

UPPER BEACONSFIELD

# VILLAGE BELL

Upper Beaconsfield Association  
[www.upperbeaconsfield.org.au](http://www.upperbeaconsfield.org.au)

Issue No. 223  
March 2021



# Locals growing their own



The Village Bell visited some energetic local gardeners, all sharing in the myriad benefits of growing their food at home. Home grown is healthier and tastier than supermarket produce which is mainly bred for shelf-stability and robustness in transport. Look at the benefits to the environment including no plastic packaging, far less carbon kilometres, and the practice of composting – utilising your (so-called) waste.



There is also a real connection with nature, and with fellow gardeners as there is much swapping of produce when people have too much of one thing and not enough of another. Gardening is calming compared to the typical 'rat race' style of living the rest of our lives seem to fall into. Gardening requires some creativity which is an extra boost to the other mental health benefits of this activity has created over the ages.

## UBA junior committee



The UBA is excited to meet our new junior committee members, Kobe S., Ella F., Ella M., Jack H. We look forward to working with them to build communication between younger residents and the community.



## Slow down for horses!

We kindly ask you to slow down if you see a rider on horseback. Speed can be dangerous for all involved.

## Upper Beaconsfield GP Practice 2nd anniversary

The Upper Beaconsfield GP Practice celebrated their 2nd anniversary on

28 February. The clinic has become an integral part of our community, and

has changed the lives of many Upper Beaconsfield residents, who appreciate having their medical needs catered for locally. Dr Anshu and Dr Puneet Malhotra and staff thank everyone for the support and love the local residents have given them.



The clinic has expressed their interest for administering COVID vaccinations, and will post updates on their facebook page [facebook.com/UpperbeaconsfieldGPPractice](https://www.facebook.com/UpperbeaconsfieldGPPractice) on any progress they have made on this matter. In the face of great challenges, we hope all Upper Beaconsfield residents have a healthy and happy 2021.

## What's your J-Talent?



Late last year talented local artist Anna Konecny won the traditional arts and culture category of "What's your J-Talent?" – an online competition sponsored by the Sydney based Japan Foundation. Their arts and culture program holds a variety of events, exploring Japan's diverse identity to Australian audiences, ranging from gallery exhibitions to creative exchange workshops.

Her video (on YouTube) titled "Mizuhiki knotting by Anna Japana" showed her creating one of her attractive craft art pieces. The judges commented "A creative and skilful demonstration of Mizuhiki knotting! While Mizuhiki is more commonly known for its minimalist and traditional designs, this video depicts a fun and contemporary take on the traditional Japanese craft".

Anna conducts workshops in the craft and produces lovely videos of how she does it. Look her up on [facebook.com/AnnaJapana](https://www.facebook.com/AnnaJapana)

Anna was featured in the Village Bell Dec 2019 issue.

HELEN SMITH

## Rainfall on St Georges Road

Month	45 yr av.	2020	2021
Jan	63.6	126.4	106.3
Feb	58.4	147.8	
Mar	64.2	65.7	
Apr	78.3	183.4	
May	86.1	86.5	
Jun	80.3	53.2	
Jul	78.6	45.5	
Aug	85.7	111.9	
Sep	90.6	67.6	
Oct	94.3	100.2	
Nov	86.5	81.6	
Dec	80.4	70.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>947 mm</b>	<b>1,140.7 mm</b>	

### Have you ever seen the rain?

Not much hail and not too much shine, but plenty of rain seems to be the theme. Whilst the weather warmed with some hot days in November, rainfall was 5 mm less than average and 10 mm less than 2019. Then December brought rains that were 10 mm less than average, but a significant 45.5 mm wetter than 2019.

Overall, the year was a wet one. Total rainfall recorded for 2020 was 1140.7 mm, which eclipsed the annual average by 194 mm, and beat 2019 by nearly half a metre of rain (474.3 mm). That is an extraordinary difference.

My neighbour's outdoor music system played 'Have you ever seen the rain' by Creedence Clearwater Revival. The answer back across the fence is 'thank you, I did indeed see the rain'.

In January of this year that rain continued with 106.3 mm, 43 mm more than average but 20.1 mm less than 2019. We have had two unusually wet (>100 mm) Januarys in a row.

The Creedence song is now stuck in my head. But that is OK, if I hum it long enough, maybe La Nina will continue to help us see the rain. Not so good for the sunseekers, but I'm sure your turn is coming, I'm actually not very good at humming.

ANDREW REWELL

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## Dinner winners – check your fridge magnet numbers!

With recent price rises at the Pine Grove Hotel, it has been necessary to review the amount provided for the Open Air Burning (OAB) fridge magnet dinner winner's prize. This has now been increased to \$50 for a couple to enjoy a meal at the Piney. Please refer to your OAB fridge magnet on the top right corner. If one of the three winning numbers is yours, then you have won a dinner for 2 at the Pine Grove Hotel during the month listed. That will fully cover two parma night meals, but alternatively you can choose from the range of pizza meals or the a la carte menu and pay the difference above \$50.



### Winning numbers

chosen at random

<b>March</b>	<b>543</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>652</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>655</b>

Congratulations if these are your numbers. Please ring the Pine Grove Hotel, ph 5944 3524, during your winning month and book your two meals or order a takeaway. Please mention that you are the month's winner for the Open Air Burning dinner prize and bring your fridge magnet along to the hotel to show that you have the winning number. If you do win and enjoy a meal, we'd like to hear from you.

Please write of your experience and send it to the Village Bell.

Many thanks to our sponsors, The Pine Grove Hotel and RMBL Investments, Dandenong for their continuing support of these dinners.

HARRY JENSEN,  
OPEN AIR BURNING ADVOCACY GROUP

## CWA invitation

Upper Beaconsfield Country Women's Association welcomes new members to attend our friendly meetings and activities. We meet on the fourth Friday of the month 1 pm, at St John's hall, corner St Georges Road and Emerald Beaconsfield Road.

For more information, please contact President Tracey Kyle 0407 810 271 or Secretary Barbara Reid 0403 577 720.

### Next public meeting

Upper Beaconsfield Association annual general meeting Wednesday 7 April 2021 at 7.30 pm.

We invite residents to come along, meet other residents and contribute to the well-being of our town.



### Become a Village Bell supporter

If you like reading the Village Bell, please help to fund it. All we ask is for households to pay a yearly \$5 support towards producing the Village Bell.

You can pay \$5 at the Community Centre, General Store or Post Office, or pay by internet banking to

Upper Beaconsfield Association Inc., Bendigo Bank, BSB 633-000 account number 162 580 112.

Tag your payment with your name so we know who sent it. If you live outside the local area we can mail the Bell to you for \$15 per year. Thank you!

**Village Bell editorial coordinator** Helen Smith tel 5944 3219 – **Editorial team** Julie Born, Linda Burrige, Kaylene Cox, Caro Letts, Cheryl O'Gallagher – **Layout** Marianne Rocke – **Photo editor** Cameron Rocke

**Next issue: June 2021**

**Send articles by 7 May 2021 to** editor.villagebell@gmail.com

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the voice of the community

## Michael Pearce – Cardinia Young Citizen of the Year

Michael and his family moved to Upper Beaconsfield in 2016, drawn not just by the hills and the surrounding forest, but by the peace and tranquillity of this place and the sense of community. He joined the Upper Beaconsfield Venturers (part of the Scout movement, Venturers are for people aged between 14 and 18, focusing on adventure, fun and community service) while completing VCE at Melbourne High School.

After completing high school he was accepted into Melbourne University where he is currently commencing his final year of a Graduate Diploma in Science (Advanced), majoring in physics. But he still finds time to volunteer, following both his love of the outdoors and his passion for physics.

Michael and his family have always enjoyed camping and hiking. This was part of the initial appeal of Venturers. Many of the activities took place at the Dallas Brooks Scout Park in Upper Beaconsfield and the GWS Anderson Scout Park in Dickie Road, Officer. He loved his time with the group and got a lot out of it, in terms of learning new skills, mentoring, physical activities and just having fun. So, once he turned 18, it was an easy decision to give back what he had received by becoming a Scout Leader. Now based with the Narre Warren South Scout Group, Michael is enjoying being a mentor for the next generation of youngsters, helping on camps, on hikes, with bikes and whatever else comes up.

All this seems far removed from the rest of his volunteer work, most of which involves his other passion, physics, or perhaps, more generally, STEM

(science, technology, engineering and maths). He wants all young Victorians, boys and girls, city and rural, to have the opportunity to get involved in science and all the possibilities it can bring. He has volunteered for many projects. With the University of Melbourne's Science Delivery programme he has helped metropolitan and country schools and students access science shows and workshops. He has helped coordinate the Victorian Young Physicists Tournament, works with the VicPhysics Teachers' Network to encourage all students, but especially girls, in the higher year levels of secondary school to take up and stick with physics. Michael also volunteers with the Australian Institute of Physics and Melbourne University's Physics Students Society. Apart from all this, he works with the Melbourne Space Program, a not-for-profit organisation affiliated with Melbourne University's School of Engineering. It is run solely by students, past and present, with the aim of giving students hands-on experience in real world, or maybe out-of-world, technology projects. For example, a coffee mug-sized nano satellite that was successfully launched in 2019. Which really is quite extraordinary. The aim of the MSP is to produce future innovators and leaders in technology who may one day help solve some of the many problems we, as a global community, face today.

Not surprisingly Michael intends to continue his studies once he graduates, eventually completing a Master of Science, a PhD and one day working in



Michael at the back

the field of astrophysics.

It all seems a far cry from a hit of tennis with his brother on the dusty old clay court behind the Community Centre or camping with the Upper Beaconsfield Venturers. But perhaps there is a link. Many of the skills that Michael has learnt and is now passing on via his two seemingly disparate fields are not so dissimilar: resilience and resourcefulness, critical thinking, reasoning, analysis and problem solving are vital wherever life takes you, whether you're on a sporting field, researching in a laboratory or even running a country.

CARO LETTS

## Stan Hamilton – Cardinia Shire Senior Citizen of the Year

We also congratulate Stan Hamilton on his receiving this award.



## UBA meetings 2021

The first public meeting of 2021 was held on 3 February, the first public meeting since early last year. Cr Brett Owen chaired the annual meeting and the election of the new committee, and later answered questions from residents. There was plenty of news and issues to discuss.

This included the announcement of the solar grant for the Community Complex. Residents were warned about a ragwort infestation in the Cardinia Reservoir near Red Hill Road. The Green Wedge public consultation took place in February some residents and groups sent in submissions. The Men's Shed and Recreation Reserve representatives

gave updates on their activities. Fire protection concerns were raised again, with emphasis on protecting Upper Beaconsfield's assets.

The next public meeting is planned for Wednesday 7 April at 7.30 pm. A representative from Cardinia Shire will speak to the Upper Beaconsfield Association to provide an overview about some of the projects to improve local roads. The \$150M Sealing the Hills' project is sealing 164 prioritised roads in the Dandenong Ranges and surrounding areas.

If you live on an unsealed road this will be of interest to you. All welcome. Look out for a reminder on Facebook.

# About town

## Criminal activity

On Upper Beaconsfield Community Facebook page recently, residents reported that unknown people appeared to be checking properties out. One posted security footage showing several men snooping about. We also heard a report of police chasing a suspect driving a ute into one of the local reserves. Always lock your house and car doors. Keep an eagle eye open for unusual activity in your area and report it immediately to 000.

There is a wealth of information on the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency website, at <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/>. Described there are records over 10 years, latest trends, and statistics. State-wide, COVID-19-related offences increased the number of alleged offenders processed by Victoria Police over the past year. Family related incidents increased during the pandemic. In 2020, stealing from cars was one of the most common offences in Cardinia Shire.

To find data by local government area and by town postcode go to <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data-by-area>. Interestingly, Upper Beaconsfield and Dewhurst had the most offences recorded in 2011 (158) and 2012 (143), 2015 (111) and 2016 (112). Offences for 2020 up to September were 51. Crime data is recorded year ending September. Perhaps the lockdown had some benefits!

