesus himself experienced it in the Garden of Gethsemane. At that time, there's every indication Christ felt the same doubt and confusion we feel when confronted with the stillness of God.

But did that mean God had stopped listening or working? Of course not! In fact, God was about to accomplish His most important work in all of history!

So while at times we too might feel anxious as we encounter a stillness from God, we can remember that, like Rosemary, apparent silence doesn't mean that nothing is happening. His stillness can be a sign of His closeness and love! The beautiful music of God's work in our lives is always playing. We may not be hearing it yet. But one day we will hear it in all its glory—forever.

**Joseph Tkach**  
Speaking of Life

## YWCA Mature Women's Group

When Maureen Carr's husband died unexpectedly, she found the support of the YWCA Mature Women's Group invaluable. Having worked all her life until retirement, Maureen felt lonely without her husband. She had lost touch with her workmates and had few friends other than the YWCA women, who rallied around and were very supportive. Maureen said, "As you get older or become widowed or divorced, it is more difficult to make friends, and loneliness can make you feel older."

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has developed from an organisation helping young girls who were alone and friendless in the city, to groups all over the world which help to make life better through employment, accommodation and improvement of the status of women. It is non-denominational.

The Mooroolbark YWCA Mature Women's Group, which meets in the community centre each Tuesday, was started in 1986. Six ladies decided that a club for women over 50 was needed, so they contacted the headquarters of the YWCA and were given permission to go ahead. Placing advertisements in local newspapers and shop windows, they recruited 20 members. The numbers swelled to 40, then 70. Today the group has 45 ladies and would welcome new members.

Many of the members are widowed or single, but even women who are retired



PHOTO: BARBARA AUSTIN

At the group's meeting the week before Melbourne Cup Day, many of the members wore hats in honour of the racing season

and happily married find that they need the companionship of other women and to be away from their husbands for a few hours each week. The aim is on developing friendships and understanding the physical and mental needs of their age group.

Meetings have informative speakers on a variety of subjects, including road safety, keeping safe and healthy, and learning where to go to solve legal, medical and family problems. They have had speakers on guide dogs and local bird life, as well as advice about how to look after pets and lost or injured animals. There have also been guests who spoke about the rewarding and challenging experience of working for charities overseas such as Mission without Borders and Mercy Ships.

The group also makes donations to various charities. Some of the "girls" knit and sew for different groups. The main charity receiving their support this year is Cottage by the Sea, a self-funded organisation which provides a five-day holiday at the beach to underprivileged children.

The first Tuesday of each month is film day. The group meets at Reading Cinemas in Chirnside Park. A group ticket is bought for \$6 each and they choose a movie, which is followed by a light lunch and a chat.

Each second and fourth Tuesday in the month, the group meets in their club room at the Mooroolbark Community Centre, where there is a prearranged activity or speaker. On the third Tuesday of the month they have an outing to an event or place of interest.

Maureen Carr, current secretary of the YWCA Mature Women's Group, speaks of these Tuesday gatherings with much fondness and appreciation. She knows what it can be like to feel isolated from the world.

**Barbara Austin**

*For more information on how to join the YWCA Mature Women's Group, call the Mooroolbark Community Centre on 9726 5488 or call club president Beth on 0425 730 630.*



When times are hard, it can affect every member of families who struggle. Job insecurity and financial problems cause uncertainty and stress, and this insecurity is often felt by even the youngest members of the family. To make things easier for local families affected by financial hardship, Mooroolbark mother of two Lisa Currie—with the support of many amazing individuals and businesses—recently established Nourish Network.

One of Lisa's main aims in founding the program was to provide a community of givers to look out for those in our neighbourhood who need a little extra help. The motto for the program is “providing families in need with nourishment for the body, mind and soul.” It focuses on providing practical support—food, clothing and household items, and general life education—as well as emotional support.

Lisa consulted with Yarra Ranges schools to identify families of primary-school-aged children who need some extra assistance. Families were selected for the program based not only on their needs but on their willingness to take an active part in changing their circumstances and give back to the community in their own way. Member families contribute a gold coin or share skills or services that benefit members.

