

Planned for the Mount

Barrels shock

A report in the *Herald-Sun* (3 August 2020) about a planned luxury accommodation development on the slopes of Mt Buninyong at 67 Yendon No 2 Road has left many residents of the district shocked and angry.

As shown in the artist's impression (left) it includes an eight metre high barrel-shaped 'holiday house' sitting atop 16 metre high stilts and stairs.

Developer **David Penman** has told *Visit Victoria* that "we've snapped up the best views in Ballarat (literally on the side of Mount Buninyong) and we're putting the barrels on top of an extinct volcano with an 80 metre vertical drop".

Certainly, there will be excellent views of the clusters of wind turbines at Lal Lal and Elaine to the south.

The News understands that the sketch plans first submitted to the City of Ballarat showed several 'barrel' units being almost at ground level, quite different from the unit referred to as *Vertigo* (pictured at left) sitting on those high stilts and stairs.

Mount Buninyong historian, carer and walker **Peter Hiscock** said, "We will have to fight this one hard. It's a potential eyesore and a heritage nightmare." Another nearby resident said, "They will be so close to us that I am shuddering."

Curiously, a Daylesford real estate agent already has the *Vertigo* house, unbuilt and with no planning approval, listed for sale for \$1 million. (See also *The News* editorial and images on p 4).

Artist's impression of the barrel house as published in the *Herald-Sun*. Note the height of the unit relative to the car shown nearby.





LEGEND

- Existing building to be removed
- Pre-development contour (0.50m intervals)
- Proposed community building
- Proposed picnic table / seating
- Proposed car parking
- Proposed concrete pavement
- Proposed concrete feature paving
- Proposed concrete feature paving
- Proposed natural children's play space
- Proposed gravel surface
- Proposed gravel path 2.0m wide
- Existing tree to be protected and retained
- Proposed exotic tree
- Proposed fruit / nut tree
- Proposed native / indigenous tree
- Proposed fruit tree trellis
- Proposed garden bed
- Proposed community garden
- Proposed low grassed mound
- Proposed water sensitive urban design treatment
- Proposed fence / barrier
- Proposed shielded flood lighting to soccer pitch

Some issues...but Royal Park project on track

The major works project now well under way at Royal Park Reserve has prompted some mixed reactions and questions from residents in nearby areas. Two issues raised with *The News* have related to the removal of the huge old cypress trees along the Warrenheip Street frontage, and provision of adequate parking.

The Council plan for the \$1.8 million project provides for 97 off-street car parking spaces constructed of gravel with interspersed tree planting for shade and visual softening. Of these about 50 spaces will be along Nolan Street with the remainder along Hedrick and Inglis Streets.

The old Warrenheip Street cypress trees will be replaced by a dual avenue of smaller native plants, possibly callistemons, to encourage the return of urban bird life. The plan provides for a total of 200 trees to be planted.

New level

Overall, there is great community enthusiasm for the project with the key element being the construction of two soccer fields to give the booming Buninyong Soccer Club a home for the first time. Mayor **Ben Taylor** said that the playing fields with top class drainage, irrigation and lighting would bring the facilities at the Buninyong Soccer Club to a whole new level.

Stage Two of the project will feature the construction of a 480m² Community Building mid-way along Hedrick Street. This will include a multi-purpose function room, kitchen, meeting room, four change rooms (including female changing rooms), toilets, and under-cover spectator viewing areas.

Adjoining this will be a paved 'community gathering space' with shelter and cooking/picnic facilities, electricity and water available and tables and seating.

Council has said that work on the project will continue throughout this year and be ready for next year's soccer season.

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Protester calls for no tyranny



The News phones ran hot earlier this month when a lone male protester was spotted sitting at the village roundabout corner holding a placard reading *No Tyranny!*

The protester turned out to be Buninyong resident **Robert Kelty**, proudly holding aloft his colourful sign and acknowledging the toots from cars as they passed. Robert said that he “has always been a rebel”, having been taught to think things through for himself and not “go with the herd”.

Not social

“Little by little we are steadily losing our freedoms,” he asserted. He regards *Social Distancing* as an oxymoron – he says that there is nothing ‘social’ about it. He will continue protesting until Dan Andrews relents.

As we sat on a bench, socially distanced, four police officers approached. I was wearing a mask, Robert wasn't. The police offered him one. He refused. They had a chat. “Protest peacefully, don't yell, and next time we will issue you with a

Notice if you're not wearing a mask,” the police told him.

“Have a good day,” said Robert as they left.

Actor

Robert's face may be recognised by those who have attended recent summer-time Shakespeare in the Gardens theatre events where he has played a lead role in recent productions such as *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Love's Labour Lost*.

At the time of writing, with the number of COVID-19 cases in the Ballarat area having risen to the mid-20s, community opinions are divided over present social restrictions.

Mostly there is understanding, mixed with some frustration; there is compliance and there is defiance; masks are being worn, with masks nowhere to be seen on some; most people are observing social distancing, while a few are having parties. Robert's position, however, remains quite clear.

– Cassandra Carland

streettalk

CHANGE OF FACES up at that grand home behind the manicured cypress hedges on the Mount road. Out goes the orthopaedic surgeon and in comes the well-known accountant.

GREAT TO SEE four new business owners pop up along the Warrenheip Street business strip recently. The shop in the old *Eagle Hotel* building is now the sole vacant one. The imminent opening of the Bank's community cottage further along the strip soon will be another boost.