## Salisbury Road parking

Parking at the Community Complex. Now that Community Centre classes are starting up again, and hall hirers start using the hall at weekends, parking will be at a premium in Salisbury Road while the

new construction is taking place at Salisbury House. Drive slowly and carefully along Salisbury Road as there is not a lot of room to pass. Staff and visitors at Salisbury House should park on the south side of Salisbury Road. The parking on the north side at the Community Complex, is for hall functions and Community Centre patrons.

HELEN SMITH

## A plea for consideration

I would like to thank people for the courtesy, waves, and consideration you have shown to us horse riders. Beaconsfield Upper is a beautiful location that has many equestrian trails, which also means many horse riders. Horses are a flight animal that can be unpredictable even though we do our best to desensitise them to cars, bikes, motorbikes, trucks, dogs, and alpacas etc.



Most times horses will behave, but occasionally we need your help. Please go past us slowly so that if you need to stop, you can do so safely. Please take a wide berth of at least 1.5 metres.

Please do not blast your horn, spin your tyres, shout, or rev your engines. If a horse spooks it could land on the bonnet of your car or through your windscreen causing horrific damage to you and your car, my horse and me.

What all riders are asking is for consideration and awareness by car drivers. If we signal for you to please slow down we are doing it for a reason.

WENDY CORNTHWAITE

## What are the rules?

VicRoads rules state that “drivers must slow down and watch out for horses being led or ridden on the road – leave as much space as possible to allow for unexpected movements by the horse. Never use your car horn around

horses – it may startle even the most placid horse and could cause it to bolt resulting in a crash”.

## Village Festival on hold

The 14 February 2021 should have been the date of the Upper Beaconsfield Village Festival. By this time, we would have spent hundreds of hours organising, and thousands of dollars paying for all our rides and entertainment.

The Tower Run organisers planned to get a modified run established early this year. However due to COVID-19 and insurance issues around the pandemic, they were unable to do this.

On a more positive note, we are hoping to have the full Village Festival and Tower Run back in 2022.

Over time we have seen that February is becoming a more unsafe time to hold the event due to heat issues and bushfire threats. So we are examining a new time to hold the Festival in the future.

Later in 2021 the committee may hold a small festival with maybe a run of some sort. An event that is flexible enough to change the date if needed. The day will be different with a community BBQ, and music. Maybe a local dog show for residents to enter their dogs in a fun environment. We still need to work through these details, and it will obviously be dependent on what’s happening with COVID-19. We feel it is important to have some sort of community event to support and bring together our beautiful families and local community groups in Upper Beaconsfield.

Watch this space. Take care everyone.

NATHALIA ELSEGOOD

VILLAGE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

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# Upper Beaconsfield Association

## President's report

Through 2020, despite the pandemic, the UBA supported a range of events and issues. The UBA committee met online on a regular basis to maintain momentum, particularly with the Village Bell, and posting reliable C19 information sources through social media. Committee members attended meetings with few apologies – a huge thank you to all during a challenging time! No public meetings after February were able to be held.

### C19 impacts

In response to the pandemic, the Victorian government guidelines affected the following:

- The UBA cancelled the 2020 Carols, and the Citizen of the Year dinner
- The UBA & the Community Centre postponed the Australia Post Community Grant and expects to recommence shortly, with completion in June 2021
- The Citizen of the Year Committee met online. UBA will announce this year's winner at a special dinner, rather than at the Village Festival as would normally occur.
- Despite C19 hindrances, the Village Bell goes from strength to strength delivering all issues through the complicated year, with our admiration to a great team. Two UBA committee members attended the online Community Newspaper Association Vic Conference.
- Cardinia Council's Social and People Recovery Sub Committee. I met with this committee fortnightly online to address the community's needs related to C19.

### Safer Together Bushfire Mitigation Management project

Following Cardinia Shires' successful 2019 Safer Together Program, the UBA Fuel Management Group collaborated successfully with the Safer Together Bushfire Mitigation Management Group for a grant to work with the Upper Beaconsfield, Dewhurst, and Guys Hill communities. This successful project seeks to identify the ecological priorities and values important to these communities and to establish a means to achieve these. With significant input from the local community, the steering group plans to develop a tool to help local landowners identify these priorities and values on their properties; the range of vegetation management



options available, and how they could use the tool to enhance and protect the things they and our communities value most.

The UBA Fuel Management Group co-leads the steering group, which includes representatives from the local community, DELWP, CFA and Council. With research and technical assistance from Melbourne and Monash Universities, and technical advice from DELWP and CFA, the grant scheduled for completion by mid-2021. The project aims to:

- Conduct surveys with residents to identify what priorities and ecological values are important to Upper Beaconsfield, Dewhurst, and Guys Hill residents
- Use computer modelling to identify the effects and risks of potential treatment options
- Use a structured decision making process to pull together the complex issues surrounding community safety, biodiversity and local amenity so as to establish strategies which will give local landowners the tools to make informed decisions on how to manage their property for their own and the communities' benefit.

CAROLINE SPENCER

### Thank you to our Village Bell supporters

Frank Archer; Bail family; Pat Balson; Ray and Ann Benson; Sandie Bliss; Andre Bokos; Erin Borg; Julie Born; Eric & Joyce Bumpstead; Linda Burridge; Kay Cox; Lesley Davidson; Stephen Fisher; Mike Hall and Carol Letts; Stan Hamilton; Paul Higgott; Anne Inkster; Harry & Diana Jensen; Noel Ling; Anne Mehla; Carmel McKenna; George Moir; Cheryl & Fergus O'Gallagher; Annie & Mick O'Riley; Brett Owen; Dot Pockett; Jenny & Lawrie Pritchard; Andrew Rewell; Cameron & Marianne Rocke; Dan & Alison Ryan; Sue & Peter Simmons; Robert & Bev Sinclair; Helen Smith; Caroline Spencer; Bob & Eleanor Taylor; David Vinen; Fedir Woskoboenko;

To become a supporter see page 4



# Cardinia

## What's news in council 1300 787 624

### Imagine Cardinia

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts and ideas in the Imagine Cardinia campaign to help us develop the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Council Budget. We are developing these plans to help guide our strategic direction over the coming years. To check on the progress of these documents, or to provide further input or feedback please visit [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/imaginecardinia](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/imaginecardinia)

### Equestrian Strategy review

Council has commenced a review of our Equestrian Strategy 2014 which has been guiding provision of equestrian activities. The review is being undertaken to ensure the plan continues to reflect the needs of the equestrian sport and recreational riding over the next 10 years. The development of the new draft strategy will include community consultation in the coming months.

### Sealing the Hills

Many of the unsealed roads around the Dandenong Ranges were constructed around 100 years ago. Unsealed roads produce dust pollution and maintenance issues, and are heavily impacted by weather conditions, land formations and increased traffic.

The Better Local Roads – Sealing the Hills project will seal 109 kilometres of unsealed roads across the Dandenong Ranges and surrounds and has received \$150 million funding from the Australian Government. Sealing the Hills will be delivered as a series of individual projects on 164 prioritised roads over the next 8 years as part of Council's overall "Better Local Roads" program.

There are 15 prioritised roads located in the Upper Beaconsfield area including: St Georges Road, Telegraph Road, Sugarloaf Road, Carpenter Road, Dickie Road, Halford Street, Lenne Street, Sutherland Road, Young Street, Morris Road, Burton Road, Haupt Place, Armstrong Road, Corringham Road and Fairhazel Court.

Roads to be constructed from 2021–22

*continued on page 8*

continued from page 7

include: Telegraph Road, Dickie Road, Armstrong Road and Carpenter Road.

Cardinia Shire officers will be in attendance at the next Upper Beaconsfield Association meeting at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 7 April.

Project managers and community engagement officers will provide a summary and overview of the sealing roads project, funding schemes, project design and scheduling of works in the area. There will also be an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and provide feedback.

For more information about the Sealing the Hills project, please call council on 1300 787 624 or visit our website at: [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/betterlocalroads](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/betterlocalroads)

### Cardinia Shire – Australia Day Awards

Upper Beaconsfield was well represented in the 2021 Cardinia Shire Australia Day Awards.

Stan Hamilton was awarded Senior Citizen of the Year and Michael Pearce awarded the Young Citizen of the Year. Stan Hamilton as a past long term resident has always contributed to our local community. He has also been a volunteer with Upper Beaconsfield CFA for 60 years.

Upper Beaconsfield's Michael Pearce has contributed significantly to our broader community through his volunteer work, driven primarily by his

passion for physics and the outdoors. Michael is conscious about ensuring that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) is accessible for all Victorians.

Congratulations Stan and Michael.

### COVID-19 updates

The health and wellbeing of our community, supporting community members and supporting local businesses continues to be Council's priority.

### Latest updates to Council services

For up-to-date information about Council facilities and services visit: [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

Our customer service centre at Officer is now open Monday to Friday, 8.30 am–5 pm but you can still contact us by phone or email or access a range of online services via our website.

### COVID-19 Online Help Hub

Our COVID-19 Online Help Hub features a range of useful resources and information and is supported by a dedicated team of staff who are on hand to help you find the information you need. For more information: [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/onlinehelphub](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/onlinehelphub)

### Local support services and connection

Local groups can provide support during the COVID-19 pandemic, including financial support, housing assistance and food services. To view

the directory visit [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

### Community survey seeks to better understand local needs

You can help Council to better understand local needs throughout the pandemic by completing a short, anonymous survey. The results of the survey will help guide our response and recovery efforts and assist us to plan services and programs for both immediate support and recovery. The data gathered will also be used to understand how community needs change in relation to different stages of the pandemic which will help us plan for future pandemics. The survey is anonymous and will take around 15 minutes to complete. More info: [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay)

For up-to-date COVID-19 information visit [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)

CR BRETT OWEN

### Contact Mayor Cr Brett Owen

Email [b.owen@cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:b.owen@cardinia.vic.gov.au)

Phone 0418 993 370

Facebook Councillor Brett Owen - Beacon Hills Ward, Cardinia Shire

## Reflecting on our local community

The start of the year has provided an opportunity for me to spend some time within my own community and allowed me to reflect on the important things that make up our community. I look forward to how we can build on this during the year.

Taking the opportunity to drive through Upper Beaconsfield, it is great to see the community that we know; a hub of activity and social interaction, shops open and people walking about with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

We have a lot to be proud of. We came together as a community through a time of adversity, which saw some of us face challenges that seemed insurmountable. We worked and stood together, reached out and looked after each other. The renewed vibrancy in our community is testament to the way we have emerged stronger and more hopeful for our future. For those who

may still be facing concerns or issues, please feel free to reach out to me and my team, we are always here to see how best we can assist.

It will be great to reflect on what makes the lifeblood of our community thrive and work towards how we can make our community stronger. We can continue to work towards building on our unique qualities as residents, shop owners and consumers. I want to create opportunities and work with the residents of Upper Beaconsfield to build a stronger community in 2021 with a sense of excitement and hope.

I would also like to remind our community to be mindful of the fire danger period, although we have been experiencing some cooler weather recently, please remain vigilant with all necessary precautions to be undertaken during this time.



This year, I look forward to reconnecting with the community through visits and hearing your thoughts and ideas. Please feel free to contact me on 5953 0216 and you can stay up to date with local relevant issues and have a glimpse of my workday, through my social media pages on [www.facebook.com/BradBattinMP](http://www.facebook.com/BradBattinMP), @bradbattinmp and search for Brad Battin on YouTube.

BRAD BATTIN MP  
MEMBER FOR GEMBROOK

# The extraordinary echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*

The echidna is unique. They are mammals, but they lay eggs. They are one half of the monotreme family, the other being the platypus.

When scientists first studied them, they could not quite believe what they were seeing. They needed a name for this strange new animal, seemingly part mammal, part reptile, that expressed their surprise and fascination. So they chose 'Echidna'. Echidna was a monster found in the stories of ancient Greek mythology. Half woman and half snake, she gave birth to most of the ancient Greek mythical monsters, including Cerberus, the Hydra and Chimera.

There are four species of echidna: one species, the short beaked echidna lives in Australia. The other three, long beaked echidnas, live in New Guinea. While the short beaked echidna is quite widespread and common in suitable habitats, all three New Guinea species are critically endangered.

