

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE



Edition 107 - August 2023

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Landcare Celebrates Stage 2 Biodiversity Announcement



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DEADLINES & PUBLICATION DATES

We aim to publish by the 6th of the month. The deadline for submissions is the 24th of the month prior. Advertisers and community groups will be sent reminder emails. **There is no edition in January.**

Harcourt Valley Landcare has been working with the Mount Alexander Shire Council since 2020 to protect the Harcourt Valley's native plants, animals and their habitat during the planning scheme amendment.

The goal of our work advocating for the natural environment is to ensure that the proposed development of our town is done in a way that places biodiversity protection and our nature-loving lifestyle at the heart of Harcourt.

In June 2023, we were thrilled to hear that our call for a thorough, on-ground survey of our valley's native plants, animals and their habitat has been heard and that Stage 2 of a biodiversity audit will take place. This second stage follows the Stage 1 report commissioned by the State Government's Regional Planning Hub, which recommended that further work is needed to identify areas in the town with higher biodiversity so that development can occur away from these areas.

Continued page 2 ...

Landcare Celebrates Stage 2 Biodiversity Announcement

... Continued from page 1.

The scope, budget and timeline for Stage 2 is not yet finalised, however our expectation is that it will entail on-ground surveying, in which ecologists visit key areas to identify and monitor the presence of native species. (Stage 1 of the biodiversity audit was a “desktop survey” in which the consultant reviewed literature that was already available, including previous reports and surveys, which were limited. Site visits also occurred to both public and private land.)

The announcement that Stage 2 of the audit will go ahead is fantastic news for the native animals and plants of our valley including our much-loved Brush-tailed Phascogale. In 2021 Dr Jess Lawton found that Mount Alexander Shire is a stronghold for these phascogales, listed as vulnerable both federally and in Victoria. These small animals have disappeared from many of the areas they were once found, which means that our area is critical to their survival. It's just one of the reasons that Harcourt Valley Landcare is advocating for the protection of wildlife corridors that allow safe passage for our precious native species from Leanganook to the Walmer Forest.

This is a message that the strategic planning team at Council has heard from Harcourt Valley Landcare since they first sought community feedback for Plan Harcourt in 2019. We made a submission in 2021 outlining concerns that the amendment did not meet community expectations from an environmental perspective. In 2022 we attended the Victorian Planning Panel hearing, where we called for a biodiversity audit to be completed before further planning continues. Our expert witness and ecologist Paul Foreman argued that the Plan Harcourt amendment did not provide adequate protection for biodiversity and that strategic protection of biodiversity needed to be embedded in the plan at the foundational stages.

Harcourt Valley Landcare has identified the following landscape features for protection: key waterways Barkers Creek, Picnic Gully Creek and their tributaries, which will provide critical habitat corridors and refuge for animals moving through the landscape in a warming climate; large, old trees that provide critical habitat for hollow-nesting species such as the Phascogale; roadside vegetation on Elys Lane, Douglas Lane, Leafy Lane, Craigie St and Eagles Rd.

Members of our group enjoyed chatting to Harcourt residents about the biodiversity audit and which local species they had spotted recently, at Gather Harcourt in July. Apart from our competition to identify 12 of our valley's local species from our beautiful photos (congratulations to Ken Holden and Asha Bannon for perfect scores!) we also began collecting signatures on our petition to Mount Alexander Shire Council.

The petition calls for the protection of biodiversity in the Harcourt Valley through the planning scheme amendment and asks Mount Alexander Shire Council to protect wildlife corridors that allow safe passage for our precious native species from Leanganook (Mount Alexander) to the Walmer Forest.

What you can do to fight for Harcourt's natural environment:

- Watch this space for how to add your name to the petition, in future *Core* updates and on Hardcore Harcourt Facebook page.
- Reach out to Harcourt Valley Landcare or the Council and let us know if you would be happy to allow ecologists access to your property, to identify potential wildlife corridors and significant vegetation especially if you have remnant native trees or have seen native animals. Contact info@harcourtvalleylandcare.org or the strategic planning team at Mount Alexander Shire Council on (03) 5471 1700 or via email strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au

Shire Update on Harcourt Town Centre Vision and Biodiversity Assessment Work

Council officers have recently completed the Harcourt Town Centre Action Plan following consultation with the Harcourt community earlier this year. This is to be presented to Council to consider for adoption towards the end of 2023.

The Action Plan lists ten key projects that celebrate Harcourt's beautiful features and conceives a town that is liveable and connected. To help inform the actions relating to transport, a strategy funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) has also been prepared to improve the safety and amenity of all road users in Harcourt with a focus on encouraging walking and cycling.

To learn more about the Harcourt Town Centre Action Plan visit Shape Mount Alexander.

Update on Biodiversity assessment work as part of Plan Harcourt

To progress the Plan Harcourt Planning Scheme Amendment, and ensure it is managing to protect biodiversity considerations in Harcourt, Council has completed a stage 1 biodiversity assessment.

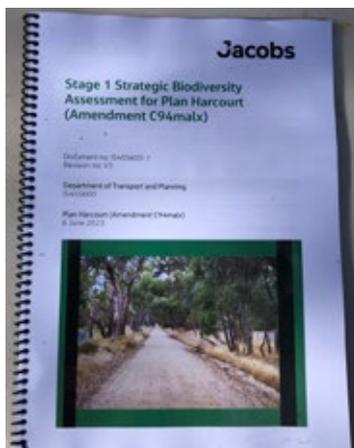
The stage 1 assessment found that while the Plan Harcourt Amendment attempts to protect higher value biodiversity in certain ways, such as rezoning areas for development with limited biodiversity values, a second stage assessment is required in order to confirm higher biodiversity areas.

These findings reinforce the independent Planning Panel's key recommendation that the Plan Harcourt Amendment should not proceed until further work is completed to strategically plan for biodiversity protections.

Council has been working with the Department of Transport and Planning's Regional Planning Partnerships team for funding support to deliver this work, and has been successful in getting dollar for dollar matched funding from the Department.

Council's Strategic Planning team is currently working with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to scope out the works for the stage 2 biodiversity assessment. Once this advice is received, Council officers will start the procurement process to appoint a suitably qualified consultant to undertake this work.

For further updates and to view a copy of the stage 1 biodiversity assessment visit Plan Harcourt.



The *Core* online has live links to the website or to open your email software. QR codes can be scanned using your phone.

HPA Progress Report

Well, here we are in the middle of winter with the prospect of a long hard summer coming up, however, the Harcourt Progress Association has been keeping itself busy as usual producing *The Core*, writing submissions for the community house, and being involved in the Gather Harcourt Market last Sunday. I think everyone who attended the market would agree that it was a wonderful afternoon that even the drizzle did not affect.

As always, a number of stalwart volunteers turned out to help. On Saturday Paul Mizzi, Phillip Hay, Ruth Hay, Phil Musat, John Baldock, Alison Curtis, and Dean Curtis constructed the stage and Paul Mizzi, Troyene Evans and Wayne Borg strung the catenary and did the lights. On Sunday all those volunteers were there again and joined by David Dean, Bronnie Dean, Alex Freeman, Freddy Acfield, Geoff Freeman, Di Lederman, Sha Cordingley and, of course, Naomi Hay. If I've forgotten anyone it is because they were moving so fast on the day. All lights, tents, yurts and tables and chairs were in place by the opening time of 1 pm when the people of Harcourt started to arrive ... and enjoy themselves.

A special thanks goes to Liesl Malan, Di Lederman and Ruth Hay who were the 'brains' behind the market and to John Baldock who, at the end of every event, is the last man standing, collecting the chairs and tables to take back to their resting place.

I believe the next Gather will be in December, so look out for notices on the Facebook pages and in *The Core*. We hope to see you there.

Harcourt Progress Association will be holding its AGM in the near future, watch out for the notices and please consider whether you would like to be involved, either as a committee member or a member.

Until next month, keep safe and warm.

Sha Cordingley

President, Harcourt Progress Association



Volunteer Position Advertising Coordinator – Harcourt News – The Core

The Core is seeking an active volunteer to become a vital part of its editorial team. By contributing to this volunteer run newspaper you will be ensuring its sustainability and supporting local Harcourt community and businesses. This role is for someone who can dedicate around one hour a week as Advertising Coordinator.

