

THE ILLAWARRA *flame*

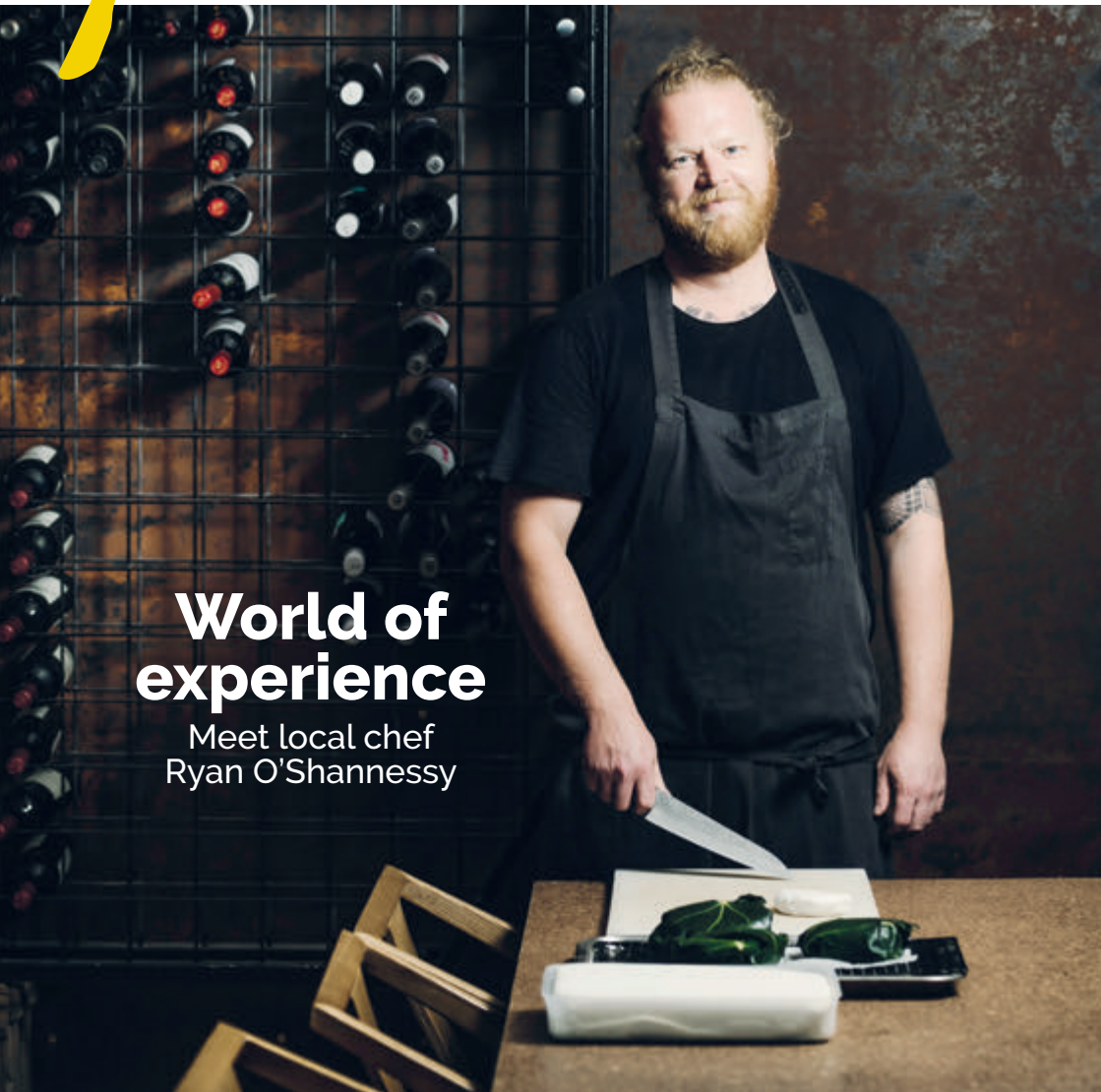
April 2022



Keeping community news alive

World of experience

Meet local chef
Ryan O'Shannessy



Meet Our Contributors



Amanda De George is a naturalist, writer and photographer based in the Northern Illawarra. Her passion lies in discovering interesting critters in urban environments and sharing them with the followers of her social media pages and website. Oh, and adventures and naps and wine; she's passionate about those things too!



Kendal Heyes has been exhibiting in Australia and New Zealand since the 1980s. He has held over 50 solo exhibitions of photography, painting drawing and printmaking, and is represented in the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of NSW, the Art Gallery of South Australia, and Victoria, Massey and Otago university collections in New Zealand. After living in Sydney for 30 years, Kendal moved to the Illawarra in 2010, and now lives in Coledale.



Rob Brander – aka 'Dr Rip' – is a coastal geomorphologist and professor at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. A resident of Coalcliff, he's been studying beaches for more than 30 years, starting in Canada where water temperatures convinced him to come to Australia. He is an international expert on rip currents and beach safety and runs a community education program called The Science of the Surf.



Dr Anna Putnis qualified in 2000 from Sheffield, England. She trained as a general surgeon in London and worked in a trauma hospital in South Africa. She retrained as a GP on return from Africa, qualifying in 2010. She worked in London, before moving to Australia in 2014. Anna is a very friendly and approachable doctor. She lives locally, with her husband and three sons. In her spare time she enjoys travelling, camping, exercising, food and wine.



Janice Creenaune is a retired English teacher, who has lived and worked in the Illawarra, and completed three year-long overseas teacher exchanges. A wife and mother of three, she sees the life of a retiree as an evolution, something to be cherished, enjoyed. Janice is a volunteer for PKD Australia and her interests include travel, Letters-to-the Editor SMH, letterpress printing and film study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The publishers acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultural and spiritual connection to this land. Their stories are written in the land and hold great significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from the mountains to the sea.



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NEXT DEADLINE 20 April 2022

COVER Chef Ryan O'Shannessy, founder of Flame Tree Food. Photo: Anthony Warry

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DEADLINE**
April 20
for May
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That 70 Show

By Coledale artist Kendal Heyes

That 70 Show is an exhibition to mark my 70th birthday, and to look back over about 40 years as an artist. It is also to show some of my work that hasn't been seen locally, and finally it is to celebrate my recuperation after chemotherapy and radiation treatment at the end of last year.

The main focus of the show will be paintings from the 1990s to the present. I am known for the variety of materials I use in my work, from painting on velvet to burning images into paper, and this is reflected in the paintings I'm showing at Clifton School of Arts.

The Polynesian paintings, white lines on black velvet, are connected to black and white visual experiences associated with my home country of New Zealand, such as tapa cloths from the Pacific Islands, the blackboard signs at roadside fruit stalls, the national teams all wearing black, the black and white works of Colin McCahon, the Pacific sky at night. Velvet gives a very deep black, and recalls the Polynesian paintings on velvet made popular by Edgar Leeteg in the 1930s and 40s.

The use of plaster and mica pigments gives the paintings in *Details: Painting after Photography* a surface like glossy photographic prints. This series deals with how photography has changed the way we look at paintings in reproduction, that we've become used to isolated sections of detail and texture.

In the series *In Search of Painted Time* the paintings are built up slowly with translucent layers so previous stages remain dimly visible. These constitute an accumulated memory of the paintings' coming into being. The use of mica pigments also means the painting changes when you move around in front of it, so it emphasises the time of viewing.

The idea of being in the city and thinking of the countryside informs the *Vanishing Point* series, in which a vertical/horizontal grid is overlaid by an angled one of about 30 degrees, which produces a doubling and interweaving of images of built structures, city towers, and at the same time patterns in landscape seen from the air.

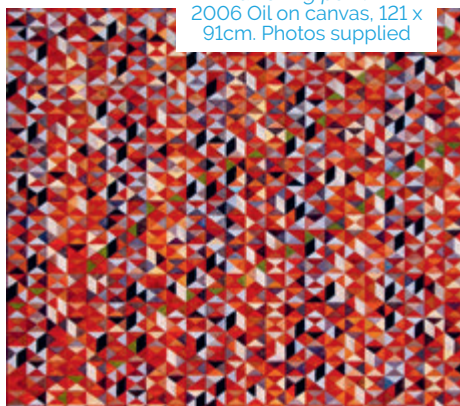
Although it is mostly a painting exhibition, I will also be showing some recent drawing and photographic works.

That 70 Show is on from 22-26 April at Clifton School of Arts, 338 Lawrence Hargrave Drive. Open 10am-4pm. Opening drinks, Friday 22nd, 6-8pm. Kendal's 70th birthday celebration, Sunday 24th, 2-7pm. Both events are open to the public. ♥

Enquiries: kendalheyes@hotmail.com,
kendalheyes.com



Artist Kendal Heyes and
Vanishing point III
2006 Oil on canvas, 121 x
91cm. Photos supplied



Art workshops

At Clifton School of Arts

Book for CSA workshops via pruewat2@gmail.com or www.artsclifton.org

An Introduction: The Rhythm of Good Drawing Practice with Victoria Hartcup

Tuesdays April 12 & 19 10am-2pm. Build a solid foundation of simple habits and attention to detail. Two-day workshop \$200. CSA members \$180.

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Thursday April 28 10am-2pm. The meditative craft of slow stitching. Using hand embroidery to build simple patterns and easy appliqué. No experience necessary. Full price \$90, members \$80.

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Writers Centre in festival mode!

By Sarah Nicholson, South Coast Writers Centre director

It's all happening behind-the-scenes right now, but we are super excited to give readers a sneak peek of what's happening at not one, but two writers festivals we are presenting locally in May and June.

First up, on Sunday, 22 May, the SCWC and Merrigong Theatre will bring Sydney Writers' Festival, Australia's largest forum celebrating books and ideas, to the Music Lounge at Wollongong Town Hall. This day-long event includes a live stream of panels direct from the Sydney festival, plus in-person panels with local writers.

The Sydney Writers Festival is still under wraps, but we can announce some of our locally curated program. Come along to hear multi-award-winning horror authors, J. S. Breukelaar and Alan Baxter, talk about Alan's latest book, *The Fall*, and Australian dark fiction in general. Tamryn Bennett from Red Room Poetry will be in conversation with two Illawarra poets, discussing writing, publishing and the state of Australian poetry.

We are also thrilled to announce that we are curating and presenting our own writers' festival, the South Coast Writers Festival, in June. The festival will showcase the exceptional talents in our region and promote new Australian writing.

From Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th June, across venues including the Wollongong Town Hall, Library and Art Gallery, the festival will present a



program of readings, conversations, panels and book launches, for adults and children. There's a packed schedule of well-known and emerging writers over three days, including Jane Caro, Caroline Baum, Scott Ludlum, Robyn Williams, Jonica Newby, Vivian Pham, Zoe Ghani, James Elazzi, Catherine Rey, Hayley Scrivenor, Dinuka McKenzie, Helena Fox, Auntie Barbara Nicholson, Katherine Heyman, Christine Sykes, Claire Zorn, and Meredith Jaffe.

Also, look out for our new street library! With the assistance of a Wollongong City Council neighbourhood grant, we've been working with Thirroul Men's Shed to have a street library built. It will be installed out the front of Coledale Hall soon.

Visit southcoastwriters.org 🌟

Ribbon Gang to steal the stage in Thirroul

Director Stephen Goldrick was a Helensburgh resident who used to sing with Songsmiths and Mendala, and now lives in Corrimal. Here he shares the story of his musical show, *Anvil*

This April, Players In Exile present their musical play, *Anvil*, featuring a widowed Irish blacksmith who leads the Ribbon Gang in their fight for freedom in the tumultuous world of 1830 NSW.

I co-wrote the show – we had a sell-out premiere season in 2019, then Covid came. Now we have a fresh cast, new venues and are concentrating on heartfelt storytelling with strong singer-actors.



One hot day, ticket-of-leave man, Ralph Entwistle, takes off his clothes and swims in the river to cool down. Unluckily the governor's carriage clatters by and the authorities punish Entwistle with 50 flesh-tearing lashes for "affronting the governor". Soon official cruelty leads to rebellion. The heroine, "Anvil", joins him and 120 convicts and farm workers range the bush between Bathurst, Goulburn and the Abercrombie Caves, where the last gang members are rounded up and sent to Bathurst to be hanged.

The music by Wollongong composer Lisa Lockett is very beautiful – it frames the stirring story of one woman challenging the social facades and repression of the English hierarchy.

Anvil has three local shows, then hits Sydney's Flight Path Theatre. It's in Thirroul on 8 and 9 April at C3, 345 Lawrence Hargrave Drive.

Tickets at www.trybooking.com/BXPBGH 🌟

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Time to *crochet*

Janice Creenaune meets long-time Coledale resident Anna Blackman, who has retired as a highly esteemed local photographer and found a new creative passion and an ethical outlet through Covid

Anna Blackman has always been creative, but in retirement she looked forward to international travel and painting. But then Covid hit and everything changed.

"I was looking for something that was fun and easy, something that I could do easily from home. So I looked to crochet. I had always knitted, but crochet worked with one hook and yet continued my passion and pleasure in working with yarn. YouTube offered ease of instruction where I learned the basics of crochet and I easily lifted the craft into other possibilities."

Passion, enthusiasm and skill are always infectious and Anna has these traits in abundance, but what she also brings to her art is a true ethical element.

"I had travelled to Peru in September of 2019 and I visited an alpaca farm, which had amazing yarn. It was organically dyed, sometimes with berries, cabbage, flowers, beetles, seeds and spices.

"It did awaken my views and it had a certain 'feel' to it that was not evident in normal chemically coloured and processed wool.

"I filled my bags to return but this experience had awakened my ethical stand and further research has increased my resolve to work ethically."

As well as baby alpaca yarn from Peru, Anna also imports Italian angora. Belgium linen yarn is another product with which she enjoys working.

"I love the undyed merino from Nundle, too, in particular. Sometimes my daughter-in-law dyes silk with brown onion skin or tumeric and I join yarns to crochet for effect.

"It is the tactile feel of the material which I enjoy working with and the more natural the fibre the better it feels. It has to be as natural a product as I can obtain."

Ideas and being creative come naturally to her.

"I do need to concentrate, but I also enjoy the repetition of a project," Anna says.

Scarves offer almost a meditative atmosphere for her. "I do actually find it relaxing, even quite blissful at times.

"Scarves can be reasonably plain to produce but the choice of yarn or double-yarns sometimes with a particular edging allows it to feel especially appealing wrapped against the skin."



Photographer turned
crochet worker Anna
Blackman. Photo supplied

Anna has a will to continually create and in particular something that lasts. She works on many projects at once and most days starts something completely at random.

"I have no trouble letting go of my projects because my mind is actively engaged on the next project anyway, always what is coming next.

"I am currently selling out of 55 Parrots in Bulli in winter and am setting up an Etsy shop soon called, 'Only One Made'.

"Each of my projects is unique, ethically dyed with something from the earth and good for the environment.

"I want a small footprint from my work and to encourage people to think about what is best for the earth as well as themselves.

"The yarns often still incorporate a natural lanolin and the feel of the final product is especially gratifying."

Ultimately, Anna's crochet pieces have a deeply felt ethical element interwoven with the yarn itself.

Look for Anna's projects locally and online.

Writer Janice Creenaune is a volunteer for the PKD (Polycystic Kidney Disease) Foundation Australia. Email janicecreenaune@gmail.com 🌟

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Feeling bookish?

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With 18 to 22 days of rain predicted this April, it's time to stock up and settle in! Alongside an abundance of books, we have games, puzzles and craft books to keep the kids entertained. For adults we have a stack of favourites, plus great events. Please book early as places are limited:



Sunday 3rd 2pm in the bookstore: Bruce Roberts with Linda Goldspink-Lord for an intimate discussion around her book, *Crawling Through The Darkness*.

Wednesday 13th 7pm Ryan's Hotel: Sue Turnbull with Tim Ayliffe and his latest crime fiction, *The Enemy Within*.