Nourish Network began in July this year and takes a comprehensive



approach to family wellbeing. One of its main priorities is supplying families with food items to help relieve financial strain and provide improved nutrition. It also offers education on a number of topics, provides clothing and household items and—most importantly—gives social and emotional support.

Each week, parents and carers enrolled in the program attend a café-style morning tea, where they meet others in similar circumstances and help develop a supportive community. After time spent socialising, each family receives a weekly allocation of fruit, vegetables, and bread. Food is provided by organisations such as Second Bite and local businesses, among them Baker's Delight, Coles, and Langfords Patisserie.

Once a month, the program runs a ‘market day’. On this day, in addition to the usual morning tea and food pick-up, there are various goods and services available for the participants. Among the donated items are non-perishable food, clothing, (including lovingly hand-knitted scarves, beanies and gloves during winter), hygiene products, and household items. There are also cooking demonstrations and sessions which provide education on nutritious eating. The social interaction and information sessions combine to instil confidence in parents and provide them with skills and techniques to help them improve the lives of their families.



Local businesses and organisations have donated very generously to the program



Scarves and beanies have been handknitted for Nourish Network members

*Carols by Candlelight*

**Hookey Park, Friday 9 December 2016**

6:30 pm Picnic dinner in the park—BYO or purchase from on-site food van

7:45 pm Enjoy the sound of Croydon Citizen's Brass Band. This will be followed by community carol singing, supported by the Melbourne Male Choir, and performances by local schools

Bring your own rug or chair

Food for sale at family-friendly prices—including the famous Lions Christmas Fruit Cake

Battery-operated candles for sale

Parking: rear of Terrace Shopping Centre, Mooroolbark

Participants, many of whom are single parents or elderly guardians, also have the opportunity to engage in wellbeing activities such as art therapy and relaxation, as well as self-care and pampering opportunities like massage and haircuts. There are also people willing to lend a listening ear or to help with job-seeking skills or family finances.

Lisa said that the program has already succeeded beyond her wildest dreams, thanks to the generous support of private individuals, organisations and businesses. She is particularly grateful to partner with Melba College in Croydon. Three of their VCAL students help with the program each Friday while other students support by collecting donations. The experience is a rewarding one for the volunteers, some of whom work behind the scenes while others work directly with the program participants. “People who want to use their skills to make a difference are able to see where their efforts are most appreciated and experience the gratitude of those receiving,” said Lisa.

If you would like to know more about Nourish Network or have a skill you'd like to contribute, visit the [ripplekindness.org/nourish-network](http://ripplekindness.org/nourish-network) website or Facebook page: Nourish Network.

Janet Van Dijk





# For England

Randall Bouchier

In my article about local historian Anthony McAleer in the September issue of *Living Today*, I said that I would write further about his most recent book, *J.D. Burns – Poet, Schoolboy, Soldier, Martyr*.

The book was launched at Lilydale Uniting Church on 10 July this year.

Local politicians Tony Smith (the Federal Speaker) and Cr Maria McCarthy were among those who spoke about the life of James Drummond (Jim) Burns during the launch.

Lilydale Uniting Church was chosen for the book launch because Jim's father, the Reverend Hugh McLeod Burns, was the minister at the Lilydale church (then known as St Andrews Presbyterian Church) at the time of Jim's enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1915.

Hugh had become a clergyman in the footsteps of his own father—Jim's namesake—the Reverend James Drummond Burns, who had risen from humble working class beginnings and, assisted by scholarships and his own hard work, graduated from Edinburgh University in 1837.

Whilst pastoring the Presbyterian church at Hampstead, England, Jim's father Hugh was born. When Hugh was 18, he settled with his mother and two siblings in Melbourne, where he completed his Master of Theology at Ormond College before taking up church postings at Inverleigh (where Jim was born in 1895) followed by Bairnsdale, Mentone and Lilydale.

Both Jim's father and grandfather were men whose selfless dedication to their congregations was well known. They were also recognised for the generous service they gave to the towns where they pastored. Jim was cut from the same cloth! When he was 12, he organised the first scout troop in Bairnsdale by drumming up interest by door-knocking in his neighbourhood.