This position would suit someone with an interest in writing and wanting to develop their skills in news media, business and advertising.

Key responsibilities:

- ▶ Generate new advertising sales
- ▶ Maintain relationships with existing advertisers
- ▶ Manage accounts administration
- ▶ Work collaboratively with the editorial team
- ▶ Write articles to feature advertisers' businesses

You will have:

- ▶ Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- ▶ Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook
- ▶ Good organisation and time management skills
- ▶ Experience in administration and accounts

Training and mentoring will be given to the successful applicant.

To apply, send your resume to news@harcourt.vic.au outlining relevant skills and experience and a short letter explaining why this role interests you.

mainFM is an award winning radio station based in Castlemaine, broadcasting music, community news, talks and specialist programs and events throughout a large area of Central Victoria, serving our community.

With over 100 local volunteer presenters with a passion for radio, our programs are varied and diverse with over 70 shows across the program grid, transmitting 24 hours a day and streaming online via mainfm.net

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Expression of interest Harcourt Valley Community House

We are taking expressions of interest from skilled and qualified people who wish to be involved in providing courses at the community house.

Contact Paul Mizzi: paul.mizzi@harcourtprogress.vic.au



Chatting with Harcourt CWA

A Lunch, A Birthday and Christmas

Hello Everyone,

This month saw another fifth Thursday lunch, and Run Rabbit Run accommodated a group of us perfectly. What a bright and cheery atmosphere, and what treasured delights of a bygone era can be seen upstairs. We can certainly say that the combination makes for a very pleasant hour or two, and the food was delicious.



The members settle in at Run Rabbit Run.

Our Association Day fundraiser is coming up on August 17 to which you are all invited. This is going to be a wonderful afternoon as we listen to Lisa Candy from The Tea Emporium in Castlemaine discuss the wonders of the many teas that fill her beautiful shop. Our very own Joy Robertson has assembled a display of 100 teapots from her collection for your pleasure. Afterwards, sit and talk with friends as you enjoy a delightful afternoon tea. Come and join us at the Harcourt Leisure Centre at 1.30 pm – admission is \$10, which includes a delicious afternoon tea.

It would seem that 1943 was a very good year for producing exceptional CWA members as this month we celebrated another very special birthday. Our amazing muffin and cake maker, Marlene Thompson, enjoyed her 80th birthday afternoon tea and so did we.



We all celebrate Marlene's birthday

We sometimes have a guest speaker come and join in our meetings, and this month we had the pleasure of listening to Stacey Mannix from McKenzie Davy Pharmacy. Stacey told us about the importance of caring for our skin (lots of moisturising, ladies), managing our medications, and answered the many questions that pop up when you have someone with you who has all the answers. Thank you, Stacey, and it was our pleasure to have you join us for our special afternoon tea.

Now we all know how cold it has been so what better time to celebrate Christmas than in July. Thanks to our Craft Leader, Lynette Carter, who came up with the idea, and her two wonderful helpers, Helen Hand and Marlene Thompson,



Christmas in July.

we arrived at the Leisure Centre on our normal Craft Day to find a magnificently decorated table on which was placed an assortment of meats and salads and, yes, even a plum pudding. Many thanks to these three wonderful Harcourt CWA members for giving us a little bit of Christmas cheer in winter.

As you know, we hold our normal monthly meeting on the first Thursday of the month at 1.30 pm at the Harcourt Leisure Centre in Bingham Road. We would love to see you anytime if you would like to find out a little more of what the CWA is all about.

Until next month...

Lyn Rule, Publicity Officer



Harcourt Branch

ASSOCIATION DAY

Thursday 17 August at 1.30 pm. Harcourt Leisure Centre. Everyone Welcome.

Tea for Two

**Guest Speaker – Lisa Candy from Castlemaine Tea Dispensary
plus a magnificent display of 100 teapots.**

**Entertainment – Trading Table – Raffle – Door Prize – Afternoon Tea
\$10 Entry at the door.**

RSVP by 10 August to Helen Hand (0448 510 996) or email to: harcourtowa@gmail.com



WALKING TOGETHER Towards Makarrata

Makarrata is 'coming together after a struggle, facing the facts of wrongs and living again in peace.'

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day – 'Little Voices, Loud Futures'

My child is home from school today. Their dad has tasked them with identifying and drawing four birds and two insects. I see a process of connecting to and acknowledging Country. My son comfortably walks around the garden in Djaara Country spotting indigenous honeyeaters. In this family of 'twitchers' our books tell him one is a 'New Holland Honeyeater'. I pause to reflect on our histories and how we can better walk together on these un-ceded lands.

When I immigrated to this continent as a child, there was no focus on 'early' explorers predating Captain Cook. The Dutch had found places more favourable to them for colonising. While 'New Holland' was still in use for birds, this continent was now commonly known as Australia. As I picked up English, I regularly sang that these lands with 'wealth for toil' were 'young' and 'free'. In the classroom the scant depictions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were simplistic caricatures. 65,000+ years of the world's longest living, continuous cultures; Frontier Wars and ongoing realities of colonisation weren't mentioned. I was often targeted over my birth country's (German) history at school. During the nationalistic spectacle of the late 80s on this continent, as I immersed myself in learning about my heritage, I also began to uncover the ongoing colonialist history of Australia.

The first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, celebrated annually on August 4, was

in 1988, set against the backdrop of protests led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their supporters during the bicentenary. The date had historically been chosen to communally celebrate the unknown 'birthdays' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their communities when very young – the Stolen Generations.

Between 1910 and the 1970s, as many as 1 in 3 First Nations children were forcefully removed from their families by governments through white assimilation policies. Children of mixed descent were taken by Aboriginal 'protection' officers and made wards of the state in an attempt to breed out a 'dying race'; which was a common perception then. They were displaced from Family, Community, Culture and Country. Far reaching and intergenerational impacts of these genocidal policies continue.

In 1997, the Bringing Them Home Report was tabled. A year later National Sorry Day was first held on May 26. During the huge reconciliation walks of 2000, Australians called for a national apology which, in 2008, the Australian Government finally gave, acknowledging the grief and trauma caused by past policies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are currently 10.6 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be removed from their families. Our institutions often fail them. Much is needed to close the gap in education and life outcomes. First Peoples know the needs of their communities. Ample

evidence shows their initiatives work when adequately supported. There are many good resources on hand to incorporate First Nations content, history and pedagogies into our institutions.

Locally, Koori Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) and Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation are examples of amazing First Nations educators. Truth Telling is a necessary path to healing and growing our national identity. It starts by listening to First People. Ally-ship involves moving beyond guilt and fear – to be brave and make change.

I gratefully learn from, and celebrate, First Nations people – their rich and resilient culture. I honour the great love they pour into raising their children and bringing community together. I acknowledge Elders past and present, mentors, educators and the young proud people creating strong, resilient futures.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day on August 4 will be celebrated in Castlemaine with many fun activities for littlies from 10.00 am – 2.00 pm at The Goods Shed. A Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony starts at 10.30 am. For more information ring Aunty Kerri Douglas on 0477 769 459.

For further information about this national day of celebration and related content visit www.snaicc.org.au

Find out about The Stolen Generations and healing at healingfoundation.org.au

A beautiful film about Nalderun: youtu.be/aWNBTPpz1f0

Floria Maschek is an ally and member of Friends of Nalderun (FoN). FoN members are guided by Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation and are diverse individuals and representatives of many local community networks, supporting Nalderun's visions and work. Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation supports the Aboriginal Community and is led by Aboriginal people while providing many learning and cultural opportunities to the broader community. Nalderun is a Dja Dja Wurrung word meaning 'all together'.

More information can be found at www.nalderun.net.au

You Can Help ...

If you know someone who would like to get a copy of *The Core*, either in print or online, but is having difficulty accessing it, let us know. We can make sure they get their preferred version – we can have it put in their letterbox, or we can send a copy by email.