They evolved between 20 and 50 million years ago from a platypus like aquatic monotreme. One especially large form, *Zaglossus hacketti*, was about the size of a sheep. It stood one metre tall, weighed 30 kg and had a tongue about 54 cm long! With a long, curved beak and long legs, it probably ate grubs, beetles, worms, and other invertebrates. Modern echidnas grow 35 to 75 cm long and weigh between 2.5 and 10 kg. On average the male weighs about 6 kg and the female 4.5 kg.

The short beaked echidna lives across most of Australia from the mountains to the deserts. They are active during the day and at night, depending on the season and food sources. Because they cannot sweat or pant to reduce body temperature, they are particularly sensitive to heat stress. When it is hot they seek shelter in burrows, caves or somewhere protected and shady.

Surprisingly, echidnas have the second lowest body temperature of any warm-blooded animal at just 32°C, though this can fluctuate 6 to 8°C during the day. And in winter they hibernate. Extraordinarily, their body temperature can drop to 4°C, heart rate to four to seven beats per minute from a

normal resting rate of 50 to 68 beats per minute, and respiratory rate can drop to three breaths per minute, 80 to 90 percent slower than normal. This ability to lower metabolic rate increases an animal's chances of survival during cold winters when food can be hard to find. That echidnas can hibernate is a relatively new discovery. Previously it had been thought that hibernation was a recent evolutionary adaptation derived as a specialisation for animals living in cold climates. It seems this ability developed many years earlier than previously thought.

Echidnas live to dig, and they are very efficient. Like the lyrebird and various other digging animals (e.g. bettongs, bilbies, mallee fowl) echidnas are ecosystem engineers. This means that their digging activities improve soil mixing and water penetration, keeping the soil healthier, promoting plant growth, and decreasing run off and soil erosion. While the echidna shifts a lazy 133 tonnes annually, the lyrebird tops the list at 155 tonnes of soil and leaf litter shifted a year. The feet and claws on the echidna's hind feet point backwards allowing them to dig backwards and their powerful front feet dig straight down into the dirt. But their legs are not built for racing. They have a maximum waddle speed of 2.3 km per hour, with a general cruising speed of only 1 km per hour.

Their preferred foods are termites, ants, insect larvae and other invertebrates. Using those strong claws, they can break open logs to find their favourite

termites and dig deep into ant nests. The claw on the second toe of the hind foot is extra-long so dirt and insects wedged between the spines can be combed out.

Echidna eyesight is not great. So how do they find their food? They have a couple of tricks up their quills. Electro receptors in the nerve endings of their snouts may help detect the electrical signals produced by their prey. And they have incredible hearing. Their ears are just large slits behind the eyes. But they are extremely sensitive. The internal bone structure is arranged so the tiniest vibration from the ground passes directly to the middle ear and from there to the inner ear receptors. In this way it is thought that echidnas can sense the vibrations emitted by termites and ants moving around underground. They also have an excellent sense of smell.

While they have no teeth, they do have an exceptionally long and fast tongue to slurp up these delicacies. In fact, its genus name, *Tachyglossus*, means fast tongue. And that tongue can follow along the twists and turns of ant and termite tunnels, even doing a U-turn if necessary. The tongue is covered in sticky saliva to help ingest their food. Inside the mouth there are a series of spines which strip off their prey as the tongue is thrust out for another mouthful. In this way up to 200 grams of termites can be consumed in 10 minutes

On the outside their famous spines are really modified hairs – long tough hollow barbless quills growing to 5 cm long. Usually they are beige and black to help the echidna camouflage into the surrounding bush. But South Australian echidnas have much darker spines than those in the eastern states, and on Kangaroo Island some echidnas are white, while others are redheads. Each quill is connected to several muscles. This is a useful part of the echidna defence mechanism. Quills can be erected quickly and effectively as a defence shield, enabling the echidna to curl into a tight spikey ball, hiding



*continued on page 10*

face and feet. Or they can be used to wedge the animal tightly into a confined space such as a rock crevice. And they are quite sharp.

Echidnas are also quite furry. But you can't really see their dark fur because of all those spines.

As you might expect echidna reproduction is a bit different. And careful. For a start, the males have a four headed penis and the females a two branched reproductive tract. Only two heads are active at one time, the other two closing down and shrinking. Maybe this increases sperm production and increases the chances of a successful mating. No one is quite sure why echidnas have evolved this system.

Both males and females have a pouch on their bellies, which can make it hard to tell the sexes apart. Fortunately, the echidnas themselves know the difference. Echidnas breed between May and September. Given they are solitary and have a home range of around 50 hectares how do they even find each other? No one is exactly sure but that keen sense of smell is especially useful. And perhaps the use of spurs. Males have a spur on each hind leg, much like the platypus. But the two have different purposes. During the breeding season the platypus can erect his spurs and use them in combat, injecting a non-lethal but excruciatingly painful venom into his rival. Millions of years ago this was probably true for echidnas as well. But the echidna can no longer erect his spur and he no longer produces a venom. Instead, he secretes a waxy substance that seems to be used for communication rather than battle over the mating season.

During this time, they form mating trains as the males seek out a female. Up to 10 males will follow a female for long distances till she is ready to mate. The males dig a circular trench around her, the strongest (or quickest) pushes his rivals away, digs more dirt from under her tail, places his tail under hers and belly to belly they mate. The whole process does not take long.

During the mating period both sexes lose weight, the males because they are too busy to eat and the females because they are constantly being hassled by the males. Even during hibernation, the female can never really be sure she will sleep undisturbed. On occasion a passing male will enter her burrow, mate with her, and leave. She can wake up pregnant and never know what happened.

Whatever the circumstances of her

pregnancy, about two weeks later she lays a single soft leathery egg into her pouch. Just 13 to 17 mm long it is held in place by pouch hairs. And after 10 days incubation a new little echidna, called a puggle, is hatched. About 12 mm long, blind, hairless, and weighing only half a gram the puggle resembles a jellybean more than an echidna. For the next six to eight weeks, it remains in the pouch. The pouch is furry and shallow and faces backwards, so it is a slightly precarious existence for the puggle. But it manages to stay aboard by hanging on tightly to the fur in the pouch with its front feet.

Female echidnas do not have mammary glands as such. She secretes milk through 'milk patches' in the skin and the puggle laps the milk up. By eight weeks the puggle is too big and prickly to stay in the pouch any longer. His mum moves him to the safety of a burrow that she has dug. They stay close together for up to a year. Although she spends a lot of time away from home feeding, she returns every five days or so to feed her baby.

By day 240 the young echidna has a full set of spines and sometime in the next couple of months he will leave the burrow forever. Although he weighs only one to two kilograms at this stage, he is ready to start an independent life, digging, feeding, hanging out. On a pleasant day you may even find an echidna sunbathing, flat on its back, furry tummy exposed to the sky. They are also excellent swimmers and are handy tree climbers. They are not always where you expect. In captivity they can live to 50 years; in the wild their life span is a lot less, maybe about 14 years but like so much else about the echidna, no one really knows.

**CARO LETTS**  
**UPPER BEACONSFIELD**  
**CONSERVATION GROUP**

### Join UBCG

Anyone interested in joining UBCG please call Fergus on 0409 901 355. Light refreshments (cakes, slices, biscuits) always on hand.

## Rambling on ...



I have just been communing with an echidna! He was trundling along my back pathway so I quietly sat on the steps to watch him at work...

He poked along the gravel path with that wonderful, rolling, 'four-cornered' walk they have, until he found an ant-hole. Then, such excitement! He plunged into it as deep as he could force his head, while scraping a circular hole with those strong front claws. At one stage I almost felt he would go bottom-up like a diving duck!

When finished with that excavation,

he left it behind and wandered over towards the steps. He poked at my shoe with that extraordinary, long beak-like snout, then climbed up on the lowest step and sat nestled up against my foot for several minutes!

Mythology talks about the 'purity of the unicorn'. Surely there is nothing so totally harmless and inoffensive as an echidna? And in its own way it gives one such pleasure to watch.

Have I been blessed by the Australian version of the unicorn?

**ROSZ SMITH**

## Wildfire – the ‘white fellas’ curse

In a dry continent like Australia, with erratic rainfall, periodic fires in our vegetation are a certainty.

Over eons Aborigines studied how plants reproduced – like those whose seed pods open after a fire, plant life cycles, and other adaptations to fire such as robust root systems, that re-shoot new stems and foliage to replace anything burnt. Just about everywhere, Aborigines used the tool of fire to burn at various locations, seasons, intervals, and intensities to encourage or inhibit the growth and distribution of particular plant species. Fire sensitive species were dealt with cautiously.

Whether plants Australia wide were initially adapted to fire, or whether Aborigines’ prolific burning practices forced these adaptations is a chicken or egg argument. Aboriginal use of fire as a regeneration tool went hand in hand with using it as a tool to reduce fuel loads – all to prevent wildfire.

The early explorers’ diaries were littered with notes about large coastal and inland regions of our continent resembling grassy English gentlemen’s estates, from north Queensland down to southern Tasmania, and far into the outback. ‘Thick bush everywhere? No way. Lots of grass! Bring in the livestock – terra nullius’, was the official call.

The first incursions were by the squatters taking out huge licensed runs. They overstocked these enormous grassed regions the Aborigines had created with high rotation burning with hard hooved sheep and cattle. As a result the soil degraded, and many of the grasses became stressed, or died out. At the same time other long-standing Aboriginal fire management regimes of surrounding bushland rapidly disappeared with our hasty, often violent dispossession of the Aborigines from their land.

When the Aboriginal grasslands were degraded, all manner of bushy vegetation rapidly took over. During early cultural interaction, some settlers tried to copy the Aboriginal burning routines, but went overboard. They burned their runs/properties in summer with high intensity fires, which also killed the grasses, again promoting bush over grass.

The whites’ fires were not always rapidly extinguished like those of the Aborigines. As a result, on 6 February 1851, a mere 14 years after squatters first set foot in Victoria (1837), a wildfire burnt 5 million hectares, claimed 12 human lives, 1 million sheep, thousands of cattle, and native animals. The myth

that Australia had always been the land of wildfire, was born. At the time you may think that Aboriginal elders may have been consulted about this calamity, but no. Many years and many wildfires later, this option no longer exists.

So, many bushland areas we see today may have been grassland in 1837. This is quite mind-boggling. Our folklore revolves around early settlers clearing the land for European style farming. Ironically, some of this bush may have been the re-grown bush areas created by the squatters.

It is assumed that due to seasonal water availability, Upper Beaconsfield would have been designated as a hunting area by the local Aboriginal tribes. Hunting areas typically had broad grass areas, burnt often to attract game, which also allowed the hunters to round up the game. Abutting these zones were thick forest areas where ambush hunters could hide for a surprise attack when the kangaroos tried to flee to this thicker forest for ‘safety’.

Most of us now cherish any bushland areas that have escaped development, especially the wildlife they support. Yet we barely have a clue how these vegetation types were fire managed before 1837.

An all too cautious approach of keeping fire away at all costs, steadily increases fuel loads that generate wildfires. My witnessing of the lead-up to Ash Wednesday taught me that. Incineration, death, destruction, pandemonium, are just a few words that come to mind from that event.

However, the natural regeneration after Ash Wednesday was something to behold. Thousands of seedlings germinated and plants re-shooted, all competing for the inadequate land they tried to occupy – an impenetrable jungle in places. We also must appreciate that many pre-existing jewels must have been severely spoilt, requiring decades to return, if ever, from that searing hot burn.

Opinions vary widely on how to reduce the impact of next unplanned fire in our area. Burning has its hazards and generates smoke, but is regenerative

in nature. Slashing requires expensive machinery and skill on steep and sometimes rocky slopes we find locally.

Commencing in March 1992, on Hamilton Reserve, Berglund Road, a careful experiment took place conducted by the local CFA and the Conservation Group working together. The effort was to find a compromise between safety of people and ecological diversity. The whole stand of bush was divided into smaller areas. One area was left untouched, another slashed, another was to be burnt as coolly as possible by the CFA in autumn (pictured), another coolly burnt by the CFA in spring. A regeneration survey was conducted by some university students. Our attempt to find these studies was not successful, but four long time members of the Conservation Group did not recall any significant detrimental effects from the burns, which is also accords with Eric Bumpstead’s recollection of events. He was CFA Captain at that time.