COVERING THE STORY of the lone protester down at the roundabout a few weeks ago, our *News* reporter went along, duly masked, to chat with the unmasked protester. When an overkill group of four police officers arrived, they issued a quite gentle warning to the rebel, but got stuck into our reporter because her mask wasn't high enough on her nose!!

ANOTHER RUSH. It seems that gold prospectors have reappeared in the *Woovookarung Park* and that some success has been reported. With a miner's right, prospecting is legal, provided that vegetation is not disturbed and that any holes created are filled in.

MAIL BOX THIEVES. With all the parcel mail now happening, there's been a couple of reports of parcels being stolen from mail boxes. Most recent one from a box in Warrenheip Street South. Post Office confirmed delivery. Beware of your delivery instructions.

THE COXALL CLAN has been in the district since the very early days. In 1901 then-Mayor **Arthur Henry Coxall** officiated at the opening of the Queen Victoria rotunda in the Botanic Gardens. Had his name proudly emblazoned over one of the entry archways. But around 1950 Council painters arrived and reduced the Coxall name to Coyal. But all is well again. In the recent renovations the extra L has returned.

Ban the barrels

A few weeks ago there was a flurry of media releases about a proposal to build a collection of barrel shaped holiday houses on the side of Mount Buninyong on Yendon No 2 Road.

The *Herald-Sun* led the charge on 3 August, followed by *The Courier* the following day. This all happened as the City of Ballarat's planners were advising *The News* that "the application you refer to has not yet proceeded to public notice/advertising. Council is still waiting on further information requested from the applicant."

But the release of these sketches and copy about the "unique" project seemed to be carefully timed to soften up public and Council opinion just in advance of the coming period in which objections to the project can be lodged.

Benefits

It is predictable that very soon 'economic benefit' arguments will be trotted out. We will hear that the guests paying \$790 for a minimum two night stay in those luxurious barrels up on the Mount (as they do at Hepburn) will bring untold wealth to the local business community.

Perhaps there will be a few extra coffees and meals bought in Buninyong. But there won't be crowds of people up there in the barrels looking for a meal each night. And, if like in Hepburn, they pay another \$85 for a bunch of six roses, \$95 for a bottle of *Mumm* champagne, and an extra \$399 for the (interesting) *Lovebirds Package*, there's not going to be much cash left over!

Revealingly, in a *Courier* report, when asked about recommendations he would make to his guests, the promoter said "I

will send them to Sovereign Hill, *Underbar*, or to burger restaurants". No mention of any local establishments!!

Location

Even if some of the 'benefits' data do stack up, there is no escaping the major issue of the location and the longevity of these eye-jarring structures on the slopes of our local natural icon.

If they were to be sited on that vacant undulating land on the Midland Highway opposite the Cemetery, where once a caravan park was proposed, *The News* and locals would likely support such a development. They could fit well into such a setting and location.

It also has been said that these buildings are no worse than some already on the Mount.

Maybe so. But surely there must be a line drawn somewhere by those responsible for planning and environmental protection in this community. If approved, these incongruous intrusions will be up there for a long, long time.



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After Eltham and Europe Alison loves her home here

In recent issues of *The News* (see also p 10) there have been reports of the children's short story competitions. The judge has been local editor and author Alison Arnold. Alison grew up in Eltham where she loved the bushland, the green spaces, the famed artists' colony at Montsalvat and the nearby Yarra River

When she moved to Buninyong she had a feeling of coming home, because the landscape here is just as green and beautiful.

With her partner **Simon** and their twelve-year-old daughter **Harriet**, they live close to the Gong and have a great view across to the church on the hill. She often catches herself thinking just how beautiful it is here.

Books

Alison has been a book editor for twenty years, working first for a children's book publisher *Black Dog Books*, then for *Text Publishing* in the CBD. With her family she moved to Ballarat in 2011, and a couple of years later Alison went freelance to stop the lengthy commute to Melbourne and back.

In 2015 Simon and Alison took their daughter out of Grade 1 at school for a term, and travelled around Europe, visiting both of Alison's brothers who happened to be living in Berlin and London at the time. While they were doing incredible things – hiking up mountains in Germany, swimming in lakes and the sea, riding bikes around Copenhagen – they were constantly asking themselves what they wanted out of life. It turned out they wanted to live somewhere beautiful.

Dream home

Simon, a garden designer and psychologist, found their house in Buninyong that same year, and they're so grateful that he did. They already had friends in Buninyong, and Alison lost no time in joining the Buninyong Community Choir.

They spent lots of time discovering the town whilst walking their pet dog, **Rosie**. One of Alison's favourite places is the Lions Club bookshop where she's bought (and donated) lots of books.



Although Alison works from home, she's often actually working at the bench in the front window of *Chocalatto*, drinking chai tea, with Rosie waiting outside.

'It turned out they wanted to live somewhere beautiful'

Alison remarked enthusiastically that, "Judging the children's short story competition was brilliant. I've worked for so long now with professional writers that I'd forgotten just how inventive, bonkers and clever kids are when you give them a brief to write a story. Nothing is off the table.

"The stories that I read were so fresh and fun that it made me fall in love with my job all over again.