Let us know by sending the person's details to: news@harcourt.vic.au

nbn in town to talk about upgrades

Wednesday 16 August 2023: 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

nbn Fixed Wireless Upgrade and Scams Awareness Information Session

**Harcourt Railway Station,
23 Station St, Harcourt VIC 3453**

Among upgrades happening include:

- Enhancing the speed of our Fixed Wireless network, enabling faster and more consistent speeds at the busiest times and introducing two new wholesale higher speed plans;
- Providing access to the nbn Fixed Wireless network for the first time to thousands of premises;
- Enabling access to uncapped data usage with nbn® Sky Muster® Plus Premium, the latest step in the evolution of the nbn satellite network.

Work has started on the upgrades to the nbn Fixed Wireless network in the Mount Alexander region, which will benefit many local households and businesses by providing access to faster speeds and extending the coverage of the nbn Fixed Wireless network.

Once complete, the upgrade program aims to expand the reach of the existing Fixed Wireless footprint by up to 50%, as well as enabling many of our existing fixed wireless users to achieve faster and more consistent speeds during busy periods (like the evening).

Head of nbn local Victoria, Emily Peel said, ‘The local presentations will be a good opportunity for residents and businesses to have their questions answered about how to make the most of the nbn network.’



Harcourt Lions Club

The Harcourt Lions Club was busy at the weekend cooking up a storm with their ‘Sausages on the BBQ’ at Gather Harcourt on Sunday afternoon, while watching the happy crowds lining up for a ride on one of the two camels. It appears the crowds and the stallholders had a great time.

The Club has supported those who joined in with Dry July, giving a donation towards their fundraising efforts. Well done on making it through the long month.

The next Club Gathering will be held at VMR on the third Thursday – August 17 – at 6.30pm for a shared dinner followed by a general discussion and a planning time at approximately 7.30pm.

Club Gathering at the Victorian Miniature Railway (VMR) on the third Thursday of each month at 6.30 pm for dinner (something to share) followed by general planning and discussion at 7.30 pm.

AUG	27	Pruning Fruit Trees 9.30 am-12.30pm Continuous Hot Compost System 1.30pm-4.30pm
SEPT	24	Organic Pest & Disease Control 9.30am-12.30pm Grafting Fruit Trees 1.30pm-4.30pm
OCT	29	Biochar Making & Correcting Compost 10am-12.30pm Compost Tea & Worm Farms 1.30pm-4pm

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Landcare Week 2023 August 7-13

Be inspired, be empowered, be a landcarer.

Harcourt Home of the Best – Growers, Makers, Artists

Harcourt’s new tourism pamphlet has been developed by Diana Corke from the Heritage Centre in collaboration with Liesl Malan, creative artist and designer and proprietor of Goodness Flour.

This is the second iteration of the tourist map, and is completely updated with new colours and layout. George Milford said, ‘We at the Heritage Centre are deeply indebted to Liesl, who has given freely of her time and talent. The pamphlet is attractive, informative and highlights the best that Harcourt has to offer. It is available here and at various venues in the town and at the Information Centre in Castlemaine.’

Harcourt’s Wildflowers



The Harcourt Heritage Centre now has a delightful showcase of local wildflowers, including herbs. The photos of these were captured by Heritage member Wendy Barron. She has a very keen eye and has observed these plants in Harcourt’s bushland, particularly in the Flora Reserve, for many years.

The Harcourt Flora Reserve is located behind the Leisure Centre. This is an important stretch of bushland which the Harcourt Valley Landcare group cares for and which is under the stewardship of Harcourt Valley Primary School. Nesting



boxes have been placed in the reserve by the Landcare group as part of a project with the school. When you visit, help preserve this area by walking into the reserve only, there are no specific tracks for bike riding or cars.

The display of Wildflower photos is among a number of new bright and attractive displays in the Heritage Centre which have been created by Diane Dooley who has a flair for design.

So come along on a Wednesday between 9 am and 3 pm, or make an appointment by phoning: 0400 916 527.

New Broadband Connection

Bernie Schultz, IT ‘expert’ at the Heritage Centre and display artist for *The Core*, is mightily pleased about the availability of broadband at the centre.

He said, ‘The connection to broadband at the ANA Hall should have been done long ago. It means that we now have unlimited access to internet research. For the last year or so volunteers have been



juggling with using phones as hotspots or using a 4G router with very limited bandwidth per month. The new Windows installations and their periodic updates made short work of gobbling up what little internet access the Centre had.

‘Though the broadband access is much more expensive (hint: would any local business like to provide some sponsorship?), it will prove invaluable as it will be available as a public access point during Applefest and for Gather Harcourt in the future. And, of course, it makes research at the ANA Hall a whole lot easier, and Windows can do its updates, too.’

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Councillor Comment



Hi all,

Congratulations to all involved with Gather Harcourt at James Park on the weekend. The event was really well attended, and it was great to see everyone having a good time.

We have had a few nice days, so I am sure many of you will be enjoying the sun.

At its July meeting, Council voted on a motion put by Councillor Gardiner that seeks to ban kangaroo harvesting in our shire. The motion was passed on the casting vote of Councillor Driscoll who was chairing the meeting. I had thought this would go the other way, but that is democracy at work.

The present arrangements by which kangaroos are harvested is a state government-controlled matter, so it will be interesting to see their take on it.

On Friday evening, I attended a meeting of local farmers. It was interesting to hear from them, and the general consensus was that the build-up of kangaroos is having a substantial impact on local farms. Farming is an important part of our community. Have you ever thought about how the people in the city would survive without our farmers (food producers)? That's food for thought!!

On a brighter note, the Matildas have just had a convincing win over Canada. That was great to watch. That, following Carlton's win on the weekend just about brought tears to my eyes.

At the Council briefing session tomorrow, we will be discussing planning matters that will come before our next meeting of Council.

There is always something interesting going on. Remember you can see our monthly council meetings on YouTube.

Best regards to all, Tony

AG Cordy
0439 742 434

Victorian Orienteering Championships at Mount Alexander



The Victorian Orienteering Championships will be held at Mt Alexander over the weekend of 2nd-3rd September 2023 based at the Leanganook picnic area, where competitors will assemble prior to starting their courses and regroup after finishing their courses to look at results, discuss courses and catch up with old and new friends.

Bush orienteering is more than just a trail run; it involves moving off the trails into the bush. There is no marked route on the ground; the aim is to reach pre-determined control points using a map for navigation. The key is concentration and the ability to make quick decisions while moving as fast as you can. It's not just for runners, but walkers as well, with courses available for everyone regardless of fitness or age. The age groupings and classes for the weekend range from 10-year-olds to 80-year-olds.

More information regarding orienteering events can be found on the Orienteering Victoria website. www.vicorienteering.asn.au/go-orienteering/bush-orienteering

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Harcourt CFA

WWW – Winter Warnings Wrap up

As we enter the last month of winter, I thought it would be timely to revisit the CFA's Winter Warnings as fire statistics around the state still show that most fires that occur in the home are avoidable. On average, there are 3,000 house fires in Victoria each year, and most could have been prevented by taking simple precautions.

Kitchen

The most common place in the home where fires start is the kitchen. Many kitchen fires are caused by cooking that has been left unattended. Others are caused by electrical faults and flammable items like paper towels and curtains being too close to sources of heat like the stove or toaster.

If the cooking area is not kept clean, a fire that starts on the stove can very quickly spread to built-up grease and fat around the stove and range hood with the fire travelling up into the roof and to the rest of the house.

Sleeping Areas

Many fires that result in fatalities start in bedrooms or lounge areas. This is often due to improper use of electrical appliances or home heating.

Electrical items in the home can include the power supply, fixed or portable appliances, power boards and extension leads.

If you use electric blankets, turn them on 30 minutes before getting into bed and then turn them **OFF** as you get into bed. Keep electric blankets flat with controls at the side of the bed. Regularly check for broken or worn wiring. Only purchase heat bags with instructions – do not use heat bags as bed warmers as they can overheat and start a fire.

Heating

During the colder months we see an increase in the use of heating appliances. If you bring a portable heater into a bedroom, be sure that it is well away from things that can burn, like clothing, bedding and curtains, and always turn it off when you get into bed or leave the house. Never charge electronic devices on the bed.