The redeeming features of these kind of burns were that they reduced the overall fuel load in stands of remnant forest, without disrupting the whole ecology of the stand. They also could be achieved using a small number of fire appliances and crew, and were rated as cool to warm burns with flames to 1.5 metres in height, close to what the Aborigines had done nationwide for millennia. Additionally, they were also inclusive of various community groups working together to build local knowledge.

The future building of this knowledge is vital for us be proactive in dealing with the risk of wildfire and maintaining healthy bushland. By also drawing from history, we can learn lessons about ourselves, and the previous fire management of this country.

*Research for this piece principally relied on Bill Gammage’s, ‘The Biggest Estate on Earth. How Aborigines made Australia’.*

**CAMERON ROCKE**

# Community Garden

Did you manage to beat the rainbow lorikeets to the apples? We went down to pick unripe apples to provide the pectin for our plum jam. I had no idea the tree was covered in hundreds of lorikeets, and when I startled them, the tree exploded in colour! It was surreal.

In other news, the olives are ripening and ready to be claimed and pickled by a lucky local. Nashi pears not so sweet, but very juicy. Apricots made the perfect 'nude food' snack for lunch boxes, or long country drives. Green beans, tomatoes and herbs a plenty.

At this time of the year a lot of us will be inundated with zucchini. One way to keep them under control is to eat the flowers, and therefore reducing the amount of fruit. Recently, we enjoyed the most delicious fried zucchini flowers stuffed with ricotta, pine nuts, herbs and lemon at Bam Bam's Italiano in Avonsleigh. I think of my Nonna every time I eat zucchini flowers.

Here is another yummy recipe for your glut of courgettes.

## Waste is such a waste

Waste facts – Australians waste 5 million tonnes of food each year. That's 9,000 Olympic swimming pools FULL OF FOOD. 10 million plastic bags a DAY end up in landfill. That's just food and plastic.

Let's try to do better – FIRST, CONSUME LESS. Say no to any plastic bag. Take your own bags and containers.

Cardinia Council offers some help. Food waste can now go in your green bin. Cardinia offers rebates and workshops to assist with home composting (including rebates for worm farms and re-useable nappies).

There are a range of places that accept recyclable waste that can't be put in council recycling bins.

- \* Take your soft plastics to **RedCycle** bins at Woolies or Coles. Here's a list of what plastics they collect: [www.redcycle.net.au/what-to-redcycle/](http://www.redcycle.net.au/what-to-redcycle/)
- \* **Hills Recycling** ([hillsrecycling.wixsite.com/hillsrecycling](http://hillsrecycling.wixsite.com/hillsrecycling)) caters for recycling in the Dandenong Ranges. Drop off places are at **Recycled Roots and Leaves** at Silvan and the **Kallista General Store**
- \* Drop off old x-rays, phones, batteries and small e-waste at Emerald Library, there is also a container for 'Lids for Kids'
- \* Take polystyrene to Monash Waste Transfer and Recycling Station



### Green zucchini and spinach pancakes

The great thing about this recipe is that it is super easy and super versatile, in terms of putting your own spin on it. Add a poached egg with avocado and feta and you've got brunch – at a quarter of the cost of at a café. Serve with a side salad and some grilled fish and you've got lunch or dinner. Dress with Kewpie mayonnaise and your taste buds have just landed in Japan. So, get creative and sneak those veggies in – no one will ever know! Makes 4-5 medium sized pancakes.

#### Ingredients

- 1 medium zucchini, grated
- Couple of handfuls of spinach (replace with parsley, silverbeet, or omit completely)
- ¾ cup of milk of your choice
- 1 ¼ cup of flour (use GF flour for intolerances)
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg
- Olive oil for frying
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Method

Blitz/blend spinach with the milk until combined. Add flour slowly, mixing well to combine. Whisk in egg, baking soda, salt and pepper. Fold in grated zucchini and mix well.

Consistency should not be too runny so that the pancakes hold their shape well in the pan. Zucchini has a high water content, so if the batter seems too wet, add a little flour. If too dry, add a little bit of milk or water.

Heat oil in a pan and add the batter in batches. Fry for approximately 3-4 minutes, or until the sides turn golden. Flip over and cook the other side.

Serve with toppings and sides of your choice. In picture above, this pancake has been topped with blistered cherry tomatoes, cucumber and lettuce drizzled in olive oil and vino-cotto, finished with shaved parmesan.

They are also good served cold too, making a yummy addition to any lunchbox.

ANGELIE O'BRIEN

### Did you know you can recycle toothpaste tubes and medication blister packs?

Small online stores *Banish* and *Flora & Fauna* give you a voucher to spend at their stores for every parcel with recyclable beauty and household packaging you send them. This now includes medication blister packs. Check out their websites: [banish.com.au/pages/recycling-program](http://banish.com.au/pages/recycling-program) and [www.floraandfauna.com.au/recycle](http://www.floraandfauna.com.au/recycle)



Other small businesses are starting to offer a similar service. The collected items will eventually go to TerraCycle, who use the plastic to make parkbenches and other items.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-07/how-to-encourage-more-programs-for-hard-to-recycle-items/13125678>

# Grow your own ... is growing your own the answer to life's problems?

For me, returning to work physically after lockdown required some adjustment. I forgot how the morning ritual of sitting idle in the infamous Berwick school traffic creates the perfect opportunity for the mind to wander and imagine a simpler life.

Often I start with the question, "What is important in my life?" Then I begin to create a list friends, family, food, music... Not a big list is it? I do not think anyone on their deathbed ever said, "I wish I had more stuff". I am beginning to learn that the best things in life are free. Of course, my grandparents knew this, as did the great philosophers Luther Vandross and Janet Jackson.

There is nothing I enjoy more than the liberating activity of walking or riding for freshly grown food, whether it is the neighbours, our community garden, or a forage. Sometimes I exchange the food I have grown, but often my neighbours are happy to offload the glut, have a conversation about the day, recipes, music, or have a crack at solving the world's problems.

"Stay for a cup of tea?"

Community sufficiency, a term I have borrowed, is not a hard journey to commence. There is not an end goal – just enjoy the ride and rewards. If you feel secure in your community, then you have more confidence, resilience, and freedom.

Anyway, I am back to sitting in traffic observing just how deep we are in the rat race, or frantically running on the hamster wheel of life, and witnessing last year just how quickly the wheels can fall off. And for what? We have been tricked into stretching ourselves beyond comprehension. But growing our own food and strengthening local communities is just the ticket to re-balance the scales, and perhaps rely a little less on the consumer-roller coaster that we have all become accustomed to.

Recently I have been inspired by the words of Helena Norberg-Hodge who describes "localisation of economic activity as a 'solution multiplier' for many of the dire problems that confront the planet today" [1]. I also recommend her article in Dumbo Feather [3].

Norberg-Hodge describes a recent growing rise for change – spearheaded by climate change and broken economies (infinite growth on a finite planet). People are "yearning for

localism, connection to people, place and culture." Obviously, this extends beyond growing your own food.

This action can also relieve us of the global problems associated with food production such as biodiversity loss, nutrient run off, impacts on water quality, the enormous amount of herbicide and pesticide used – even global warming. In addition, it builds community and benefits our mental health.

By growing your own food, and sharing or trading local food you can:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions mean less carbon kilometres
- Eliminate plastic packaging
- Control your waste by composting
- Reduce large scale monocultures, and therefore the impact on the land and ecosystems
- Reduce consumerism, freeing you up for the good things in life
- Assist diversity, through working and connecting with nature
- Provide healthier food that is fresher, more varied and with more nutrients than limited varieties available in supermarkets
- Promote a sense of security when you become aware of the abundance around
- Spark creativity by making use of materials you or your neighbours already have on hand
- Strengthen relationships and build community connection.
- Increase feelings of empowerment knowing you can grow your own, or source food locally for free
- Free up your time, and work less
- Connect with nature, and engage within the web of life that we often disengage from
- Connect to the ways of our ancestors
- Improve mental health

Empowering yourself and the community through food and gardening is not only a political statement or a response to the environmental crisis, but also beneficial to one's mental health.

An article in The Conversation (2019), describes "social prescriptions" as an alternative to pharmaceuticals. Doctors in the UK are now prescribing community gardening for loneliness, anxiety, and depression [2]. We know sharing, exercise, sunshine and connectedness makes us feel good, and now scientific studies support these ideas. Furthermore, the act of slowing down through actions such as walking around the garden, weeding, pickling, preserving, baking sourdough, fermenting all the extra produce, are mindful, productive, and nostalgic activities that calm and ground us.

So, as we can see, the benefits of growing your own are limitless – we have barely scratched the surface. So, let's get growing!

CARL HIRST

## Reading

1. Helena Norberg-Hodge, *Localisation and the economics of happiness*, <https://commonthreads.sgi.org/post/157897991073/localization-and-the-economics-of-happiness>
2. Yvonne Black, 2019, *Anxiety and depression: why doctors are prescribing gardening rather than drugs*, <https://theconversation.com/anxiety-and-depression-why-doctors-are-prescribing-gardening-rather-than-drugs-121841>
3. Helena Norberg-Hodge, 2020, *The power of going local*, <https://www.dumbofeather.com/articles/the-power-of-going-local/>



# Exciting news for the Community Complex

In September 2020, the Upper Beaconsfield Community Complex Buildings & Grounds Committee applied to the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning for a solar grant. We received exciting news in January that we were successful. The letter stated:

Thank you for your application to the Solar on Public Buildings Program.

The program generated considerable interest with more than 300 applications received from across the state. It is promising to see this level of interest in renewable energy and especially in solar PV systems in Victoria.

I am pleased to advise that the Upper Beaconsfield Community Complex has been assessed as eligible for funding under this program. Subject to an energy audit, the funding may be used for energy efficiency works, a solar PV system, battery installation, electrical upgrades if required and/or associated works.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) will be in touch shortly to discuss the

next steps in the process, which will include arranging an energy audit to be conducted at your site before assessments for solar system designs are rolled out from January 2021.

Congratulations on this fantastic outcome that will both help reduce your electricity operating costs and power our state towards achieving a Victorian Renewable Energy Target of 40 per cent by 2025 and 50 per cent by 2030.

Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Solar Homes

## Community Complex new committee

The Upper Beaconsfield Community Complex Buildings & Grounds Committee held a triennial meeting on Wednesday 10 February 2021 to elect a committee of management to manage the facility, located on a Crown Land Reserve under the Department of Environment Land Planning and Water. The new committee comprises delegates of user groups at the Complex – Community Centre, Men's Shed, Upper Beaconsfield Association and interested members of the

community. Many thanks to the long serving committee members and welcome to the new members.

We thank Cr Brett Owen for attending, chairing the election, and answering questions.

Looking over the events of the past term, the committee has encountered many problems. These include ongoing maintenance issues of the heritage-listed hall, which was built in 1884, and other parts of the building extended in the 1950s, 1980s and 1991. Problems have come about because of the difficult situation of the facility being on crown land under DELWP. In recent years council has provided more assistance. In the meantime, rules and regulations stipulated by council for community buildings have become more stringent. Many older parts of the building were not compliant with current building regulations. Gradually these have been rectified. The committee thanks Cardinia Council for the assistance and looks forward to a productive relationship in future.

HELEN SMITH



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# Jessey Sykes – plasterer, farmer, councillor, publican

When considering a topic for this history article I looked up a few names online. I came across Jessey Sykes in the Cardinia Heritage Register. It was suggested that he was the first owner of the Ranges Hotel at Gembrook. The same note came up in various other publications. In my earlier research I had never seen this “fact”, so I decided to look into it deeper.

