

# Dunkeld & District Newsletter



Sponsored by Lions Club

Distributed fortnightly on Wednesday (except during School Holidays)  
Printed at the Dunkeld Consolidated School – E&OE

Issue No: 6/2021 Date: Wednesday 5 May 2021

## Dunkeld RSL Sub-Branch ANZAC Day Dawn Service

A large crowd respectfully attended this year's Dunkeld RSL Sub-Branch ANZAC Day Dawn Service on Sunday 25 April 2021. RSL President, Mr Terry Noble, led the commemorative service in the cold grey dawn at the Dunkeld Cenotaph and the Requiem included:

*Today we remember our fallen. Memorials have been erected and are built for them in their own land but on far off shores there is a memory that no pen has traced, it is marked not on stone or brass but in the living hearts of us all.*

*All the men and women that have shed their blood and lost their lives are now living in the soil of countries worldwide.*

*We all shed tears for our sons and daughters who lie in these far away countries, but we will remember them and it is all of those, who have fought "said" to their mates, we will tomorrow again crouch in the shallow dug outs and lay in the frozen mad and battle the blazing sun of the deserts. They also say these things in the battle worn destroyers and not to forget the bombers and those who lived in prison camps all over the world these are but a few of the places, far from home where we have lost our loved ones.*

*They were your mates, the kid across the street, the medical student, the tradesman, the mechanic at your local service station, the baker, the gardener, the clerk, the army private, a naval commander, an Airforce pilot but above all I am an Australian like you and I was there so you can say we are free. Lest We Forget.*

Dunkeld Consolidated School Captains, Libby Herrmann and Mitchell Gordon, participated in the service with Libby as guest speaker presenting a speech about her great-grandfather, the late Mr Henry Leech OAM (WWII veteran, RSL Life Member and former Prisoner of War) and Mitchell honourably reciting The Ode. Libby's inspiring speech is included on page 10.



RSL member and RAAF Warrant Officer Rose Noble, raised the Australian flag to the masthead during Reveille. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the soldier's memorial by various community groups and schools including the RSL Sub-Branch, Legacy, Dunkeld Consolidated School, Monivae College, Baimbridge College, The Hamilton and Alexandra College, Southern Grampians Shire Council and families and community members.

The Dunkeld & District Lions Club members generously provided a complimentary barbecue breakfast and hot beverages, for the large crowd, at the conclusion of the service. The Dunkeld RSL Sub-Branch would like to sincerely thank the general

community for their wonderful support especially the Dunkeld Consolidated School and Dunkeld & District Lions Club. Thank you to our local business houses who kindly allowed us to sell our ANZAC Appeal badges and merchandise including Dunkeld General Store, Kelly's Merchandise, Sturgeon View, the Dunkeld Old Bakery and the Dunkeld and District Community Bank.



Disclaimer: The purpose of the Dunkeld & District Community Newsletter is to share information about activities, events, projects and services in our local district and surrounds, including historical information. It is not a platform for political or public argument. The newsletter is supported by local business advertising. The Dunkeld & District Community Newsletter reserves the right to accept or reject any submissions at its discretion without notification.

## DONATIONS

We rely on donations to the Community Newsletter to offset all expenses relating to producing it. Please send in your donation to the Dunkeld Consolidated School office where it will be receipted, and an acknowledgement made via the Newsletter. A receipt will be provided. **Please make cheques payable to the "Dunkeld Consolidated School."**

## CHURCH TIMES

### Saint Patrick's Catholic Church

Co-Pastor: Father Pat Mugavin - 5571 1161  
Co-Pastor: Father George Kuruvila – 5571 1161

Email: patrick.mugavin@ballarat.catholic.org.au  
Email: george.kuruvila@ballarat.catholic.org.au

1 <sup>st</sup> Week	Sunday	May 2	8.30am	Mass
2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	Sunday	May 9		No Mass or service (Mass in Glenthompson)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	Sunday	May 16	8.30am	Mass
4 <sup>th</sup> Week	Sunday	May 23	9.00am	Assembly of Word and Communion
5 <sup>th</sup> Week	Sunday	May 30	9.00am	Assembly of Word and Communion

### Dunkeld Anglican - Uniting Churches

1st and 3rd Sunday of the month at 5.00pm. All Welcome. Please sign in when you arrive.  
Enquiries to Father David Oulton - phone: 5571 1317.

### Panyyabyr Uniting Church

### Mirranatwa Uniting Church

Enquiries: Margo Dark: 5574 0222; Iris Field 5574 0202; Kristy Beveridge 0428 581 903.

WHAT'S ON IN MAY						
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
3	4	5 Newsletter issue 6 distributed	6	7	8 Printmaking Workshop OTR	9
10	11	12	13	14 Newsletter issue 7 deadline	15	16
17 Red Cross Meeting @ 2.00pm	18	19 Newsletter issue 7 distributed	20 'Sit & Sew' @ 7pm Community Centre  Dunkeld Museum Guest Speaker @ 7.30pm	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Newsletter issue 8 distributed Comedy Festival Roadshow	29	30



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**Western AG Willaura**

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Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7.30pm start  
Tickets \$35; concession \$25  
Tickets available: [tickets.hamiltonpac.com.au](http://tickets.hamiltonpac.com.au)



**HAMILTON GUIDANCE GROUP**

The Southwest Branch of the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria (Hamilton Guidance Group) would like to invite people living in the Dunkeld area to join us for an evening 'sit and sew' to be held at the Green Room in the Stirling Place Community Centre on the evening of Thursday 20 May 2021, starting at 7.00pm.