In 1911, Jim began his studies at Melbourne's Scotch College, where William S. Littlejohn was the headmaster. Jim devoted himself to academic excellence, and threw himself into extra-curricular activities. He became a prefect, represented the school in debating and cricket, was active in the cadet corps and contributed to and edited the school magazine.

Littlejohn later wrote, "J. D. Burns was the type of public school boy that one delights to honour. During the four crowded years that he was at Scotch he lived for the school... His was a rare combination of gifts of heart and head and hand, and he brought them all to the service of the school. He cherished the highest ideals of life. Whatever things were pure and honourable, and just and lovable and gracious, he thought on these things."

After Jim enlisted, he was farewelled by the Lilydale congregation and commenced his AIF training at the Broadmeadows camp.

It was here that Jim penned a poem entitled *For England*—a patriotic and emotional call to arms that both expressed his own motivation for serving the Empire at its time of need in WWI and subsequently ignited patriotic responses from his own and subsequent generations throughout the British Empire. When printed in one British publication, it was attributed to Rudyard Kipling, who in a letter to the editor said words to the effect of *I did not write this poem, though I wish I had!* The poem went on to become the most widely read and best-received Australian war poem ever.<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, Jim's promising life was tragically cut short at 20 years old when he was shot through the head in the midst of a Turkish artillery barrage during trench warfare at Courtney's Post, Gallipoli on 18 September, 1915. His mates grieved the loss; Corporal J. D. Burns was as highly respected in his battalion as he'd been at Scotch College.

Anthony laments that Jim's death cut short a promising life. He observes that Jim's death (like the deaths of so many other young men of his generation) provided a snapshot of irreparable loss. Quite apart from the long-lasting scars of grief and loss experienced by families, friends and communities, what might Jim and his contemporaries have gone on to achieve? What contributions might Jim have made to Australia's literary heritage? Might he have made his mark on the church, in community affairs, or in politics? Might he have become a leading academic or teacher?

We'll never know. On the one hand we're grateful to those who sacrificed their own lives so that we might enjoy some of the freedoms we all too often take for granted. On the other, we're left with a nagging sense of loss, of what might have been. And we who are left reflect on the madness, the folly, the unquantifiable loss—the tragedy of war and its impact on the generations that follow.

Copies of *J.D. Burns – Poet, Schoolboy, Soldier, Martyr* are available at Lilydale RSL, and the book is well worth the read.

Anthony McAleer's curiosity, personal warmth, and writing abilities have all so generously contributed to the recording of our local history for each of us, and for those who come after us.



<sup>1</sup> The text of the poem appears on a memorial at the Lilydale Uniting Church and can be read at [monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/ww1/display/103657-lilydale-uniting-church-memorial-plaque](http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/ww1/display/103657-lilydale-uniting-church-memorial-plaque). Interestingly, Jim's grandfather (also James Drummond Burns) was also recognised for his poems and hymns.





## Family Fun Day and 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations



A huge and enthusiastic crowd of students, parents and friends gathered at Rolling Hills Primary School on Sunday 9 October to participate in a fun-filled day of birthday celebrations and activities for all ages. The day began with a formal welcome by Assistant Principal Mary Moore, and some delightful presentations by the school choir. Mary then introduced the two previous principals, Barry Jackson and Terry Spottiswood, who each reflected briefly on their own personal journey in the life of the school. The current principal, Robyn English, concluded the formalities and everyone joined in the special moment of the cutting of the spectacular 30th birthday cake.

The organising committee of parents and staff is to be heartily congratulated on all of the work that went into preparing for the day. The extensive variety of displays, stalls, rides, and activities kept everyone involved, connected and well fed throughout a great day of celebration and family fun.

Comments from some of the committee members sum up the reactions to the whole day and highlight the strong personal connections that are a significant part of life in the Rolling Hills school community. Mel Woodhouse said, "It has been a great pleasure to work together as a team in creating an event that allowed so many people to celebrate and enjoy our great community at Rolling Hills PS. Allie Harrison, who enjoyed the pleasure of cutting the cake on behalf of everyone, said,

"It is a really special thing for me to be able to return as a teacher to the primary school I attended as a child. I feel a deep connection to the community and consider it an honour to be able to pass on my love of learning to the next generation."