If you are drying clothes in front of a heater of any kind, always keep them at least one metre from the heater.

Power Boards

Sometimes there are not enough power outlets for all our devices. Power boards are used as a common solution. It is important to remember that power boards are only meant to be temporary, and they should not be a permanent fixture in your home.

Power boards can only take a limited number of devices, so only plug in one device per outlet. Never plug double adaptors or piggy back extra power boards into a power board, and don't plug high powered appliances like heaters into a power board or extension lead. Doing so can cause the power board or extension lead to heat up and start a fire.

Check! Check! Check!

- ✓ **Check** chimneys, flues and fire boxes for cracks, rust and debris.
- ✓ **Check** electric blankets for kinks in wiring.
- ✓ **Check** and clean the lint filter in your dryer.
- ✓ **Check** appliances for visibly frayed or damaged wiring.
- ✓ **Check** your Home Fire Safety Plan & Home Fire Escape Plan.

And check those smoke detectors that could save your life.

Brigade Activity

Brigade members have been maintaining their skills by using the Virtual Fire Training equipment and the domestic training prop that was located at the Castlemaine Fire station.

There were two turnouts in July to support the Castlemaine fire brigade.

The first was to a hot water service that was 'melting' and the second was to an alarm at Arcare Retirement Home, which was the result of burnt toast.

Fortunately, we were not required at either job and were duly cancelled by the Castlemaine brigade.

Another turnout was, yet again, to the intersection of the Calder Freeway and Fogartys Gap Road. Again it appears that a vehicle crossing/entering the freeway has failed to give way to a vehicle on the freeway.

Please take the utmost care on our local roads and always look and check and look again for any oncoming traffic.

Spring will soon be here and hopefully with some warmer weather, but then summer will be just around the corner, and looking at what is happening now in the northern hemisphere with the predicted El Niño weather patterns, our summer is looking like it will be hot and dry as expected. Start thinking about your spring preparation plan now!

Stay warm and safe

Tyrone Rice

Brigade Community Safety Coordinator

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Click here for the CFA website
cfa.vic.gov.au

Am I at risk?



Harcourt Uniting Church

In a recent article I mentioned that there were two Methodist churches (Harcourt and Harcourt North) prior to the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977. We continued to hold services at both churches on alternate Sundays until the eventual combining of

the two congregations to Harcourt.

This poem was composed by the late Mrs Glad Iskov and recited by her at the Golden Anniversary of the Harcourt North Church on Sunday 22 November 1981. Glad had a wonderful way with words along with her great sense of humour. At the eventual combining of

the two churches, Glad, along with the other members from Harcourt North, joined us at Harcourt Uniting Church. Alma Chaplin was one of those and is still a member of our Harcourt Uniting Church. Alma rarely misses the Sunday Service.

Footnotes:

I used to be asked to play the old pedal organ at Harcourt North sometimes and it was hard work pedalling. When that organ was sold Alma Chaplin's brother Silas bought it and when repairing it he found that the bellows had been held open with a couple of hymn books which is why I had to pedal harder to keep the air in the bellows!

The Harcourt North Church building is still on the corner of Reservoir and McIvor Roads. The Plymouth Brethren Hall was situated across the back of the Church and was removed several years ago. It was pulled down and the materials used by a property owner in Eagles Road to build part of their home.

Jan Jenkin

For many years we didn't have a Church at Harcourt North. And so 'twas at the local school that the preachers all held forth. We had no pulpit, no hymn board and no baptismal font. But we had a preacher and some books, that's really all you want. Our babies were baptised at school with a minimum of fuss. But we really meant those vows we made, they meant a lot to us. One Teacher made it difficult, didn't want us there at all. And so we moved our gear away and worshipped in the hall. Then someone got a bright idea to form a Ladies Guild. To raise the funds we'd need, to buy materials to build. We cooked for caterings and stalls, made aprons by the mile. And every Spring we'd hold a Fair, 'twas service with a smile. It took five years to raise enough, and then the plans were set Our men lined up and built this Church, 'twas opened free of debt. The Church just wasn't big enough for Sunday School as well And so we worked some more, and bought the Plymouth Brethren Hall. The Church was filled on Sundays, when whole families came along We even had a children's choir to entertain with song. The Church has furnishings and books donated through the years To keep alive the memory of district pioneers. But now we have too many seats, well maybe that's not true. If all who could, just came along, we'd need to form a queue.



Glad Iskov reading her poem at the Golden Anniversary of the Harcourt North Methodist Church on Sunday 22 November 1981



People gathered outside the church after the Golden Anniversary Service.



Sue Quirk and Bill Allen were married at the Harcourt North Methodist Church on January 22, 1966.

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The exposed granite next to the platforms gives an idea of the challenges faced preparing the site for construction. Many truckloads of granite were removed after numerous explosions set by an explosives expert.



The vast embankments near the station are now covered in mulch and planting has begun.



The array of tracks and points leading from the engine storage shed is a picture of precision. The bank above has been planted in *Lomandra longifolia*.

The volunteers at the Victorian Miniature Railway are pleased to be getting into the nitty gritty of railway construction and landscaping. VMR President, Andrew Mierisch told *The Core*, 'We've finished fighting mud, slush and slush by completing the installation of drainage lines and retaining walls. There's no more granite to be blasted, which is a huge relief. Members are laying tracks and installing points on the lines and we can now concentrate on beautification of the site especially around the station. We have also cleared and levelled a large site where we envisage we can offer the community space for displays eg car shows or markets.'

The landscaping and planting at the site is being led by Harcourt resident, Sarah Qualtrough, a trained horticulturist. Sarah said, 'The plan is for an all Australian native garden with a focus on indigenous (local) plants where possible. The aim is that the gardens near the station will be showpieces with a combination of beautiful

native plants. Three embankments near the station have been mass planted. We went back to basics to prepare the soil. The weeds were sprayed and we used very large pieces of cardboard as weed mat, which was followed by layers of deep mulch in preparation for planting. Tonnes of mulch was delivered and spread by the volunteers.'

'Examples of some of the plants are *Lomandra longifolia*, *Eremophila* as a ground cover, and *Banksia blechnifolia*, which is known as red velvet. The rest of the garden will be laid out in environmental zones, with screening plantings. The Yellow Box shade trees are a special feature of the site and there are plans to plant more. This is such an exciting project; I'm so pleased to be involved.'

Away from VMR, Sarah's passion is teaching about food growing. She has been a Stephanie Alexander garden teacher and her business Edible Green can be found on Facebook.

No doubt, we will be hearing more from VMR very soon as their progress speeds up, with the end to the main works in sight.



Fireside Chat Harcourt Heritage Centre Sunday 20th August 1.30 pm

The Fascinating History of Orchard Spraying

The Harcourt Heritage Centre collection includes orchard spray pumps and many photographs depicting spraying of fruit trees from 1900 onwards. The equipment, and its use, has developed from the primitive to the sophisticated.

Perhaps you can help identify some of the equipment in the photos.

**Warm room. Blazing fire.
All welcome.**

Please bring a plate of afternoon tea.

Harcourt Carpet Bowls LEGACY TOURNAMENT

Wednesday 9th August 2023

Harcourt District Leisure Centre

Commencing 7.30, but arrive 7.15 to enter your name.

Cost: \$5.00 to play three games.

Supper will be served to finish the evening.

Prizes for winners – Raffle with great prizes.

ALL WELCOME no previous experience needed.

All money raised will go to Castlemaine Legacy Group.

COME ALONG FOR A FUN EVENING.

The Harcourt Carpet Bowls Association is holding the Country Carpet Bowls Championships again this year on **Saturday the 23rd September 2023 at 12 noon** with competitors coming from around the State.

The event will be open for spectators to watch the Round Robin games being played.



Music



Craft



Kids



Dance



Crowds



Fire



& Dogs



Gather Harcourt

Gather Harcourt: Busy – Enjoyable – Successful!

Many thanks to Ruth Hay who has proved to be a consummate organiser, and thank you to the team of hardworking volunteers who made Gather Harcourt a success. The atmosphere on the day was remarked upon by a number of people; dare we say it was a feel-good affair? The last Sunday in July would seem a risky time to hold an outdoor event, but the light drizzle which fell late in the afternoon didn't deter the crowd at all.