"Writing and reading are so important for all of us, especially at the moment. When you read you can do all sorts of things: escape from worries – and there are so many worries right now – and analyse the world around you," Alison said.

"Maybe most importantly, reading gives you access to other people's stories, and it is very difficult to close your mind and heart against people when you know them in this way."

– Rita Russell

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Ron, Jim, Neil and John The Vaggs know all about motors

When Jim Vagg and his father Ron took over the automotive workshop business in Warrenheip Street from Les Coxall in 1973, it was the start of an auto service and repair dynasty that is now into its third generation.

At present the business is being run by John Vagg, 55, who was only six years of age when the Vagg Auto sign was put up out front. He started off his links to the business by sweeping up floors there to earn some pocket money.

But, after leaving school at the age of sixteen, John didn't head directly to work alongside his father Jim in the Warrenheip Street motor business. He did an apprenticeship with B & G Myers where his work was on agricultural machinery such as headers and hay presses. With the closure of that firm John then started work with the rural division of Eclipse Motors working on trucks as well as farm machinery.

Partners

For many years after the 1973 purchase, the business was run by John's grandfather Ron Vagg and his dad, Jim.

After Ron retired, Neil Vagg a younger brother of Jim became a partner in the firm and the brothers operated the business together until 1995 when Neil moved a few metres north along Warrenheip Street after taking over Sloane Diesel – a business he still operates.

Known widely across the district for his skill in auto repairs and servicing Jim retired in 2015. Now aged 77 years he still occasionally wanders into the workshop to



make sure that John and his two apprentice employees are keeping the engines of Buninyong's cars and utes ticking over as they have been for the past 47 years.

Shown in his mechanic's uniform of blue overalls, John Vagg continues the family motor business in Buninyong.

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Locals show teeth

Some residents living at the southern end of Warrenheip Street opposite Royal Park have been grinding their teeth since reading the details on a Council yellow Planning Application notice that recently popped up outside the new construction site there (see photo above).

For what started out to be an apparently well-designed private residence, sympathetic with nearby older homes in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ), now has had a significant change of direction and function with a Planning Application being lodged with Council for it to be used for business purposes – specifically as a dental practice.

Following requests from nearby residents for support, the Buninyong & District

Community Association (BDCA) has joined with individual objectors on the grounds of its impact on amenity for local residents. There has been an apparent lack of transparency with the sudden switch, part-way through construction, from the original planning permit approved for a “residence”, to an application now for the building to be used for a “business”.

BDCA President **Gayle Adams** said that the Association is delighted to welcome a dentist to the town, and the “business activity” area would have been an ideal location.

It is understood that at least six objections have been lodged with Council concerning this development.

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Fish shop's new faces



Above: It's easy to get a smile from Sherry and Navroop at the Buninyong Fish Shop.
Below: Map of north-western India showing Bathinda in the context of other well-known Indian cities.

From spicy curries to hot takeaways

A background as a student of engineering in the Punjab region in far north western India, where curries are the basic fare, and now life as a part-time taxi driver for Ballarat Taxis, are unusual credentials for the new owner of the Buninyong fish and chips shop.

However, this has not stopped Awampreet (Sherry) Sidhu, after just four months, from turning the local fish and chip shop to a business now getting excellent reviews for the quality of its takeaway foods.

As a first step Sherry changed all the suppliers of his foods. He has sourced new quality suppliers for gummy shark (flake), blue grenadier and butterfish, and

his new style 13mm chips are crisper and tastier than most.

New-look

Inside the shop, the new-look menu appears fresher and more comprehensive, and the smiling owner has also introduced regularly changing special packs.

For example, when *The News* recently visited, the current special pack was a homemade-beef patty (and bun) with

caramelized onions, sriracha mayo, double cheese lettuce, onion rings, lemon pepper chips plus a can of soft drink for \$15.

Specials are listed on the shop's Facebook page which, in turn, is linked to the website. Phone ordering is easy and a simple order number is given.

Helper

As a Sikh, Sherry still proudly wears a turban. He migrated to Australia in 2015 from the very old city of Bathinda in the Punjabi region of far northern India (see map below), population of some 370,000 and located very close to the border with Pakistan. He now lives in Sebastopol.

While Sherry admits that he is still learning and working on further improvements to his food and service, he is being helped out behind the counter by his cousin's sister **Navroop Kaur** who has brought with her considerable experience in a well-regarded Melbourne-based fish and chip shop.

The word around this town is that the food from Buninyong fish and chips shop has definitely taken a serious turn for the better.



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AUTHORISED BY CATHERINE KING, 5 LYDIARD ST NTH BALLARAT 3350

Start NOW on fire hazards CFA advises

Buninyong-Mt Helen Fire Brigade is encouraging people to use these colder months and the extra time at home to start preparing their properties for the upcoming bushfire season. This preparation applies equally to urban and rural properties.

Winter is a quieter time in the garden when chores usually include pruning, trimming back bushes, and generally tidying up yards and surrounding bush areas. Consequently, it is the ideal time to assess a property and do the necessary work to prepare for summer.

Action

There are many simple things that can be done around the house to reduce fire risk. Suggestions to get started with fire hazard reduction work include

- clear any branches overhanging your house or decking. Where possible, keep tree branches and shrubs more than ten metres from buildings, particularly, next to or under windows.
- break up the fuel – have gravel pathways, use fire resistant plantings in garden beds, trim lower branches, Fire needs a path for fuel to travel. Break up this path!
- reduce grass to less than 10 cm, particularly in rural areas or urban blocks adjoining bushland.
- clean up fallen or hanging bark and any flammable materials under trees. Fire accelerates rapidly upward in eucalypt settings.