All are welcome, whether you are an experienced embroiderer, or have never tried it at all! Come join us for a cup of tea and a bit of stitching, and perhaps discover a new craft, or re-awaken an interest in an old one.

For more information, please contact:  
Heather Funk 0438 594 449  
Jill Wilson 0413 106 877  
or Dorith (Dot) Callander 0434 348 757

**MIX AND MATCH - JIGSAW**

**PRINTMAKING**

Off the Rails Dunkeld  
Saturday 8 May 2021  
10.00am – 3.00pm  
Cost \$75.00  
All material included.  
Contact Susan Clarke  
0409 431 960



**DUNKELD MUSEUM NEWS**

**Henham Project**

Our interest in the failed settlement of Henham in the Victoria Valley almost 100 years ago has grown beyond a guest speaker night into enough significant research to produce a booklet on the subject. **The guest speaker event is on Thursday 20 May 2021 at 7.30pm** (gold coin donation), where a couple of local 'identities' will share their knowledge of the 'town that never was' and an extensive display of Henham-related documents can be viewed. **All welcome.** The booklet will also be available for purchase on the night and afterwards from the Museum and the General Store.

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Trevor Landwehr 0407 719 099      111 Lodge Road, Hamilton  
Paul Donoghue 0438 871 432      Phone 5571 9099

In this edition of the newsletter, we have provided an account from a Stawell newspaper in 1923 which describes a journey in that year from Dunkeld to Halls Gap. This piece gives background to the purported rationale behind the Henham settlement: to generate funds to build a good road from Mirranatwa to Halls Gap. It is a very interesting piece to read in its own right because of the detailed descriptions of the landscape, flora and fauna experienced on the journey. Much of it familiar in 2021. Please refer to page 12 of the newsletter.

### Ararat Car Club visit

We recently welcomed 15 members of the Ararat Car Club to the Museum. They were very impressed with our exhibits, and we were very impressed by their cars, including a beautiful old Jag and an old Mustang!

### Memberships

Annual memberships are now due (\$15.00).

The Museum is open Thursdays and Sundays 1.00pm to 5.00pm.



## Remedial Myofascial Clinic

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### DUNKELD PUBLIC LANDS

**SOLAR LIGHTS:** Three lights have been put up this week in the caravan park on the walking track they have motion sensors to increase brightness when someone is passing.

Concerns have raised about the condition of the walking track between Henty Street and Reservoir wall. We are contacting Council regarding these concerns and also the weeds on the wall to see what can be done. We hope to get a start on the jetty in the next few weeks.

*Frank Raymond, Dunkeld Public Lands*

## STURGEON VIEW

Formerly Café 109

109a Parker Street  
Dunkeld Vic  
Ph: 03 5577 2288

Monday closed.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Sunday

Lunch 11.30am – 2.30pm

Dinner 5.00pm – 8.00pm

Friday – Saturday

Lunch 11.30am – 2.30pm

Dinner 5.00pm – 8.30pm

In-between lunch and dinner service light snacks are available from 2.30pm – 5.00pm

**Tuesday night: Parma Night selection of delicious toppings \$18**

**Thursday night: Burger Night freshly homemade burgers and rolls \$17**

**Freshly homemade pizzas available daily from \$17**

### TAKEAWAY FAMILY PACKS

- Pizza Bundle - 2 x Pizzas garlic bread & 1.25L soft drink \$40
- Fish & Chip Bundle – 4 x pieces of fish chips & salad \$35
- Chicken Parmas – 4 x Parmas chips & salad \$70
- Chicken Schnitzels - 4 x Schnitzels chips gravy & salad \$60

### DINE IN OR TAKEAWAY MEALS BEVERAGES & ACHOHOL

- Gluten free Vegan and Vegetarian options available
- **Beer Wine Mixed Spirits available**
- Coffee tea milkshakes soft drink varieties etc
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Wednesday 8:30am – 3:00pm

Thursday 8:30am – 3:00pm

Friday 8:30am – 3:00pm

Saturday 8:30am – 3:00pm

Sunday 8:30am – 3:00pm

Monday Closed



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## Mutterings from mischievous Father David

Now let's just think this through...

It all began early one morning when I had to rescue the banner pole out of a narrow box that measured 4 foot high, 18 inches across and 6 foot wide. You get the picture. I couldn't reach the bottom of this container by simply bending over and reaching inside. What I wanted lay tantalisingly at the bottom. I could see it. It lay there taunting me. There was only one thing for it. I got up on a chair and gently lowered myself in, picked up the recalcitrant poles and then... well um.... You know where this is going right? There I was, in a locked empty church, early in the morning and getting out was going to be a lot more problematic than getting in.