Wednesday 27th 7pm Ryan's Hotel: Music and Conversation. Ali Whitelock and Terri Campbell discuss Terri's new book, *There'd Better Be Oxy in that Christmas Bon Bon!* 🍷

Women in War

By local studies librarian Jo Oliver

As we commemorate ANZAC Day, it is timely to acknowledge the significant part women of the Illawarra have played in war, on the home front, in caring for the wounded and contributing to surveillance. Two local women for whom Wollongong City Library holds information are Alice Thompson and Carol North.

At age 23 Alice Jane Thompson of Balgownie enlisted with the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) as a nurse on 20 March 1917, during World War 1. She then embarked from Sydney aboard RMS Mooltan and served in Greece.

Information from Nurse Thompson at the time shows that 40 of the 300 nurses who left Australia on the ill-fated Mooltan were selected to proceed to Salonika, she being one of them. She states that most of the cases so far are sickness owing to the terrible heat and says she is not sorry that she came and if she had to choose over again, she would do the same, as too much cannot be done for the boys who are fighting and bleeding for us all.

After the war, Alice Thompson was kept in quarantine due to influenza. She married Dr Theo Allen in England on 16 January 1919, which resulted in her discharge from the AANS; they then returned to Australia on 23 January 1919. Alice received the British War and Victory medals, and a Greek Medal for Military Merit. Sadly, she died on 6 June 1922 and was buried at Wollongong.

Carol North, a local resident of Coledale, who passed away on 2

December 2021, was a radio operator in WWII. She was interviewed by Samantha Figueroa, one of Wollongong Libraries' Local Studies team in April last year. You can



Carol North in uniform 1942 and with medals in 2015 (P32193).

Photos: Illawarra Images/
Wollongong City Libraries

listen to the interview at illawarrastories.com.au

The abbreviated account below explains her training and service.

"We did the Morse code in at Flemington Racecourse, six months training ... I was posted to Queensland ... I worked in several places there. The last place was Amberley and that was underground and we had a lake on the top of us. It looked like a lake ... we were working secretly underneath the glass top ...

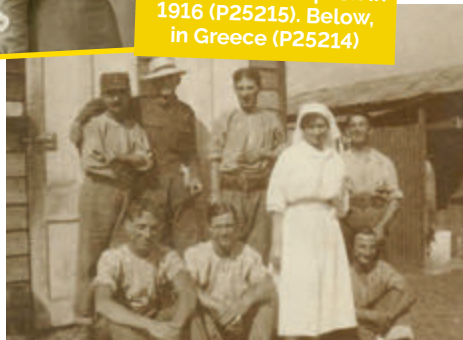
"When we went on duty and off duty we had to go into Brisbane into the secret place, which was behind a cigarette stall. So, we used to go in the cigarette stall, at the back was a huge radio organisation, and we learnt there.

"Everything we took was in Morse code and we used to listen very intensely for the airwaves. Then if we heard a strange plane, which in those days was Japanese planes flying everywhere, we would take their code number... [it was] given to General MacArthur's helpers ... They would decode the messages ... that was very, very secret at the time. No one actually knew where the Air Force was working with the radios. That was exciting."

Visit illawarrastories.com.au and find WW1 stories at www.illawarraremembers.com.au 🇺🇸



Alice Jane Thompson in 1916 (P25215). Below, in Greece (P25214)



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Fantastical debut

Thirroul Library Officer Katrina recently had the pleasure of chatting with Illawarra local and author, Kiah Thomas, about her debut middle grade novel, *The Callers*.

This fantasy novel touches on themes of friendship, environmentalism, global food production, and the consequences of wanting more than we need.

Kiah's inspiration for the book came while driving from Wollongong to Sydney through Dharawal Country. It got her thinking about the pull between nature and progress. Being hungry at the time, her thoughts also turned to the idea of food appearing magically when desired and 'what if it had to come from somewhere else?' These idle thoughts were the beginning of this wonderful new story set in the lands of Elipsom and Evantra.

Originally written as a Young Adult novel, Kiah changed her main characters, Quin, and Allie, to be more suited to a younger audience after receiving big questions about the world from her nine-year-old son.

For Kiah, reading, and writing stories is her way of processing the world – its beauty and its devastation. She "tends to write better when fully absorbed in the space and feel of the story" and managed to write this book during her three kids'



nap times, night-time, and school holidays.

Kiah hopes readers will think about the issues being addressed through the fast-paced and thought-provoking adventure of the story.

The Callers will be available from 4th May 2022. Reserve your copy from Wollongong City Libraries today! ✨



Brachychiton acerifolius, the Illawarra flame tree, is among the watercolours by Thirroul artist Jean Dennis

Entire genus in watercolours painted from life

Octogenarian Thirroul artist Jean Dennis, who specialises in painting rare plants, will see her life's work on show at Sydney's prestigious gallery The Calyx, at the Royal Botanic Garden, from April 25.

An acclaimed botanical illustrator, Jean has travelled all over Australia for years, documenting the rare *Brachychiton* in exquisite watercolours. Most are painted from freshly picked specimens.

Jean won a Royal Horticultural Society silver gilt medal for her early *Brachychiton* paintings in 2000.

By 2015 Jean thought her adventure was over, when she learned of a new *Brachychiton* species in the Northern Territory. The area where it grew, Fish River, was too difficult to reach in the wet so Jean flew to Darwin the next day, and was lucky enough to catch a small seedling in flower at the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens.

Jean is the first artist to record the entire genus in watercolour from life. The paintings in her exhibition will not be for sale individually as Jean painted them as a collection in the hope that they will be preserved as a record of the genus. ✨

Quilt sale will be sew good!

By Lynn Kelly of Bulli Corner Quilters

What do Quilters do during a pandemic?

They sit and sew and sew and sew...

The ladies from Bulli Corner Quilters have been doing just that and they are keen to raise money for the local charities they support.

To this end, they are having a Giant Quilt Show and Sale on Saturday, 23 April at their normal meeting place – the Northern Illawarra Uniting Church, corner of Point St and Princes Highway, Bulli. It's on from 10am to 4pm, with entry being a Gold Coin Donation.

While they always donate quilts to people in need, the quilters believe that at this time funds would be more beneficial to charitable organisations – therefore the Quilt Sale.

They have been supporting local charities for over 20 years and have still continued to carry on



this great work even during the pandemic.

Families affected by the recent floods have also been given quilts to provide them with some warmth and support. These generous ladies also donated in excess of 60 quilts to the Illawarra/Shoalhaven Organ & Tissue Organisation.

So come along to a quilt show with a difference – all quilts on display are for sale. Quilts aren't just for beds – they can be thrown over the back of the lounge; hung on walls or used as table covers.

There will be other items on their sales tables as well. Don't forget Mother's Day is just around the corner.

More info: Lynn at lmk1703@yahoo.com.au or 0413 963 070. 🍀



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10 Years Strong!

Austinmer Dance Theatre has a new name and direction, writes Vyvian Wilson, secretary of the AUSTI Board of Directors

AUSTI's Artistic Director Michelle Maxwell. Of the challenges she has faced Michelle is sanguine. "Over the years I have learnt to 'just ask' and never to pass up the opportunity to ask those who inspire me for guidance, feedback or support." Photo: Children of the Revolution.



Danni Cook from Coledale believes her apprenticeship "gives an insight into the contemporary dance industry and provides opportunity to learn from and connect with an exceptional number of artists involved in the industry". Photo: Martin Chaix



Dancer Kate Arber, who moved with her whole family from Melbourne to Wollongong in order to take up this unique opportunity. "AUSTI has given me a spider web of connections within the arts nationally and internationally. I wouldn't have made those connections without Michelle and the company."



Ten years ago, Austinmer dance artist and teacher Michelle Maxwell identified a gap in the industry for emerging dance artists transitioning from full-time training and tertiary education into a professional career.

"If dancers didn't fit in the 'box' of our leading training facilities and companies, there weren't the opportunities for them here," Michelle says.

"I saw many of my very promising senior students travel overseas in search of further training, only to become homesick, grow too tall or become injured and return home feeling they had failed."

Often this ended their pursuit of a dancing career.

In 2011, against all odds Michelle established the Austinmer Dance Theatre (renamed AUSTI dance & physical theatre) as a not-for-profit association.

"It was a leap of faith and while exciting it wasn't easy. Had I known the challenges of securing funding, the endless, voluntary hours of teaching, choreographing, self-promotion, planning etc, I may have given it more thought."

Despite these difficulties Michelle continues to

steer the AUSTI ship and audition exceptional emerging dance artists every year for one of 12 places offered at AUSTI, providing them with a rich program of classes, workshops, mentorship and professional performance opportunities.

"We strive to create a supportive space where young artists feel valued, supported and able to take risks, while perfecting their craft and expanding their professional networks."

AUSTI's successes have been extraordinary. Accolades have included the 2011 Sydney Fringe Festival (SFF) – Most Outstanding Dance Production; 2018 SFF Critics Choice Award; and an AUDANCE Australian Dance Awards nomination for outstanding achievement in youth dance. Many of AUSTI's dancers have gained professional work both nationally and overseas.

One of the biggest impediments to AUSTI's development is its lack of a permanent home – an affordable dance studio equipped with a sprung dance floor, a necessity for the health and safety of all dancers. Currently, AUSTI splits its activities across local commercial dance studios and community spaces, which can be a juggling act.



Independent Shellharbour dance artist Nat Cunzolo has worked with AUSTI for over five years. "My time with the company has ultimately shaped and grounded aspects of my life well beyond a class or performance. Each year has been exceeded with continual guidance, support, challenges and opportunities that shape the human, dancer and artist I am today." Photo: Rhiannon Davies



Another exciting development for AUSTI is the recent support from Merrigong Theatre Company's MERRIGONGX program, and the Nicole Fitzsimons Foundation. This year AUSTI will launch the Illawarra's first ever curated, outcome-based contemporary dance residency uNCOILED eXposed. Up to six choreographers will have the opportunity to work with a group of dedicated and driven dancers over 10 days, culminating in a four-show season at the IPAC in October.



The other obstacle is the lack of ongoing financial support. To date, Michelle has given all her time and energy to AUSTI without remuneration.

"I do it because I love dance and have a passion for creating this opportunity for young dancers in the Illawarra but it would be nice to take home a pay cheque once in a while."

Despite these difficulties, 2022 is looking positive for AUSTI. With a generous grant from Wollongong City Council, AUSTI has re-branded the organisation's website with its new name and look, and has an invigorated program.

Due to the impact of Covid, AUSTI is squeezing two years into one – some highlights will be a Youth Dance Australia collaboration with Yellow Wheel and Sue Healey and participation in the Australian Youth Dance Festival, both in Melbourne. There are also plans for a Dance on Film fundraiser this year, which will screen the best of AUSTI in performance over the past decade.

Michelle's dream is to see AUSTI working and creating in an Illawarra-based Arts Hub – a multi-arts space where mainstream and diverse

artists of all genres can train, rehearse, collaborate and hold developmental showings.

"I would love to set up a 'youth' program for younger dancers (aged 10-14) with and without previous dance training, run regular community workshops and performances in the Illawarra's Aboriginal and underprivileged communities and get AUSTI on the road for some touring of performances and workshops to regional and remote areas.

"At AUSTI we're passionate about training the 'whole' dancer. While technique forms a large part of what AUSTI offers, building a dancer's self-belief, inner confidence, respect for each other and independence as artists, all form a vital part of AUSTI's program.

"To witness the growth and self-development of a young artist is priceless, and something I never tire of."

AUSTI's rebranding project was funded through the Creative Wollongong Quick Response Grants from Wollongong City Council. Visit www.austitheatre.com.au 📌

Call to create Art Trail

By Stanwell Park painter Edith McNally

This month features a “call out” to local artists interested in establishing a “Northern Villages Art Trail” modelled on highly successful initiatives around Bundeena and Maianbar.

The Bundeena-Maianbar Trail offers a unique way to view artists practicing their craft and displaying their work through opening their studios for visitors from far and wide to come and take a look at them working and to sometimes buy a work that takes their fancy. My family regularly takes the trail for some great art viewing, family fun, exercise, chat and a nice meal or snack to round off a great little outing. Bundeena artists open their studios monthly but in the first instance I am looking for a once/twice per year open studio offering in the northern Illawarra.

Our northern villages provide the perfect background to do likewise. Our area is beautiful beyond words. There are many professional and amateur artists in our area. Indeed, our area is perfectly positioned to not only set up our own art trail experience but also to nurture and expand the abundant opportunities it offers not only to artists



but also to associated businesses that may choose to display works or provide hospitality.

I have floated this idea to my own chapter of the CWA in Stanwell Park and we are very keen to explore this idea.

If you would like to be involved please join me at an inaugural planning meeting on Thursday, April 14, 7pm at 16 Seaview Crescent, Stanwell Park. Please RSVP 0477 778 289.

Write to Edith at mcnallyedith@gmail.com ✨



Jazz In the Neighbourhood

By pianist Kelvin Haisman

In the Neighbourhood is a quarterly series of local Jazz, Soul and Latin concerts being presented at Thirroul library's Excelsior Hall by myself and my partner, artist Naomi Ullmann.

Each concert features a different guest vocalist backed by the Accidental Quartet comprising Jeremy Sawkins on guitar, Hugh Fraser on bass, Troy Lever on drums, myself on piano.

The motivation for presenting acoustic music at Excelsior Hall was triggered both by my discovery (shortly after moving to the area) that the Thirroul library possessed a 1902 Steinway baby grand piano in great condition and by the realisation that

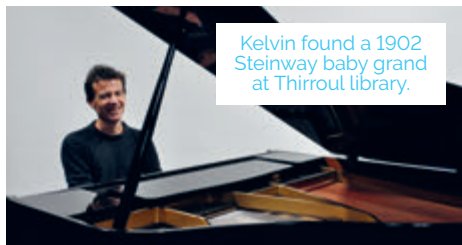
the Illawarra region is home to an increasing number of professional musicians whose performing lives remain centred in Sydney and beyond.

The inaugural *In the Neighbourhood* was held in June 2021 and featured well-known vocalist Trish Delaney-Brown. It was a resounding success and sold out. Then Covid lockdown hit.

In the Neighbourhood #2, held in February 2022 featured the same line-up and was very successful.

The Accidental Quartet's members all live locally and bring a wealth of performing experience with them. The concert format and intimate staging within the space allows the group to present new repertoire and to “stretch” musically.

Our aim with *In the Neighbourhood* is to present improvised music of a high standard to the local community. The audience response has been fantastic. This support enables the musicians to be paid properly for their work, which is wonderful.



Kelvin found a 1902 Steinway baby grand at Thirroul library.

In the Neighbourhood #3 is on Sunday, 1 May, 5-7.30pm and will feature renowned jazz and soul vocalist, Pat Powell. Tickets through Humanitix. ✨

Racing Birds' single takes off!

By Jessica Nelson



If you haven't heard of Racing Birds then you've been missing out on one of our greatest local musical talents. Born and bred in Stanwell Park and now residing in Helensburgh with his young family, Jeremy Strother, and his band mate, Bobbie Lee Stamper, have just released their alt-country, guitar-driven and foot-stomping debut single *Rarely Never Loaded*.

Their unique bluesy rhythms have garnered them a cult following, and with their prolific song-writing pedigree it's not hard to see why. Jeremy's accomplishments include working across I Am Apollo and Stellar Perry (*The Voice Australia*), alongside a publishing deal with New York agency Frisbee. USA-born Bobbie cut his teeth as a guitarist for Jon McLaughlin, sharing stages with Sara Bareilles, Colbie Caillat and Bon Jovi. Closer to home, he's performed with Australia's finest, including Guy Sebastian, Human Nature and Matt Corby, to name a few.

Coming together they create a raw and captivating sound, pulling listeners into their story; creating vivid imagery of neon signs, fading tail lights and California skies.

Rarely Never Loaded is available via Spotify, Apple Music and more. Scan the QR code to watch it on YouTube. Follow @rrracingbirds on Instagram

Pictured: Jeremy (left) and Bobbie. 🍷

Happy Easter

RayWhite



Wherever your easter egg or house hunt takes you.

From our family to yours, wishing you a safe and happy easter.