Ruth said, 'I feel the day was a

success, there was a constant crowd of people, but there seemed to be plenty of space for everyone. The variety and quality of the food and drink was very pleasing, and I believe that the majority of the stall holders had a good day. The music was fantastic, and people said what a wonderful idea the camel rides were. The camel driver said he had never experienced such a polite and good-natured crowd, and he attends a lot of events! The camels were so popular that towards the end of the day he could not continue with offering

rides as the camels were too tired. The children loved the lantern making, and although it rained at the time of the lantern parade, there was an impromptu parade anyway. We all thought having the fire drums at the close of the day was a nice touch. The one thing we weren't expecting was the mud! We re-located some stalls to avoid it as best we could.'

'Thank you to the team of volunteers who have supported Gather Harcourt, we couldn't have done it without you. Stay tuned for the next Gather event which is scheduled for later in the year.'



Memorial Service of Reflections and Memories

Dhelkaya Health is pleased to offer its annual Memorial Service of Reflections and Memories as an online service once again.

The service, which began in 2019, provides an avenue through which loved ones, staff and the wider community can remember and give thanks for the lives of patients, residents and clients of Dhelkaya Health who died between 1 December 2021 and 30 November 2022.

Kynan Sutherland, the pastoral care coordinator at Dhelkaya Health, has conducted the service this year.

Mr Sutherland said: 'Continuing COVID-19 restrictions in health care settings requires those working in healthcare to continue to be flexible, responsive and creative. Although watching the service is nowhere near the same as gathering in person, like the previous year, so many more people are able to participate in our online offering than would have been able to attend in person.'

'The feedback from family and friends, many of whom live in Melbourne and interstate, is that they really value the opportunity to honour

their loved ones in this way.

'Even though most COVID-19 related restrictions have ended, COVID-19 has not, and many people are still hesitant to gather in large groups. Add in the rising cost of travel, and it's easy to see why providing this remembrance service as an online service makes sense.

'It's our hope that watching the service offers people comfort, recognition and a time to be still and remember in the midst of a world that continues on, regardless of what they may be experiencing.'

This year's service was filmed in the beautiful autumnal setting of the Garden Room at Buda Historic Home.

The Remembrance Service of Reflections and Memories is available to watch on Castlemaine Health's website at www.castlemainehealth.org.au and



Maldon Hospital's website at www.maldhosp.vic.gov.au. It can be accessed via any PC, phone or tablet device with an internet connection.

For further information or a copy of the memorial service booklet (hardcopy or electronic), please contact Kynan Sutherland, Pastoral Care Coordinator, on 54713542 or email ksutherland@castlemainehealth.org.au

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Linda Newton



Harcourt male blue wren.



Harcourt Valley Primary School

Spring – Concert Season

Have you noticed that the birds seem to be more vocal lately? Perhaps they are responding to the longer days and slightly warmer weather. At HVPS, staff have reported that they have overheard children singing in the playground. What is stirring their singing? Spring coming?

Recently I spent some after-school time with my young friends who attend HVPS, they were singing too. Their reason, preparing for the school concert which, it seems, will be for them the highlight of the term. These two delightful young students gave me a small preview of some of the songs they will be singing. I was impressed.

The concert will be at the Harcourt Leisure Centre on Monday 11 September, 7.00pm and is open to all members of the community. Put the date in your diary and come along. Below is the information Katrina Hood, their music teacher, provided for the school newsletter.

‘This term in Music we are preparing for a whole school concert. Students will learn about teamwork and supporting each other, taking risks and creating a safe environment. They will learn about rehearsal strategies for songs and dance routines, and be introduced to dance elements as they learn the choreography. The concert this year is called **THE BIG CONCERT** with song titles and lyrics fitting in with the theme. Some of the songs you will be dazzled by are: **THE BIG BANG THEORY**, **SUPERCALISFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS** and **LARGER THAN LIFE**. I am in the process of trying to organise a band for the concert so the students can experience the extra thrill of live music and see how music is a part of our community.’

When not singing, students have continued with their school subjects. Principal Andrew Blake reported that the school has benefited from the continuing input that two of its staff, Mrs Hargraves and Mrs Stearne, have received from attending training sessions with the Department’s Primary Schools Maths Specialist Training Initiative. This is a state-wide teacher training scheme whereby, over a period of two years, both on-line and face-to-face, teachers attend monthly in-services with specialists in primary maths. For readers’ interest I took a photo of a maths board in the central area of the school, which outlines the maths concepts students are working on.

Students have also benefited from having parent volunteers coming into hear children read.

The Core does its bit to encourage literacy skills through *The Core* annual literacy awards for grade 6 student writing. Recently, Robyn Miller and I met with Andrew to finalise arrangements for this year’s literacy awards, which were instituted for the first time last year.

Four finalists will be chosen by their teacher, then *The Core* will be involved in selecting the two winners. One student will be awarded the main prize, a book voucher from Stonemans Bookshop and the other will be given an Encouragement Award, also a book voucher. These awards will be presented at the school’s final assembly in December. We, at *The Core*, are hopeful that we might also receive writing contributions from students in other classes.

For the Term 2 Positive Behaviour Goals, students are obtaining ‘apples’ for ‘being responsible as active listeners’ and keeping the schoolyard tidy by putting rubbish in the bin. The program was outlined in this year’s March edition of *The Core*, and is achieving good results.

Academically, NAPLAN results for grades 3 and 5 were recently



sent home. Parent/teacher interviews have taken place.

School photos were taken in the last week of July.

Grade 5/6 students have been involved in a five-session lesson program with Bronwyn from CHIRP on preparing for puberty.

Grades 3/4 are looking forward to their school camp at Anglesea on 16 and 17 August.

A dedicated group of parents and community volunteers is baking apple pies at the school on a Friday morning for several hours from 9.30 am. This is part of a Pie and Slice fundraiser organised by the school council for this term. Community volunteers are most welcome to join this group to assist with the pie baking.

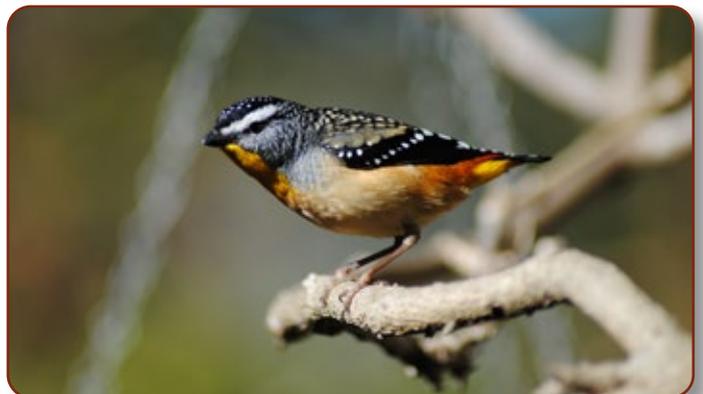
Lois Denham



Our crossword wiz TMcW also takes very good photos. He sent these two photos along with this month’s crossword.

Above: A thieving magpie ‘caught’ pinching nest building material from a hanging basket.

Below: one of a pair of spotted pardalotes which are totally destroying another hanging basket while they build an ‘underground’ nest.





Harcourt Heritage Centre

Excelsior – WD Grant

The word ‘excelsior’ generally denotes high or superior quality. Excelsior was much in use in the early 20th century as a trademark. The Excelsior quarry at Faraday was opened in 1919. It was located in McQuillans Road (then more generally known as Genders Lane).

The site, at the foot of the south-west flank of Mount Alexander, has several advantages. First, the granite was accessed without the need to remove overburden, and second was the ease of access for transport.

Among the treasures of the CH James Collection at the Harcourt Heritage Centre is a set of 21 black and white photographs of the Excelsior Quarry dating from 1948. Among them is a photograph of a group of workers at the granite face, another is of the manager, WD Grant, standing at a crane in the quarry. Other photos are of workers at their tasks such as inspecting some granite, three men drilling a hole using a rock drill powered by compressed air (the air hose is coiled in the background), preparing for blasting and dressing the granite blocks. There are pictures of a crane moving blocks of stone, views of the dump pile, a central view of the quarry with three derrick cranes and the granite face, the mobile crane and a photo of the bus used to transport the workers to and from the quarry each day (the vehicle has Victorian number plate KW 241).