'Sad' words were muttered, and my doctor would have been very displeased with my blood pressure.

In the end I pushed myself up and very precariously, so as not to endanger my life insurance policy, through a herculean effort managed to get out and emerge triumphant clutching the banner pole close to my breast.

I have made the same mistake many times in my life. To rush in and solve the problem or fix the broken doodad without first thinking through how all this might work. What catastrophes my brashness and over confidence have initiated along the way. I say inspiring things to myself like ...How hard could it be? Well, let me tell you! Plenty hard. Painting something white while dressed in my priestly blacks probably ranks right up there. What could possibly go wrong?

So, when you come across a problem... just stop. First think carefully; consult you tube if you have to. Just don't jump in boots and all. Just don't.

Father David Oulton



## RED CROSS NEWS

A small group met on Monday to decide on future meetings. There is a change of date for May. The meeting is a week earlier (to suit two members heading off on a trip the next week). So, we will meet at the Henry Leech RSL Room on **Monday 17 May 2021 at 2.00pm**. Please bring your ideas.

The Emergency Services group (Heather Macgugan is our representative) have done their Psychology module and have another module today (Friday.)

Heather Napier won the day's raffle and Bek and Iris won the competition, organised by Heather.

*Iris Field*  
Secretary

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### Beyond the Farm Gate podcast Local Kelly Barnes from Mates Dog School

Kelly Barnes is the Founder of Mates Dog School and the co-President of the newly revived Dunkeld CWA — both in Dunkeld. Kelly originally studied agriculture before a chronic pain condition forced her to give up farm work. Have a listen to this episode, where Kelly shares how her experience inspired her to establish Mates Dog School a place where farmers, together with their dogs, learn low-stress stock handling, enhance the dog-owner bond, and build resilience through social connection and peer support. "Get them understanding their dog and looking towards their dog as a team mate rather as opposed to a work tool." Listen to the latest episode of Beyond the Farm Gate



**Beyond the Farm Gate**

Kelly Barnes  
Founder and Manager  
Mates Dog School

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## SOME WORDS FROM FATHER DAVID

Finding the sweet spot.

Here is a photo of a dishevelled greying guy at Park run. This photo is not glamorous or sexy.



You can see my countenance is contorted with the strain of trying really hard. I look as though I have all the problems of the Church of God on my shoulders.

It is a curious quirk that every so often I find what some sports people refer to as the 'sweet spot'. The sense where body, soul and mind all align in a perfect harmony. This 'space' is an elusive little critter that you cannot write into your diary for 8:00am on Saturday morning. You do not find this 'sweet spot'; rather it is almost as if it finds you. It happens sometimes when I am jogging around by myself and I am not motivated by selfish ego in trying to catch the person in front of me.

No, this 'sweet spot' catches me by its own stealth and I don't realise it until I am actually there, in the moment. A surfer will also speak to you about the sweet spot. They will tell you that sometimes they catch and ride the perfect wave. Try to replicate this of your own volition and you are doomed to never experiencing it again.

Sometimes it works like this with prayer as well. Every so often, you may find Him or rather He finds you.

And because we can't orchestrate this encounter, the best we can do is make sure that we continue to run round the lake, go across to pray, front up at the altar, make ourselves aware, practice and make ourselves available.

There are some blustery dark mornings though when all seems lost, forbidding and lonely and I wonder why?! and then ...

Father David Oulton



**Dan Tehan MP**  
Member for Wannan

As your representative in the Federal Parliament, listening to your views about our local area is my priority.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.  
190 Gray Street, Hamilton VIC 3300  
Local call 1300 131 692  
dan.tehan.mp@aph.gov.au  
[www.dantehan.com.au](http://www.dantehan.com.au)

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**\*NOTE CHANGE OF HOURS**

**MONDAY TO THURSDAY - 7.00am – 4.30pm**

**FRIDAY – 7.00am – 5.30pm**

**SATURDAY - 7.30am – 4.00pm**

**SUNDAY- 8.00am – 1.00pm**

**(Times may vary on Public Holidays)**

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**Mothers Day Lunch  
at Sturgeon View**

Sunday 9th May  
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11.30am-1pm  
and  
1.30pm-3pm  
Bookings are essential  
We request pre order of  
meals and to inform us of any  
dietary requirements  
upon booking  
Two course meal \$50pp  
Complimentary glass of  
wine on arrival  
kids options available

**ph 5577-2288  
for bookings**

**Main Course**  
Lamb Rack with a sage,  
thyme, parsley, herb  
crumb, oven baked  
served with roasted garlic  
infused mash potato  
with red wine jus  
and blanched broccoli  
or  
Pork Ribeye  
Pan seared pork ribeye  
served with creamy  
mash potato topped with  
asian slaw drizzled with  
honey soy sauce

**Dessert**  
Chocolate basket filled with  
Strawberries and ice cream  
and Strawberry cointreau  
or  
White Chocolate cheese  
cake served with cream



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### Saint Patrick's Day Celebration

Nearly thirty people gathered at St Patrick's, Dunkeld on 17 March to celebrate the feast day of Saint Patrick, after whom our church is named. Following a Mass celebrated by Father Paddy Mugavin we adjourned to the Meeting Room for drinks, Irish stew and mashed potato. Then dessert of green jelly, fruit salad and ice-cream followed.