Whoever supplied the information to the Heritage Register must have looked at the Berwick Shire rate book, which showed Jessey Sykes paying rates for a hotel on part of crown allotment 11 in the Parish of Gembrook. However, there are a number of crown allotments with a similar name. The Parish of Gembrook has sections C, D and E, as well as a section with no letter, and it had a number of allotments that were preceded by the letter A. The Ranges Hotel was part of a subdivision of crown allotment A11 that had originally been selected by the Reverend Dr John Edward Bromby. By the early 1890s this land was in the hands of a bank, and later owned by the estate of Frederick Maitland Innes. It was only in 1901 that an application for a roadside victualler’s license for premises about to be erected at Gembrook was made by Mrs Jane McMahan. So Jessey Sykes was certainly not there in the late 1890s.

Further research would have shown that Sykes was paying rates for the Pine Grove Hotel, located on crown allotment 11 section D. These understandable mistakes in research are then perpetuated through several hard copy publications, and thus it becomes difficult to rectify the error in the public’s mind.

## Early days

Jessey Sykes was born in Yorkshire, England in 1836, the son of a single mother. At 21 years of age, he boarded the ship ‘King of Algeria’ to Melbourne. He headed for Beechworth where he married Scottish born Isabella Craig in June 1862. She was the daughter of a teacher. Their first two children were born at Beechworth where Jessey worked as a greengrocer and plasterer. In 1863 he filed for insolvency when pressure from creditors and losses in business showed debts of £101. His assets amounted to only £30. Another encounter with the Beechworth courts (1865) was when he allowed a sow and her eight young piglets wander in High Street. He was fined 5s, and 5s costs. By 1868 the family had moved to

North Melbourne, and there nine more children were born. Jessey continued to work as a plasterer and lather, and the newspapers published numerous advertisements by him looking for workers. Fencing was still not his strong point. There are many notices of him looking for his straying pony, horse, cow and even a dog. For the cow he offered a reward of £2, so she must have been a good supplier of milk. He also rented out cottages. He applied for a publican’s license in North Melbourne in 1873, but it was refused.

## Upper Beaconsfield

On 16 Aug 1883 Sykes applied for a 320-acre selection in Upper Beaconsfield. It was crown allotment 71A Section D in the Parish of Gembrook. This land was situated north of the golf course and is now within Cardinia Reservoir. In his application for a crown grant to the land on 7 Jan 1890 he declared that he had erected a 4-room house measuring 35ft x 32 ft with a veranda along the front. He had also built a man’s room, a coach house, a stable, a milking shed, pigsty, and a tool house. He grew vegetables and potatoes, planted an orchard and sowed oats, Dutch clover and rye. He named his property “Craigie Lea”. By April 1886 Jesse Sykes had also obtained the title to crown allotment 129c in the Parish of Gembrook for the consideration of £142 5s 3p. This property was nearly 60 acres in size and was described as a grazing property. It is situated along Shelton Road, in Toomuc Valley.

Seven of the Sykes children attended Upper Beaconsfield State School from December 1885, the older four had already completed their education. The eldest daughter, Sabina Sykes married the relieving head teacher of the Upper Beaconsfield school, William Craig.

## Councillor

In August 1886 Jessey nominated for a seat on the Berwick Shire Council. The Beaconsfield Riding had just been formed, so there were all three seats to be filled. Six candidates nominated and the elected three candidates were all from Upper Beaconsfield – William Brisbane, William H Goff, and Jessey Sykes. Somehow associated with the formation of the new Riding, Sykes’ term was only for one year, and he had to face an election again in 1887. He stood against Alfred Ernest Kitchen, and won by six votes. In 1890 he ran for council unopposed.

In late 1888, during Sykes’ stint at Council, Robert Buchanan’s Burnbank estate, north of Inglis Road, Berwick was advertised as a subdivisational sale. On this property was a 5 ½ acre quarry, which reputedly was bought by Jessey Sykes for as much as £105 per acre. He paid council rates for the quarry between 1889 and 1893, but never obtained the title for it. It has not definitively been ascertained whether the quarry was located on Robert’s land or on land of his neighbouring brother James, but access to it was from Beaumont Road. When the road was first built it was referred to as Syndicate

Beaconsfield Riding Councillors October 1886

*continued on page 16*



**VISITORS**



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Road, after the syndicate that had been formed to work the quarry. Sykes' motivation was said to break up Wilson's monopoly of supplying local stone at the time.

Shortly after the 1890 'election' an application was made to the Supreme Court to oust Jessey Sykes from office, as it was alleged that he was benefitting from contracts filled by stone from the syndicate's quarry. A contractor and member of the syndicate, James O'Donnell, obtained a number of contracts for road metalling in the Shire of Berwick, and used stone he bought from the quarry. A ratepayer, Sidney John Webb of Narre Warren, made an application to the Supreme Court claiming that Sykes was in breach of the Local Government Act 1890, which states in part: "No person concerned or participating in the profit in or of any contract with any municipality or in or of any work to be done under the authority of any such council shall be capable of being or continuing a councillor of the municipality." Webb argued that councillors should conduct themselves in a manner that there would be no semblance of suspicion on such matters.

Justice Hood directed that initially an inquiry should be held before a police magistrate, or other fit person, probably to ascertain a factual account of what had been occurring locally. Surprisingly, Webb declined to participate in this enquiry. Justice Hood then ruled that in his view, taking a literal interpretation of the statutes, that Sykes had nothing to do with the profits of the contracts, and he discharged the rule with costs.

Webb appealed and in February 1892 the case returned to the full court of the Supreme Court. After an exhaustive review of the statutes, the full court again found that the syndicate had an agreement with O'Donnell to supply stone to him at a fixed rate of sixpence per cubic yard. O'Donnell in turn, was free to use the stone in any contract he entered, and his profits were not flowing back to Sykes. The appeal failed and was dismissed with costs against Webb.

That same year, 1892, Jessey Sykes was unanimously elected Shire president with an allowance of £25. He did not nominate at the expiry of his term in August 1893. He had another tilt at standing for Council in August 1895, but lost out to Alexander Crichton (votes 82/57).

In 1897 he contested the election again but lost out to Henry James (votes 107/80).

**Pine Grove Hotel**

Back in Upper Beaconsfield, Sykes sold 'Craigie Lea in May 1893 to Bernard Murphy. Sykes' land on Shelton Road was transferred to his wife Isabella in September 1893. In January 1894 the Pine Grove Hotel was for sale by tender as Hubert Lenné, owner and builder of the hotel, was in financial trouble. The household furniture and effects, together with buggy horses, cows, pigs, farm produce and 30,000 bricks were auctioned on 10 Feb 1894.

The existing mortgage over the Pine Grove property was transferred to Isabella Sykes, and her North Melbourne property was added as security. Jessey Sykes first advertised for guests to frequent The Pine Grove on 7 March 1894, and kept the same ad for the entire seven years they operated the hotel. Hardly anything has been reported in the newspapers about the Sykes' time at the pub. It appears that they leased a farm from William Brisbane somewhere, but in February 1898 a bushfire destroyed the outbuildings of this farm, and two weeks later the fire flared up and destroyed the house. It was insured for £300. The location of this property is not clear, but is believed to have been near Sykes' land on Shelton Road, as the fire destroyed outbuildings on other properties in this area at the same time.

At a government inquiry to assess the potential route for a railway line to Gembrook, Jessey Sykes gave evidence, and said that he had two

licensed traps for passengers on the road, and that he carted goods. While he advocated a route via Oakleigh and the old township of Narre Warren, he acknowledged that such a railway would diminish his income from picking up goods at Beaconsfield railway station. Sykes was also a trustee for the Recreation Reserve. It was written that he was a noted athlete in his younger years.

In March 1901, Isabella Sykes applied to the licensing court to transfer her Victualler's licence to Mary Ellen Cregan, who obtained the title of the Pine Grove Hotel on 19 September 1901. Curiously on 1 Nov 1901 an auction was held in Melbourne for the sale of the property, but while the publican's licence was transferred to Albert Payne shortly after, Mary Ellen Cregan remained the owner of the property until 1907.

Little is known about the Sykes family over the next few years. In 1906 Jessey took part in the "Eight-Hour Jubilee", celebrating 50 years of the Labor movement. The Worker newspaper wrote: "He never misses an opportunity of attending the Eight-Hour celebration, and having passed through all the big building periods of Melbourne during the boom he has a deal of interesting anecdotes with regard to the progress of Labor through its various stages."

**Walnut Grove**

Isabella remained the owner of the Shelton Road property until 1910. The Shire rate books don't mention a house there. In 1908 Jessey Sykes bought the 80-acre "Walnut Grove" property for £190. It had been valued at £300 in the previous owner's probate/estate. This property had formerly been used as the Inebriate Asylum for females. The Sykes family lived in Walnut Grove for some time, however, the land was subdivided promptly into blocks from 2 to 10 acres, and a public auction was held in November 1909.

In October 1913 the newspaper reported that on account of family illness, Jessey and Isabella Sykes had sold the property to Mr Hay, and returned to live at their city residence. They also seemed to have had an interest in a property in Berwick.

On 28 February 1915 Isabella Sykes died at Mansfield House, Berwick. Only a short time later, on 10 May 1915, Jessey died aged 77. One of their sons, Albert Stanley Sykes, lived on Quamby Road in the early 1950s.

**MARIANNE ROCKE**

# Thyroid disorders

Have you been feeling tired, or slow? One of the common causes could be an issue with your thyroid! Almost 1 in 6 Australians have a thyroid disorder and the incidence increases with age.

The thyroid is a small bow shaped gland that sits in front of neck just below the Adam's apple. It produces the hormone thyroxine (T3 and T4) and calcitonin. T3 and T4 control metabolism, heart rate and how the heart works, temperature, blood pressure, brain development and the development of foetus among many other roles. Calcitonin helps in controlling the amount of calcium and phosphate in body.

The thyroid gland can become enlarged occasionally. It can be benign like a nodule or goitre, or it can be malignant as in cancer.

## Overactive thyroid

The thyroid gland can become overactive and produce too much thyroxine. This condition is called hyperthyroidism. It can be caused by inflammation in the gland due to Graves disease. The classic symptoms of an overactive thyroid include fatigue, weight loss, anxiety, palpitations, increased appetite, heat intolerance,

menstrual irregularities, sweaty palm, and shakes/tremors.

## Underactive thyroid

If the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroxine it is called hypothyroidism. This is the most common thyroid condition in Australia and is more common in women. The most common cause of underactive thyroid is Hashimoto's thyroiditis (an autoimmune condition) or destruction of the thyroid during cancer treatment. Classic symptoms of hypothyroidism include fatigue, weight gain, cold intolerance, dry skin, brittle hair, constipation, irregular menstrual cycles, difficulty getting pregnant, and sleep problems.

Thyroid monitoring is essential during pregnancy as well, as it has consequences for the mother and baby. Normal thyroid function is essential for foetal development. It can lead to pre-eclampsia (raised blood pressure), prematurity in baby and congenital abnormalities. Pregnant women who suffer from underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) need a 20-40% higher thyroxine dose during pregnancy.

Thyroid can also be sometimes overactive (hyperthyroidism) during pregnancy which requires medications and close monitoring. Hyperthyroidism is less common during

pregnancy as compared to hypothyroidism.

After pregnancy patients can have abnormal thyroid function due to a condition called postpartum thyroiditis and is generally self-limiting.

Management of abnormal thyroid function depends on its cause and whether it is over or under active. Hypothyroidism requires treatment with thyroxine replacement and is usually lifelong. The medication should be taken in the morning on an empty stomach and avoid consuming any other medications at the same time for 30 minutes.

An overactive thyroid requires a medication which usually is taken for 12-24 months. It can revert thyroid function to normal, or sometimes underactive. Sometimes the medications do not achieve control and hence patients may need radioactive iodine or surgery on the thyroid gland.

If you are concerned about any of these symptoms then please see your GP or visit us at Upper Beaconsfield GP Practice.

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ANSHU MALHOTRA**

**UPPER BEACONSFIELD GP PRACTICE**



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**Tuesday 8.30 am – 7 pm**

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**Thursday 8.30 am – 6 pm**

**Friday 8.30 am – 6 pm**

**Saturday 9.00 am – 2 pm**

## Behind the scenes on deer management

Despite the pandemic, the Cardinia Deer Management Coalition has been busy behind the scenes with many a Zoom or Teams meeting and a lot of planning. I've had just two face to face meetings since March last year.