There are many other helpful ideas to assist in a 'tidy-up' program. Check out the CFA booklet *Your Guide to Property Preparation* found at cfa.vic.gov.au and search for Property and Preparation .

Burning off

When having a burn of any sort, it's important to notify neighbours and also to register the burn on 1800 668 511. The burn-off will be logged, thus reducing the chances of an unnecessary call-out by the local volunteer brigade. Again, this applies to both urban and rural areas.

Further advice and assistance can be obtained by contacting **John McLeod**, the local Brigade Community Safety Coordinator on 0408 142 031.

CFA volunteer Nigel Butterworth is shown busily clearing debris from his property. Even burning off small piles of leaves and bark such as these should be logged with a call to 1800 668 511.



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Stories of older kids

Competition judge Alison Arnold said that it was so hard to assess the Grade 5 and 6 stories. "There were battles between good and evil, a cat ice-cream parlour, caves full of crystals, contemporary realist fiction, horror, adventure, comedy, and so much more. The stories are getting more complex and the writers are taking more risks, which is always exciting."

Winner: Amy Piltz (MLC Hawthorn) for *Running Free*, an accomplished and thoughtful story written from the point of view of a mare whose herd is threatened by hunters. (See opposite).

Runner-up: Kaylee Ellis (Buninyong Primary) for her perfectly realised and genuinely scary horror story.

Highly Commended: Murray Hassell (Damascus College) for *A Grand Story*, a post-modern comedy about a knight called Sir Handsome Face.

Highly commended: Tano-Li Quach, (St James Parish School) for *Hidden Magic*, a fantastical battle story set in Australia in the year 2493.

Commended: Mackenzie Davey-Spokes (Lal Lal Primary), **Nivashini Neelavannan** (Black Hill Primary), **Ruby Tonkin** (Ballarat Steiner School), **Celia Klerks** (Lal Lal Primary), **Indy Leonard** (St James Parish School).



Amy Piltz

Running Free



By Amy Piltz, MLC Hawthorn

The icy wind brushes across my face on this cold, brisk morning. Today, it is as cold as Antarctica and my herd have found a patch of green grass under the thick, white blanket of snow. My foal is standing against me, my body her only heat source. This grass isn't going to last for long, we need to find some more food, and fast.

I start to move further along the stream when we come to a clearing. There are many strands of luscious, sugary, grass poking up through the silky snow, and my herd scrambles to get the best grass. The joy doesn't last long though. The piercing sound of a gunshot rings in my ears as a pack of hunters loaded with guns charge into the clearing.

My herd gallops away, rushing into the icy cold river. As my feet enter the river, the piercing cold freezes my feet, but I keep running, running for my life. The prickly cold rushes up through my legs and consumes my whole body. My foal

is dropping behind and I'm worried she will be caught. I hear another gunshot as I see a herd member fall into the chilly water. The river has slowed the hunters down, but not for long.

Suddenly, another horse carrying a young girl, who was about sixteen, gallops into the field. It looked like an angel riding a horse. She comes to a halt when she reaches the hunters. The hunters are surprised and slow down. She stands her horse between my herd and them. "You aren't getting anywhere near these horses, you understand? Leave them be," she announced.

My herd galloped over the hill and into the thick bushland. We heard the hunters slowly walking away. A wave of relief fell over me as my foal leaned on me again.

Slowly, one by one my herd emerged out of the bushland and into the clearing. The snow had started to melt, winter was almost over. My herd settled down as we munched on the green, sugary grass. I will never forget that girl who saved our lives. The young girl on the horse.