Linda Knights, a parent member of the committee, who did a great deal of work on the very impressive historical display of staff and students over the past 30 years, said, "My connections go way back. My father participated in the interim committee that was formed before the school was established. Having enjoyed my school life in Rolling Hills I am delighted that my own children are now enjoying this same opportunity. I have a big soft spot in my heart for this school." Other committee members spoke of their school community as "warm and welcoming", "inclusive and supportive" and "a community that really cares about its members."

With comments like that from people closely involved with Rolling Hills, it is easy to see why the school has a reputation that families who become a part of this community invariably seek to remain there throughout their entire primary school life.

Congratulations to all involved on a great day and a thriving school community.

**Doug Lewis**

## Robyn English—Rolling Hills Primary School Principal



Principal Robyn English, right, with former Rolling Hills PS principals Terry Spottiswood and Barry Jackson

Robyn English, principal at Rolling Hills Primary School, brings to her new posting a rich background of experience in primary schools. The daughter of an academic working in various universities around the world, Robyn's own primary school life was spent in diverse places including some time in Papua New Guinea and England, and several years in a highly multi-cultural school in Melbourne. It also included a full year in boarding school.

Robyn's 20 years of teaching experience in Victorian schools began with an appointment to the western suburbs and has taken her to nine other schools including a country appointment at Lal Lal, near Ballarat. Throughout her career she has become acutely aware of the wide range of backgrounds and cultures that have produced the diversity that is found in our Victorian schools today. She reflects on the valuable experiences she has had through being involved in some very different school environments and cultures, and having the opportunity to work alongside a number of inspiring principals and leadership teams.

Robyn speaks of the importance of finding a 'good fit' between principals and school communities and discloses that whilst working in the Balwyn North area she was 'tipped off' by a close colleague that Rolling Hills was looking for new principal and that she might find it to be a good fit for herself. Her research into the school and the community convinced her that, from her perspective, this was

indeed the case. As time went on the appointment panel confirmed that they had come to the same conclusion by appointing her to the position.

Robyn sees Rolling Hills as a strong and stable learning community that is fully committed to continuing to grow and develop in its capacity to best serve its students in a rapidly changing world. She relishes the opportunity to learn and grow along with the whole community as they focus on the best ways to prepare their students for the future challenges they will meet. She speaks of the importance of providing a wide range of experiences and opportunities leading to discovery and promotion of individual strengths and abilities, while remaining totally accountable for learning results in the basic areas of literacy and numeracy—results that can be clearly measured.

The school is currently focusing on its four-year strategic plan. A part of that process is to revisit and review the school's vision statement. The current statement, described as 'a work in progress' reads, "Our vision is to inspire all learners to be curious and creative. We seek to develop resilient and ethical citizens with the skills to thrive in a diverse global community." Rolling Hills Primary School looks well placed to continue to grow and develop in all aspects of the learning process while remaining the well-loved community that it currently is.

**Doug Lewis**



# The Journey to Peace

Janet Van Dijk

Wilma Wollburg's cosy home in quiet, leafy Mooroolbark is a long way from the horrors of war. But for the 93-year-old widow, the memories are never far away. "Not long ago I dreamt about it again," she said. "Still. Seventy years ago, and still..." Her voice trailed off. "My own screams woke me up."

Like many Australians, Wilma lived through World War II. However, there is one significant difference between Wilma and her contemporaries—Wilma was born in Germany and during the war served in the German military.

The third of seven children, Wilma was born in 1923 in Goslar, Germany. War broke out when Wilma was almost sixteen, and for the next few years she worked in various government-assigned jobs. In 1942, she started work with the German military and for three years was employed in all branches—army, navy, and air force. Among other things, her duties included typing, operating the telephone exchange, and working as a spotlight operator. Although Wilma

her treatment at the hands of the Russians, Wilma paused, then simply said, "The first 20 years here in Australia I never talked about it—I couldn't."