KIDS be sure to enter our colouring-in competition for your chance to win an easter hamper*





Brushtail possums and (inset) a ringtail possum in care.
Photos: Amanda De George & Guiliana Ferrari



Rescuers inundated

The heavy rain has had a devastating effect on local wildlife, writes Amanda De George, of Backyard Zoology

As chair of the Illawarra branch of WIRES, Heather Milroy, is a difficult woman to pin down. It's not for want of trying though and we reschedule our chat several times due to her being called out on wildlife rescues.

"We're just starting to find them now because while it was all happening they were in hiding and so were we. We couldn't even go out on rescues because of all the roads being closed," she explains when I finally catch her in a rare moment of quiet.

Compared to some regions, the Illawarra escaped the most recent spate of torrential rain relatively unscathed with only localised flooding. Still, the ramifications of weeks of constant rain has had a devastating impact on birds in particular.

"We're getting a lot of sick birds in, that have been starving because they couldn't get access to food, particularly nectarivores because all the nectar's been washed off the flowers. The insects have all suffered from the weather so the whole food chain has been affected."

WIRES Illawarra Possum and Glider Coordinator, Guiliana Ferrari, confirms that possums have also suffered catastrophic affects.

"The biggest casualty has been ringtail possums. They're a smaller and much more delicate possum" she says. "They make their own nest called a drey. Undoubtedly some of the dreys would have been smashed by the torrential rain."

As with birds, getting out to feed normally has also proven to be an extremely difficult task. If the possums do make it out to feed, the type of



long-lasting rainfall we have been having impairs the ability of both ringtail and brushtail possums to correctly discern the level of nutrients found within leaves. This leads them to either not eat enough or to not eat at all.

"They have been coming in underweight, lethargic, and the majority with pneumonia. By the time people find them it's too late."

For WIRES' hard-working volunteers it can sometimes feel like too much, and Heather and Guiliana say the work can be heartbreaking. The number of actual rescues for this period won't be known until after the weather has died down. But amongst the frenetic pace, the emergency trips to vets and around the clock feeds, there are good moments too.

Guiliana recalls a particularly lovely reunion between a brush tail possum and her joey.

"I looked after bub for the day and brought her back at night and sure enough after not long, these two eyes appeared about three houses away and she made a beeline for the baby. They were calling to each other and the joey jumped onto mum's back and off they went, up the tree."

If you find a sick, injured or orphaned native animal, contact WIRES on 1300 094 737. You can also donate directly to the Illawarra Branch of WIRES, by using the online form at WIRES.org.au and listing Illawarra in the notes section. 🌸

Visit www.backyardzoology.com

Parkinson's Awareness Month

By Dr Anna Putnis, of Bulli Medical Practice

Parkinson's disease is a progressive degenerative neurological condition characterised by both motor (movement) and non-motor symptoms. It is estimated to affect over 10 million people worldwide and around 100,000 Australians are living with Parkinson's.

The average age of diagnosis is 65 years. While the risk of contracting the condition increases with age, Parkinson's is not part of the natural aging process. Younger people are also diagnosed with the disease. This is called Young Onset Parkinson's.

Symptoms

There is no definitive medical test (blood test or scan) to diagnose Parkinson's. It is diagnosed by identifying a range of symptoms and features.

Motor symptoms of Parkinson's include:

- Resting tremor
- Slowed movement (bradykinesia)
- Rigid muscles
- Posture and balance problems
- Reduced facial expression (blank-like appearance)
- Gait problems such as freezing, shuffling, drooped shoulders and lack of arm swing.

Non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's include:

- Cognitive impairment
- Depression and anxiety



- Sleep difficulties
- Loss of sense of smell
- Constipation
- Speech (voice becomes quieter)
- Swallowing problems
- Writing problems (writing may appear small)
- Vision difficulties
- Apathy and fatigue.

Management

If you become aware of symptoms, visit your GP. They will usually refer you to a neurologist or geriatrician. Parkinson's disease is primarily related to a lack of a neurotransmitter chemical called dopamine. This is usually due to degeneration of dopamine producing neurons within the mid-brain. Most pharmaceutical treatment options for Parkinson's disease attempt to restore the balance of dopamine and other neurotransmitters.

As Parkinson's progresses, needs change, and medications must be reviewed regularly by your GP and specialist for dose adjustments.

More information

Visit Parkinson's Australia (www.parkinsons.org.au). This April, you can also support Pause4Parkinson's which is an awareness and research fundraising event organised by Shake It Up. 🌸

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A nice long period swell rolling in at a mystery location in the Northern Illawarra. Photo: Rob Brander

Dr Rip's Science of the Surf

Wave talk with Professor Rob Brander

I don't want to talk about La Niña, East Coast Lows, or beach erosion anymore – it's too depressing! But let's talk about something that all of those are related to: ocean waves. How much do you really understand about waves and how they are formed? Living on the coast, this is essential info!

Ocean waves need an initial disturbance to form. For most of the waves we see, that disturbance is wind. The ocean surface is rarely flat and the wind literally 'grabs' the bumpy surface and transfers energy into it. The bumps get bigger, the transfer of energy increases, and the waves begin to move in the same direction as the wind. If the wind is gentle, or doesn't last long, the waves will die out quickly. If it's strong and lasts a long time before stopping, the waves will have enough energy to travel across entire oceans.

All waves are described by their height, period and wavelength. Wave height is the vertical distance from the crest of the wave to the trough. Wave period is the time it takes between two wave crests to pass the same point and wavelength is the physical distance between the wave crests. All three will change, even over hours, depending on the wind source. Basically, the stronger the wind blows, the longer it blows for, and the larger the distance over water that it can blow across (a term called fetch), the higher and longer the waves will be.



When we get strong onshore winds, like the typical northeaster sea breeze during summer afternoons, the waves become short, choppy and messy with short periods less than eight seconds. We call these wind waves because they are generated locally and you can actually see them being formed by the wind. Wind waves are pretty much all you get in small bodies of water, like bays, estuaries and lakes, but they also occur in the middle of the ocean due to large storms where they are called sea waves.

These wind (or sea) waves have plenty of room to grow and the further they travel, the more they sort themselves out into nice, clean lines of swell waves which have periods of eight to 20 seconds and much longer wavelengths. The longer the swell wave period, the further the waves have traveled. It's not uncommon for a large groundswell to suddenly appear as large, long period waves formed from a distant storm finally arrive.

Generally we always experience swell coming from somewhere, but if there's a strong onshore wind, we'll also have wind waves superimposed on top and there'll be a mix.

There's a lot more to waves than that and if you have any questions, please ask!

Have a question for Dr Rip?
Email rbrander@unsw.edu.au 📧

Demystifying death

By Edwina Ellicott, Community Engagement Manager at H.Parsons

The way we talk about death nowadays is very different to how it was talked about in the past.

In fact, we don't talk about it much at all these days, or it's considered a bit of a taboo topic.

Death has become very institutionalised or medicalised. Most people used to pass away in their home, surrounded by family and loved ones, but now 82% of people pass away in a medical institution.

Only 15% of funerals have any form of preplanning and yet there is a growing trend in people wanting to personalise their funeral and having some form of control over their end of life experience.

And yet having open conversations, listening to people who have the knowledge and experience to give us access to information and having a safe environment to have these conversations is not something that is readily available.

With that in mind, H.Parsons is collaborating with community stakeholders to deliver the Demystifying Death series. We plan to provide a platform for the community to have safe conversations and hear from subject matter experts in planning for end of life. Families are telling us that they want to hear more about palliative care options, cultural beliefs and practices in death and funeral planning, and planning practicalities such as estate planning and advance care directives. Importantly, we'll be encouraging conversation and discussion and questions will be welcomed.

Having access to information or some form of preplanning in place – whether it's the music that you want at your funeral, knowing if your loved one wants to be cremated or buried or having the opportunity for a professional writer to record your story – can significantly reduce the stress for families, loved ones and the person



approaching end of life. People are just not aware of the options that are available and what can be done now in order to mitigate unnecessary stress later. It's often a difficult topic to broach and needs to be handled with respect and sensitivity.

We're looking forward to the next session on Friday 29 April at H.Parsons in Wollongong. Our program will include information about Advanced Care Planning and cultural practices in Macedonian Orthodox funerals. This a free event and everyone who is interested in this topic is welcome to attend.

For more information contact:

H.Parsons Funeral Directors

Community Engagement

Ph: 4249 2224

Email: communityengagement@hparsons.com.au



Venerable Miao You, of Nan Tien Temple (top) and End of Life Doula Carolyn Vaughan (below) in conversation with Michelle Newland, of Mountain View Crematoria



H.Parsons has chapels in Bulli, Wollongong, Warilla and Dapto – and will be opening in Wandandian soon
Phone 4228 9622 or visit hparsons.com.au



If the leaf is crushed, grey myrtle has a strong smell of cinnamon or bubblegum. Photos: Kieran Tapsell



Tree of the Month

By Banksia Bush Care's Kieran Tapsell

Backhousia myrtifolia (Grey Myrtle)

This is a common rainforest tree along the Illawarra coastline and escarpment, but it also

grows from southern New South Wales to Fraser Island. It grows into a large tree, as high as 20 metres in rainforest areas, and there are smaller examples along Stanwell and Hargrave Creeks. There is one example of it regenerating naturally in the Stanwell Avenue Reserve in the circle opposite No. 33 Stanwell Avenue.

Grey myrtle leaf looks like Lilly pilly, but the main difference is that if the leaf is crushed, it has a strong smell of cinnamon or bubble gum. Its wood was highly prized in the past for hammer and axe handles. About 10 have also been planted in the Stanwell Avenue Reserve. It flowers from November to December. The white and sometimes greenish flowers are about 12mm across and 10mm long.

Banksia Bush Care News

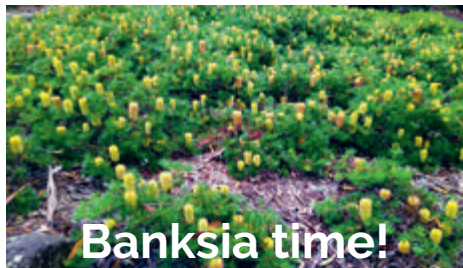
We are working on the eastern and westernmost edges of the Stanwell Avenue Reserve. At No. 33, Stanwell Avenue, fronting onto the beach, Bill Harris and his team have been planting lomandra, dianella, saltbush, snake vine (*Hibbertia scandens*) and other ground covers over the areas where lantana, senna, and Cape honeysuckle had been removed.

Our plans for clearing the western edge extending the deer fence into the cleared area have been put back by the heavy rains. However, when the weather clears, we will be planting numerous rainforest species, which are currently in pots. 🌸

Aevum
Podiatry

<p>Summer is almost over and the school year is fast approaching.</p>	<p>Knees. Ankles. Feet. They're what we know best.</p>
<p>Come and see the team at Aevum Podiatry to help you get "back to school" ready!</p>	
<p>Aevum Podiatry 02 4294 9990 2/20 Walker St Helensburgh info@aevumpodiatry.com.au www.aevumpodiatry.com.au</p>	

Scan me to learn more



By John Elton of Illawarra Grevillea Park

Banksias always make a stunning statement in autumn at the Grevillea Park. The easiest to grow in the Illawarra are *Banksia spinulosa* and *Banksia ericifolia*. Both have different forms, from ground covers to large shrubs. They will grow well in full sun or semi shade. Beautifully intricate cones come in shades of golden yellow through to orange red maroon. An added delight is that these last for months. The highlight in the park is the large bed of *Grevillea spinulosa* Bush Candles growing in dappled light. One can see hundreds golden spikes with lovely contrasting dark brown stamens. Unlike most flowers, these are stiff and wiry to touch but full of nectar and always attract plenty of birds and bees. Our Autumn Open Days are on the first two weekends in May, 10am-4pm. 🌸

Ask Bohmer

What is Sudden Branch Drop? Local arborist Clive Woodnutt (aka Bohmer, his climbing name) has the answer

Dry weather followed by a heavy downpour may create hazards in your yard. After all the wild weather, here's the tip of the month from Bohmer, aka 'The Tree Whisperer'.

Have you heard of Sudden Branch Drop? Also known as Summer Branch Drop, it's a phenomenon whereby eucalyptus trees shed branches after a long period of drought followed by heavy rain – and we've seen a lot of it with the wild 'Summer' weather we've been having across the Illawarra.

To try and avoid it impacting your trees, homes and property, I'd suggest, like many of our community of tree-loving customers, that you get your trees checked out and maintained to reduce stress on those load-bearing limbs!



Bohmer is happy to come take a look at your trees if you need help – contact him through bohmerstreecare.com.au or email info@bohmerstreecare.com.au. And keep caring for those trees!



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Rainbow and
Spawn. Photo
supplied

A counsellor's best friend

Spawn the kelpie cross is a key part of 'walk and talk' sessions with Rainbow Shiva, the Illawarra Flame reports

It's hard not to smile when an interview begins with the words, "Hello, Rainbow."

"My official name is Tammy Rainbow-Glitter Shiva," says the Fernhill local, who recently started a counselling business and has hair to match her colourful name.

"I changed it a few years ago because I got divorced and I didn't want to go back to my maiden name. So I just made up a whole new name."

At the same time, she decided to upskill and study counselling at the Australian College of Applied Professions (ACAP). "Once I qualified, I got a job with a drug and alcohol service."

After five years, Rainbow says it was "time to take the step" and launch her own business, Walk and Talk with Rainbow. To help with these counselling sessions, her three-year-old dog, Spawn, trots along (though if a client's not comfortable around dogs then she stays home).

"Everyone's named her the Love Dog," Rainbow says. "She's a kelpie cross border collie. She does have a lot of energy, but she also loves to just be patted. Clients love it because we go for a walk and they throw the ball for her, then towards the end of the session, we sit down and they can have cuddles."

It's a business model inspired by a lifetime in pet-friendly Wollongong, with its network of off-leash beaches and dog parks.

"I'm a local. I was born in Wollongong Hospital, grew up in Keiraville and I love going to the beach with my dog," Rainbow says.

"When I first started the counselling journey, I always had it in my mind I'd really like to do 'walk and talk', on the beach or in the park or somewhere it's relatively quiet."

Rainbow finds this helps people open up.

"It gets people out into nature. It is quite a calming experience. Walking and pet therapy combined helps somebody decrease anxiety and stress, increase feelings of social support and it provides motivation, stimulation and focus."

Rainbow offers counselling on a wide range of topics, including drug and alcohol, mental health, ADHD, trauma and parenting. Call 0426 260 537, find her on Facebook or see her ad on page 54. 🌸

Meet a 'Conscious Conversationalist'

Austinmer's Ben Owen shares the story behind his new service

I'm Illawarra born and bred, with a psychology degree from Wollongong Uni. In a previous role I used to receive calls from distressed people in need of a listening ear and added to my qualifications by completing a short course from Lifeline.

I realised the positive impact that my studies, empathetic nature and my own personal life experiences had in enhancing my ability to listen to and assist people. Eventually, I quit my corporate career to start helping others full-time.

Society is more complex, yet we're disconnected. Countless articles report increased levels of loneliness, isolation, anxiety and depression.

I saw an opportunity to offer a new point of connection in the space between traditional therapy and confiding with friends or family. The service I offer, called Conscious Conversations, is designed as a precursor (and hopefully a preventative) to counselling. It's for those who require a cathartic release, who are lonely or need an independent trusted confidante.

It's less formal than counselling, designed to enable clients to never feel analysed, assessed, labelled or treated. And yet it's confidential, unbiased and independent, all facets that separate it from the help often received from loved ones.

Consultations include phone/virtual, walk and talk, coffee chats or a unique grounding 'small talk' offer (making a bonsai while chatting).

Visit www.consciousconversations.org.au 🌸



BIZ Briefs

Welcome

Saif Ahmmmed and Umma Ferdoush are the new licensees of Helensburgh Post Office.

Saif has an accounting background and Umma has extensive retail experience. They are looking forward to serving the 2508 community. Long-term staff member Sarah Watts will continue to work at the Post Office to provide continuity and local knowledge.