BETH RITCHIE

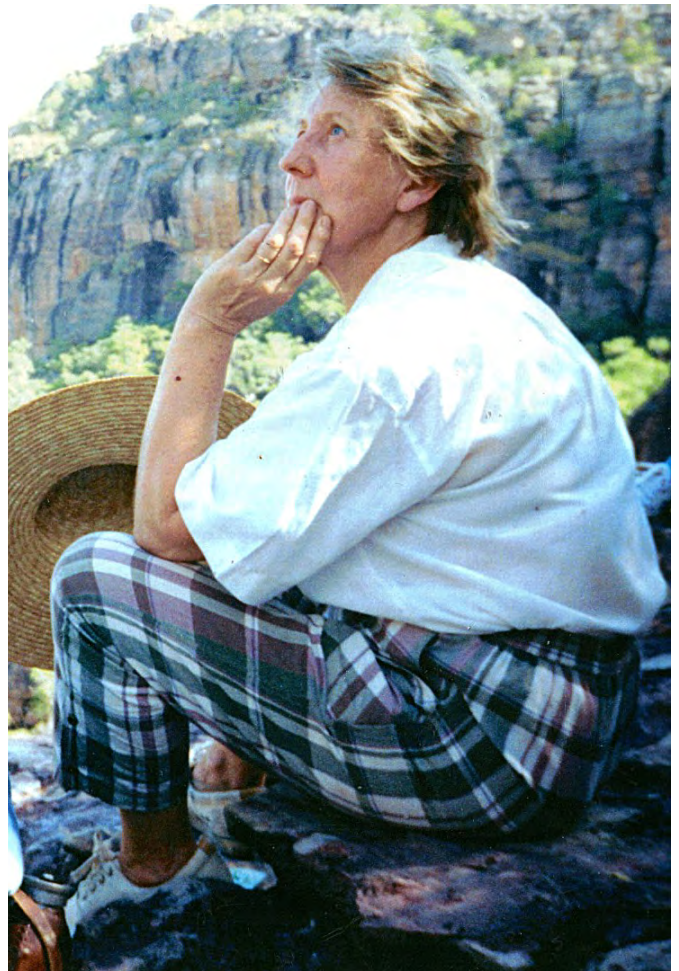
Her village, her life

Buninyong lost one of its most loved and respected citizens with the death of Elizabeth (Beth) Ritchie on 5 August at the age of 92 years. With her husband Frank who died five years ago, and their three sons, Beth had lived for some 66 years in the Mount Buninyong Road home built for them by her father Stan Ludbrook.

There was hardly an aspect of community life not touched by Beth's work, care or interest. Research into and preservation of the town's history was high on the list. She was a foundation member of the Buninyong & District Historical Society, and the family will be donating her extensive collection of materials to be placed in the society's archives.

So too was her interest in the school, the old Shire Council (on which her husband Frank served), Mount Buninyong's flora and fauna, restoration work on the Botanic Gardens, planting of trees along the village's streetscapes, and in particular the pre-school.

She led the fight to get the pre-school established and after doing so found there was no teacher available, so she took on the job herself to get it going. According to neighbour **Peter Hiscock**, "Beth volunteered for everything around the town in the days when if volunteers didn't do it, it didn't get done."



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Buninyong

Wen Cyrus came in for help

Another curious patient at the vet's

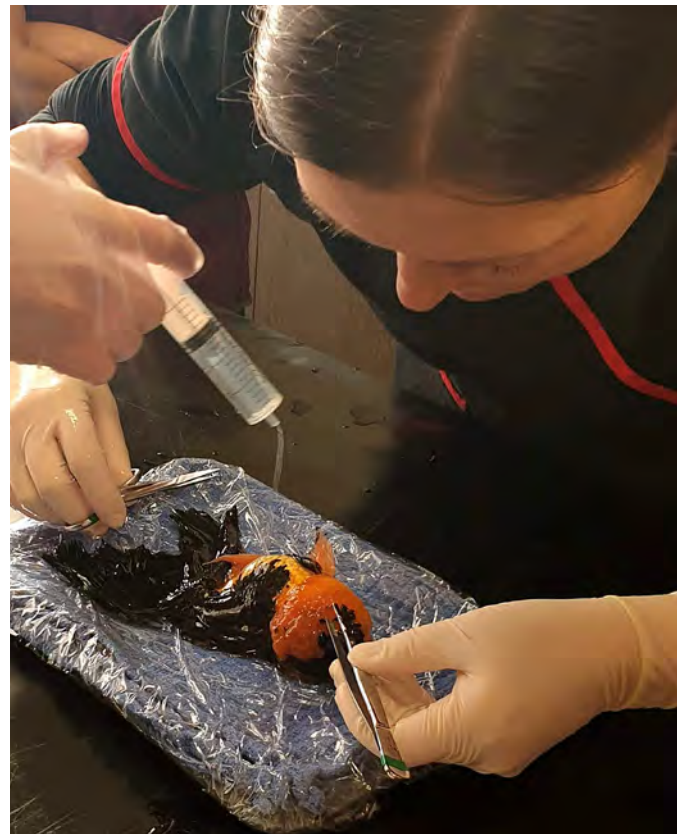


It is not uncommon that the excessive skin cells that produce this Wen grow to such an extent that they interfere with vision, and this was the case of poor Cyrus, the goldfish.

The first step in helping Cyrus was to anaesthetise him to allow his Wen to be trimmed in a safe and stress-free way. Cyrus was anaesthetised with an anaesthetic agent in the water and then removed from the water to allow for the surgery on his head.

Once this was completed, he was moved back into fresh water to recover, and he can now see again those dogs in the waiting room much better than ever.

Left: After being anaesthetised, Cyrus is gently lifted from the water by nurse Tori McDonald. Below: Dr Jennings operates to remove the excess skin on the fish's head.




Recently, in the waiting room of the Buninyong Veterinary Clinic instead of the usual scene of large and small dogs eyeing off one another, and especially watching that cat in basket in the corner, there was another 'eye' patient – this time in a bowl of water.

Veterinarian **Dr Rebecca Jennings** has tackled a wide range of animal and bird problems both in Buninyong and in other countries. But this one turned out to be of considerable interest and challenge to her. It was a goldfish having vision trouble.

Growth

This pet fish, named **Cyrus**, was struggling due to a growth of skin that was beginning to cover his eyes. While there are many types of goldfish, one of the most popular is a breed called *Oranda*. This fish is characterised by a bubble-like hood called a *Wen* or crown on the top of the head. It is a peaceful fish, can grow to between 20 -30cm and live up to sixteen years.



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More about the old Franklin bridge

A gold mine and a vice-regal pub

The bridgeworks now going on along Scotchman's Lead Road between Buninyong and Napoleons has stirred up interest as to why the bridge was called Franklin's Bridge. Few locals had any idea. The answer came from historian Doug Bradby who lives close to the bridge.