After their captors had run out of food and could no longer feed them, the prisoners were put on a cattle train to East Germany. From there, Wilma walked to her home town of Goslar, about 400 kilometres away. "I had to ask people if I could stay in their houses overnight because there was a curfew and at nine o'clock we had to be off the streets." One day a jeep filled with American soldiers offered her a lift. Although they were kind, Wilma was too scared to accept the offer and kept walking.

She finally arrived at her parents' home, where her family was dumbfounded to see her. "Nobody knew what had happened to me." For the first time in her life, Wilma saw her father cry.

After arriving home, Wilma stayed inside, barely moving. "I just sat there, staring." After a couple of days, she began spending time in the

little vegetation other than saltbushes, and the desert heat was merciless. "There was nothing there," Wilma recalled with a smile, "just six houses and a water tower. Our address was 595 South Australia. That was the whole address!"

After six months there, the family moved to Melbourne so that Wilma could find work, and they soon had another child, Peter. In 1961, both Wilma and Ernst became naturalised Australian citizens. For more than three decades they worked in various jobs and lived in different Melbourne suburbs—Ascot Vale, Frankston, and Woori Yallock. Eventually in retirement the Wollburgs moved to Geelong, where they loved the town and its social life.

Sadly, Ernst passed away in 1996. A few years later Wilma moved to Mooroolbark



PHOTO: JANET VAN DIJK



PHOTOS SUPPLIED

was not involved in the fighting, war brought disturbing experiences, like travelling in a train while bombs dropped from the sky. "We would hide under the train until it went away, then get back on the train," said Wilma. "We were frightened; but on the other hand—it's life."

Wilma was stationed in Czechoslovakia when the war came to an end. "We didn't know what was going on," Wilma remembered. "Our lieutenant, who had to look after us, went off on his motorbike and left us alone, and we were captured." Wilma and three girls she was working with were marched through the forest by her Czechoslovakian captors. "On the way kids and adults stoned us and spat on us." Wilma was a prisoner of war for six weeks, sleeping on straw in a pig sty, while the male prisoners of war were housed in a stable. "That was alright," said Wilma. "And then the Russians came. Then came the bad times." Unwilling to talk about

garden, still just sitting. "I sat there for weeks," she said. "Weeks. Everything came back and I didn't know what to do any more. I didn't want to see or hear anything. Everything sinks in slowly."

After seven or eight weeks Wilma began making tentative steps to start her life again. She eventually began working, and reconnected with a young man she had known before the war, Ernst Wollburg, whom she married in December 1948.

The Wollburgs soon had a baby daughter, Monica. With food shortages and limited opportunities in Germany, they applied to immigrate to Australia. Their application was successful, and they arrived in Australia in August 1954. They were soon sent by the government to a remote part of South Australia, where Ernst worked on the railways. There was

to be closer to her family. Wilma loves life in Mooroolbark and wishes she had moved here earlier. She goes for a walk every day and has a busy schedule, with social activities most days of the week. She enjoys keeping in touch with her children, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. In her spare time, she knits woollen squares to be sewn into blankets for the charity Mission without Borders. "I'm busy," she said. "I can't just sit and do nothing."

Over the years, Wilma has shared her story with several of her Australian friends, many of whom also fought in the war or who had family members who did. As they share friendship in a place of peace, many miles and many years distant from the war in which they were on opposite sides, they must surely reflect on our shared humanity and on the futility of war.



## Burmese Community Garden at Pembroke Primary School

Pembroke Primary School is building a large community garden and learning space to provide opportunities for students and the wider community to build horticulture experience and learn about traditional Burmese culture. The Mooroolbark school received \$8,000 in funding from Yarra Ranges Council's 2016 Grants for Community program to benefit the school and wider community. More than half of Pembroke Primary School's students are from Myanmar (originally Burma). Their families are from traditional farming backgrounds and have a wealth of skills but no formal qualifications.