There was not much safety gear in use. One photo shows a worker three-quarters

of the way up a long wooden ladder at the granite face. Judging by the height of the man on the ladder we can calculate that the granite face was about 7½ metres in height from top to bed. The same photo, on close inspection, reveals that the row of horizontal drill holes (used to split the rock) were drilled very close together. It also reveals that there were very few or no inclusions – no black blemishes. Another photo shows a pile of neatly cut kerb stones, probably destined for the monumental works of Geo. Ferries & Sons, Castlemaine.

We can tell, due to the obvious care taken to split the granite, and due to the absence of blemishes, the Faraday Quarry rightly held the title of Excelsior – of superior quality.

It is notable that the dump pile of reject stone at Faraday was smaller in relation to total output than the dump piles of quarries worked elsewhere on Mount Alexander.

The Excelsior Quarry, on freehold land, had been owned by George F Atyeo & Sons of Melbourne. Mr WD Grant was manager of the quarry from the time it opened in 1919 until his retirement in 1953. As manager, he displayed a keen capacity and skill in his work. He was regarded as an authority on the local granite industry. His opinion and judgement were sought and respected.

Will Grant was affectionately regarded by his employers, Atyeo & Co, as well as by his employees. We know the names of several employees, as captions to the photos mention Bill McKindley, Dick Norris, Alex Grant and Ern Peeler. In fact, most of the workers were related to Will Grant by blood ties or by marriage.

In his earlier life, Will Grant had been captain of the Barkers Creek Cricket Club and he had a life-long association with Harcourt’s Australian Natives Association (ANA), acting as secretary and taking part in the many social events organised

by the ANA.

Will Grant’s retirement in March 1953 was marked by a special dinner at Hawthorn, hosted by his employers. He was presented with several gifts, including an inscribed set of pipes and a tobacco pouch.

Regrettably Will Grant died soon after retirement. His obituary states that he had been a person of integrity, fidelity and high standing – truly an excelsior.

We know a little of the subsequent history of the Faraday quarry. Howard Quarries of Angaston, South Australia, purchased the business and the freehold from Basil Johnson in 1989. The quarry then became a source of material for crushing and screening aggregates. It was Howard Quarries which provided the granite rocks for the spillway at the Barkers Creek Reservoir about the year 2000.

Barossa Quarries took over the business in 2003, the owners of Barossa Quarries being Stephen Falland and his wife Rebecca (nee Howard).

The Faraday quarry is worked perhaps one week per month since the year 2020.

This is another in a series of Thumbnail sketches written for the Core by Harcourt Valley Heritage Centre.

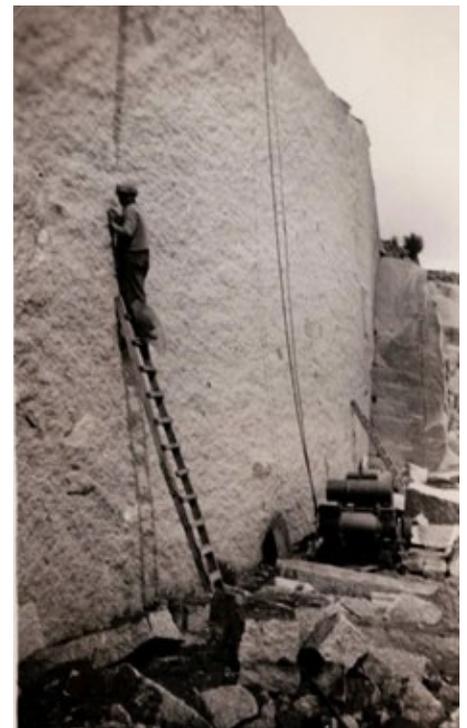
Information about Howard and Barossa Quarries was derived from Sand and Stone, the official magazine of CMPA, (Construction Material Processors Association)



WD (Will) Grant, the manager of the Excelsior Quarry.



Will Grant, Bill McKinley and Dick Norris.



Ernie Peeler up a ladder at the granite face.



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Student-Led Caravan Fix Me Up project to help homelessness in Castlemaine



Castlemaine Secondary College, in partnership with Dhelkaya Health, HALT and Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network, has devised an innovative way to assist families facing homelessness in the Mount Alexander Shire, while simultaneously developing skills and aspirations in the construction industry.

The project has resulted in the provision of a refurbished caravan to help tackle this priority issue. Contributors to the project included local trades' people, suppliers and Year 11 students.

The project was made possible thanks to Mount Alexander Shire Council's Round 2 Community Grants which aims to support projects that align with Council's plans and strategies.

In the Mount Alexander Shire, there are 17 people sleeping rough on any



given night. There are 50 plus community members who are couch surfing or staying with friends or family because they have no affordable secure housing, as well as 200 plus families in housing crisis.

'This project will help our homeless community by providing temporary accommodation to families in need,' Castlemaine Secondary College Principal Justin Hird said. 'We're proud of our students and look forward to seeing them develop their skills in support of the community. We're also thankful for the Community Grant and assistance of

local tradespeople and suppliers who have committed to the project.'

Dhelkaya Health CEO Sue Race said 'Homelessness has a deep and lasting impact on people's health, both mental and physical. It affects every aspect of life, including education and employment opportunities, connection with community and ability to fully participate in society. This project will help many young people and their families each year, local people who've found themselves in difficult circumstances, to achieve stability.'

If you are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness—including experiencing domestic and family violence you can call: 5479 1000, or after hours 1800 825 955.



Bakery Works Progress

Watching the almost daily progress of construction at the bakery has become an enjoyable pastime for many in the community. 'What's next?' 'When will it open?' These have become the questions of the moment.

Blume's Bakery owners David and Jodie Pillinger have planned everything in this project down to the position of each plant. Jodie said, 'The transition of

the front of the property from garden to parking area and access to the business is expected to take about six months, but we are philosophical about this. The builders are doing a wonderful job and if there are delays, well so be it. Works are going on inside the building as well. There will also be a new fit-out in the shop area beginning soon.'

In the meantime, Jodie is keeping

herself busy with baking. She recently participated in an event in Bendigo called 'Sweet Sisters' with a group of fellow baking aficionados. 'This took place in View Street in Bendigo. I made croissants, lemon tarts, cheese cake, and my special Harcourt apple pie and other baked treats. The queue stretched all the way down View Street and around the corner, so it was a very successful day.'



Grace Church

This is a statement of faith from Pastor Roger Thurecht

Angels

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament says, 'All angels (are) ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.' I believe that angels are spirit beings, part of God's creation, and are inherently servants.

Psalm 91 says: 'For he (God) will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'

I believe this angelic protection is available to all those who will consciously avail themselves of it, all those '... who dwell in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty', as Psalm 91 puts it.

I believe that children are especially precious in God's sight, so much so that the Gospel of Matthew records Jesus as saying that 'their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.' This is a wonderful scripture to be aware of when praying for one's children and grandchildren.

I believe that angels are capable of taking on human form. This is what the writer of the letter to the Hebrews has to say:

'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'

Christians are often able to relate testimonies about times when they have been suddenly, miraculously, and inexplicably delivered out of harm's way by 'people' who appeared, and then disappeared, as quickly as they came. Such testimonies might revolve around experiences on the road, or, in our case, fire.

I believe angels also serve as God's messengers. It was an angel who announced the birth of Jesus Christ the Lord, to the shepherds.

Finally, chapter one of Hebrews teaches that angels, as part of God's creation, are always subject to their creator. They are never to be worshipped or elevated above their creator.

At Grace Church, we have just commenced an interesting series on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Please, join us You would be most welcome!

Ps Roger Thurecht

Grace Church

Service: 11.00am Sunday
All Welcome

Pastors: Roger & Glenise Thurecht
0422 605 897
gracecastlemaine.org.au

30 Buckley Street, Harcourt

Harcourt's Little Library

Harcourt's Little Library is outside the ANA Hall
It's available any time.