The Multi Raffle was drawn and results as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize: \$100 Voucher donated by Royal Mail: Sister Marg Carmody.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: \$25 Voucher donated by Sturgeon View (109): Heather McIntyre.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: \$25 Voucher Donated by Sturgeon View (109): Terrie Nicholson.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Fan donated by Kelly's: Dennis Willey.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Prize: Garden Gloves donated by Kelly's: Gaye Beveridge, Sherry Phillips, Pauline Mathews and Colleen Lomas.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Prize: Wine donated by Peter Hinchey: Maree Willey, Evelyn McLean.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Prize: Fruit and Jams donated By Heather McIntyre: Father John McKinnon.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Prize: Six-pack of Stubbies donated by Elizabeth Hinchey: Peter Phillips.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Prize: Potted Geranium donated by Keryn Gordon: Rose Kennedy.

Congratulations to all prize winners. A special thank you to all who donated prizes/money or purchased raffle tickets. We appreciate all who were able to celebrate with us.

A fun night of good food and shared fellowship. We have been able to fully pay for the new electric stove recently installed in our meeting room. Thank you all.

*Helen Lyon, President, Dunkeld Catholic Women's League*

### Garden Notes – May

May to July is a good time to apply garden lime to your lawns. This will help to break up any surface soil "crusts" which may have formed during the summer. Many fertilisers will drop the soil pH below the range preferred by lawn grasses, lime will offset this effect. It also increases earthworm activity and helps to prevent moss growth.



Main vegetable plantings for May are: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, broad beans and turnips. Don't forget to spray your peach, apricot and nectarine trees in mid-May using copper fungicide, this will reduce fungus disease problems later in the year.

Now is a good time to plant citrus trees, lemon, orange, lime, mandarin and cumquat, also olives. They need a sunny, well-drained position with well loosened up soil and some well-rotted animal manure added. Also, don't forget to order winter planting of roses, fruit trees and deciduous ornamentals now.

People have asked about control of moss in lawns. This usually only becomes a problem in badly drained or shady areas and will remain a problem until those situations can be improved. Iron sulphate will give temporary control.

May and June are the best months for hydrangea pruning. This simple process consists of the removal of dead or weak shoots as well as cutting back to a strong bud any canes which produced flowers last season. If you wish to change the colour of your hydrangea blooms or intensify existing colour, you would commence treatment not later than May and continue regularly until flowering. Acid soils produce blue flowers, alkaline soils produce pink, white remains white regardless of soil pH. Iron sulphate, aluminium sulphate or hydrangea bluing fertiliser can be used to acidify soil (i.e. to turn flowers blue or to keep them blue). Epsom salts (magnesium sulphate) or garden lime will produce pink blooms.

Spring flowering bulbs, annuals and perennials can still be planted, but don't delay as the season is drawing to a close. A few moments spent cleaning and sharpening your secateurs will help you to get pruning under way in winter. More details next month.

Happy gardening!  
*Stephen Hughan, Ararat Nursery – phone: 5352 1123*



### SCHOOL NEWS

#### Acting Principal's Report

Welcome back to all our students, teachers, families and community members to Term 2. We hope to see an uninterrupted term, full of engaging learning activities for our students to enjoy. I thank all our staff for their continued dedication to our students. The care and guidance they give to our students and teaching delivered, is second to none.

Students and families, we are so lucky!

We again start the term with the calendar filling up quickly. Whilst students enjoyed a Pupil Free Day for the first day of term, staff spent the day revising our School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, to monitor how we are tracking and guide where to next with our planning and use of resources. We also revisited the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO), which we will continue to do regularly and ongoing.

During the first week, we held our own school Anzac Day Service, where senior students delivered readings, poems and stories. I would like to congratulate Libby Herrmann for her inspiring speech about the life of her Great Grandfather, Henry Leech. The time and effort Libby spent diving into the life of Mr Leech, was not only a wonderful learning experience for her, but a moving experience for all who were lucky to hear her speak at our school assembly and then at the Dunkeld Dawn Service. Libby, thank you for sharing Henry Leech's life story and well done on the exemplary delivery. Thank you also to Mitchell Gordon who read the Ode of Remembrance at both services and to Hugh Prentice for his reading of an Anzac Day poem.

This week we have Caulfield Grammar visiting our school. This has been a longstanding partnership of their Music students visiting our school and showcasing their talents to our younger students. Our wonderful P & F committee and volunteers will be providing Caulfield Grammar their lunch and a small concert will follow for all students in the afternoon.

Coming up, we have School Cross Country on Monday 3 May. Students have been doing some practise in PE sessions, as well as having the opportunity for a daily run around the set course.

NAPLAN Testing begins on Tuesday 11 May. All students in Years 3 and 5 across the country will be participating in this testing. Our students have had a chance to familiarise themselves with the process of completing the computer based practise tests. If students are absent during one of the testing days, there is a catch-up period throughout the two-week period.