Deer control on properties had to take a back seat last year due to restrictions, but deer to deer interactions have obviously not been curtailed, with lots of new arrivals. Hopefully, things this year will be better and our goal for protecting our environment will get back on track. And in some respects, this is already well underway.

Firstly, in October last year, Johannes Wenzel, one of our members, initiated a Victoria-wide collaboration of like-minded groups, now called the Victorian Deer Control Network. This has since snow-balled with over 40 groups ready to join and as many interested discussing it with their members. The timing of this has been impeccable, if not serendipitous, in that it has coincided with the establishment of a Victorian deer coordinator position by the Invasive Species Council.

Johannes has been liaising closely with the ISC in the establishment of the goals and structure of the group and ISC have offered the services of the new coordinator in the role of executive officer for the network. For a volunteer network, this is a tremendous boon.

Not only that, the annual Australasian Vertebrate Pest Management Symposium, being held online this year due to COVID-19, has allotted a session for the official launching of the VDCN. This will take place in late May, with Johannes outlining the origin and purpose of the network. The intent of the network centres around collaboration and sharing. Until recently, although there have been many groups working hard to mitigate the damage being caused by deer

to the environment and agriculture, there has been minimal sharing of knowledge. Where are they, how many are there, how do you monitor them and the damage they cause, how is it best to control them or to guard against them, how does cross-tenure control work, where can we get funding, what are the legalities? The VDCN aims to pull all this together, so we do not feel like we are all working alone.

Unfortunately, I am not yet able to give you a webpage to visit, but by the next Bell I will have more information for you. In the meantime, if you are interested in finding out more or think your group would be interested in joining, contact us through [info@cardiniadeer.org.au](mailto:info@cardiniadeer.org.au)

Secondly, CDMC will be conducting some survey work in late autumn this year. You may have already read about this in previous issues of the Bell. This was to have happened last year, and I can't promise the pandemic won't put a spanner in the works again, but we will continue to plan. One of these surveys is an aerial thermal imaging survey, being coordinated by Johannes, which is scheduled for an early morning in late May.

At the same time, we are planning some ground survey work. This is a complex task where we are trying to compare two population survey techniques and match deer population density against the vegetation damage over time. A combination of camera-trap surveys, scat counts, and logging vegetation damage are likely to be used, possibly even eDNA research.

Due to the complexity and expertise required in the initial setup and interpretation, we are hoping to partner with a university to ensure the most robust scientific outcomes. We are currently discussing this with three



tertiary institutions, who are all quite excited by the prospect of working towards a positive environmental outcome with a community-based group.

An important aspect to CDMC is community involvement. We are very keen to use citizen science where possible, and the proposed survey methods are very suitable for this and would be a valuable learning opportunity at a range of levels for the whole community. In the coming weeks we will be approaching landholders and locals to come on board and be involved in what should be an exciting and informative venture, where doing and learning will be among the most important outcomes.

We are looking for volunteers, including those who might be closet or future scientists. We will need help with many activities, such as viewing camera-trap images, vegetation surveys, faecal scat counts, IT and data entry, coordination and liaison, and setting up camera traps. And you can do as little or as much as you like. We will provide training where necessary, but none of the tasks will be difficult, and you won't be working alone.

If you would like to know more or would like to be actively involved in helping with the survey, please contact us at [info@cardiniadeer.org.au](mailto:info@cardiniadeer.org.au)

For further information, look us up on [www.cardiniadeer.org.au](http://www.cardiniadeer.org.au)

**MIKE HALL, PRESIDENT,  
CARDINIA DEER MANAGEMENT COALITION**

## 1st Upper Beaconsfield Scouts



We invite all Upper Beaconsfield youth to come and try Scouts. This is an opportunity for youth to reconnect with nature, make new friends and get active.

We are also looking for leaders and assistants to help running our great programs. Scouts really is for everyone, we'd love you to come and check it out.

Contact Andrew on 0418 334 140 or [leader@1stupperbeaconsfield.com](mailto:leader@1stupperbeaconsfield.com)

All sections of our Scout Group meet at the Igloo, Upper Beaconsfield Recreation Reserve.

**Joeys** 5-7 years  
Monday 5.30-6.30 pm

**Cubs** 7-10 years  
Monday 7.00-8.30 pm

**Scouts** 10-14 years  
Tuesday 7.00-9.00 pm

**Venturers** 14-17 years  
Monday 7.30-9.30 pm

**Rovers** 18-25 years  
Thursday from 7.30 pm

# Outside the urban environment people still need to be streetwise

Who could forget the footage of the Black Summer fires? Drought seared bush, generating flames twice as high as the tree tops, fire tornados, and houses being little more than just another fuel source for the wild flames.

Strangely enough, many of us – who live in a bushfire zone – quickly forget. They are just abstract orange images on a TV set. Those who never forget, are people who have experienced a real bushfire at their front door.

Experiencing shock after hearing reports of deaths; seeing most of the buildings on a single street wiped out; witnessing TV cameras being poked into the faces of traumatised people who had lost everything; sensing that whole livelihoods hang in the balance; and appreciating the fire fighters who had done their utmost, are to some locals, a very real reminder of days gone by.

In the aftermath there are also the inspiring images of whole towns bonding together, like what happened locally after Ash Wednesday. Everyone helping each other out through the ongoing crisis, particularly for those living in cold, rudimentary accommodation before their houses were rebuilt.

This begs the question: What could a town achieve if a small portion of this positive energy could be focused on bushfire mitigation techniques **before** a bushfire is thrust upon us? Like:

- getting to know your neighbours so that in an emergency you are not interacting with strangers
- sharing ideas on property management that give your assets the best fighting chance of withstanding a bushfire
- building the feeling of being part of a community

## If it is second nature after a disaster, why not before?

Starting 'fireguard' groups on streets was a plan implemented after the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires to work towards these goals. Some fireguard groups are still active after all this time, some have fallen away, because many of the

older residents of Upper Beaconsfield have moved on and 'the baton was not successfully passed' to newer residents.

'Fireguard' is also a term that has changed over the years. It used to be a system where a street would have a get together and someone from the CFA would come and have a chat with the group about the latest bushfire mitigation techniques and answer questions.

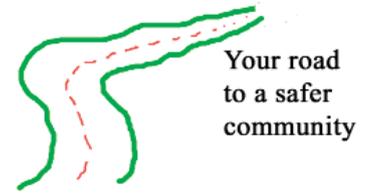
The CFA have changed their emphasis so that Community Fireguard is now a six to eight hour course to enable people to understand bushfire behaviour and local risk, construct a solid bushfire survival plan, and make better protective measures on their property. If you have a good individual bushfire plan, it will be vindicated through this process. Should some parts of your fire plan be a little suspect, you have the opportunity to modify these to a more robust outcome. Note: If you do not have a written fire plan, you are exposing yourselves to risks that will only become apparent in the 'heat of the action'.

At a community level, the latest efforts under the 'Safer Together' scheme, are also aiming to achieve important aspects of the dot point objectives stated above.

*The new 'Streetwise' scheme will combine components of the post 1983 Ash Wednesday fireguard program, and can incorporate some benefits of Neighbourhood Watch.*

Streetwise has two components:

1. Creating a phone and email list of street members, which is distributed to each member of the street. This provides an emergency communication system, using communication platforms the vast majority of people already use. There are many highly efficient social media platforms, but everyone has to join them for them to work effectively, sometimes a hard ask.
2. Organising an annual street party, so neighbours can mingle, get to



know new residents, and have a bit of fun. Learning from past experience, 'Streetwise' groups or the like, are much more likely to stay on-going and connected if they hold annual street parties. The host provides a BBQ and their back yard, guests bring their own food, drink, and chairs. If you miss one, there's always next year.

With these two simple features up and running, a Streetwise group can also:

- Encourage some members to complete the full Community Fireguard course 8 hour course and share that knowledge
- Look out for vulnerable street members (the aged, disabled, lonely or bereaved)
- Detect and report suspicious activity
- Deal with other emergencies than just fire
- Return stray animals to their right homes efficiently
- Deal with street issues e.g., Council matters

## Starting 'Streetwise' on your local thoroughfare

'Streetwise' is a non-funded program. The author of this article is a volunteer. Each street needs someone to create the phone and email list (others can help you) and maintain it (when people leave or move into your area).

Anyone who wishes to do some volunteering and make a real difference to their community can fulfil this role. A retired person or someone working part-time may be ideal for such a position.

We owe it to ourselves and our families to strive to respond to potential emergencies, well in advance, as a community.

If you are interested please call Cameron Rocke on 0400 769 786, and we can get a Streetwise network up and going in your niche of Upper Beaconsfield.

CAMERON ROCKE



# What's on this term at the Community Centre?



## Upper Beaconsfield Community Centre

Come to the Community Centre and participate in our many activities on offer this term. For more information, give us a call or check out our website.

### Special interest and volunteering

- Boomerang Bags group
- Art & Craft groups
- Toy Library
- Public use computers

### Computer workshops

- Computers for beginners
- Computers – level 2
- Digital literacy on iPads – beginners
- Digital literacy on iPads – level 2
- Build your own website using WIX
- Photo workshop
- Social media

### Lifestyle classes

- Yoga  
Monday 6 – 7.15 pm
- Circuit training  
Monday 7.30 – 8.30 pm or  
Wednesday 6.30 – 7.30 pm
- Pilates  
Thursday 9.30 – 10.30 am

- Guided meditation  
Thursday 7.00 – 8.00 pm
- Strength training  
Friday 9.30 – 10.30 am
- Kids dance  
Tuesdays 4.00 – 6.00 pm
- Kickboxing  
Tuesday 6.30 – 7.30 pm
- Let's dance for adults  
Friday 6.30 – 8.00 pm
- Social walking group  
Thursday 9.30 – 10.30 am

10-12 Salisbury Road, Upper Beaconsfield VIC 3808

Phone: 5944 3484

Email: sarah@ubcc.org.au

www.ubcc.org.au

# Melbourne Youth Chorale 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary

## Embracing 2021 with enthusiasm

Melbourne Youth Chorale (MYC) stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before and looks forward to a dynamic future.

Formerly Berwick Youth Choir, MYC is the City of Casey's longest established choir, founded in 1986 by Jean Heriot (OAM). Jean travelled to Hungary to study the Kodály method of music education and returned to Australia to share her knowledge. She is remembered for her passion, dedication, commitment to personal improvement and genuine love and care for her students. Jean's vision for the Berwick Youth Choir was to provide all children in the community with access to high quality music education. In 1998 she was awarded Citizen of the Year, and in 2006 awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her contribution to music education.

MYC celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. We are proud to be able to continue Jean Heriot's legacy, providing high quality music education to children and young people in Casey/Cardinia and beyond. Our fees-free structure enables us to offer the gift of music to every child without prejudice – because

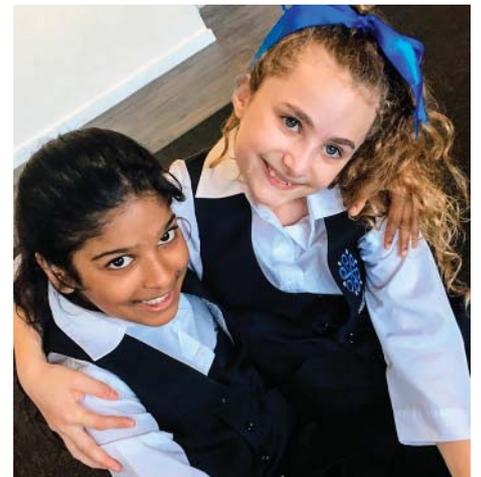
everyone deserves the gift of music.

We are entirely dependent on grants, sponsorships and donations and welcome financial support at <https://www.melbourneyouthchorale.com.au/donate/>

The pandemic has been challenging for everyone. MYC responded swiftly, and by the beginning of term 2 in 2020 an online learning program was up and running. Learning online is nothing like meeting face to face. However, we are delighted with what our choristers achieved through the program. If we need to lock down again in 2021, we will have no hesitation in returning to online learning.