With support from Yarra Ranges Council, the school has partnered with Box Hill TAFE to provide a Certificate II in Horticulture course for the Chin community to help them access employment and connect their Australian life with their cultural heritage. These courses will be open to the wider community and are set to launch in early 2017.

Yarra Ranges Council Director Social and Economic Development Ali Wastie said the project focused on students learning healthy and sustainable practices, self-esteem and employment. "This project will allow the Chin community to discover skills, learn, and connect with other students, placing them on a positive track to employment after school," Ms Wastie said. "Creating this community garden and learning space will build awareness and understanding of the Burmese culture in the wider community."

Pembroke Primary School Principal Carolyn Elliot said Discovery Community Care recently undertook a 'community blitz' at the school, with volunteers including qualified tradespeople who donated their time, expertise and equipment to carry out works. "Our school is very diverse and we had a space that wasn't being utilised," she said. "We are working with a designer and with our Burmese community to build a space that's quiet and peaceful so they can come to reflect on the journey they had previously had and something that connected them to home."

She said Conservation Volunteers Australia would be visiting the school to assist with weeding, mulching and planting indigenous flora around the periphery of the garden. The garden will feature vegetables, herbs, an orchard, a pond with aquatic plants and a Burmese 'farm tent' which is a thatched-roof hut to be built by the school community.

The school received \$8,000 in council's 2016 grants round and will receive \$6,500 next year to ensure the project continues successfully. The Yarra Ranges Grants for Community program supports community-based projects that build the social and cultural life of the region. It is a platform for local groups, not-for-profit organisations and individuals to lead projects that identify and respond to community concerns and aspirations. The program is also part of council's contribution to sustaining a connected and inclusive community.

Recipients for the 2017 Grants for Community round have been announced. The full list of 2017 recipients can be viewed at: [yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Grants-Funding](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Grants-Funding)

**Anna Chisholm**  
Yarra Ranges Council



Back row: Irene Lian, Jum Thiui, Lang Hnem, Ttuang Peng  
Front row: students Meriam, Finn, Jafeth, and Emma

## An exciting time for music at the Mooroolbark Community Centre



The talented Yarra Valley Singers, along with conductor Belinda Gillam, will perform Christmas music from across the centuries on Sunday afternoon 4 December. There will be music from the 15th to the 21st centuries including a piece in Woiwurrung language—*Pirn Wandeat Ngamat Ho*—with words by Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy.

The Yarra Valley Singers are a community choir who enjoy making music and seek to develop their voices, enabling them to perform for the community at a high standard. They have performed at citizenship ceremonies, the Montsalvat Choral Festival, and have combined with other local choirs and orchestras in works such as Handel's *Messiah* and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Be entertained and enjoy the opportunity to sing along at this impressive concert.



PHOTOS: MALCOLM RUSSELL

A couple of weeks later, on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 December, the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir will return to ring in the festive season with a 40-voice ensemble. This truly splendid choir will fill the Red Earth Theatre with booming baritones and smooth melodies, delivering a world-class program of musical hits and popular Welsh repertoire. These experts of four-part harmony have toured the USA, Canada and the UK, including performances at the Royal Albert Hall and Wales's own Cardiff Arms Park with Tom Jones and Dame Gwyneth Jones.

So come along and enjoy some music at one or both of these very special Christmas events. Tickets for all concerts are \$15, with concession tickets at \$10. The Yarra Valley Singers concert offers free tickets for children under 16 years old. Afternoon tea or supper is included in the ticket price.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit [www.culturetracks.info](http://www.culturetracks.info), phone 1300 368 333 or drop by the Mooroolbark Community Centre and speak with one of the friendly staff.