Thank you, Dee Gerring

### ANZAC Art

Our students have a respectful and amazing display of their Anzac artwork throughout the school.



Prep and Year 1 Art

### Some reflections about ANZAC Day from the Prep and Year One Students

Libby told us they had no food.

*Annabelle Beveridge*

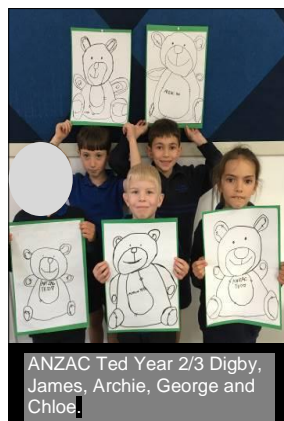
I learnt some soldiers were prisoners and I didn't know that they had to build train tracks.

*Michaela Roache*

ANZAC Day is the day we think about the people in the army and the people that died. *Liv Lance*

Soldiers go marching on ANZAC Day. *Edwin White*

They have to be brave to be in



the war. *George Phillips*

Libby had the longest story and we found out that you get really hurt in war. War isn't very nice. *Dempsey Gerring*

### House Cross Country on Wednesday 5 May

Due to inclement weather being forecast for Monday 3 May, our House Cross Country Sports will now be held on Wednesday 5 May commencing at 1.30pm. Regular classes will run prior to the Cross Country events.

There will be an early lunch break at 12.30pm and the first event will begin at 1.30pm, concluding with presentations and assembly at 3.00pm and dismissal at approximately 3.20pm.

Age groups and distances are as follows:

- 5/6 years 500 metres
- 7/8 years 1000 metres
- 9/10 years 2000 metres
- 11/12/13 years 3000 metres

Parents are welcome to attend.

### Division Athletics Carnival on Friday 7 May 2021

The following students have qualified to compete in the Combined Warrnambool, Portland and Hamilton Division Athletics Carnival on Friday 7 May 2021 at the Brauerander Park Athletics Track in Warrnambool: *Phoebe Lazzari, Lachie Gordon, Lachie Oldfield Mann, Charles Prentice, Jack Oldfield Mann, Indi Mibus, Charlotte Alderman, Phoebe Ross, Ella Peters, Sean Bird, Darcy Potter, Edie Jackson, Sebastian Aarons, Oscar Fanning, Zander Mibus, Louis Lazzari and Hugh Prentice.* We wish all our students the best at this next level of competition.

### Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program (SAKG)

Reports by SAKG Kitchen and Garden Captains

#### Kitchen Report

Last Friday the Awesome Agapanthus cooked in the kitchen. We cooked Beetroot and Herb Risotto, Borek, and Silver beet, Leek and Feta Slice. It was delicious! By Libby Herrmann

#### Garden Report

This week in gardening Group B have been very busy. We continued with the pruned the fruit trees in our garden. With the rain and sun, we have been getting our garden should do well. By Jake Linskens



### The Dunkeld Consolidated School wants your Used Batteries!

The Dunkeld Consolidated School Council has been conducting an ongoing Battery Collection Fundraiser. Kelly's Dunkeld have kindly offered to be a central collection point for used batteries for the Dunkeld Consolidated School (Jason Linskens was instrumental in organising this). Any unwanted car, truck, tractor, boat batteries etc may be dropped off at Kelly's Hardware Store, 101 Parker Street, Dunkeld.

Components of used batteries e.g. metals, acids and plastics are reclaimed, recycled and put back into the manufacturing process to build more batteries and household products, 98% of the battery is recycled.

If you require any assistance with the pick-up of your used batteries, please contact Simon Ross on 0408 984 499.

Thank you for your support!

Ros McArthur

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## DUNKELD RSL SUB-BRANCH

**RSL Membership:** We invite ex-service men and women to be members and renew their membership to ensure the future of the RSL locally. Membership renewal (\$40.00 per person) for 2021 is now due. If you are a relative of ex-service men or women, you can also join the RSL. By becoming a member of the RSL you will be helping the welfare of disabled war veterans and supporting your local RSL Sub-Branch. Application forms are available from the Secretary/Treasurer, Terrie Nicholson - phone: 5573 3353.



**Annual General Meeting:** An Annual General Meeting, followed by a general meeting, will be held on Sunday 6 June 2021 commencing at 11.00am in the Henry Leech RSL Room. A light finger food lunch and beverages will be served at the conclusion of the meeting. All are welcome to attend.

### ANZAC Day Dawn Service presentation by Guest Speaker, Libby Herrmann:

On this special day when we remember our brave ANZACs, I am thinking of my great-grandpa Henry Leech. Some of you may remember Henry from his many years in Dunkeld, or will have seen his name on the RSL Room in our Community Centre, or may know that he received an Order of Australia Medal for his contributions to the Dunkeld community. But to me, he was just 'Pa Henry'. I remember him as a very tall old man, who had trouble with his eyesight, and he would bend down to see my face when we talked to each other. He was kind and funny and everyone says he was a true gentleman.