Outgoing licensees Greg and Lorrelle Watts have retired after 19 years.

“Buying a Post Office licence is a significant investment into the community,” said Lorrelle.

“Saif and Umma are lovely and genuine people and as always we encourage everyone to continue to ‘buy local’ and support this local small business. We wish Saif and Umma every success for the future.

“We want to thank the local community for supporting our small business over the past 19 years and we treasure the loyalty and friendships that have developed. It has been a lot of fun and a delight to watch families grow over the years.”

Greg Watts served as president of the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce for many years and *The Illawarra Flame* would like to thank him for his outstanding service to the business community.



Cheers!

Family-run Five Barrel Brewing – started six years ago by a home-brewing father and son duo – won the Illawarra and South Coast Local Business award for Outstanding Specialty Business. Phil O’Shea shared some of their backstory: “We

opened with a very small tasting room, on an even smaller budget, but we’ve always focused on making the best beer we can! Over the years we’ve roped the rest of the family into the business. We’re now a full house where the whole family has a role to play!

“The name Five Barrel Brewing comes from the size of our brewing system, which is 5 Barrels, or 600L.”



Happy bizaversary!

To Horizon Bank, which is celebrating 20 years in Thirroul. 🌟

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State of the market

Floods, interest rates, pandemics and federal elections – they all have an impact on the property market, and each of these issues is squarely in the spotlight as we conclude the first quarter of 2022. So what’s likely to happen next? Will the incredible price rises and high demand for properties continue? Or has the market peaked? And if so, what’s the outlook for the months ahead? The first quarter of 2022 has continued to show strong demand in our area with Sydney migrants still the most competitive buyers in terms of budgets.

However there are more properties to choose from and less frenzy with office work and overseas travel returning. As such buyers are more fussy and willing to wait to seek out that property that ticks all their boxes. For the good properties this means prices are still as high as ever and for the rest it’s a more challenging environment to get that premium price.

Skip the lines at Symbio

Easter holiday tips from Symbio's Kevin Fallon

With school holidays upon us, did you know that if you are a Season Pass holder you get to skip the main entry line and enter through our special Season Pass entry? That means you get to enjoy more time with the animals, playing in the splash park or adventure playground, and less time waiting to get inside.

The best part is you get unlimited access for 12 months and it has never been more affordable thanks to the NSW Government \$250 Parents NSW Vouchers and \$25 Discover Vouchers.

You can redeem all 5 of your \$50 Parents

NSW Vouchers (available to all parents who homeschooled their children last year) at once to receive \$250 off your season pass, or redeem one \$25 Discover Vouchers per person per day.

You can redeem your vouchers at symbiozoo.com.au from the comfort of home or onsite at Symbio Wildlife Park every day of the week.

You can even put your Parents NSW Vouchers towards a Meerkat, Red Panda, or Koala 'Behind the Scenes Experience' for two people.

Happy Easter from our family to yours.

Visit symbiozoo.com.au



Toastmasters open for all

By Matthew Derbridge, of Helensburgh and District Toastmasters

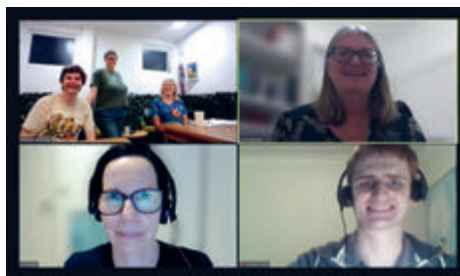
Twenty-four years ago, this region's branch of Toastmasters, a global not-for-profit organisation consisting of about 16,600 clubs and more than 350,000 members, was started. For decades, the club has provided a safe and friendly space for people from all walks of life to build their self-confidence.

The past two years have been tough for everyone, logging into meetings, staring at screens on their desks, remembering to unmute or be visible. Now doors are opening and so is our club. Helensburgh and District Toastmasters meetings are held at The Cupbearer, corner of Parkes St and Gibbons Lane, and our doors are open every 2nd and 4th Monday night of the month. Come in for a 7pm start. This is the perfect opportunity to stand up and speak freely and get the support you need to develop. We are still having Zoom for anyone who cannot travel or wish to remain at home or in office.

Our meetings are fun and engaging, allowing opportunity to talk and get feedback; if you have a wedding speech, work presentation or even a school

project, we will give you tips and tricks to become better. We celebrate holidays and raise awareness of important events. Our meeting on the 14th of March celebrated Pi Day. Next meeting is the 11th of April with none on ANZAC Day.

We welcome anyone aged 18 or over. The first two meetings are free of charge. After that, you will be invited to join our Club, and be entitled to earn valuable speaking qualifications. Email us on Toastmasters2508@gmail.com for further details. 🍷



Darkes Cider is sporting a new look!

By Jo Fahey at Darkes Glenbernie Orchard

SURPRISE! The Darkes Cider range is on its way with fresh new designs on the full range of ciders! Also new is that our Dry Cider and Perry will be in a can!

They are still in production and these pictures are mock-ups but Howler, Little Blue and Dry should be released mid-April. Perry will hit the deck by late April but it will definitely be worth the wait!

Last year we were thinking it was time to freshen our designs, so we started the lengthy process of redesign. They haven't changed in 10 years and, whilst we love the original design concept, it was time for a makeover! We love our new look and hope everyone else does too!

Special Offer April Only

Be one of the first to get our new-look cans with an online order at www.darkes.com.au

Use code FLAME for a \$10 discount on any Darkes Cider carton (24 x 375ml) placed during the month of April 2022 only. Also free local delivery on cider cases (Sutherland Shire to Kiama). We deliver on Tuesdays and Fridays and will fill orders as soon as stock arrives.

Visit darkes.com.au



In the can!
Darkes
Cider's
new look
launches
in April



SCAN ME



Hello honey!

By Green Connect general manager Kylie Flament

Bees fascinate us, produce delicious honey, and are needed to pollinate most of our fruit and many vegetables. They're also very cute, have an amazing life cycle, and can be kept in your backyard.

I was curious about bees (European honey bees, in particular) so went along to a workshop at the Green Connect farm a couple of years ago and, like most participants and anyone who learns about beekeeping, fell in love with them.

Less than two months after my one-day course, 30,000 or so of these incredible insects moved into my backyard in a standard hive, and my beekeeping journey really began.

The beekeeper who sold me the hive, Andrea, helped me to choose a position that was a little bit protected, would get lots of sun in winter but a bit of shade in summer, where the entrance could face north, and not far from a fence so that the bees would be encouraged to fly up rather than across the backyard.

I bought all the gear – beekeeping suit, gloves, hive tool, smoker. There are other things you can buy that make life a little easier, particularly if you're going to have lots of hives, but this was enough for me.

A friend who had also done the course came over and helped me open up the hive for the first time. We were both nervous and excited. We talked to the bees the whole time, which was probably more to calm ourselves than to calm the bees. We exclaimed over each frame of honey, brood (bee larvae) and bee bread (a mixture of nectar and pollen that they save up to feed the larvae).

Tasting our first harvest of honey was like Christmas had come early. It was a whole family

event to uncap the cells of honey, scrape it into a bowl, strain it to remove the wax, and, of course, the main event – lick our spoons and bowl clean. The kids were keen to pitch in every step of the way, and continue to treat any day that I harvest honey as a major celebration.

I've been stung a few times, which does hurt, but I have learned to get the stinger out as soon as possible, smear honey on the area, and take an antihistamine to be on the safe side. It is the price you pay for keeping bees, and given a few of them get squashed while I'm checking the hive, no matter how careful I am, and the fact that I'm robbing their honey stores, I really don't blame them for getting upset.

All in all, it is a wonderful backyard hobby. It is an incredible honour to watch the bee lifecycle in action, watching baby bees being born, bees cleaning the hive and feeding their young, bees foraging for nectar and pollen and bringing it back to make wax, honey and bee bread. And like all good beekeepers, when I see a bee in the garden now I no longer think "eek, don't sting me!" but "hello little one, thank you and go well".

Some great bee facts ...

Worker bees are all female, only live for five to six weeks and in that time they each make 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey

The queen bee lives for up to five years and lays up to 2500 eggs per day!

Drones (bees) don't look after the hive, forage for nectar or pollen or make honey and they can't sting. Their only job is to mate with other hives' queen bees (if they're lucky). 🍯



What's On at Green Connect

Regular Farm Tours at the Green Connect in Warrawong: Alternate Thursdays and Saturdays gam

SAT 30 APRIL - INDEPTH BEEKEEPING

Green Connect's next beekeeping course is on from gam to 4.30pm. Tickets are \$192 (or \$132 for those who need them) and include morning tea, lunch and all the tools, equipment and beekeeping suits you need for the day.

Bookings: green-connect.com.au

NINA needs volunteers

By Northern Illawarra Neighbour Aid manager Sharon Gissane



Northern Illawarra Neighbour Aid (NINA) is looking for volunteers – and it's a role where the rewards can flow both ways.

"When I was feeling a bit lost, volunteering with NINA gave me a sense of purpose," said Mollie, a volunteer who has since become a NINA staff member.

"I felt like I was really becoming part of the community. Such a simple task for me – to drive a client to an appointment, but I really felt like it made a difference.

"Oh and the chats were the best! Getting to know these clients is a privilege."

There are a range of ways to get involved, including 1-to-1 transport, helping with our social groups, driving one of our buses to outings, Meals on Wheels deliveries, 1-to-1 social support or helping with grocery shopping.

Please get in touch. No amount of time is too small.

NINA is a local not-for-profit organisation dedicated to serving our senior citizens. Our offices are opposite Helensburgh Coles at 18 Walker Street. Call (02) 4294 1900 or follow @northernillawarraneighbouraid on Facebook. 🌟

Northern Illawarra
Neighbour Aid Inc.

NINA

www.nina.org.au

NINA SHOPPING BUS APRIL 2022

Pick up and drop off direct to your home.
Bookings essential 4294 1900. Pick up from 9am.

DATE	DESTINATION	DESTINATION
1st April	Warrawong (\$10)	
5th April	Bunnings Kirrawee (\$10)	
8th April	Shellharbour (\$10)	Corrimal (\$5)
15th April	EASTER FRIDAY NO SHOPPING	
19th April	Flower Power Milperra (\$10)	
22nd April	Figtree (\$10)	Corrimal (\$5)
29th April	Macarthur Square (\$10)	

Monday–Friday (9am–5pm) | telephone 02 4294 1900
18 Walker Street, Helensburgh



Ryan the chef

In the first of our new Local Foodie series, meet Ryan O'Shannessy, head chef at Thirroul's Pará restaurant and owner of Flame Tree Food

Ryan O'Shannessy is a busy bloke with a whole lot on his (work) plate. He's the head chef at Thirroul's well-regarded Pará restaurant and the co-founder and now sole owner/operator of Flame Tree Food, a popular purveyor of boutique food items, such as plant-based cheese, pasta and more.

He may look like a nightclub bouncer but he has a clinically creative mind, a tremendous work ethic and brings a wealth of experience to his work, honed in restaurants around the world.

Ryan grew up in the Sutherland Shire, moved to Tasmania when his dad started a new job there. He began working as a kitchen hand at Launceston's St. George Hotel when he was only 13. He moved back to Sydney at 16 and worked as a kitchen hand at Elio in Leichhardt, and started his apprenticeship at 17.

He moved to London when he was 23 and continued to clock up years of real-world experience. He has worked in restaurants in Sydney, Kakadu National Park, London, Malaga, Spain, Noosa, the Blue Mountains, Melbourne and he "staged" (worked for free, for the experience) in Colombia.

Ryan kindly took time out of his busy work schedule to answer our questions.

How did you get started in the kitchen?

My grandmother, my mother and my auntie were all incredible cooks. So I grew up around good food.

Has all your international experience influenced your approach?

Yeah, definitely. I think that's one of the biggest things as a chef. There are so many different cuisines out there and you start to get interested in food and you start to try a whole lot of different things and you want to go to the source.

I spent a lot of time in South-East Asia. A friend of mine moved there, so I've travelled through there and eaten a lot of the food.

I think if you're interested in food then you're definitely interested in different cultures and different flavours that people have to offer – and travelling opens that up to you.

Especially in South America and Asia, where you've just got an abundance of street food, obviously strange and interesting stuff that you never encounter in Australia, available to buy for a few dollars on a street corner.

'Fresh is best' seems to be a crucial principle in your approach.

That's always been a consideration in cooking. When I lived in Tasmania, we had fruit trees and we had vegetable gardens. We didn't live close to any shops or anything, so we grew a lot of our own food and it's a huge difference.

Until you have that, where you can walk out your front door and pick something from the garden and cook it, you don't really see the difference between that and what you buy in a supermarket.

It's important in cooking to use the best quality produce and the freshest produce, because if you don't start with something good, you're not going to end up with something good.

I've tried to use the best possible produce and work with growers as well – it's very different to if you just buy generic produce from the market, you don't even know where half of it's from, versus if you work closer with producers, the difference is huge. A lot of these guys go out of their way to grow good-quality produce and beautiful vegetables, good quality eggs.

And that makes a massive difference to your final product.

How long have you been at Pará?

I started in late 2019, just working casually. And then the head chef left just before the lockdown, and I took over.

How has the menu evolved since then?

Well, Pará has always been Mediterranean. That's always been the standard the owners have wanted to maintain.

There was a very heavy Spanish influence, Northern Spain, kind of French border, and then it gradually became more Southern, moving further into the south of Spain.

And now it's a bit more Italian. And we're probably going to kind of move up through Italy over the next six months or so.

Tell us about your company, Flame Tree Food. For starters, why that name?

I used to surf down here when I was younger and I always liked hiking through the Royal National Park to get to surf spots. I just always had a bit of a thing for the trees. Flame trees are just very original and very unusual – there are very few trees in Australia and probably in the world that have that bright red look about them.

And they're just so different. They're so unique, and beautiful.

And setting up the company in Illawarra as well. It was something very specific to this region.

What is Flame Tree Food well known for?

We started selling food in May 2020 – and some of the first stuff that we sold was actually plant-based cheese.

Most of what we sell at the moment is fresh pasta [think mouth-watering creations such as handmade pumpkin and goats' cheese agnolotti] and a range of plant-based cheese, including



All photos:
Anthony Warry



smoked almond ricotta, white mould cashew milk soft cheese, and others.

What are some of the more challenging aspects of being a head chef and also operating your own business?

I think everyone's suffering with staffing at the moment. It's very hard to find people.

Juggling the two – Pará and Flame Tree Food – is a constant challenge, to be honest. There are a lot of days where I just think: what's wrong with me?

It's just time, really. I make the food, pack it and deliver it to all of my wholesale customers.

So, just simply finding enough hours in the day to be able to make everything fresh and then deliver it.

What are some of the more rewarding aspects?

It's getting to cook what I want to cook, within reason, at Pará, that's the main thing.

I'd like to expand the menu more – do a lot more technical and complex kind of stuff.

I've made bits and pieces of cheeses in various places I've worked, but Flame Tree Food gives me

the opportunity to focus on that and get it out there, and especially see people's reactions.

There are a lot of great producers in the vegan cheese market but it's still lacking in a lot of ways. It hasn't really been taken seriously.

For me, being able to be a part of that kind of cheese revolution is quite fun. And being able to innovate and create new products and make nice food and cook good food and just enjoy it.

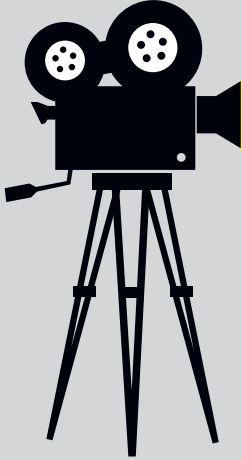
The freedom to do whatever I want is the main thing that keeps me going.

Pará is 258 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul, www.parathirroul.com

Find Ryan's new website at www.flametreefood.net and follow @flametreefood For orders and prices, email orders@flametreefood.com.au or DM on Instagram.