**Malcolm Russell**



## Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	<b>Farmers Market:</b> Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Combined Rotary Clubs. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Bill Sutherland: 9727 0037.
Friday nights during school term	<b>Fridays@Kids Domain:</b> Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 pm. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or <a href="http://www.lmc.org.au">www.lmc.org.au</a>
Monday evenings each week	<b>Scottish Country Dancing:</b> Mondays 8 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9876 9206.
Second Monday of each month	<b>Mooroolbark Country Women's Association:</b> 1 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. New members always welcome. Contact Coral Cunningham: 9728 4479.
Thursdays during school term	<b>Music Together Program:</b> 0-5 years. Run by trained music therapist. St Margaret's Uniting Church 9:45 am. Morning tea & playtime included. \$12.50 per session per family. 2017 enrolments now being accepted. Call Yvonne: 9726 9347.
Thursday evenings each week	<b>Maroondah TOWN Club:</b> (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 pm. St Margaret's Uniting Church. Hull Road. For more information call Kaye: 0414 984 062.
Wednesdays during term time	<b>Kilsyth Primary School Playgroup:</b> Painting, story time, activities and games for children birth - 3½ years. 9:15 am. More info: 9725 4320 or <a href="http://www.kilsythps.vic.edu.au">www.kilsythps.vic.edu.au</a> .
Tuesdays & Thursdays	<b>Mooroolbark Men's Shed:</b> 9 am – 3 pm. Now meeting at 91 Swansea Road, Montrose. More information: president Greg Andrews on 9728 4439, or secretary John Lowry on 9726 9970 or 0419 366 969.
December	<b>Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation sessions:</b> December 6. Mooroolbark Community Centre. More information 1300 368 333. <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/</a>
9 December	<b>Community Carols:</b> Picnic dinner from 6:30 pm, 7:45 pm enjoy Croydon Citizen's Brass Band, followed by carol singing. BYO rug or chair; food & battery-operated candles for sale. More details see notice page 11.
10 December	<b>Urban Harvest:</b> 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.
10-24 December	<b>Christmas Light and Sound Show:</b> 30-minute shows back to back between 9pm-11 pm. Free family event. Oxley Stadium/Life Ministry Church (15-49 Old Melbourne Road Chirside Park).
11 December	<b>Christmas Carols: Free family event.</b> Sing carols and share in the joy of Christmas! Sausage Sizzle and Christmas Light & Sound Show at 9pm! Life Ministry Church, Old Melbourne Rd Chirside Park.
24 & 25 December	<b>Services at St Margaret's:</b> 24/12 Christmas Eve family service. 5 pm barbecue followed by worship at 8 pm. 25/12 Christmas Day service, 9 am.
January	<b>Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation sessions:</b> Mooroolbark Community Centre. More information 1300 368 333. <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/</a>

### Mooroolbark Community Centre and Montrose Town Centre

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

December	<b>Red Earth Gallery Exhibitions:</b> Artists in Our Residence November 15-December 3. Closing Celebration December 1. Red Earth Gallery, Mooroolbark Community Centre, 9726 5488.
4 December	<b>Yarra Valley Singers Christmas Concert:</b> Red Earth Theatre. Tickets \$15 or \$10 concession. 2pm. Mooroolbark Community Centre.
17 & 18 December	<b>Melbourne Welsh Male Choir Red Earth Theatre:</b> Red Earth Theatre. Tickets \$15 or \$10 concession. Sat 17 Dec, 7pm. Sun 18 Dec, 2pm. MCC.
23 December	<b>Mooroolbark Community Centre</b> closes for Christmas period

### 2017

9 January	Mooroolbark Community Centre reopens
January & February	Culture Tracks 2017: Yarra Ranges Council Arts Program - Info/Bookings <a href="http://www.culturetracks.info">www.culturetracks.info</a>
January & February	Red Earth Gallery Exhibitions: Red Earth Gallery, Mooroolbark Community Centre, 9726 5488.
February 6	Term 1 Workshops begin: Pottery, Oil Painting, Tribal Bellydance, Young Artists, Pottery for Kids & Craft. MCC.

**Our Community Events Calendar offers a free service to local clubs and organisations. To include entries for your group's community events in future issues please contact Doug Lewis on 9761 1121 or email [lewisdm@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lewisdm@bigpond.net.au)**

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

# LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark

## Production

LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark is produced by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, assisted by local volunteers



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## Like to contribute?

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

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of *Living Today* can be accessed at: [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)

To join the email distribution list please send a request to [living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com](mailto:living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com)

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

We seek to achieve this by:

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

## OUR SPONSORS

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