Leave, Borrow
or Take a Book



Weather & Water

July was, by all accounts, cold, dreary and grey until the middle of the month when the weather switched to severe frosts for nearly a week. The days were sunny, but cold. Many days hovered around the 11° mark, with some days colder.

Towards the end of the month, the weather mellowed slightly with daytime temperatures around 14°. Rainfall, at 37 mm, was considerably less than last month's total of 153 mm. The ground however, is fully charged, and even the hint of rain starts water running into the dams. The soaks and springs on Mount Alexander and Mount Barker are running and are visible on the rocks when the sun comes out. The high water table causes puddles hidden under the grass in low-lying areas. These result in the loss of gumboots and flailing about by the hapless person who steps into the disguised mud.

Signs of the warmer temperatures here at Reservoir Road were mushrooms, roses flowering on the banksia rose and the Hardenbergia happy wanderer in full bloom by the third week in July (see the picture below). All of these are either out of season or early in blooming.

The rainfall total to the end of July was 401 mm which is lower than 2022, 2021 and 2020 (but only by 5mm) and higher than 2019, a hot, dry year when only 248 mm was received.

The Bureau of Meteorology still hasn't 'called' El Niño yet, but has announced that it is expected.

Reservoir Levels

Levels are high, which is encouraging in the face of the potential dry weather ahead.

Upper Coliban	100.5% as at 26 July
Lauriston	94.9% as at 26 July
Malmsbury	102.9% as at 26 July
Barkers Creek	92.2% as at 23 July



The Hardenbergia in full flower



Katie Finlay's Fruit Growing Tips



Hi everyone

If you've planted any fruit trees recently - well done! When properly looked after, fruit trees can live for a very long time, so it's a great legacy to create for your family, and the families that will eventually inherit your fruit trees in years to come.

If you bought your trees from Carr's Organic Fruit Tree Nursery, we'd like to say a big THANK YOU; we love our local customers ☺. Our 2023 season has finished, but we're already working on growing the trees that we'll be selling next winter. Next year we'll be adding some fabulous apple multi-grafts to our usual mix of lovely heritage fruit trees.

Thanks also to everyone who came to the planting and pruning workshops - we had more than twenty people each Sunday, so it was well worth doing. Our next workshop day is August 27, and we'll be doing pruning in the morning (almost sold out), and in the afternoon you'll be able to learn a fabulous new hot composting system developed by the amazing team at Castlemaine's YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) composting project. If you'd really like to get good at making your own compost (which is probably the single most useful skill any gardener needs), we highly recommend this workshop. Jump on to our website to book in: growgreatfruit.com/product-category/workshops

Our grant from the World Wildlife Fund is yielding great results. We've been exploring new models for the Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op (HOFC) in the future, which has thrown up some great ideas. We're about to embark on a whole farm plan, and we've started working on what "small farm viability" really means. For anyone that's tried to make a living from a small farm, it's a pretty important conversation to have! We'll be sharing all our work with you when we finish (probably through the HOFC website), so stay tuned.

So, back to fruit trees, and how to give them the best start in life? Firstly, make sure you protect the trunks from being eaten. The sorts of pests that like to eat bark that are common in Harcourt are rabbits, hares, kangaroos, and wallabies. If sheep, goats, cows (or even the odd deer) find their way into your garden, they can also do damage.

Animals eating the bark or branches of your baby tree can seriously stunt or disfigure it. If they eat the bark all the way around it can even kill the tree. Your trees may need protection for the first two or three years, or until the bark has hardened

enough to lose its attraction (though even old bark can still be attractive to sheep and goats).

Tree guards, fencing, or dogs can all be effective deterrents. If the problem is hares (common around Harcourt) you can make an organic hare-deterrent paint by mixing animal fat with any strong smelling stuff like peppermint oil, garlic, lavender, eucalyptus, tea tree etc, and painting it on the bark. Hares are herbivores and don't like strong smells, so the combination works well to stop them eating the delicious tender bark on your baby trees. However, it's not very permanent, so you'll need to re-apply it after heavy rain or heat. Tree guards are usually a more effective solution that you only need to put up once!

The type of tree guard you choose will depend on the type of animal you're preventing, and also the shape of the tree. If the limbs of your tree start very close to the ground (up to knee height), a tree guard just around the trunk won't be enough to protect the tree adequately. You'll need to look at a taller structure around the whole tree. Traditionally, old metal drums were used for the purpose, and you can often see the remnants of them around old fruit trees, which is one of the problems with this option! Once the tree has grown, the drums are hard to remove. A mini-enclosure (i.e. fence) around each tree works well, but is time-consuming and expensive to build if you have a lot of trees, and leads to the same problem of having a redundant enclosure that's hard to remove once the tree is mature.

So, what's the solution? There are four we recommend, and the one you choose will depend on your budget and dedication. The first is the full 'repel all enemies' enclosure fence around your property, built tall enough and engineered highly enough to keep out both kangaroos and rabbits. This is the dream solution, and something we've started to build around our farm.

The second option is much more practical and multi-purpose, and works particularly well for single trees in the garden, or short rows of trees. A simple hoop structure erected over the tree using star pickets and 2" poly pipe provides an affordable framework that can be used to support frost cloth, bird netting or fruit fly exclusion netting. It can also be simply reinforced with a strip of chicken wire around the base for a year or two to stop the 'roos and rabbits from eating the bark.

The third option is somewhere in

between; a simple tree guard made from a length of chicken wire rolled into a hoop and attached to the ground with a stake on either side.

The fourth and last option is to use three wooden pallets to form a triangle around the tree. Simply wire the pallets together and then wire them to at least one stake to hold them in position and stop the structure from falling over.

Here are some more tips to make sure your young trees get a good start in life.

- If you didn't prune them when you planted, prune now (or before spring) so they grow into a useful shape right from the get-go. We reckon a classic vase shape suits most backyard trees.
- Once the soil has started to warm up a bit, mulch young trees, or plant a living understory. Fruit trees prefer a woody mulch like sawdust or wood chips, or use old straw. It's a good idea to put a layer of compost or worm castings under the mulch to make sure you're still feeding your soil microbes. Once the trees are established, they're better with a 'living mulch' or even just weeds, as long as you mow them regularly. For the first year or two, it's definitely better to reduce competition from grassy weeds, so it's OK to use mulch while you get the understory plants established.
- Fruit trees don't need watering in when you plant them, except in very dry conditions. This year there's plenty of soil moisture, so you don't need to water your trees yet. However, make sure you've got the irrigation set up and ready to go, because it's not unusual to get a sudden hot spell in spring. If you've mulched, make sure you can either deliver the water under the mulch, or leave the irrigation on for long enough to be sure the mulch is really soaked and the water is getting through it to the soil below.

Happy fruit growing!

Hugh and Katie Finlay have been organic orchardists in Harcourt for more than 20 years, and offer a free weekly newsletter called Weekly Fruit Tips. Find their online fruit-growing courses at growgreatfruit.com. Sign up for a free online workshop at growgreatfruit.com/webinar-landing/

Council news



Enter the 2023 Business Awards

Applications for the 2023 Mount Alexander Business Awards open on Monday 21 August.

The biennial awards showcase, acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of local businesses.

There are seven award categories open for nominations, recognising a diverse range of businesses – new, established, innovative, creative and more!

An information session will be held on Monday 21 August at 5.30pm at the Castlemaine Civic Centre.

Applications close on Monday 18 September.

The awards ceremony will take place in November.

Read more about the awards and apply now at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/BusinessAwards.

Apply for an Event Grant

Our Event Grants program supports groups that are running public events in the shire.

Applications close on Monday 28 August.

Find out more and apply now at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/EventGrants.

Levee update

We're in the process of delivering, upgrading and re-establishing levee banks in Castlemaine and Campbells Creek. A levee in Newstead is currently in the investigation and design stage.

Find out more at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Levee-update.