However, so much more can be achieved face to face, and we are really looking forward to getting back together. The choristers cannot wait to sing in a group and hear each other again! Enquiries for joining the choir or for joining our mailing list for regular news can be made to Kerry at [manager.myc@gmail.com](mailto:manager.myc@gmail.com). Presuming pandemic restrictions allow, we will be holding a show-case concert later in the year. Watch out for details!

We have some new innovations planned for 2021. Firstly, the entry



level musicianship program has been redeveloped into a comprehensive theory program. Secondly, the online learning program is a resource that will become a remote learning program. Students from all over Australia will be able to engage with the content and enhance their music education. Thirdly we are planning to start a new choir for children with a disability aged 8-11 called "Flying Free". If you are interested, please contact Kerry at [manager.myc@gmail.com](mailto:manager.myc@gmail.com) for more information.

Despite the difficulties of 2020 we embrace 2021 with enthusiasm and look forward to continuing to offer the gift of music in high quality choral development and Musicianship education to the Casey/Cardinia Community... 'because everyone deserves the gift of music'.

KERRY ALEXANDER



# Forming new friendships at Early Learning Centre

We have been exploring many exciting topics at the ELC recently, including

healthy eating, aboriginal symbols, sustainability, dinosaurs, birds' nests and much more.

With a large influx of new children enrolled at our service recently, the children have enjoyed forming new friendships. We have an ongoing focus on assisting the children in developing positive social skills and learning how to navigate play within a social context.

We would love your children to learn and play with us! We have limited vacancies available for full and half days, so please feel free to enquire. Please have a look at our website ([www.ubcc.org.au](http://www.ubcc.org.au)) for more information and for our virtual tour of the centre.

Alternatively, you can contact the ELC at the Community Centre on 5944 3484, email us on [elc@ubcc.org.au](mailto:elc@ubcc.org.au) or visit us at 10-12 Salisbury Road, Upper Beaconsfield.



UBC Early Learning Centre



ELLI HEATH



## We are now open

Autumn is the perfect time for planting. Soil temperatures are still warm enough to encourage root growth, and the milder temperatures reduce water stress. At this time of year plants have a better chance to settle in well, making optimum growth above and below the ground, before they have to cope with the heat and dryness of next year's summer.

Green Circle Plant Nursery specialises in Australian native plants indigenous to the local area. We supply plants to residents, farmers, schools, and kindergartens – for gardens and revegetation projects.

Now open with new opening hours:

Friday 10 to 4, and Saturday 10 to 1 for those who cannot get there on Fridays.

1 Halford Street, Upper Beaconsfield

SUE SIMMONS

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# News from BUPS

What a wonderful start we have had, with delight evident on many faces when seeing their friends and teachers on the first day. After last year, returning for term 1 has been a little extra special. Although we are still following strict COVID restrictions, we are grateful to welcome our families back onto school grounds. Seeing the buzz and the smiles at drop off and pick up times reminds us how precious our community is. Everyone is doing a terrific job wearing masks and respecting social distancing and we thank parents and carers for supporting these important procedures.

This year we welcome four new staff members. Anna Joyce, Eirini Kourtai, Ann Manchanda and Hayley Stammers bring diversity and individual talents to our growing team. Please join us in making them feel welcome. We also have a number of student teachers completing their placements this term and we wish them well.

It is always exciting to see new faces, with many new families joining our community, along with our new 2021 foundation children. They may be tiny, but they are certainly mighty, and our new parent cohort has done a terrific job preparing them for school. It was a positive and enthusiastic start for all and, once again, we have matched each prep with a grade 6 buddy. It is a huge responsibility for our new school seniors, and they take it very seriously. We often find the buddy program forms a bond and friendship that lasts a very long time.

Our environment and school grounds are a priority this year and are looking forward to re-establishing the vegetable garden and outdoor school classroom. We love providing learning opportunities both inside and out. Being a nude food school, our composting and recycling practices are taken very seriously. We will also be welcoming back our chooks in the near future and are looking forward to many egg collections.

Toward the end of the 2020, BUPS had student volunteers from a variety of year levels embark on a very special project to move 9 cubic metres of pebbles to create new fire safe

gardens. What a huge achievement, well done to all.

We have a number of dynamic new school leaders this year. Congratulations to School Captains Ella F and Kobe S, and Vice Captains Jack H and Ella M. Together with their leadership team, they are ready to make their mark in 2021. We look forward to seeing their ideas and qualities as leaders develop.

Have a great term one everyone, and remember very day is a new opportunity to learn and be kind.

*KELLY BALTISSSEN*



## Upper Beaconsfield Fire Brigade

What a difference 12 months makes! Last summer we were kept busy fighting the horrendous NSW and East Gippsland bushfires. This season by comparison has been spectacularly quiet. The main influence has been the milder (and wetter) weather. There is no room for complacency though. History and experience has shown us that the bush can still burn even when the conditions don't appear to be conducive. There will still be some warm weather and the odd high fire danger spike day here and there that will crop up. All residents should remain vigilant through the declared fire danger period that runs until 1 May 2021 unless notified otherwise.

We often get asked if it's ok to burn off

green waste debris given it has been cooler and wetter than normal and there is no perceived risk. The answer unfortunately is still no. It is still illegal to be conducting burn offs until the fire restrictions are lifted. Offenders can expect a visit from police and may face fines and/or further actions.

### Turnouts

The brigade finished the 2020 calendar year with 49 turnouts (incidents) for the year which is about 6 below our average. Since the last Village Bell publication, we have attended 19 turnouts of which 12 were in our primary response area and 7 were support calls for neighbouring brigades. They consisted of:

- 14 x Grass & Scrub Fires
- 1 x assist other agency (Ambulance)
- 1 x car fire (abandoned)
- 1 x Motor Vehicle Accident
- 1 x rescue
- 1 x structure fire



### New and departing members

In December we farewelled Tony and Consuela Middleditch from our brigade when they moved to the quiet life in Central Victoria. Tony and Consuela made a considerable contribution to the brigade over the last 5 years for which we are grateful for and they will be sadly missed. We wish them well in their new endeavours. At the start of the year we welcomed 4 new recruits to the ranks. Ethan Norbury, Harrison Pinney, Jenny Hall and Michael Tomek.

Each member will embark on the recruit training pathway consisting of both practical and theoretical knowledge as well as attending regular brigade training to further their knowledge. We look forward to them turning out with the brigade once they have completed the necessary requirements.

We are always interested in talking with new and prospective volunteers. What does it take to be a volunteer fire fighter? The biggest commitment is time. Regular attendance at training in addition to being able to commit to the requirements of the CFA's General Fire Fighter program (minimum skills) involving several full weekend days of practical and theoretical training.

With the cancellation of the annual Christmas Eve carols last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, we thought we would try something a little different with the annual Santa run. Santa made his way around some of the local streets spreading some Christmas cheer and handing out pre-packaged lollies to kids, both young and old. The night culminated on the Recreation Reserve oval where a small gathering of people got the opportunity to get photos with Santa and the CFA tanker. Many thanks to Julie Born and the UBA in providing the lollies for Santa.



### Tanker 1 replacement update

Correspondence has been received from the CFA indicating that our ageing 30-year-old CFA supplied Hino 2.4D Tanker is in the running for replacement but that the replacement program is running behind schedule. We are hopeful that the appliance will be updated this calendar year. Fingers crossed for it happening before the next fire season.

### Ash Wednesday commemoration

Tuesday 16 February marked the 38th anniversary of the tragic Ash Wednesday bushfires that devastated parts of Victoria and South Australia

claiming the lives of 48 people including 21 in Upper Beaconsfield. Twelve of those were volunteer fire fighters from Narre Warren and Panton Hill brigades. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to hold an official commemorative service this year on the day. Our thoughts and prayers as always are with the families of loved ones and the many other people including emergency service workers who were affected by this tragedy.

*IAN PINNEY, CAPTAIN  
UPPER BEACONSFIELD FIRE BRIGADE*



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# Men meeting again at the Shed

On 20 January we had our first meeting for the year and were happy to see some of our members for the first time in nearly a year. This was a catch-up meeting and the guys talked about what they did over the summer break. Some bought in their excess vegetable garden produce and some just wanted to brag about how big their tomatoes had grown. Just before Christmas, we finished the year by having a delightful dinner at the Cardinia Beaconsfields Golf Links.

Over the breaks – COVID and Christmas – there were some activities by members, both at home and in the Shed. Ron VV created pot plant hangers. Mark constructed drawers for the woodworking area. Paul H manufactured a steel fabrication table and also a portable forge for blacksmithing projects. Andre completed an acoustic guitar at home. We also held regular Zoom meetings. One of our



current projects is our participation in building 75 Rosella nesting boxes. Three Men's Sheds (Berwick Woodworkers, Labertouche and Upper Beaconsfield) are volunteering their labour and equipment to cut out the ply sheets. The finishing will be performed by year 9 students from Beaconsfields College. This is a community project for the Mt Cannibal and Bunyip Community Fire Recovery Committee.



Another project that we are evaluating is the creation of hiking poles from 60 year-old recycled tobacco sticks. These are sticks that were used to hang tobacco leaves in kilns for drying, before the industry was phased out. Charlie, a new member, donated these sticks and has the expertise to guide us in this venture.

By the time you read this, we will have had our 1st sausage sizzle at Bunnings.

## Where are we?

The Shed is located at the rear of the Community Complex (in Salisbury Road) with entry from Halford Street. We are open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 am–4 pm. Come along on a Wednesday morning, when

we have a meeting of all members. Share a coffee, a biscuit and a yarn with us, and find out more about the Shed.

For more information email [secubms@gmail.com](mailto:secubms@gmail.com)

Visit us on facebook [UpperBeaconsfieldMensShed](https://www.facebook.com/UpperBeaconsfieldMensShed) or [sites.google.com/site/upperbeaconsfieldmensshed/](https://sites.google.com/site/upperbeaconsfieldmensshed/) Our Annual General Meeting will be on Wednesday 3 March 2021.

**RON KERPEN - PRESIDENT**

# Cricket Club planning for the future

During the pandemic, the Upper Beaconsfield Cricket Club has attempted to provide a safe outlet for our young people as well as the older cricket tragics. The WGCA fixtured a season of one day cricket matches at all levels as it was the easiest way of coping with disruptions. As this is being written we are all locked away in our homes for five days and restricted to exercise for two hours again. All matches were called off and instead of 14 rounds the season has shrunk to 13 matches.

The impact has been varied. UBCC is run by a team of volunteers who donate their time without hesitation. As the club has progressed in 2021, we are looking to the future. Volunteers are precious. As in many clubs – if many people offer help, the work effort is reduced.

## Help needed

Can you assist us to lessen the load

for others? Mel Naismith and Sarah Sankey are two who have devoted hours of their time to assist the smooth running of the club. Both have given three years of their time to ensure the club's youngsters can enjoy the game of cricket each week during summer. Sarah, as club registrar, has returned to work and finds that it is not as easy as three years ago. Mel has been Vice President and Junior Coordinator for a club with 9 junior teams. Her structures have kept the club's junior section as one of the best organised in the WGCA. We are looking to ensure that the efforts of these two are continued in the future. But it requires your help too. Both senior and junior committees need rejuvenation soon. Our AGM is normally held in May.

## Finals ahead

Finals are looming again, and several teams are positioned to snatch at a premiership. The second X1, U12 white and U14 girls all are ready to reach for

the summit. The club wishes them all the best and the same to other teams that may appear in the finals.

## Facilities

Our facilities upgrade appears to be moving towards replacement of the old igloo-based structure. Cr Brett Owen, current Cardinia Shire mayor, has been super supportive believing it is Upper Beaconsfield's turn to join the amenities revival. The club is thankful for the input of local politician Harriet Shing as well as Jason Wood, our federal member, who have both provided valuable support. Jason has organised the base of \$500,000 to initiate the development. We are looking to be able to produce a community facility that Upper Beaconsfield residents can use with pride.