Keep reading: look out for more Local Foodie stories on everything from pizza to gelato coming up in future issues of the *Flame*. Want to be featured? Email editor@theillawarraflame.com.au 📧

RayWhite



FREE

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

**arrive before 5:45pm for the
easter egg hunt then settle in
for 6.30pm screening**



**Easter Saturday
16 April 2022**

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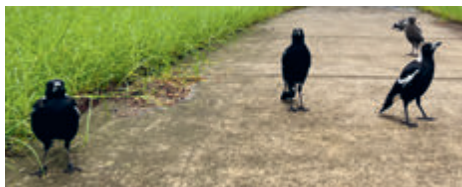
**Funds donated to Helensburgh
Thistles Soccer Club**

**Presented by Mattias Samuelsson
from Ray White Helensburgh**



Letters to the Editor

Write to editor@theillawarraflame.com.au



East Thirroul Magpies Disappear

Are you able to enlighten me on the mysterious and sudden disappearance of a family of magpies who, until spring 2021, frequented our local area, Bath, Ocean, Harbord and McCauley Streets Thirroul, and were much loved and appreciated by the local residents?

This family group of magpies, numbering approximately 10 individuals, were daily visitors to our streets and homes for the last 15 years, and possibly longer, bringing their babies along as soon as they could fly each year. They would forage around us in our gardens, completely relaxed with our proximity to them, warbling their songs in reply to our poor attempts to mimic. They became so much a part of our daily lives that we could distinguish individual birds by their behavior.

Coinciding with the erection of, "Caution Swooping Magpie", signs by Council in early Spring, the whole family group disappeared from our locality without a trace. Initially we assumed they had temporarily moved somewhere locally to nest but none of the individuals have returned.

We miss their songs early each morning as well as their companionship in our backyards, and would like to know the reason for their disappearance. We know that Council, on occasions, relocate or cull troublesome individual birds and are curious to know if this or some other fate befell them.

– Adrian Johnson, Thirroul

Magpie mystery update: Council didn't do it

The Illawarra Flame contacted Council and a spokesperson said: "The family of magpies in Thirroul is known to Council staff, and Council has not relocated or culled these birds.

"The signage in McCauley Street, Thirroul was installed at the request of a community member who reported being repeatedly swooped, and seeing others' swooped as well.

"Magpies are a protected species and it is an offence to harm them."

Our Backyard Zoology columnist Amanda De George suggested the magpies may have moved to

where there is a more food or less competition

Meanwhile, Adrian is afraid that poisonous baits set for rats may have taken out the omnivorous songbirds.

Do you know more?

Email editor@theillawarraflame.com.au

Ethics teachers needed at Helensburgh

We are seeking volunteers, so that we can provide ethics classes for all the families who have requested it at Helensburgh Public School.

We currently require teachers across all stages. In ethics classes, children learn how to think logically, disagree respectfully and support their arguments with evidence, rather than act according to blind habit or peer pressure.

No experience is necessary – all training is provided by Primary Ethics. If you are looking for an opportunity to make a valuable contribution to our school, please email ethics.helensburgh@gmail.com

– Lorraine Creasy, Helensburgh

Women of Scarborough Wombarra SLSC

A wonderful article ("The Club That Saved Itself", March 2022) highlighting the women now associated with the surf club, and the fact that it is now going from strength to strength, but it makes out that before Rachelle, there were no women patrolling in the club.

I undertook my Bronze Medallion (BM) at the club in 1996/97 – the Chief Instructor was a young woman called Allison. Another young local woman, Kelly van Loo, was Patrol captain.

Toner Stephenson (middle aged) and Jane Barnetson (about 16) did their Bronze with me, and went on to patrol for subsequent seasons.

I became Chief Instructor and we trained many young women/girls for their Surf Rescue Certificates (SRC) and BM, including Rachelle, my daughter Meagan, and Hayley Ellis. These three school friends obtained their SRCs together, and then Meagan and Rachelle completed their BMs, Meagan at 15 and Rachelle when 16. Rachelle and Meagan patrolled for a few years.

Hayley's older sister Errin and her friend Ashleigh Boers did their BMs prior to Rachelle and Meagan, and patrolled for many years. Errin was Patrol Captain.

Rhiannon and Phillipa Cooke with their friend Wendy, also undertook their BM whilst I was



instructing and went on to patrol for years.

Whilst what is currently happening for the young women in the club is wonderful, we should not forget that there were some very dedicated and hard-working young women at the club who had come before. I would just like to see that they are not forgotten.

– Allan Bromwich

Help Aiden raise funds for PTSD

My two boys and I live in Scarborough. We enjoy receiving and reading the *Flame*. Aiden is a well-known young artist in the local area. It would be lovely if you could run this letter and help Aiden reach a goal that is not all about monetary value. Aiden is hoping to reduce the stigma surrounding PTSD and Autism.

Aiden is cutting off his long hair to raise \$6000 for two causes: he's donating his hair to help make wigs for people who have cancer; and he's donating to Fearless, a charity that aims to improve the lives of those living with PTSD.

Aiden has Autism, and getting his hair cut is a big deal! Please support him any way you can.



Scan the QR code or go to www.mycase.com.au/page/246229/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd.

– Simone Read, Scarborough 🍀

Holidays at the Library

By librarian Lindsay Carapella

Holiday activities are back at Wollongong City Libraries for ages 5+ and bookings are essential.

LEGO: Bring your imagination and creativity – we will provide a mountain of LEGO!

Helensburgh: Wed 13 April, 10.30-11.30am

Thirroul: Tue 19 April, 10.30-11.30am

MAKE IT AND TAKE IT: A fun session of craft and creativity.

Helensburgh: Wed 20 April, 10.30-11.30am

Thirroul: Tue 12 April, 10.30-11.30am

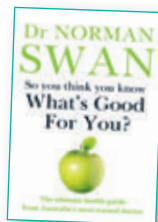
MOVIE TIME – LUCA (Rated G/95 mins)

Thirroul: Thu 14 April, 10.30am-12 noon

What everyone's reading

Wollongong City Libraries' Top 5 Adult Non-Fiction Loans in February 2022 were:

- *So You Think You Know What's Good for You?* – Norman Swan
- Love stories – Trent Dalton
- *Well Hello: Meanderings from the World of Chat 10 Looks 3* – Annabel Crabb and Leigh Sales
- *Phosphorescence: on awe, wonder & things that sustain you when they world goes dark* – Julia Baird
- *Any Ordinary Day* – Leigh Sales 🍀



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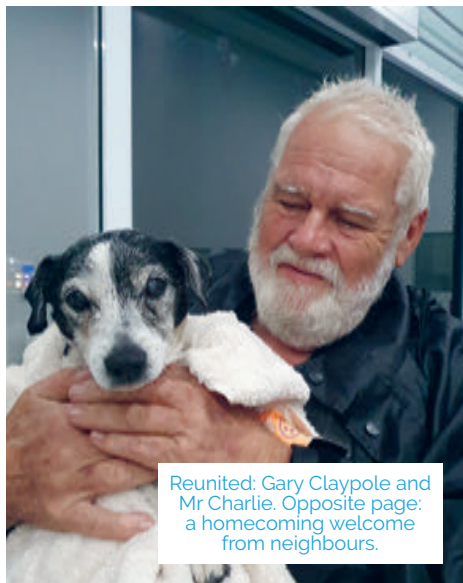
WRITE TO: PO Box 3048, Austinmer NSW

VISIT: WorkLife Coledale, 741-743 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Coledale – by appointment

02 4208 0403

Mr Charlie's amazing adventure

A 16-year-old dog with a dicky heart and breathing difficulties survived four days of being lost in Carricks Creek bushland, the Illawarra Flame reports



Mr Charlie's four-day adventure in a rain-sodden, lantana-infested creek began on Sunday, 20 February when his owner, Coledale's Gary Claypole, was woken from a Sunday afternoon nap by the sudden sound of running and barking.

"Charlie is 16 years old and he's got a few medical issues, so it was really out of character. I thought I'd better take him for a walk. I opened the gate and he took off like a scalded cat."

Gary's neighbour, Dana, and her daughter Asher saw the dog get away. "Little Asher gave chase. She came back and her eyes were wide as saucers, saying that he'd run off down Lawrence Hargrave Drive, in the traffic."

Gary jumped in his ute and drove down immediately. A passer-by waved him down to say he'd seen the dog run into the yard of a house with a creek running beside it.

"It's called Carricks Creek. It's inaccessible to get down into, it's very steep, very overgrown."

The man offered to help – he went in, had a look but didn't find Charlie.

Charlie was still missing on Monday morning, when Gary went back to have another search.

"I called, 'Mr Charlie, where are you?' No response. Then I noticed that the creek is piped out to the ocean, to beside the Coledale Surf Life Saving Club."

For the next few days, Gary and a friend, Eric, went down to where the creek pipes out, expecting to find Charlie's body washed up. "Because during all this time there was torrential rain and the creek was swollen and the pipe was pumping out water. And I thought, 'At least I'll have his body.'"

During the hunt for Mr Charlie, Gary called on the fire brigade, the SES and the police but, with wild wet weather surging throughout the state, emergency services were too tied up with other work. Through it all, however, the community was on the lookout for Charlie.

"He's well loved. He'll pull me across the road to say hello to somebody. Children will be walking by and I don't know who they are and they'll say, hi, Mr Charlie."

"My son had put his image up on the Lost and Found pets page on Facebook, I'd put up signs at the local cafes."

"The lady in the house where he ran into her was very nice. She'd left out food and water. I'd left the gate open and the light on in the hope ..."

"Every morning I'd get up. And there was no Charlie. Nobody had seen him, he hadn't been knocked or picked up by the council. He wasn't at the pound. I just knew that he was still in that creek. And he was probably dead because he ran all the way. He's got a bad heart, he's over 16 and he's got an airway problem."

By Thursday, Gary was almost resigned to the idea that he'd never see Charlie again.

"I'd already started to throw away a few things of his, but I thought, I'm not going to throw away his bed or his water bowls."

"I said a prayer to my wife, who recently passed away, a year or so ago. I said, 'Deb, have you got any pull up there with a big man? Now's the time – I need him back.' I think she had words."

At 8pm on the Thursday, when Charlie had been missing for four days and the rain was bucketing down, Gary heard a knock at his front door.

"It was my neighbour, Dana, saying that a little girl, Lilly, beside the creek was doing her homework near an open window and had heard a dog coughing and barking. She said, 'Quick Gary, Charlie must still be there.'"

"She'd sent her husband, Jarod and her son, Jake, on ahead, because it was pouring rain, they were in their wet-weather gear."

Gary jumped in his ute and joined them.

"It was dark by this time. Jarod and his son managed to get down into the creek with torches and they were up to their knees in water and the

elephant-ear plants and bullrushes were up over their heads – that’s how overgrown it is.

“We were all on the bank, singing out, ‘Charlie, Charlie!’

Jarod said, ‘Be quiet! We’re trying to listen for him.’”

Then, through the raindrops, they heard the soft jingle of a dog tag.

“Jarod was able to follow that. They didn’t see him until they were right on top of him. He was behind a bush, tangled up in weeds, shivering, drenched, only a few inches above the water line.

“Miraculously, he’d survived this ordeal.”

Gary rushed Charlie to a 24-hour vet, the ARH Animal Referral Hospital in Fairy Meadow. The little Jack Russell had lost two kilos, was badly dehydrated and had blood on his tail. “He had two puncture marks, about a centimetre and a half apart, which looked suspiciously like a snake bite.”

After two nights at the hospital and fluids to rehydrate, Gary brought him home. However, Mr Charlie’s adventure wasn’t quite over.

“They said that his tail had died from the bite mark down. So I took him back, they amputated his tail, and he hasn’t looked back. He has started to eat, walking further and further each day.

“I’m so grateful to all of the people who looked for him, neighbours were driving around at night. Everybody’s just been amazing.

“It was raining the whole time and it was dark

and slippery and overgrown and generally unpleasant – nobody can believe that he survived out there for the time he did.”

As the Flame went to press Gary reported that Mr Charlie had his mojo back! “The stitches have been removed and he is showing off his new shortened tail,” he said.

As well as Dana and Jarod, Lilly and her mum, Mel, Gary would like to thank all the neighbours who went out looking for Charlie, including Eric Bruton; Brendan & family; Cassandra, Summer & Ebony Cahill; Moira & Ross Cunningham; Robyn & Patricia; and the staff at Earth Walker & Sketch cafes who put posters in their windows. 🍀



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What if cars were guests?

Bulli mum of four Lena Huda is working to bring about change to keep kids happy, safe and healthy, the Illawarra Flame reports



For Lena Huda, the idea of 30km/h suburban speed limits, playing tennis in the street and walking solo and safely to school from age six isn't a pipe dream. It is a memory.

Lena grew up in Germany, home of the high-speed Autobahn and also of suburban slow zones legislated since the 1980s. Founder of the website 30please.org, Lena wants the same 'shared streets' experience for her children growing up in Bulli and today works full-time as a pro bono advocate for road safety in Australia.

Ahead of Wollongong's first 'Slow Down Day', a groundbreaking event on March 25 that she helped organise, Lena shared her experiences as a child in Germany and a parent in Australia.

Tell us about your childhood and 'slow streets'.

I'm one of four and we grew up in a suburban little town in Germany in the 1980s, similar to where I live now in Bulli. It was back then that 30k was introduced. Our neighbourhood was new and it was built for 30k. That meant we were always playing on the street, playing tennis on the street, learning how to ride a bike on the street, walking to school from six years old. It's really encouraged by everyone, by schools, police, media... teaching a kid how to walk to school by themselves. From six years old, kids have that freedom, and responsibility.

How long was your walk to school?

Twenty-five minutes. Later on, from high school, it was a 20-minute bike ride. Our school days were like four hours. We had to do homework, but then we would just play outside on the street.

Do you remember any close calls with cars?

Once, when I was about 12, I was riding my bike home and I was going down the hill, and a car was coming. They stopped and I tried to stop, but I

ended up on top of the car. My parents had to pay for the damage to the car, but I don't even remember getting a scratch. How different that would have been if that car had been moving, especially at high speed – maybe I wouldn't be even sitting here.

I never knew of anybody killed in a car crash.

What is one of your happiest memories?

My uncle taught me how to ride a bike. I remember he was in the middle of the street and when he let go, I cycled! I was quite young and it was so much fun – the speed and the fresh air, the freedom.

Switching to today, how old are your children and do they play in the street?

I have four, aged 3, 5, 7 and 9. Yes, it actually started happening during Covid. All the kids ended up playing on the street – cricket, skateboarding, tennis, riding their bikes. I thought, 'Wow, this reminds me of my childhood.'

We have so much more connection in our neighbourhood, people can talk and get to know each other more. When somebody drives through, one of our neighbours, they go really slow and they stop and have a chat. It's really beautiful, but I also know it's a very privileged street because we live in a cul-de-sac with traffic calmers.

Have you made any new friends through it?

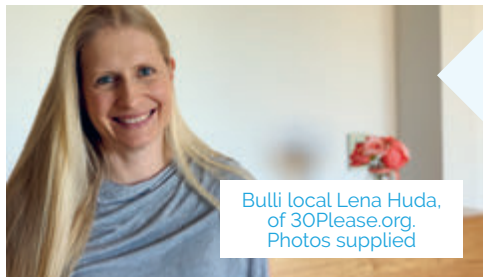
A little boy used to do Soccer Joeys with my son, but they didn't connect, because it was one of these supervised activities. In the lockdown, they met on the street. Now they are good mates and I've also become friends with his mum and dad.

What are the downsides?

I feel this tension because what if somebody says, 'What are your kids doing here, playing in the street?' In the Netherlands, they actually have signs



Graph by 30Please.org



Bulli local Lena Huda,
of 30Please.org.
Photos supplied

saying 'Cars Are Guests'. There's no sign here, saying 'cars are guests'. There's no sign saying 'watch out children playing on the street'. There's a 50km sign. That's the only sign there.

It's an interesting concept [sharing streets]. We went to a holiday park after a year in Australia. I thought, 'Wow.' You know, kids are not playing on the street, and then we went to this holiday park and all the kids were allowed to go wild.