Eighty years ago, he was just a sixteen-year-old boy when he enlisted in the army in World War II. He was only four years older than I am, but he told the enlistment officers he was 21! Henry joined up with his best mate from school, Davey Young. They'd been boys together in Fitzroy, and then they became Private Leech and Private Young of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Australian Imperial Forces. They got photos taken in their brand new uniforms with Davey's sisters, and then they went off to train for war.

Mostly when I think about war, I think of soldiers going off to fight the enemy with guns and tanks, or getting wounded or dying in battle. That's what Henry thought too. He thought they'd be going to the Middle East where his big brother Joe was fighting. But instead of fighting the Germans in the desert, they ended up in the jungle fighting the Japanese, and had to surrender to them in Singapore after only two months. Henry and Davey were among 15 thousand Australians, and tens of thousands of British troops who suddenly became Prisoners of War. They would still have to fight, but it was a different sort of fight to the one they'd imagined. And their enemy had a different code of honour.

The Japanese believed that it was a shameful disgrace to be captured alive by your enemy. It was an honour to kill yourself or die fighting for the Emperor, rather than be taken prisoner. Prisoners were weak in spirit; sick prisoners were even weaker. They weren't worthy of life, let alone decent treatment. All that they were good for, was working to build things that would help Japan win the war.

And that's how Henry came to be a slave on the Thai-Burma Railway. It wasn't called the Death Railway yet. It was an

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epic railway line that was to be 415 kilometres long, through remote wilderness, over rivers, over mountains and through rock. And the prisoners had to build it all by hand. No machines, just basic tools – shovels and wicker baskets to shift the dirt, blunt axes to clear the thick spikey bamboo, picks and crowbars to chip away at the rock.

When Henry first started on the line, the weather was good. The work was hard but not unmanageable. The men were still capable of things like performing concerts in their camp and acting out horse races. But the camps were very rough. Their huts were just bamboo shelters with a palm leaf roof, and their toilet was just a long open pit in the ground. There was never enough food and the men were slowly starving. They started to get diseases of malnutrition and tropical diseases. There was no medicine and so men began to die.

And the whole time, they were under constant threat of brutal punishments by the guards. If they tried to escape, they were killed; got caught with a radio – killed; got caught drawing pictures or keeping a diary – killed. But mostly they were just bashed with sticks of bamboo. Bashed every day for the smallest things, and sometimes even bashed for being sick.

Henry, like everyone else, got sick. He had malaria which would relapse with fevers every few weeks. And he got tropical ulcers on his legs. The ulcers would start from a small scratch which were really common because the men's boots had worn out and they had to go barefoot. The scratch would turn into a big, painful, rotting wound and if it got into the bone, your leg would have to be amputated. At times, the doctors were cutting off 8 legs a day, sometimes with no anaesthetic. Luckily, Henry's ulcers healed.

The camp doctors worked so hard to protect their men, and they were loved for it. One doctor saved Henry's life just by crossing his name off a list! Henry was on a list of men who were to go by boat to Japan to work in the mines. However, his feet had been badly burnt while working, and the doctor said he wasn't fit to go. The boat was torpedoed and sunk, and three quarters of the men on board died.

Meanwhile, back at home, Henry's family were waiting to hear news of their boy. They'd been told in February 1942 that he was reported missing. It wasn't until 18 months later, in October 1943, that they received a telegram saying that "VX60451 Leech H.F., previously reported missing, is now reported prisoner of war."

Barely any mail was allowed to get in or out of the camps. Henry was lucky one day to receive a small treasure – a photo of his little sister Doris holding a horse. His family only received two cards in the next two years. They were pre-written by the Japanese, describing the camps as a good place to be, and signed by Henry. On one of them he was able to write at the bottom: "Remember me to all at home. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas. Lots of love." They probably felt relieved and thought that he was safe and out of harm's way.

But on the railway, the monsoon season started and things actually got worse. The Japanese were under more and more pressure to get the line finished, so they made the men work harder and harder.

For the next six months, Henry's days would have gone like this:

Wake up at 5.00am.  
Line up for breakfast – a cup of watery rice.  
Pack lunch – a ball of rice the size of a golf ball.  
Gather at assembly in the pouring rain, wearing only a loincloth and hat.  
Listen, as the Japanese officer calls out the number of fit

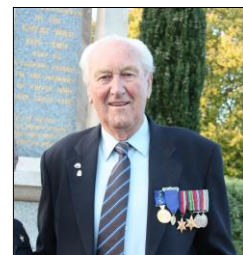
men needed to go and work that day.  
Watch, as the camp doctor tries to haggle the number down, because there are no fit men. There are only men who are less sick than others.  
Start walking towards the railway, barefoot in the mud and filth from the overflowing toilet pit.  
See the men at the front of the line, who look a bit like skeletons, but can still walk OK... See the men in the middle, shaking with malaria, and stumbling in pain on their ulcerated feet...  
And see the men at the back, too weak and starved to walk, being carried on stretchers by their mates who refuse to leave them behind to die...  
Then arrive at the worksite. Chip away at the rock or dirt or track for 14 hours, before turning around to walk back to camp in the dark. This time with different men taking a turn carrying the stretchers.  
Line up for dinner – more rice (often dirty rice with rat poo and maggots).