The Franklin mine at Scotchman's Lead was situated just short of the bridge in the large paddock on the left on the track from Buninyong across the Yarrowee Creek that led to goldfields such as Napoleons, Whim Holes, Italian Gully, Misery Creek, and Break-of-Day.

Rich

In the 1860s about 297 kilograms of gold was extracted by the Franklin Mine. No doubt, the 57 shareholders were pleased enough with the results. As it was a co-operative mine, the miners were the shareholders, and at today's price for gold, \$2,668 per ounce, the Franklin mine yielded gold worth about \$26 million!

Opposite the mine was the *Lady Franklin Hotel* which operated between 1865 and 1883 and where the miners celebrated their success and drowned their sorrows. However, it is not clear whether the Franklin mine itself was named after the famous explorer, **Sir John Franklin**, or his just-as-famous wife, **Lady Jane Franklin***.

Fraud

In 1866 the six directors of the Franklin mine were sensationally tried for conspiracy. They had declared 'fraudulent dividends' and then sold their own shares at a profit. A local jury convicted the directors and they were sentenced to three months imprisonment, but without the usual hard labour.

The first *Franklin Bridge* was very dangerous. **Richard Scatchard**, a Yorkshireman, was drowned in May 1862 when a cart loaded with bottled ale and

porter he was transporting to Italian Gully, capsized from the Bridge into the Yarrowee. The poor man's last words yelled to his mate were, "Can you swim?" Unfortunately very few miners could swim.

Unsafe

A huge flood in 1913 rendered the first bridge totally unsafe. Ratepayers complained and the Buninyong Shire took decisive and useless action.

**SHIRE OF BUNINYONG
NOTICE TO THE THE PUBLIC
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Bridge at Yarrowee is unsafe,
and any person crossing it will do
so at their own risk.
By Order. CHARLES WILSON. Shire
Engineer. 21st February, 1913.**

To be fair, within a year a replacement – the just-demolished bridge – had been completed at well below the anticipated cost.

Tickets

Today it's sad to see the old bridge go, but it was a very dangerous bridge. **Gilbert Coad** who owns the land on which the Franklin Mine sits, said that he could have sold tickets to people to watch the numerous near misses that occurred on the old Franklin Bridge over the last decade.



Lady Jane Franklin (1791-1875) drawn in 1838.

It's to be hoped that authorities honour the old bridge by keeping the name. Also should there be a ceremony held, it would be appropriate for Gilbert Coad to cut the ribbon to declare open the new *Franklin Bridge* at Scotchmans Lead.

– Doug Bradby

Ed: Given her adventurous spirit, interest in travelling and exploring, and her work with the poor especially in farming areas of Tasmania where her husband was Governor, there is no doubt that the feisty and very independent Lady Jane would be the choice of the local miners in naming their pub. Offsetting that, however, was the fact that she was a teetotaler!! The origins of the mine's name is a different matter.

Des Hudson OAM

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▪ SOUTH WARD

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You could have been living at Hiscock's Tale of a gold town

Had there been a bit more gold lying around on the surface and in the creek beds just north of here back in the 1850s, many readers of this issue of *The News* could now be living in the township of Hiscock's.

A now-derelict sign at the lay-by area on the Midland Highway just opposite the Buninyong Cemetery gives a clue to the mining village that boomed briefly in that area where the legendary **Thomas Hiscock** and companions found those nuggets of gold in 1851.

Quick boom

Within days of Hiscock sending his gold discovery off to Geelong by coach around 10 August 1851, the *Geelong Advertiser* reported that there were at least fifty people who had pitched their tents at the newly-named Hiscock's Gully after slogging along the forty-eight mile stretch of road from the port city.

Soon the tent city, already called Hiscock's, had its own hotel, store, and doubtless other services, legal and otherwise.

But by 25 August the Government decided that there would be a mining tax of 30 shillings per month. Unlike the local landholders, miners would have no voting rights or representation and the tax was to be payable irrespective of any gold recovered.

Protest

Just a few days later the fledgling township was the scene of a meeting of some sixty miners protesting at the tax. This was later



Shown above is the sign on the Midland Highway marking the location of the old town of Hiscock's.

seen as a prelude to the famous rebellion at Eureka some three years later.

With the crowded scene at Hiscock's and the alluvial gold not being plentiful, miners began drifting elsewhere in the district – to nearby areas along the Yarrowee River, to Clunes and to the areas around what would become Ballarat. The rush to the Ballarat fields only about 10 miles from Hiscocks led to the early death of the township.

But just a few years later deep lead mining started there in 1857, with the very large *Imperial Mine* setting up close to the spot where Thomas Hiscock found his gold nuggets. It closed many years later in 1913. A current road sign/name on the western side of the Midland Highway just before the cemetery now points to the site of an off-shoot mine, the Imperial South Mine, located about one kilometre to the west.

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Tragedy at the Imperial Mine

The old section of the Buninyong Cemetery has many gravesites and tombstones which attest to the dangers of life on the Buninyong goldfields in the mid-1800s. Mine shaft collapses, gas poisoning, fatal injuries from machinery, added to death from diseases of many kinds, all were factors in the frequent burials there.

But one fatality at the *Imperial Mine* at Hiscock's in April 1885 was most unusual and led both to a coronial inquiry and a subsequent trial at the Buninyong Police Court.