**ROB HANSEN**

# A new sporting facility for the Recreation Reserve?

Our focus in recent years has been to secure improvements in the Igloo complex. We have investigated options for compliant modern shower and toilet facilities suitable for girls' cricket and football. The 1990 changing rooms and antiquated 1985 shared toilet and shower arrangements with the Scout Hall are quite unsuitable.

We received over \$500,000 confirmed funding in the Shire 2020/21 budget plus MHR Jason Wood's election funding of \$500,000, giving us around \$1.2 m, which was still insufficient to build suitable facilities (including new public toilets), as an addition or modification to the current configuration of the Igloo. Multiple meetings, many by Zoom, have been held with the Shire officers to find the best solution given the limited finance and suitable flat space to locate new additions. Current funds do not address the increasing need for roof maintenance of the original 35-year-old Igloo.

## History of the Rec Reserve buildings

The Igloo was a kit for a wheat storage shed donated from NSW after the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires and assembled by Rotary volunteers during 1984. The reconstructed cricket oval and igloo was officially opened by Pakenham Shire President, Cr Keith Ewenson JP in March 1986 as a scout facility. The local cricket, football and scout committees fundraised and, in conjunction with shire and state grants the cricket social rooms, football changing rooms and the scout equipment garage extensions were added and opened by Pakenham

Shire President Pam Wyley JP in October 1990.

In 2000 the cricket club and the shire funded storerooms, scoring areas, a verandah, a passage and a new kitchen area to expand the existing cricket social rooms to create the "Long Room", This occupied the vacant space between the social room and the changing rooms. These were opened by Cardinia Mayor Cr Graeme Legge at the last Village Fair held on the Reserve on Sunday 26 November 2000.

In 2005 the football club built a multi-storey scorer box and storeroom in front of the visitor change room and added a wide free-standing bullnose verandah in front of the home change room to complete the oval facing façade.

The final extension, commencing in 2008, was the Venturer/Rover den and meeting room funded by the shire and the Scout Group and named after Scout Committee Chairman Barry Smith who raised the funds over the years and supplied much of the materials as part of the long-planned extension to the existing scout garage. I had the privilege to open it in 2009 in my capacity as Victorian Scout Chief Commissioner.

## A new recreation building needed

Over several years of consideration, the Recreation Reserve Committee has determined that new extensions built to current standards are not possible in the confined space around the Igloo. Our preferred option is new building replacing the current Igloo complex in its current location, which meets AFL,

Cricket Victoria, Scout and Cardinia Shire guidelines. This will cost around \$5 m.

Many Cardinia Shire communities have had significant new community and sporting facilities built in the last decade. We believe the poorer facilities in Upper Beaconsfield must be lifted to the same standards. Small communities such as Emerald, Gembrook, Pakenham Upper, Koo-Wee-Rup, Lang Lang, Cardinia, Bunyip, and Garfield have benefited from many millions of dollars of shire capital works, as well as the growing new suburbs around Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham. Brett Owen, Beaconsfields ward councillor and current Mayor of Cardinia Shire, is fully supportive of us in pursuing this vision and we know our former councillors acknowledged Upper Beaconsfield's situation.

## Petition planned

We are preparing a petition for Upper Beaconsfield residents to sign. This will urge councillors and shire executive staff to prioritise Upper Beaconsfield's urgent need for female facilities in the forthcoming Cardinia Shire budget discussions for 2021/22 which are already underway. The petition will be available in various community and commercial locations in the township. Please sign to support the facilities our young people need.

We have developed a draft scope for the new sport and scout complex, and have been working with the shire, and our state and federal MPs to garner support and explore and secure funding.

## Other works

Between the pandemic lockdowns a contractor has completed most of the clearing of the thick broom and pittosporum undergrowth on the northeast bank above the equestrian area. The aim is to give Upper Beaconsfield a "Bushfire Place of Last Resort" – an identified building or space that offers a place of last resort during a bushfire for the local community. These are already available in Cockatoo, Gembrook and Emerald.

The walking track around the horse-riding area along Burton Road has not progressed due to



Igloo at the Village Fair in 1988

continued on page 26

continued from page 25

pandemic restrictions on working bees. Remnants from the temporary piles of gravel for shire road sealing currently on the top carpark will give us a source of material for future work. An extension to the lower riding arena is in planning. I particularly thank Justin Davey, owner

of the General Store, for facilitating our Zoom meetings and commend continuing office bearers Vice President Andrew Ewenson, Treasurer Ian Norbury and Secretary Rosz Smith for their commitment, together with other committee members. The committee continues the challenge providing

better cricket, football, and scout youth facilities, especially for girls – to bring them up to the standard we see in our surrounding communities.

**BOB TAYLOR AM, PRESIDENT**  
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## Golf presentations

Delayed due to the pandemic lockdown, the presentations to overall winners of the 2020 Twilight Season finally took place in the clubhouse.

Congratulations to Cameron Whiting who was the overall winner of the largest perpetual trophy the club owns with the best nett average. Craig Perkins had the best "off the stick" gross average and Wayne Hassall was the season's most efficient putter.

Congratulations also to Michelle Desaulniers, who was the season winner of the Betty Forster Memorial Plate to runner up Barbara Mars. The final of the Dennis Crowley Summer Cup was won by Andy Parker and Paul Cloughton. The pair convincingly beat Ivan Furyk and Pete Koski 5 holes up with 4 holes to play. The Summer Cup is a matchplay pairs event named in

honour of life member Dennis Crowley who founded the club's army of volunteer course workers. The Beacie Brigade still meet Mondays and Wednesdays and work as directed by the course superintendent.

The Beaconhills club championships are about to begin and we wish good luck to all the players. Club Captain Jenny Chandler will have her fingers crossed for a smooth run as the event spans four weeks and extends further for the matchplay qualifiers.

We were saddened to hear that two former Beaconhills members have recently passed away. Russell Smart was a former director of the club and was also for many years in charge of a regular group of golfers named the "Thirsty Thursdays". He was a driving instructor and



taught many locals to drive in his "Get Smart" car. Ray "Chooka" Crook ran the popular Halfway House on the Lakes course for many years, sausages and onions a specialty. May they both rest in peace.

We are pleased to announce that Matt Monty has been appointed as the Club's full time Head Chef. Matt has 27 years of experience in the food and hospitality industry and has worked at Amstel Golf Club, Bridge Hotel, Sandown Greyhounds and BHP Billiton to name a few. Matt specialises in Asian cuisine and pub classics. The Bistro is open Wednesday and Friday nights and Sunday afternoons from 1 pm. Bookings can be made on 5945 9210.

**MARY GRIFFIN**

(L to R) Wayne Hassall, Cameron Whiting & Andrew Perkins, winners of the 2020 Twilight Season

Andy Parker & Paul Cloughton, winners of the Dennis Crowley Summer Cup



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## Hitting the courts in 2021

We finally hit the courts in December after the cancellation of all competition and social play for most of 2020. It is great to see the club full again. 2021 is looking good, with all competitions up and running – weekend junior and senior competition, Wednesday midweek ladies and four nights of intra club social competition. If you are interested in playing please contact us via Facebook or [upperbeaconsfieldTC@gmail.com](mailto:upperbeaconsfieldTC@gmail.com)

Coaching is back with group and private lessons, and cardio tennis available. We had some great intensive programs in the January school holidays and look out for these again in the future. For information about coaching please contact our coach [karen@ultimatetennismelbourne.com](mailto:karen@ultimatetennismelbourne.com) or 0403 454 554.



We would like to thank the outgoing president, Matt Hutchinson, and committee for managing the club through the COVID shutdown. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by all members and we are in a great position thanks to their hard work.

### Upcoming events (TBC)

21 March – Junior Club Champs

21 March – UBTC working bee

If you are visiting the courts – we are still operating under COVID restrictions, so some aspects of the club are not operational and the committee and competition coordinators are still engaging in additional cleaning. The core message is, please continue to maintain social distancing (no shaking hands etc.) and please do not attend the club if you are unwell. If you attend the club for organised competition AS A PLAYER your attendance will be recorded, but if you attend for social play, as a parent supervising a junior, or any other reason please register your attendance by emailing the club email address or completing the online process here: <https://visitsafe.at/upperbeaconsfieldtennisclub> or by using the QR code at the club.

We hope to see you at the courts in 2021!

**NICK GAMBLE**

## Greetings from the Upper Beaconsfield Pony Club



As for most clubs and sports 2020 didn't quite go to plan, which resulted in the Upper Beaconsfield Pony Club holding only two rallies instead of the normal twelve.

Our last rally for 2020 was a Christmas themed mounted games event with a treasure hunt on horseback. It was lovely to meet some new junior riders with their horses who had joined the club throughout the year.

Our pony club is thrilled to get back to doing what we love. We are holding COVID safe rallies with the first being in February. We also have exciting plans for an overnight camp at Tonimbuk Equestrian Centre, which will allow our riders to make use of their world class cross country course and indoor arenas. We have managed to secure this amazing venue after our members volunteered their time at the Tonimbuk horse trials last March.

Our club has also experienced quite a few changes as we welcomed 2021, with a fresh new committee joining the pony club team. Our previous committee members felt it was time to move on after their children had grown up, and we are so thankful for all of their hard work and dedication over the years.

We welcome our new president Michelle De Bonde Westerveld and DC Lisa Sykes, along with many other new members who look forward to assisting



the club and watching it continue to grow.

As many of you are aware, our beautiful town is home to many horse riders who enjoy trails through the streets of Upper Beaconsfield and beyond. Harris Reserve, Critchley Parker Junior Reserve and even the General Store and Pine Grove Hotel are frequented by our riders. We kindly ask you to slow down if you see a rider on horseback. Speed can be dangerous for all involved.

**AMY ALLDAY**



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# St John's: Reflection on change

I have been reflecting this week on the nature of change, both big and little. The start of school represented a huge change because my youngest son, William, started school, and as a mum I am still coming to terms with it. No doubt some of you are in the same boat, so I thought I would share a few of my thoughts. He was ready, it was me who was not ready! His older sister Mia (ten years old) was so excited that first day, that by the time I came downstairs, she had William dressed in his uniform, had had breakfast, packed his bag and was waiting to head out the door! I had both kids in school, new routines, and the real loss of pretending that I still had a little kid at home. He is a 'big' boy now, and I honestly don't know how I feel about that.

This sort of change is good. It is good for him and it is good for the family, but sometimes it does not feel good. I will miss our afternoons together. I am grieving for what I have lost, and it feels hard. I know it will pass, I know it is for the best, I know he will be fine, but

it still feels hard. Our family is forever changed.

I am reminded that change is something that will always be there. Coming into the Easter season I am reminded all the more, that sometimes change is absolutely necessary. I am not sure if you are very familiar with the Easter story, but in it a mum watches her son go through a heart wrenching change. One that will ultimately change the world for the better, and I have to say, I feel for her. In the story, Jesus has been walking around preaching God's love, healing the sick, and challenging the idea that you have to be 'good' enough, or 'do' enough religious things for God to love you. Some of the leaders didn't like this so they nailed him to a cross. This was horrific, but Jesus said many times, that he was going to die, but not to worry, for he will be raised from the dead. If you get a chance to read the story in the Bible, you will see that is exactly what happened. He was raised from the dead, revealing that you can't be

'good' enough or 'do' enough to get into Heaven, we just

need to be forgiven and to ask. Jesus' death took the punishment for all the things anyone has done wrong. It's a fresh start for anyone who wants it.

Change can absolutely be difficult, it can be distressing, and often, it can be absolutely wonderful. The process of change can be heart wrenching, leave you grief stricken but also be wonderful and exciting. It does not always end well, but in this case, my son at school and the Easter story, both have wonderful conclusions. Contact St John's any time if you want to chat more. Our services are on Sundays at 9.30 am.



REV SHANNON LEE

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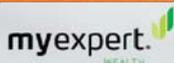
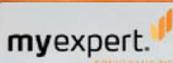
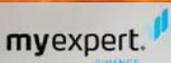
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Mon, Wed-Fri 8 am - 5 pm  
Tues 8 am - 6 pm  
Sat 9 am - 2 pm

**Dr Anshu Malhotra**  
MRCGP (UK, 2008), FRACGP,  
DFSRH, DRCOG  
GP Principal