Then go to bed on the hard bamboo sleeping bench with maybe just enough room to be able to lie flat and go to sleep and dream of home, before waking up at 5.00am to do it all again the next day.

Somehow, two out of three Australians on the railway did get through each day and live to go home after three and a half years when we finally won the war. They proved to the Japanese that they weren't weak in spirit. They were amazingly strong. *Their code of was 'always help your mates'.*

But there was one mate who Henry couldn't help...  
When Henry got sent to the railway, Davey was sent to Sandakan in Borneo. 2,434 men were at Sandakan... Only 6 came home ... Davey died five months before the end of the war.

Henry got home just after he'd really turned 21. And for the next 70 years he lived a full and happy life, and always gave what he could to help those who needed it.



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## FROM THE LIONS DEN

### ANZAC Day

Thank you to the people involved in the ceremonies at the RSL Dawn Service, a terrific roll-up of people to honour our service people. Thank you to those who stayed for the refreshments after the service.

The Lions felt honoured to be involved.

Later that day, Liz and I were able to call in at the Light Horse Museum in Parker Street, this is worth seeing. As a nation we owe our service men and women so much for the sacrifice that they made. We will remember them.

### A Woman's Prayer

Dear Lord, I pray for:

Wisdom to understand a man and Patience to be able to forgive him and love him through all his moods. Lord, if I pray for strength, I will probably just beat him to death. Amen.

*Peter Hinchey*

### DUNKELD MUSEUM *continued*

*Stawell Paper – Monday January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1923*

#### ROAD THROUGH GRAMPIANS, Developing New Wonderland

Aid to Tourists and Producers, Stawell –

A spirited movement is on foot in the Stawell and Hamilton districts to obtain a good road through the Grampians, from Dunkeld to Halls Gap, and thus provide a ready means of communication between the Western and Wimmera Districts. Such a route would not only be a boon to the producers but would open a new province to the tourists. The scenery in the southern part rivals that of Hall's Gap, but because of the lack of good road, only an occasional shepherd, in search of lost sheep, has the privilege of feasting his eyes upon it. Much has been written about the distinctive beauty of the Grampians. The idea of the new movement, from the tourist point of view, is to make it possible for the traveller to gain easily an impression of the combined grandeur of the Grampians, the Victorian Ranges and the Sierra Ranges. Stimulus is being given to the movement by the National Roads Association of Australia a branch of which was recently formed in Hamilton. Mr A.A. Armitage, a representative of the association, passed through Stawell last week, after having made his way from Dunkeld through the mountains to Hall's Gap. He was enthusiastic about the scenery and declared that with the opening of a road, a tremendous impetus would be given to tourist traffic in the western mountains.

"There is a new wonderland awaiting development", he said "and it will cost comparatively little to do the work. It is surprising that a combined effort was not made long ago to open this enchanting region right down to Dunkeld."

#### **Sentinels of the Gateway.**

Mr Armitage accompanied by a friend, was driven from Hamilton to Dunkeld by Councillor J. Laidlaw of the Hamilton Borough Council. This road, except for patches is fair and the 20-mile stretch was covered in 40 minutes.

Overshadowing Dunkeld rise Mount Sturgeon and Abrupt, which form an impressive southern gateway to the



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Mountains. Mr H.B. Dixon took charge of the travellers at this point to conduct them by car along the Victoria Valley to Mirranatwa 21 miles distant.

They turned from the Ararat road at the monument to Major Mitchell the explorer, who ascended Mount Abrupt on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1836. The good, metalled road descends gently to the Wannon River, which is crossed by a substantial concrete bridge. A fairly steep rise leads to the Gap between Mount Sturgeon and the Piccaninny, the hillock set between the two mountains. Then follows a level run along the flank of Mount Sturgeon, with the Valley stretching flatly in front, and the Victoria Ranges showing grandly in the distance. Leaving Sturgeon behind the road then flanks Abrupt on the other side, where the Sierras, equally abrupt, run on northward, peak beyond peak each thickly covered with coarse forest of stringy bark. The undergrowth along the road is mostly manuka scrub, bracken and the showy grass tree which, after a fire sends up white flowered stalks that give the landscape an eerie appearance by moonlight. Here may be seen kangaroos, emus, and black cockatoos. From the ponds along the road the ibis rise, and red lorries screech in the trees. On Mount Abrupt wild goats are now roaming, the descendant of a herd that escaped from Dunkeld on the death of their owner. The road runs on through the Valley between the Victorian Ranges on the left and the Sierras on the right. It is wide and dotted with stately redgums etc. At the Victoria Valley post office 8 miles out, the metal ends but the road continues good with patches of bluestone and red gravel.

After taking the right fork 18 miles out, a clear view was obtained of Mount William, the giant of the Grampians. In three more miles the Mirranatwa Post Office was reached. The run had taken exactly an hour.