It seems that a young woman from Melbourne, **Martha Williams** had been staying with the family of the *Imperial Mine* Manager **Mr A W Chapman**. On the morning in question, Miss Williams went to the Post Office with Chapman's daughter **Jane**, and then they went to the mine where they asked if they could go down a shaft where **Thomas Tresize**, 20, was working. He agreed.

Bucket ride

While miners normally descended by ladder down the 100 feet deep shaft, a bucket, just 14 inches wide at the top, was swinging over the shaft opening (which was 4 feet 8 inches long and 2 feet 8 inches wide). Young Tresize helped the two young women to put their feet on either side of the bucket and hold the rope to descend the shaft.

'Miss Chapman screamed, "Oh Tom, she is killed!"'

After the bucket was lowered just a short distance Miss Williams' dress became caught and she fell. Miss Chapman screamed out "Oh, Tom! She is killed." Jane Chapman kept her hold of the rope and was lifted out of the shaft.

It was testified that, when found, Martha Williams was alive but unconscious, and died after about fifteen minutes. Later, **Dr Hardy** found that "the deceased's neck was broken."

Accident

The Deputy-Coroner found the cause of the death to be accidental.

But a prosecution was later lodged in the Buninyong Police Court against the Block Manager **John Tresize** for breaching Rule 28 of Section 8 of the Mining Act 783. On the bench were **Mr D W Davies** (Mayor), and **Messrs Hedrick, Newman, Higgins and Kerr**.



After taking lengthy evidence and "after the magistrates retired for some time" Mayor Davies and his colleagues returned a majority decision in favour of dismissing the case without costs.

The *Buninyong Telegraph* of 24 April 1885, reported the story under the headline of *Sad Fatal Accident at Hiscocks*.

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Bridget Aitchison


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Authorised by Cheryl Bromfield, 40a Bridge St, Sebastopol VIC 3356

**Victorian
Labor**

Salon is now lit up again

The business strip along Warrenheip Street North took a major step towards again being a 'full house' with the 13 July re-opening of **Buninyong Hair & Beauty** under new ownership.

A serious illness had forced previous owner **Aaron Davies** to close the business some six months ago.

New owner is experienced hairstylist **Emma Nester** who brings with her seven years' management of a Ballarat salon, and some impressive specialist hairdressing post-certificate qualifications.

Expertise

For example she has completed the twelve month *Colour Mastery* program offered by the *L'Oreal* group in Melbourne. This course specialised in colour correction, high fashion colour, colour lightening, and grey coverage.

Emma also has completed an advance hair cutting course through international stylists *Mazella and Palmer*.

She is taking the current virus crisis and social distancing requirements very seriously and has taken extra measures in salon to keep her clients as safe as possible.

Family near

Emma said that she chose to open her new business here because of the "lovely community feel" and, despite living in Alfredton, with her husband and two young



children, she has many family members and friends living in Buninyong and Mount Helen.

Planned trading hours for the business will see it open five days each week – on Mondays and Wednesdays (between 10.00am and 5.00pm), on Thursday and Friday (10.00am-7.00pm) and on Saturdays (9.00am-2.00pm). At present she will take walk-in clients, however appointments are advisable (5301 3008).

Regrettably, after the introduction of Stage 3 COVID-19 restrictions, these hours have had to be modified, so call Emma to check and for all appointments over the next several weeks.

Ernie Neale's Monthly RAINFALL REPORT

Not wet yet

This year Winter is shaping up to be a dry affair. We received only 40 mm of rain in July, most of which fell in the first half of the month. The second half of July was dominated by slow-moving high-pressure cells, with diminished rainfall and some unusually mild and sunny weather.

Following on the heels of June's 52.2 mm of rainfall, this means that so far winter has delivered less than 100 mm of rain, well under the recent June/July average of 138.7 mm.

While August has opened with some rain, and even snow, BOM's outlook remains neutral, with only a 50 per cent chance of greater than median rainfall.

So, if by the end of August, the wattles are flowering, blossom is out, bulbs have sprouted, and lawn mowers have reappeared, then 2020 might end a lot dryer than it began.

JULY 2020			
Date	Rain	Date	Rain
2-8	21.2	26	0.2
9-14	8.8	28	2.4
17	0.3	30	0.6
20-22	6.0		
Total		39.5 mm	
July Average		68.5 mm	



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Looking after the volunteers

The City of Ballarat has decided to temporarily halt all of its volunteer programs.

Writing to the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens group, Parks & Gardens Co-ordinator **Daryl Wallis** said, "While we value the many works and benefits that our volunteers provide to the City, we value the individual volunteers themselves more highly and wish to keep everyone safe and healthy."



Bridget puts her hand up

First cab off the rank for a spot as a South Ward Councillor in this year's City of Ballarat elections is Bridget Aitchison who brings some impressive credentials for the role.

Campus Dean of the Australian Catholic University campus in Mair Street since mid-2017, Bridget also is a member of *Committee for Ballarat* and heads up their *Liveability* project team. A key interest of this group is Ballarat's environmental sustainability for future generations.

She says that she's standing because Council presently is lacking in transparency and in taking community consultation seriously. She also added, "It's been a long time since the South Ward has had female representation."