As an outsider to the culture, I thought, 'Oh, this is so funny that you pay for the privilege to have that, but then in your own neighbourhood where you could have it without any cost ... you don't.'

It's also interesting about stranger danger – if you think about strangers, you think about holiday parks – but in your own neighbourhood, there shouldn't be any strangers there. 🌸

Wheels Of Change

Three local road safety advocates – Lena Huda, Jon Lindley of Safe Streets to School, and Kelly Andrews, CEO Healthy Cities Illawarra – organised a ground-breaking 'Slow Down Day' last month.

On 25 March, in Mt St Thomas, Lindsay Park and Figtree Heights, drivers were urged to slow down to 30km/h to make it safer for children walking, scooting and riding to and from school.

Later this year, a 30km/h trial will run in Helensburgh's town centre.

Official wheels of change spin slowly but government statistics show action is needed: land transport accidents were the most common cause of death among children aged 1–14, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Scan the QR code to read more about the 'Three Transport Priorities' campaign ahead of the federal election or visit theillawarraflame.com.au



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SCAN ME

'Like a red waterfall'

Residents are joining forces in a battle to stop pollution, writes Wombarra's David Roach



Polluted water ends up on the once-pristine Coledale rock shelf.
Photo: Hayden Griffith

If you're driving north along Lawrence Hargrave Drive, just past Coledale hospital you'll see on the left a haphazard-looking development site on steeply sloping land overlooking the ocean. Orange and black plastic sheets are scattered over much of the denuded, muddy excavation. Hay bales, sandbags and barriers indicate attempts to control the red, sediment-filled water that, on most rainy days, still pours from the site, flooding the road, inundating neighbouring properties, flowing out across what was once a pristine rock shelf on its way to the ocean. It's more than an eyesore, it's an environmental disaster.

Two years ago, when residents first heard rumours that a development company, Wombarra Vista, had bought the block and intended to squeeze 16 home sites onto it, the proposal was greeted with disbelief. For decades this land had been labelled "Slippage. Never to be built on". The Northern Illawarra coast is notoriously unstable. In 1974, after a period of rain, a cottage immediately in front of this land collapsed when the ground beneath it slipped away. A few years after that, this part of Lawrence Hargrave Drive gave way and was closed for months. Even the nearby bus shelter has had to be replaced three times.

But Wombarra Vista submitted a development application and, despite residents' strenuous objections, "Seacliff Estate" got the green light. The concession: 14 building sites instead of 16.

Within weeks, Wombarra Vista had bulldozed the site, removing trees, boulders and thousands of tonnes of top soil, effectively creating a giant clay bowl that looks like a mini open-cut mine.

When the first rains came, residents discovered the 400m³ sediment retention basin stipulated in the DA had not been created and the site's only stormwater pipe, which ran under the road and properties, was damaged.

The first pollution event happened in late

December. After only 30mm of rain the undersized drainpipe couldn't cope. Clay slurry flowed from the site like a red waterfall, across the road, through properties, polluting the rock-shelves and creating plumes in the ocean that stretched for kilometres.

When a pollution event like this happens, who do you call? Around here it's Wollongong City Council, the Environmental Protection Authority or the Member for Heathcote. Each of them swatted residents' concerns away, shifted the blame.

In their distress, residents felt abandoned. And the pollution continued. Twenty-six separate events have been recorded to date.

Locals realised they were on their own. They were pensioners, students, renters, owners. They pooled their skills. They went out into rain storms to document each pollution event. Someone knew someone with a drone. Because no official authority was interested in testing the run-off, they learned how to do it themselves. Run-off from the site was 200 times the legal limit for suspended solids. They consulted water scientists, who warned that, without urgent action, this sediment would blanket the aquatic habitat, smother plants and animals and clog the gills of fish.

Only when the media picked up on the story and dramatic drone images of the pollution were shown was there action. Politicians and officials began to visit. Council officers promised stricter compliance but because of State Government restrictions, they could only issue small fines.

As we write this on March 27, the site has flooded again. Right now, unfiltered, sediment-filled run-off is being pumped out over the rock shelf and into the ocean. Once again, massive orange plumes stretch for kilometres.

So, the battle continues.

Read on: follow our Wombarra blog at www.theillawarraflame.com.au 🔥



Have your say on Thirroul Plaza – again!

By Louise Wellington, of Save Thirroul Village

The long-running Plaza redevelopment proposal has now found its way to the Land and Environment Court. And, you guessed it, there's another exhibition involved!

The Plaza DA will be heard in Court on 25-28 July 2022. The developer has changed their plans again – the new plans will be exhibited from 30 March until 13 April.

These are the final plans to be considered by the Commissioner of the court for them to make a decision about the development, and so it's important that, once again, the community has their say on these plans.

At the time of print, the new plans have not been publicly available, and hence the changes aren't clear. However, given that previous amendments of the various versions of this DA have been minimal, we can speculate that the new plans will have minimum impact on addressing the concerns thousands of community members have raised.

A quick recap on what's wrong with this proposal: introduction of a new set of traffic lights at King Street at the expense of a significant amount of street parking along Lawrence Hargrave Drive and King St; the bulk and scale of the design is out of character with Thirroul; loss of views from the village to the escarpment; introduction of 77 units into the heart of the village puts evening activities such as live music at risk; uncertainty of the impact to downstream stormwater network in large rain events; small business at risk due to loss of parking access.

Save Thirroul Village will be providing more information about the latest plans out via its various communication channels.

Visit www.savethirroulvillage.com.au 📌

Search is on for new Shed

By Paul Blanksby of Helensburgh Men's Shed

No one would be surprised to hear that the Men's Shed were building an ark to float us all away from The Deluge of '22. But no! The sounds emanating from the timber and metal-working areas of your Men's Shed were happy blokes making picnic wine caddy's, repairing rocking horses, making a Surprise for the Lions Mini Fair and so much more.

Even during the worst of the rain, the Shed's friendship kept our spirits up. Rosie's Morning Brew warmed our tummies and our little vegetable garden went berserk – cucumbers anyone?

Led by Michael Croft, the Shed's Committee has been working with Council, identifying several Crown Land plots that may allow us to build a new facility for the Helensburgh Men's Shed, enabling us to open more frequently, invite even wider community participation and ensure there is a 'Shed in the Burgh' for years to come.

Our motto has always been 'Serving the 2508 Community'. We love to do this by improving men's physical and mental health and giving them a safe place to be, where they can do meaningful and rewarding projects, such as the Stanwell Beach SLSC flagpole, assisting animal welfare groups with fauna nesting boxes, making kids' toys, the RSL

Annual School Perpetual Awards, Little Libraries (love them!), free-of-charge work for pensioners and the unemployed, the station sign at the glowworm tunnel, Dr Cox's surgery chair and the old Ford Baker's oven at the Historical Society.

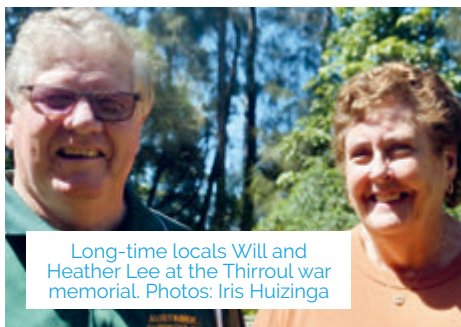
Look out for our stall on 16 April at the Lions Easter Mini-Fair and say g'day to the shedders.

Visit helensburghmensshed.org.au, 199A Parkes Street Helensburgh 9-3 Monday and Tuesday. Call Michael Croft 0413 401 522; Ron Balderston 0410 564 752; Paul Blanksby 0403 701 788 📌



'Thank you for your service'

Those five simple words mean so much, Will Lee, vice-president of Austinmer Thirroul RSL Sub Branch, tells Iris Huizinga



Long-time locals Will and Heather Lee at the Thirroul war memorial. Photos: Iris Huizinga

Heather and Will Lee, long time Thirroul locals, sit down with me to talk about their volunteering work for the RSL and the history of the well-known Thirroul war memorial. But first Will has to be interviewed by the ABC, and a cameraman sends a drone up. The stone digger overseeing the park stares ahead as the drone circles his slouch hat.

We are all here today because the obelisk at Austinmer was unveiled 100 years ago and the Thirroul Memorial quietly passed this milestone in 2020.

Heather and Will have been married for over 50 years. When I take their picture, they automatically hold hands. A smiling Heather (67) is the honorary secretary of the local RSL sub-branch, a "thankless" job according to Will (71), who is the vice president.

Birth of the stone soldier

Will: This memorial was raised by members of the public. The lady that collected the majority money, "Grannie" Riach, knocked on doors around the town. Keep in mind that money was really tight, the coal mines and railways used to go on strikes, during the war a lot of men were serving. But Grannie got the shillings together and gradually ended up collecting 183 pounds from all of her efforts. Without her, that memorial wouldn't be there. Now, you would call her an entrepreneur. I don't know what 183 pounds in 1916 would equate to in real money now. [roughly \$21,000]

Austinmer Thirroul RSL sub branch

Heather: We run a monthly meeting with all the members: our mission is to make sure the veterans and their families are looked after.

If they need anything, then we can organise that through RSL Lifecare or DVA [Department of Veterans' Affairs]. We keep an eye on them and

check on them on a regular basis. My job is to make sure that they get all the information that comes out from RSL NSW. Other volunteers help sell badges to fundraise for Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

Memorial upkeep

Heather: If you have a look at the bottom section [of the memorial], some of the mortar is leeching out. So all that has to be repaired and we've applied for a grant to get that done. Someone had climbed up the memorial once. They hung onto the gun to pull themselves up and broke the gun. It was all broken and there was blood on the ground. We have security cameras here now.

Will: Five years ago, we replaced all of the plaques on the Memorial wall with stainless steel ones, the old ones were all bronze. They were all falling off. The glues that they had in those days weren't like the glues and the cements that you have in this day and age.

Anzac Day and Dawn Service

Will: There could be around 2000 people at the Austinmer memorial, about 250 at the Thirroul memorial. Austinmer has always been the big attraction, because you're right on the beach and the beach is about the same size as Anzac Cove.

The sound system for Anzac Dawn service cost us \$2000. We didn't know where we were going to get that money from, but we were going to do it. Then Club Thirroul said: we can help you. So they are providing us with the sound system.

Heather: We all have our Austinmer Thirroul blazers and [the veterans] all have their medals on. They are not only wearing their medals on the left, they also wear their descendants' medals on the right. So you might see quite a lot of people with medals on both sides of their jacket.



Why people should come to this memorial

Heather: Not only to remember what those people who died did for them, but also to remember the people who are serving now, to thank them for what they're doing.

Will: Look in Ukraine, at what's happening now. You come here any day of the week and it's amazing the amount of people that just come and stare at the Memorial and at the wall.

I don't know if they have relatives there, or they're just looking at it and saying, thank you very much. If you see someone dressed in a uniform, walk up and say: thank you for your service. It means so much to them, it's not funny. Just those five words.

Heather: [The stone digger] looks fabulous, he really does. He is just so distinctive ... he has been there all my life. ✨



ANZAC Day Dawn Services Monday, 25 April 2022

Austinmer Thirroul RSL Sub-Branch will be holding the annual ANZAC Day Dawn Services and welcomes all to attend to pay homage to the fallen, returned and serving defence force personnel.

Services at Austinmer Beach and Thirroul's Woodward Park will commence at 6am.

Afterwards, join the sub-branch for breakfast at Club Thirroul.

Helensburgh RSL Sub-Branch will hold the annual dawn service at 6am at the Helensburgh War Memorial in Charles Harper Park.

Every year the sub-branch awards a student from each of the local primary schools (Helensburgh, Stanwell Park, Otford and Holy Cross) who displays the characteristics of the ANZAC spirit.

Helensburgh Lions' ANZAC Day Memorial Service will start at 10am at the small triangular park at the entrance to Stanwell Tops. Refreshments will be served after the service. All welcome. ✨

Lest we forget: Norbert Charles Oliver (1904-1941)

By Jenny Donohoe, of Helensburgh & District Historical Society

When you go to the Anzac Service at the Stanwell Tops Memorial Park on Anzac Day there are several crosses scattered around with some names unrecognisable and few you can read. The name that stuck up was Norbert Oliver died 1941 HMAS Parramatta. Who was this serviceman and why was his memorial in this small park?

Norbert Charles Oliver was born on 21 October 1904 at Mullumbimby, NSW, son of Charles Goodwin and Honora Oliver and husband of Rosa Margarette of Otford NSW. Norbert and Rosa lived on the Cnr Domville & Rawson Rds, Otford with their family.

Norbert had a long naval career signing up at the age of 21 on the 10 July 1925 for 12 years. During his time he served as a Stoker on the Melbourne, Success, Penguin, Australia, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne. He finished his service in 1937 and reenlisted on 16 October 1939 for another five years, serving on Penguin and then Leading Stoker, RAN 16729, on the ill-fated HMAS Parramatta.

Norbert was unlucky to have been killed in action while onboard the Parramatta whilst operating in the Red Sea and Mediterranean during WW2. On 27 November 1941 the Parramatta was torpedoed by a German submarine (U-559) and the Parramatta sunk with 138 personnel out of 162 onboard.

The HMAS Parramatta was the second ship (Parramatta) built and took out Battle Honours 'Libya 1941' and inherited another lot of honours. Parramatta (U44) was a Grimsby class sloop built in the late 1930s. There were 4 ships named Parramatta built for the Royal Australia Navy.

This is another story that has been added to the WW2 story archives of the society. If you have a story of a Helensburgh district service personnel please add it to our archives.

Visit www.historichelensburgh.org.au ✨





Why we protest

By Kristen McDonald, of Extinction Rebellion Northern Illawarra

On Friday, 25 March it was the Global Climate Strike and residents from Northern Illawarra joined hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens worldwide. Activists young and old blockaded Russell Vale Mine for nearly three hours, which was supported by a range of groups including Stop Russell Vale Mine, POWA and Extinction Rebellion.

I asked Jacqui Besgrove why she helped organise the blockade.

"I've spent years working for positive environmental outcomes in my various jobs, from permaculture farming to lecturing on restorative ecologies, but I am becoming increasingly aware we need direct action," Jacqui said.

"The window of opportunity to limit temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius is rapidly closing if we are to avoid a future filled with more floods and bushfires that have ravaged Australian communities these past few years. If we want to stop the climate crisis, we need to stop mining coal.

"All the coal from Russell Vale mine will be exported overseas and while a few Indian billionaires and Wollongong Coal Ltd will make a motza out of it, the local community will pay the cost. There will be 36 coal trucks per hour travelling up Bellambi Lane six days a week, bringing a truckload of pollution and congestion to our residential areas. The coal stockpile is a few hundred metres away from houses and schools and our drinking water is under threat as the coal will be mined directly under the Cataract Reservoir in the Greater Sydney Water catchment."

To join activists like Jacqui, sign up to a local group (like stoprussellvalemine.org) or write to your state MP (Ryan Park for Keira). 🍀

Club marks 18th with cake

By Helen Durham, publicity officer at Helensburgh Probus

Probus is a club for active retirees for friendship, fellowship and fun. Our monthly meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month at Tradies Helensburgh. New members are welcome.

Our Probus members enjoy monthly meetings with an interesting guest speaker, monthly walks and other enjoyable activities. We have active groups who play golf once a month at different courses and lawn bowls are played monthly at Scarborough-Wombarra Bowling Club. Bus trips and holidays within Australia are planned throughout the year and also overseas jaunts.

In February at our meeting we celebrated our 18th birthday with a delicious cake.

Our guest speaker, Mr Kelly from Owen and Hodge Lawyers, spoke about the importance of an up-to-date Will and Enduring Power of Attorney.

We enjoyed a Bass and Flinders cruise along the Georges River from Sans Souci to Illawong and back, then through the waterways of Sylvania Waters, with morning tea and a lovely buffet lunch.

At our February Bowls day 22 players tried to remember how to play after so many washed-out monthly Thursdays. Unfortunately, March was

cancelled due to another downpour.