#### **Passage through Gap.**

Mr D McPherson became pilot and with others driving and riding they set out for Yarram Gap, a pass through the Sierras, south of Mount Birchip, which is said to be the best route for the projected road to take into the Wannon Valley on the other side, on the way to Halls Gap. A lane leaving the road a little on the Dunkeld side of the Mirranatwa Post Office leads to the Gap, the passage of which was a delightful experience. Foothills of no great height—Grevilleas, honeysuckles, native pines and wattle grow in varied profusions.

Through breaks in the hill and forest enchanting views were obtained of the mountains beyond, for the Sierras here become a double chain, with the Wannon flowing in their level valley. After a hair pin bend is negotiated the rough track leads down to the river, 5 ½ miles from the turning off the Mirranatwa road. There is a rock crossing at the river, the banks of which are thickly fringed with scrub and wattles. The travellers were now under the shadow of Mount Birchip, the dominating peak of the western line of the Sierras and looking eastward beyond a hill shaped like a crouching lion, they admired the bold sweep of the parallel range far away across the valley.

In the sunny lambent air, the spurs and gullies tempted exploration. They showed a charm as appealing as that of the better known peaks at Halls Gap. The travellers however went on north along the Valley, passing deep lily fringed pools of the river the haunt of trout, perch and black fish. The track here is hard and level, and the visitors galloped along as far as McArthur's Gap, dodging the scrub osiers.

#### *Emus and Kangaroos.*

Returning in the twilight of Mirranatwa, they startled a few stray emus and kangaroos. A fox that had captured a rabbit on the edge of a pool made off, still carrying his prey. A belated flock of galahs screeched in noisy protest at being

disturbed. A primeval silence settled on the Gap. At six o'clock the next morning with the dew on the grass and the air wonderfully fresh and exhilarating, the overlanders rode off under the experienced care of Messrs W. and J. McArthur whose father was one of the earliest settlers in the valley. These skilful bushmen led the way across the scrub in a short cut to McArthur's Gap, much to the disgust of the brush kangaroos, which startled from their breakfast, fled to the ranges, in some cases pursued by the blue grey hound dog and the rough bred kelpie that accompanied the riders. These dogs had pulled down kangaroos before, but the rough country here gave the quarry too much advantage and their numbers were not depleted. McArthur's Gap proved to be much steeper and rougher than Yarram Gap and the horses had to be led through most of it. Passing down into the Valley the party took up their trail of the previous afternoon, and were now fairly on the way to Halls Gap. After a mile, Jimmy's Creek with the McArthur's shepherd hut on its bank were reached. It had taken 2 ½ hours to travel 7 miles. The mountain scenery continued magnificent, while on the river banks the delicate long leaved wattles were in bloom and the gum trees laden with thick blooms. Wild bees were entering and leaving their hives in the tree trunks and the air was honey sweet.

Greens Gap on the left was passed, Mount Frederick held command of the horizon on that side, while the valley extends far to the right, where the other line of ranges towers. The road with some axe-work would be passable in a motor car. Small trees had fallen across it and the little detours had to be made repeatedly, but it was level and hard, though barely defined. Scarcely a vehicle passes down from one year's end to another. The number of people who have passed through Halls Gap at any time must be surprisingly small. Through the stringy bark and red gum, undergrowth with coarse scrub, the party plodded on, crossing now and again the little rivulets that feed the Wannon. At the Seven Dial Range on the left, they came to the site of an abandoned sawmill and from here a better defined but rutty track led on to the Borough Huts the property of the Stawell council, built in connection with the town's water supply, which was completed in 1883 at the cost of 115,821 pounds. And gave the town the benefit of what its people are proud to call the best water in the world. At the huts which has taken 6 ¼ hours to reach over the 17 miles, the travellers were welcomed by Mr J Paton, Mayor of Stawell, and Councillor George Mitchell, who took them to Halls Gap by car. The road that is being constructed across the mountains to the Wartook reservoir, was inspected and then the 18 miles to Stawell, along a fair road, was down in 55 minutes. Stawell has spent 2500 pounds in 4 years in opening up the Grampians, and its tourist association has guaranteed to maintain the road from the top of Halls Gap if it is reconstructed by the Government. If the Hamilton District is equally willing to supply money and the Government assists, the through road should soon be an accomplished fact. Were it so, much capital would be invested in the mountains. Private hospitals would probably be established, accommodation houses on the ambitious scale built and private holiday homes erected. The road indeed is already paved with many good intentions.

## **NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTION AND DISTRIBUTION DATES FOR 2021**

Please note that the **closing date** for the Community Newsletter is **6.00pm on the Friday before the distribution date**, as listed in the below table.

Please forward your content to Mrs Carol Burger – email: carolburger5103@gmail.com or phone: 0417 374 673.

Issue Number	Cut-off Date	Distribution Date
7	Friday 14 May	Wed 19 May
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10	Friday 9 July	Wed 14 July
11	Friday 23 July	Wed 28 July
12	Friday 6 August	Wed 11 August
13	Friday 20 August	Wed 25 August
14	Friday 3 September	Wed 8 September
15	Friday 1 October	Wed 6 October
16	Friday 15 October	Wed 20 October
17	Friday 29 October	Wed 3 November
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