Working together for a healthy, connected shire

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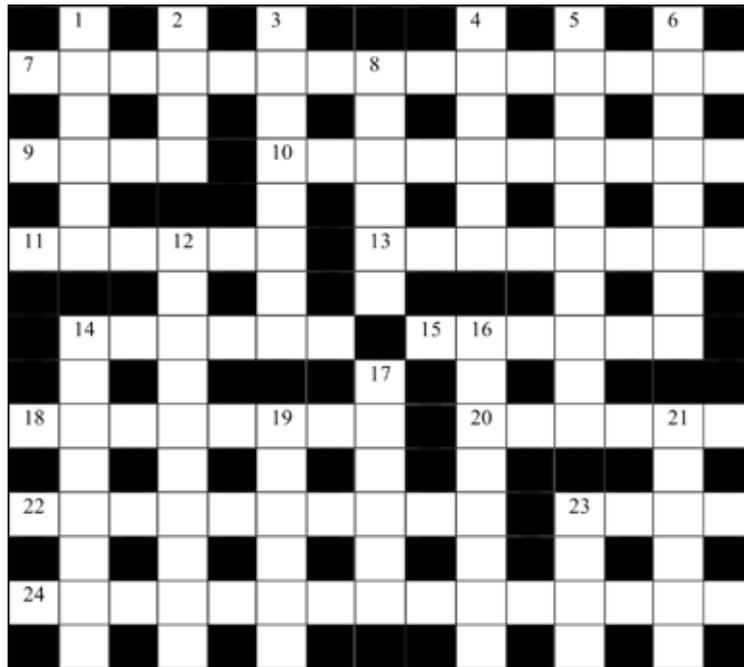


Di Selwood

0488 148 358
Harcourt - Castlemaine - Maldon

August 2023 Xwd

© McW December '18



Down:

1. No term more appropriate for teaching role in Homer. (6)
2. Get from porridge to porch in two backflips... (4)
3. Emaciated monarch in a brown study. (8)
4. Recall—but not about politician. (6)
5. I led simple creatures out of the garden and piled slime on them: they're nuisances. (10)
6. A little twitchy if you don't sleep as much. (8)
8. A Pakistani, and on the same path, an Afghani... (6)
12. Border Force has a bad name, but the Bay Militia are noted for their easy nature. (10)
14. Pair allow wrist décor. (8)
16. Army uniform for gaoler? (8)
17. Very much in the realm of comics. (6)
19. Oz all-rounder and commentator reincarnated as Euro river. (6)
21. Backward PhD round messy tomato gets unbending tool for packing. (6 or 3-3)
23. They constructed extra street in St Ives to exert self-raising fallout leaving gallery. (4)

Across:

7. Presumably what Elvis did to allow the underpinnings of the conclusion to remain. (4,3,8)
9. Untidy volcanic area? (4)
10. A prominent person, but useless... (10)
11. Motivation to back up on a Mongolian track might entail a grand wild horny sheep! (6)
13. Why plane is rapid, see? (3-5 or 8)
14. Newly-wed carrying weight across a flower. (6)
15. What a Scandinavian Townshend might grow? (6)
18. The bad coma I was put into could have been the work of Pol. (8)
20. David Frost raised many issues from his platforms. (6)
22. Astonished denial? (4,1,5!)
23. To me, it's still just a book, despite its weight and size... (4)
24. Tony's method could initiate bad loss for the Coalition... (15) [*Sadly, it didn't...*]

July 2023 Xwd Solution

© McW November '18



Down:

1. [Crab as]likely to beetle off?
2. She [knew]one (dn), and would always give lip in return.
3. Some examples could be acidic, I trust.
4. [Frenetic D]uses it for oral work.
5. What grow on trees come up to knock you out. [Well?]
6. [Die, Dewey] and reincarnate as naïve librarian with good peripheral vision?
7. Mount Apple? [Well?]
8. If it's a [set price], we'll need tickets to show we've paid.
14. [Crud! Any end]to work is hard to take.
15. [He vets elms], but when he's out of sorts they take it upon these to prune them into shape...
16. Shearer may have needed to negotiate with him, back then? [Well?]
17. Platform for gaming surfers? [Well?]
20. **Beating in concealment:** backing a lost cause, you're on one to nothing.
21. The end of [before time= early] put before it makes it annual.
23. Non-pejorative miser-attribute loses two [Well? Hh...] to leave a division.
24. Take a powder, all you goats of Asia... [Well?]
18. Animal from further north discovered in Selkirk.
19. One can only pity his keen pursuit of unattainable happiness.
22. A [rich moan]might come out if blown.
25. [Late]half-grand [D] flows into the metaphoric mouth [...of the river].
26. Ump rolls [*Sorry: should've capitalised the RR*] one loud [F] and four similar vowels.
27. Hard to [go clean]after what gravy might do left on the spoon.

Across:

9. Take in [CON...] impost to hem in.
10. Honour to the [brute it]is out of order to deliver.
11. Farmer loses a little weight [g.] to join the other seven on the river.
12. Those on a [diet sneer]at carnivores who thus make their flesh palatable...
13. One should [forbid pyres]for all those eagles poisoned in Gippsland.
15. Tilt rubbish here.
16. Petty conceptualising [mends mad illness].

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Castlemaine Bus Lines

Harcourt Services Monday to Friday

	am	pm	pm
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:56	12:11	2:26
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:57	12:12	2:27
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	9:03	12:18	2:33
Halford St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	9:05	12:20	2:35
From Castlemaine to Harcourt Monday to Friday			
Castlemaine RSL/Mostyn St (Castlemaine)	8:45	12:00	2:15
Wimble St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	8:48	12:03	2:18
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:53	12:08	2:23
Coolstore Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:54	12:09	2:24
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25

Community Diary Dates

Thursday August 10: 7.00 pm, AGM Harcourt Valley Landcare at the Harcourt Valley Community House (old Railway Station building).

Thursday August 17: 1.30 pm, CWA Association Day: Tea for Two at the Harcourt Leisure Centre. Entry: \$10.

Sunday August 20: 1.30 pm, Fireside Chat: 'The Fascinating History of Orchard Spraying, Heritage Centre, High Street, Harcourt.

Monday August 21: Mount Alexander Shire Business Awards Open. Applications close September 18.

Saturday September 2 & Sunday September 3: Victorian Orienteering Championships, Leanganook Picnic Ground, Mount Alexander.

Monday September 11: 7 pm, Harcourt Valley Primary School Concert, Leisure Centre.

Saturday October 14: Mount Alexander Emergency Services Expo (see page 9).

Carpet Bowls: 7.00 pm Wednesdays, Carpet Bowls, summer and winter, Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt.

CFA: Brigade meeting night is the third Monday of each month starting at 8.00 pm; Sunday morning equipment checks and maintenance runs starts at 9.00 am; siren is tested at 9.15 am. Contact: Captain Andrew Wilson for further details 0428 387 339. CFA is located in Bridge Street, Harcourt.

CWA: First Thursday of the month, 1.00 pm at Harcourt Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt.

Grace Church: Tuesdays at 10.30 am: Morning tea and prayers; Sunday Service at 11.00 am; 30 Buckley Street, Harcourt. Tuesday evenings at 7.30 pm: Zoom Bible Study: A Christian discipleship course covering the basics of the faith. All welcome, you can commence at any time. Please contact the Pastor for a link:

pastor@gracecastlemaine.org.au

Harcourt Lions Club: Third Thursday of the month at the Victorian Miniature Railway, Harmony Way at 6.30 pm for dinner (something to share) followed at 7.30 by general planning and discussion.

Heritage Centre: Every Wednesday at the ANA Hall from 9.00 am–3.00 pm or by appointment: 0400 916 527.

Pony Club: Second Sunday of the month. Contact Peggy Mills, 0419 902 400. The Pony Club is located next to the swimming pool.

Uniting Church: Sundays at 9.00 am in the Uniting Church, Buckley Street, Harcourt. The service is followed by morning tea. All welcome. Donations of food and other household needs for St Vinnies can be left at the Church door on Sunday mornings 9.00–10.00 am or contact, Jan 5474 2226, to arrange for collection.

Walking Group: Monday and Thursday at 9.30 am. Meet at the ANA Hall. The one hour leisurely walk is usually followed by morning tea, and new members are always welcome.



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