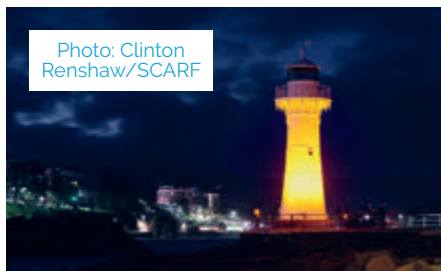
Our golfers have enjoyed two monthly games, one on a very wet course at Wollongong.

All positions were filled at our AGM and we've returned to Helensburgh Tradies for all meetings.

For enquiries please contact Lilian Slowik our Membership Officer at palsfx@gmail.com or visit www.probusouthpacific.org/microsites/helensburghanddistrict 🍀



Photo: Clinton Renshaw/SCARF



Lit up for Harmony Week

By Cristina Sacco, of SCARF Refugee Support

During Harmony Week (21-27 March 2022), the historic Breakwater Lighthouse in Wollongong Harbour was again illuminated in the traditional harmony colour orange to draw attention to Illawarra's proud history of welcoming migrants to the region, social cohesion and community harmony.

The Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI) is behind this local initiative for the second year in a row. To light the lighthouse and mark the beginning of Harmony Week, multicultural community leaders, members of parliament and representative of MCCI and SCARF came together at the harbour on Sunday 20 March.

"The lighthouse is symbolic as it brings us together and helps us navigate, move forward and overcome challenges. Following recent events in Ukraine and conflicts elsewhere in the world which impact on our many culturally diverse communities locally in so many ways, it is more important than ever to stand in unity," said MCCI's CEO Chris Lacey. ✨

Art workshop at CWA Hall

By Cheryl Bazzano

The newly refurbished CWA Hall at Stanwell Park, was the venue for an Art Workshop on Saturday, 26 February. Participants ranged from beginners to accomplished local artists.

The workshop was presented by Barbara Nell, well-known Goulburn artist. The topic was the work and life of Australian artist, Hilda Rix Nicholas. After the presentation, the group went on to produce their own interpretation of one of her many works.

A successful grant, obtained by the SPAT group, has made hall upgrades possible.

Enquiries for hire of the hall can be through the website, cwastanwellpark.com ✨

Kids, hop to it!

By Fran Peppernell, of Helensburgh Lions Club

We are looking forward to our Easter Bunny Buzz with final preparations in place. Save the date for Saturday, 16 April in Charles Harper Park.

The day kicks off with a Magic Show at 10am, followed at 11am with the Easter Scramble. Condition of entry is a donation of a chocolate Easter Egg no bigger than a fresh egg. The Easter Scramble will be age related, so all children will get an even chance. There will also be live entertainment, stalls and face painting and more!

Also on the day we will also be inviting the community to join Helensburgh Lions Club and we are offering free membership for the first year!

If you like more information, we are all available on the day at our BBQ or find us on Facebook or at www.helensburghlions.org.au

Another important day on the calendar is Monday, 25 April, ANZAC Day. We will be conducting a Memorial Service at 10am at Stanwell Tops Lions Memorial Park. Refreshments will be served afterwards. All welcome.

Thanks to our community's generous donations by way of pub raffles, Bunnings BBQs, and other events, your Lions Club has been able to give \$5000 to the NSW and QLD Flood Appeal. ✨

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Easter Scramble
Market Stalls
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Easter Bunny Buzz

Saturday 16th April
9am - 3pm

Charles Harper Park, Helensburgh

www.helensburghlions.org.au | www.facebook.com/helensburghlions

Cubs experiment with science

By Bagheera of 1st Helensburgh Scouts

We have been very excited at 1st Helensburgh Scout Group to have so many new Joeys, Cubs and Scouts join us in Term One and it certainly ups the excitement for all our activities to have so many enthusiastic participants!

The Youth Program at Scouts encourages building skills, knowledge and independence through a variety of activities. It has the added benefit of being able to be truly tailored to every child's areas of interest, connecting our core outdoor and adventure skills with our community, our creative and personal development.

This term in Cubs we have already conducted science experiments to understand how clouds form and how fire extinguishers work. We have had art nights to explore the Cubs' creative skills and to learn something new and we are combining a creative activity to make gear to take on camp with us. Of course, in between rain bombs we have also been outdoors practising our navigation skills and playing games.

The rain did get in the way of our camping plans, but our Joeys are still looking forward to their first Environment Sleepover with other Joeys from our region. This is an amazing event that is put on only every second year, specifically for the 5-7 age group to start their learning journey about looking after our environment.

Scouts will be undertaking an overnight hike and having a climbing night.

We are nearly at capacity in Cubs, but if you are interested in your child checking out Joeys or Scouts, please contact us.

Email bruce.crawley@nsw.scouts.com.au ✨



A tricky team rescue challenge

Helensburgh Girl Guides report

We started our year off with some collaborative activities at Cataract Scout Park. We had to complete two activities in our patrols and as a unit: a team rescue challenge on a low ropes course and a fun activity riding the waterslide.

The team rescue challenge was really tricky as we had to get a stretcher with a pretend person in it from one end of the course to the other without dropping them or falling off the obstacle course ourselves. Both the instructor and our leaders were very impressed with how well we worked together as a unit, and how we communicated with each other.

Then we got to ride the waterslide together. It was a super curvy slide with a bit of a drop in the middle. Lots of the girls flew in the air going off the drop and it was funny to watch their faces. The waterslide was so much fun!

Next we celebrated the Winter Olympics with two weeks of Winter Olympic Games Australian Style. The best activities were the Ice Toboggan Race, where we sat on a giant block of ice with a rope as a handle and raced each other down a hill, and the SnowBoard Race where we had to bounce a pretend snowball on a kitchen chopping board to the other end of the hall and bounce it into a bucket to score a goal. It isn't as easy as it sounds!

The leaders then handed the reins over to our Patrol Groups, and for the last few weeks we have been using our Patrol and Leadership Training to lead activities in the unit, to help us complete our Friendship Badge. We are learning lots about how to be good leaders of the future and strengthening our friendships in our unit and with other Girl Guides. It has been a great term. ✨

'My spider senses were tingling'

Tony Ryan presents a timely reminder of the perils of international travel

With the international borders now opening up, my kids (22 and 20) are talking about travelling overseas for the first time without us. With the bride living in England for two years in her early 20s, she has countless stories to tell. This always leads to my first venture overseas as a young naive 24-year-old.

While the wife's tales lead to great things, mine sit in the dumb arse category. One story (and there are quite a few) the kids always want retold.

Apart from family holidays, going down the coast with mates and footy trips, I had not done much travelling and had never been overseas. After exploring Europe for three months, I ventured to the good ol' US of A. I spent time in the Big Apple and Niagara Falls, then went to New Orleans.

At this stage I was travelling on my own before catching up with a mate in Las Vegas. So the best place to be was at a youth hostel – full of young like-minded travellers looking for adventure and all very social. If you walked into the common room alone, it would not be long before someone invited you over to their group to have a drink. There were no phones to stick your head into and thus avoid eye contact. It also helped that I looked like a young Brad Pitt (OK, that's a stretch).

I met up with these two Irish blokes and with a surname of Ryan it did not take long for a strong bond to establish. For the next couple of days we did a mountain of sightseeing, the Mississippi, the Creole cuisine and, of course, the spectacular night life the 'Big Easy' had to offer.

Unfortunately this was my demise. On the last night the Irish lads were in town we went out for a few beers and ended up at the first karaoke bar I had ever been to. Many drinks were had and we even ventured on stage to belt out an Irish song that I did not know. With an early flight the lads decided to call it a night; with hindsight, I should have too. But I wanted to keep the party going.

I met up with some Aussie guys and then a young local lad. We had a few drinks and the local lad suggested we go back to his house when the pub shut. Sensibly the others did not take up the offer, but my dufus side did. We stopped at a 7/11 and bought some beers with the last \$10 I had on me. I never realised the meaning of 'the wrong side of the tracks' until we crossed the railway line and headed into what could only be described as a very dodgy part of town. Suddenly my spider senses were tingling and decided that I would go back.

The chap insisted that he lived at the end of the street. As he led me into this house all my fears were realised – the house was abandoned. With the



streetlight shimmering through the window, he told me he had a knife and he wanted all my money. If I did not do what he said, he would stab me. I shared a few choice things, including the fact that I had told him that I had spent my last \$10 at the 7/11.

I emptied my pockets – the haul consisted of a wallet with no money (my one credit card was at the hostel) and two letters I had not posted. He then demanded my new runners, which I had bought in New York. He said that most travellers hide cash in their shoes. This guy was smarter than I thought (and obviously smarter than me) as I did have \$20 in my runners that I'd forgotten about.

At this time in the States, *Crocodile Dundee* was huge and Aussies were the flavour of the month. Somehow I plucked up the courage and said no, and told him that if he killed an Australian he would get the "chair", then told him to "go forth and multiply". With this, I pushed past him and ran out the front door. I leaped over the six steps leading into the abandoned house and was glad I kept the runners as this gave me a pace that would have rivalled Usain Bolt. I had no idea if he tried to



Luckily Tony's mugger knew of 'Crocodile Dundee'. Photo: WikiCommons

chase me as I did not stop nor look back.

I ran at a pretty good pace for the next three or so kilometres back to the hostel. Amazing how being mugged tends to sober you up. Not having cash or a card for a cab; I had those kilometres to curse myself and then came to the realisation that it could have ended up way worse.

Still shaken the next day, I cut short my New Orleans stay and flew to Vegas. There are a few stories there but I have to go by the old adage that "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas".

As footnote, I can tell you that bloke was not a nice chap as he did not have the manners to post the letters taken out of my pocket! ♦

Construction costs have soared and won't go down any time soon. Photo: Pixabay



Flooding rains 2

By architect Ben Wollen

This time last year, I had just written an article on flooding which started with “this time last year I was writing about bushfire resilient design in response to the tragic 2019/20 bushfire season”. Anyone else feel like Bill Murray in *Groundhog Day*?

And just when it seemed like our Covid pandemic was about to turn endemic, Mr Putin thought it would be a good idea to invade Ukraine. If you weren't an optimist, one might have the thought that this could all be the beginning of the end. I think it might be having an effect on Tasmania's property prices. I feel like every time the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) releases a new report, I lose another friend to the Apple Isle! Watching the news reports it does seem difficult to keep the pessimism at bay.

Well, once upon a time, I came across the term Rational Optimism and it's something I try to adopt as much as possible to cope with the steady stream of ill-tidings. I've also found the work of the Stoics to be more pertinent than ever. These guys all met with some pretty awful ends but remained somewhat philosophical in light of their fates.

Where am I leading up to, you ask? The answer is inflation. The floods have dissipated (for now), the war in Ukraine seems like it could go for some time, Covid figures aren't being blasted down the tube to us anymore and climate change, well, climate change is a gift that keeps on giving, isn't it! The immediate and net effects are: more pressure on our timber supply, ever more increases in the cost of living, and petrol prices you have to take a mortgage out for every time you fill up the tank!

Just before the floods there was an article on the

ABC website with the headline, “Building costs go through the roof, dashing homeowner dreams”. It was a little piece on how a family in the far north of NSW had some plans drawn up for their dream home only to be forced into withdrawing their mortgage application due to the uncertainty over building costs. Can you imagine the cost of a stick of pine up that way now – that is, if you could find one! In the article, a local quantity surveyor relayed the cost of framing timber had jumped from \$3.20 per lineal metre in January 2021 up to \$8 a metre in November. And he further attributed this to the effects of bushfires destroying large tracts of pine plantations both here and in America. Do our politicians need more evidence of the potential cost of climate change?

On and on the article goes with more woes, including links to other articles dating back as far as March 2021 (and I'm sure I could go further back than that if I didn't have the time pressure of getting this article in ink!). We keep looking for a break in the upward climb of construction costs but they just don't come. Even a slight plateau would be good. Those who wait seem to just get stuck in a cycle of just not quite getting there or over-extending themselves for fear of missing out.

Okay, time to get my crystal ball out. Will that ever elusive stabilisation in construction costs happen? Not anytime soon, that's for sure. (Full disclosure: I'm not a soothsayer and I don't actually have a crystal ball). All things considered it seems highly unlikely that costs will plateau and if I was a betting man I would say that, unfortunately, they'll be going the other way.

So what does a rational optimist or a stoic do in the face of all this uncertainty? I'm not that sure either so I googled it. According to further.net: “Rational optimism means taking a realistic assessment of the present moment. It means maintaining the belief that you can put one foot in front of the other, take action, and overcome a challenge or reach a goal”.

Meantime, TheSchoolOfLife.com had this to say of the Stoics: “Rather than appease ourselves with sunny tales, they proposed – to courageously come to terms with the very worst possibilities – and then make ourselves entirely at home with them. When we look our fears in the face and imagine what life might be like if they came true, we stand to come to a crucial realisation: we will cope.”

I know, I know – kind of brutal, right! There's another quote that I think perhaps is a bit more constructive and that comes from our good friend Plato and has evolved into “Necessity is the mother of invention”. That is, we're just going to have to get smarter about the resources available to us, put them to better use and find alternatives.

Mud bricks anyone? 🍁

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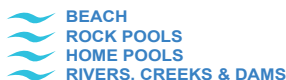
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VIEW Club report

By Barbara Kitson,
Helensburgh View Club Publicity Officer

It was so good catching up with everyone and at our new venue, it sort of feels like home. Just in case you haven't been to a meeting this year or you have missed an email that Patty and Pam have sent out – our meetings for morning tea are at 10 for a 10.30 start at the Pub, aka Helensburgh Hotel.

You can grab a coffee from across the road and come over to the Pub, the side gate will be open and we meet in the garden. When the meeting concludes those who want lunch can go in and order what they would like from the bistro.

We had our AGM last month, which was poorly attended. There were a few from the seniors trip, we were worried there weren't going to be enough to form our committee but a couple of the past committee ladies stepped up and took on positions. Thank you so much Nerida and Pam but we still need a couple more.

At our March meeting we celebrated St Patrick's Day, and we had lots of suggestions as to things that we can do within our club, which is really good. We are going to a Gala Luncheon at Mittagong on Wednesday the 11th of May at the RSL Club and will be going on the bus, unless you want to drive yourself. The cost of lunch is \$50 plus cost of the bus – it should be a good day.

Before Christmas, Mary and I took all of your school supplies down to Dapto. The car was filled to the roof and even had bags packed at my feet. The team were so surprised at how much stuff we had and were so grateful and said thank you to all. Although we are a small club, we make such a big difference so congratulations ladies and thank you.

Don't forget the April meeting is at the Pub, 10am for 10.30 start on the 3rd Tuesday – grab a coffee from across the road. The side gate will be open, so no steps, so please join us.

We welcomed Helen to our last meeting, good to see you, Helen.