Now building a home in the South Ward at Winter Valley, Bridget says she has spent much time with friends in Buninyong and district and will be working hard to better get to know the area and its concerns. She is shown above chatting downtown in July with a young mother and children.

Council elections are scheduled for Saturday 24 October 2020.



Liz catches the snowfall

When the first snowfall of the season came on Tuesday 4 August, Liz Hayward was up on the Mount with her camera to capture the scene in the crater area.

Resulting from a blast of very cold air across Tasmania and parts of Victoria, the snow fell on a day when the minimum temperature was 0 degrees and the maximum just 7°C. When this photo was taken around 9.00am the temperature had rocketed up to 1°C.

Let's lunch together

There is an old saying that there is always light at the end of the tunnel. But at present it is difficult to even find the tunnel!

John Emery says, "When all this is over why don't we all catch up for a Community Lunch. The idea is that local restaurants and clubs might put on a Sunday lunch, each with one fixed price signature dish – from pies to whatever. We all get our friends together and tell stories of how we handled the lockdowns and change of lifestyle."

Phone John with your thoughts on 0408 570 217.



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Our aim is to bring together local businesses to help develop initiatives that strengthen our community.

A membership based organisation run by volunteers who are passionate about living and working in Buninyong.

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www.facebook.com/buninyongbusinessnetwork | buninyongbusinessnetwork@gmail.com

Golf Club's Trevor McCann

Milkman to Woodman

Anyone involved with Buninyong golf would know what Trevor McCann has done for the local club over many years. But, his former working career and high-level sporting achievements are not so well known.

Trevor grew up in Warrenheip and moved into Ballarat as a twelve-year old when his family took over the *Advance Dairy* in Scott Parade, just opposite Russell Square. The McCann family ran the business there for over fifty years with Trevor eventually taking over the management of *McCann's Dairy Centre* until his retirement.

The milkman

As he became more involved in the running of the dairy, *Macca the Milko* also was making his mark in cricket circles in Ballarat. He joined Brown Hill Cricket Club as a junior and went on to forge a cricket career that would see him recognised as one of Ballarat's best.

In an A Grade career of 240 games, Trevor made 5328 runs and took 591 wickets. He played in five premierships, represented Ballarat in Country Week for twelve years (winning four titles), played two seasons with Fitzroy in Melbourne District, represented Victorian Country against New Zealand and England, and won three *Cleary Medals*, Ballarat cricket's top award. He is a life member of the Brown Hill Cricket Club and the Ballarat Cricket Association.

President

As a member of Buninyong Golf Club for 48 years, Trevor rarely misses his Saturday golf game, and served on the Committee for many years, including five years as President.

He sees the club's purchase of the land, successful projects to put club's finances into positive territory, and the removal of poker machines as highlights of his term as President.

While proud of such achievements, Trevor's legacy to the club is best seen out on the course itself. In his words, "I was grounds coordinator... had a short spell, and recently got back into it." He is happiest pottering around the course pulling out weeds,

planting trees and shrubs, creating new garden areas, or any other task that improves the look and environment of the course. While often working alone, he also keeps finding new tasks for his team of regular helpers.

Trevor estimates that he has planted some 2000 shrubs and trees around the course. He knows where they all are and when they were planted.

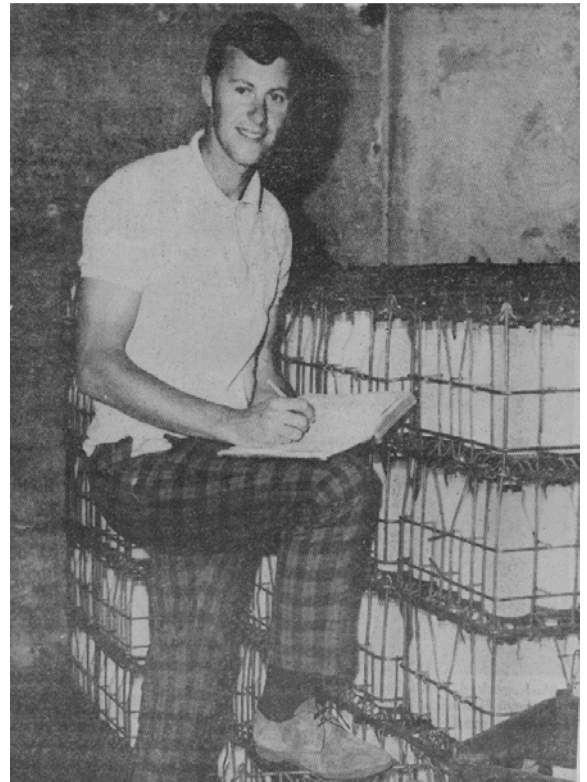
Idea

Three years ago, Trevor toyed with the idea that instead of the club dumping the timber from fallen and dangerous trees around the course, it could be used to raise funds for the club. He gathered a team together and soon made the transition from *Macca the Milkman* to *Macca the Woodman*.

He started delivering wood to nine customers. This year his customer base expanded to thirty. Trevor expects the \$7000 income from 2020 deliveries to bring his tally to over \$14,000, which has gone into golf club projects.

While *The News* is well aware of many 'milkman' tales and gags, Trevor asked for a strict confidentiality clause in that regard.

– Ray Sullivan



Above: The young milkman checks over the crates of one pint bottles of milk.
Below: The senior woodman.



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