Well, goodbye from me – keep well and safe everyone and see you at the Pub on Tuesday the 19th of April, 10.30 start. 🌟

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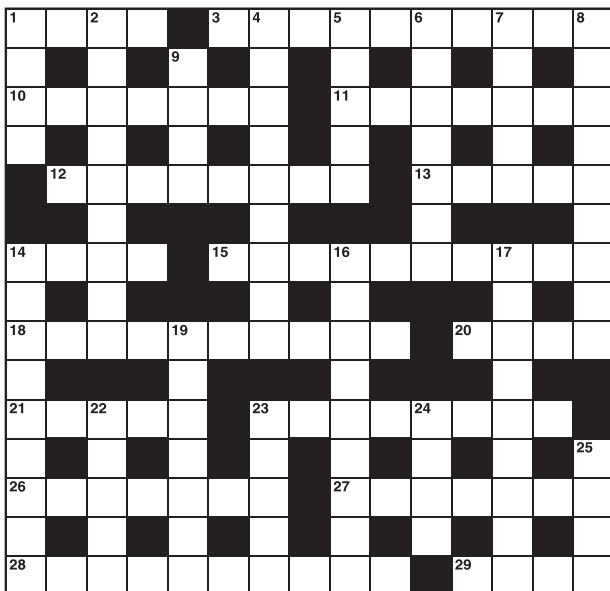
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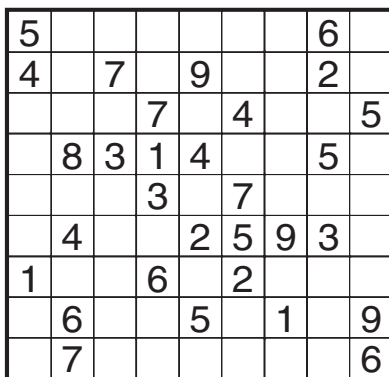
- 1 Eating place (4)
- 3 Exercises (10)
- 10 Princess Diana's maiden name (7)
- 11 A source of light (3,4)
- 12 Places to sleep (8)
- 13 Transparent (5)
- 14 Voice communication over the internet (acronym) (4)
- 15 To continue indefinitely (10)
- 18 Relighting (10)
- 20 Sham (4)
- 21 Church (arch.) (5)
- 23 Ocean (8)
- 26 Town in France with a shrine to St Bernadette (7)
- 27 Furnish (7)
- 28 Someone who receives repeated access to a service (10)
- 29 Book ID (1,1,1,1)

DOWN

- 1 Throw (4)
- 2 Prussian king, – the Great (1712–1786) (9)
- 4 Relating to the body (9)
- 5 False gods (5)
- 6 Unauthorised (7)
- 7 Laughable (5)
- 8 Take the place of (9)
- 9 Cicatrix (4)
- 14 Elements that can change (9)
- 16 Tropical fruit (9)
- 17 Professors (9)
- 19 Wandering (7)
- 22 Hand digit (5)
- 23 Japanese dish (5)
- 24 At the top (4)
- 25 Uncharitable (4)



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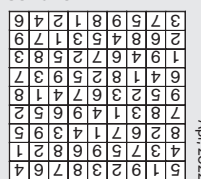
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Aquarius | Jan 20 to Feb 18

Beware of Scams, like the ones the brothels advertise in the *Mercury* stating they have one-hour specials. Seriously, what are you going to do for the other 56 minutes?

Pisces | Feb 19 to March 20

Your fortunes will change in the foreseeable future.

All you need to do is send that \$10,000 to the Nigerian prince so he can free up his millions that are locked in a Swiss bank. Then he will send you the \$12,000,00.00 he has promised.

Aries | March 21 to April 19

You have been struck down with the dreaded Covid. Be strong and with the help of others you will get through this. In the mail you'll receive a card from your Ex. Your hands will be trembling as you open up the card, thinking reconciliation may be on the horizon. Unfortunately, it is not a 'get well' card but a 'get well and truly #@\$%ed' card.

Taurus | April 20 to May 20

Your new partner in your life is sweet, handsome and charming. But it is a concern that he does not want you to watch the news or google his name.

Remember to put your hand over the ATM to protect your PIN when he is around.

Gemini | May 21 to June 20

Expressing a fake emotion is fine. Like smiling through your teeth when meeting your friend's new partner. Some people may think you are manipulative, but that's okay. You may have been alone on Valentine's Day but no need to worry: you are alone on the other 364 days of the year as well.

Cancer | June 21 to July 22

Things seem to be going well with your new partner. After sharing a lovely dinner with their family, on the drive home you ask to go through the drive-thru at Woonona Maccas, stating you did not like their mother's cooking. Expect him to leave you at McDonald's and face the long walk home. Lucky you found out he is a mummy's boy before you moved in with him.

Leo | July 23 to Aug 22

It is time to take responsibility in your own life. You can't call you mother up at 10pm and say you want her to pick you up as you are done baby-sitting! It's not called baby-sitting when they are your OWN kids! Don't feel pressure from your family to follow in their footsteps into the entertainment industry. You come from a long line of entertainers... even your sewing machine was a 'Singer'.

Virgo | Aug 23 to Sept 22

Apparently Mercury is your ruling planet. Be comforted in the fact it will be here long after you have gone. Now, it is time to ask for a raise as you have worked hard over the past 12 months. Walk into the boss's office with extreme confidence. Like a four-year-old with his Superman costume on.

Libra | Sept 23 to Oct 22

You are one of a kind and you are beautiful. Despite a number of Tinder dates not working out. Post a photo of yourself this century and you may not be so disappointed. You are struggling to work out where you fit in the world. Remember there are three types of people: ones that understand mathematics and the ones that don't.

Scorpio | Oct 23 to Nov 21

Work stress is playing havoc in your life and you're struggling to sleep. Even counting sheep fails. Try counting how many times James Reyne sings 'then the boys light up'. Surely it has to be 125!

Sagittarius | Nov 22 to Dec 21

Your relationship is teetering on the edge. Arguments are more frequent and seem to go on forever. Please note that when you say that "I am not talking to you" ... it's not actual punishment. They think it is a good thing.

Capricorn | Dec 22 to Jan 19

People at work are calling you the lantern. You think it is a compliment as you believe you are a shining light of the office. It is actually because they think you are dimly lit and need to be carried. ✨

Halle takes home silver!

By Christine McDonald, Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club publicity officer

The NSW State Champs were held at North Steyne from 24 to 26 February. We had a small team representing The Park in our red, white and blue colours. Lincoln, Halle, Nate, Frankie, Tiahna, Zalie and Indiana competed in their age events in a mixture of pouring rain and humid heat against the States' best.

On day one it was the sprints for Lincoln, Halle, Nate and Frankie. Halle made it through to the U10 final. Nate finished 4th in his U11 heat and progressed to the next round.

Day two was an early start for Nate on the beach as he competed in the 1km Beach Run or should we say '1km Sprint'. It was fast and furious but Nate stayed with the pack and was happy with his result.

Following the 1km Beach Run; Lincoln, Halle, Nate and Frankie were back on the beach in the rain to compete in what will be their best event for the competition, Flags. All four Nippers did exceptionally well placing in the top 24 in the State. We did have a very exciting day with Halle taking home the silver in her U10 Beach Flags!

On day three our senior Nippers – Tiahna, Zalie and Indiana – were pumped and ready to run their Beach Sprints. Tee started the day with an impressive 5th in her heat and Zalie gave it her all. Both girls made the club proud in the U13 Sprint. Unfortunately that is where the State carnival ended. Indie missed out on competing at her last Nippers carnival due to heavy rainfalls creating health concerns for the water area.

Congrats to all our team for making your families and the club very proud. Thank you to Tradies Helensburgh for their sponsorship; the team looked great in their State Shirts – next year we may need raincoats!

Leadership Camp

The annual Leadership Camp was on 4-5 March at the Surf Club with our U13 & U14 Nippers braving the conditions (rain, mud and the odd bit of sunshine).

It was a great camp with fun activities like the amazing race, group challenges, helping to prepare dinner (aka gut fish), fire on the beach with toasted marshmallows, and movies. All this combined with learning about the facilities and functions associated with the surf club.

Special thanks to Council Lifeguard Matt for giving his time to talk to our Nippers about career pathways, lifeguarding with the council and beach



supervision. Thank you to the parents for allowing their children to have this special experience.

Nippers Presentation Day

On Sunday, 20 March we held our Nippers Presentation Day. It was a huge afternoon seeing more than 120 Nippers and their families attend. Congratulations to all our Nippers; the major award winners, the 100% Attendance Nippers, Age Champs and to all those Nippers who gave it their best with a smile on their faces.

A big congratulations to the following Nippers who received these prestigious awards:

- Jack "Daki" Mawson Seagull of the Year: Noah Papendreas
- Keith Mills Seagull of the Year: Halle Bostick
- Neil Langdon Boys Endeavour Award: Kade Taunton
- Jack Higgins Girls Endeavour Award: Angelina Novotny
- The Thompson Family Most Consistent Senior Water Competitor at Carnivals: Nathaniel Amadio
- Ryman Family Beach Encouragement: Matilda Luck and Jay Makwana

To view all the award winners, visit www.stanwellparksurfclub.com and follow the links.

Thank you to the Junior Activities Committee for a great end to the season and to all those parents who have volunteered to be part of the JAC for season 2022/23. Let's hope we have awesome weather, great surf conditions and no more global pandemics! 🌟

New name for Beach to Bombie

By Jenelle McWilliam

On Sunday, 20 February the Dave Winner Beach to Bombie swim was held at Coalcliff Beach on a sunny day with a small swell and good conditions. A great day for an ocean swim. The course was 1500m with start and finish on Coalcliff Beach

The event name was changed this year to recognise Dave Winner, who had a serious accident in the surf in August 2021 that prevented him from swimming the event this time. Dave's courage, resilience and determination in facing his injury and fighting to overcome it in his recovery, has been an inspiration and something to celebrate.

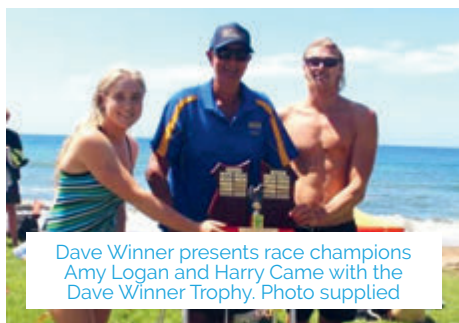
Dave was present to start the swim and to present the awards. Special thanks to Coalcliff SLSC for organising the day as well as providing water safety and officiating for the event.

This year the event was sponsored for the first time so a big thank you to Ohana Ocean Athletics for providing prizes for the top three male and female competitors.

Well done to the club and entire Winner family for making this a special day for all.

Here's a list of the final place-getters.

- **Female:** (1) Amy Logan (2) Catherine Johnson (3) Bridgid Collaery



Dave Winner presents race champions Amy Logan and Harry Came with the Dave Winner Trophy. Photo supplied

- **Male:** (1) Harry Came (2) Mathew Logan (3) Steven Winner

For the full list of place-getters and times, please go to the Coalcliff Facebook page.

The day was made even more special when Steven Winner, Dave's son, crossed the line in 3rd place in a field of outstanding ocean swimmers and made Dave a very proud father

Congratulations to all competitors and Coalcliff SLSC hopes to see you all again next year. 🌟

Treachery trip was 'a cracker'

By Ian Pepper, Scarborough Boardriders contest director



The set-up at Treachery. Photo: David Kemp

Another cracker annual away trip up the coast to Treachery on 19-20 March, always an absolute blast and our crew scored plenty of great waves.

The weather and waves were almost tropical for the Friday early arrivers, while a southerly change greeted us for pointscore day with Lighthouse Beach offering best waves and weather protection.

History was made with our youngest ever A-grade winner Mannix Squiers taking the win and Stanwell Park's Hargreave family got the

winning trifecta over three divisions within the club: Kasey in Open Womens, Oscar in 18s and Tristen in 35s. Micro Grom Fletcher Bell scored a BRAND NEW BOARD from DP Surfboards for his impressive surfing on Seal Rocks Point. Next year's dates are 17-18 March 2023 for any members looking to book early.

About the same time we were in Treachery, Kalani Ball claimed a massive win at the Vissla Central Coast Pro being a World Surf League (WSL) Qualifying Series (QS) 3000 event. This was Kalani's biggest win in his career and sets him up well to make it through to the WSL Challenger Series again in 2022 with the chance to qualify for the world tour in 2023. We wish Kalani all the best in the rest of the events.

Also at the same time a number of our junior members made the final stages of the Central Coast Junior Pro with Zahlia Short making the semis and Shyla Short and Will Clarke making the quarter finals. Well done!

Next pointscore is May 1st so happy surfing over Easter and school holidays. 🌟

Port Kembla Tidal Chart

April 2022

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1 0305 0.39 0917 1.68 FR 1537 0.30 ● 2145 1.59		10 0233 1.43 0953 0.61 SU 1608 1.10 2113 0.83		19 0404 0.28 1006 1.47 TU 1551 0.44 2218 1.85		28 0019 0.54 0626 1.59 TH 1246 0.37 1901 1.58	
2 0350 0.38 0958 1.59 SA 1608 0.36 2221 1.62		11 0345 1.44 1050 0.55 MO 1706 1.17 2224 0.77		20 0500 0.30 1101 1.37 WE 1636 0.53 2308 1.83		29 0109 0.48 0710 1.55 FR 1321 0.40 1939 1.65	
3 0333 0.40 0938 1.49 SU 1538 0.43 2156 1.63		12 0445 1.49 1135 0.49 TU 1748 1.26 2319 0.69		21 0602 0.34 1203 1.27 TH 1727 0.63		30 0154 0.45 0752 1.49 SA 1352 0.44 2014 1.70	
4 0415 0.44 1016 1.39 MO 1606 0.51 2230 1.62		13 0534 1.55 1214 0.42 WE 1825 1.36		22 0003 1.77 0711 0.38 FR 1314 1.20 1828 0.71			
5 0459 0.48 1056 1.29 TU 1634 0.59 2304 1.60		14 0007 0.59 0617 1.61 TH 1248 0.36 1900 1.47		23 0107 1.70 0824 0.40 SA 1432 1.19 ● 1944 0.76			
6 0545 0.53 1139 1.20 WE 1706 0.66 2343 1.55		15 0052 0.50 0700 1.65 FR 1322 0.32 1934 1.58		24 0220 1.65 0933 0.41 SU 1548 1.23 2105 0.74			
7 0635 0.58 1228 1.12 TH 1745 0.73		16 0137 0.41 0742 1.65 SA 1357 0.31 2012 1.69		25 0335 1.63 1033 0.39 MO 1649 1.31 2220 0.69			
8 0028 1.50 0735 0.62 FR 1330 1.08 1837 0.80		17 0223 0.34 0827 1.62 SU 1432 0.32 ○ 2051 1.78		26 0441 1.62 1125 0.37 TU 1739 1.40 2325 0.61			
9 0125 1.45 0845 0.63 SA 1448 1.06 ● 1950 0.84		18 0312 0.30 0915 1.56 MO 1511 0.37 2133 1.83		27 0536 1.62 1208 0.37 WE 1822 1.50			

TIMES AND
HEIGHTS OF
HIGH AND LOW
WATERS
LAT 34° 29'
LONG 150° 55'

MOON PHASE SYMBOLS New Moon ● First Quarter ◐ Full Moon ○ Last Quarter ◑

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Helensburgh Sunday Social Golf Club Robert 'Indy' Jones reports

Water courses have once again frustrated HSSGC members. Emails for April and beyond will keep members up to date on new venues. For membership information, contact Tony on 0418 863 100. Join us and enjoy a game of golf, the outdoors and good company.

Indy signing off ... The secret of playing good golf is to hit the ball hard, straight, and not too often – I am perfecting not too often! 🍀

Tradies Social Golf Barry Thompson reports

March was a washout.

We will try to run our April tournament on Saturday 16th at Boomerang.

Tee Off is at 7am and is listed as an Individual Stapleford event.

However, with two wash-outs in a row, some of our more pessimistic members are at the TAB trying to get on a Trifecta.

With *Flame* reaching a wider readership we invite golfers of all standards to drive up the pass and join us. We play Boomerang on nominated Saturdays and enjoy our golf in a friendly but competitive manner.

Check us on Facebook or ring Mick Carroll (0414 734 353) for information.

Without contact from my informants I have no gossip, either true or spurious, so I can only wish those going on the Gold Jacket tour a dry, enjoyable trip and I hope to see you all on the 16th. 🍀



PUPPIES NEED A HOME!

Gidget, a four-month-old boxer cross, needs a new home, and so do her sisters. They are energetic, lively girls who will keep you on your toes! These girls are only for those with a lot of energy to burn!

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SUNDAY APRIL 10

A movie night promotional banner. On the left is a large, detailed illustration of a red and white striped popcorn bucket. On the right, a circular inset shows a family of four (mother, father, and two children) sitting on a couch, wearing 3D glasses and holding popcorn. The background is orange with a black film strip border. Text includes 'FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT' in a stylized font, 'FREE Entry to see Clifford the Big Red Dog with every purchase from MOVIE MENU' in white script and sans-serif fonts, and 'The Bistro opens 4pm & the movie starts 5pm' at the bottom.

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