



# NW MN

## NORTH & WEST MELBOURNE NEWS

ISSUE 186

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### Classes go through the motions

Tanaka Nyamvura

Cliff Rundle can now laugh about an awful Sunday morning last month at North Melbourne Language and Learning. The adult education centre that Cliff manages works to empower the CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) community in the Alfred Street public housing estate. His education facility occupies the ground floor of an 11-storey block. “A rogue tree root ruptured a sewerage pipe in a first-floor unit,” Cliff said. The flat quickly became inundated with raw sewage, with hundreds if not thousands of litres seeping through the floor to flood NMLL’s rooms below. Cliff had been at home relaxing when the first call came through and didn’t realise how dire the situation was. “But when I got a second call, I knew it was serious and I was prepared for the worst. The damage affected all three classrooms, two of them severely,” he explains. The centre’s rooms had experienced what the Age indelicately called a ‘poo-nami’. “There was water in between the classrooms, and police and 30 people were working to minimise the damage. It soon dawned on me that a huge clean-up task

would begin when they left,” Cliff grimaces. While emergency workers drained the water from the classrooms, the resulting mess meant they had to be decontaminated. In two classrooms, carpets had to be removed and new floorboards installed. However, classes had to continue. And they did. “That was important because we didn’t want to disrupt students learning. When classes stop, it can be hard to get students to return,” Cliff explained. Sam Navarria, NMLL education and compliance coordinator, agrees. “We stress the importance of attendance, so we had to make sure they had lessons,” he said. The Department of Health and Human Services provided rooms in another building for students to use. Bio-cleaners came in to restore the flooded classrooms. Cliff speaks with admiration for how the students handled the interruption. “It was commendable how they put up with their temporary unsuitable accommodation. “It just showed how we can all rally together to achieve a shared goal.”

Tanaka Nyamvura writes regularly for the News.



Token Armies. Photograph: Dian McLeod

### Rich festival feast of theatre and dance

Claire Wilcock

The Melbourne International Arts Festival is coming to the North Melbourne Town Hall next month. The festival will run from 2 to 20 October and will include some of the world’s most gripping contemporary dance. And Arts House will be presenting it right here on your doorstep. Offerings will range from physical theatre that tests the limits of everyday office supplies to a thrilling dance duet in a space that grows ever smaller. Four epic performances are guaranteed to entertain you next month. All you have to do is book your tickets. There will be four shows in the town hall and the Meat Market. A North Melbourne-based dance company, Lucy Guerin Inc., will bring its duet *Split* back to Arts House after it has been wowing audiences worldwide. Jo Lloyd’s *OVERTURE* is also making a triumphant return to Arts House following its premiere in August last year. It now has a clutch of awards under its belt. And there’s Branch Nebula’s *High Performance Packing Tape* – the work that makes you rethink

exactly what is possible with Sellotape and cardboard boxes – on its first visit to Melbourne. These three shows will run from 2 to 6 October only. In the festival’s final week, *Token Armies* – the first work from Chunky Move under their new artistic director Antony Hamilton – will take over the Meat Market. It is epic in scale, ambitious in conceit, and utterly unforgettable in execution. This world premiere event is an evolutionary leap into an unknown tomorrow. It features sculptures by Creature Technology Company (creator

of *King Kong* and *Walking with Dinosaurs*) and an ensemble of 23 performers. It will run from 16 to 20 October. Claire Wilcock is marketing manager at Arts House. **Want to know more?** Tickets for all shows are available on the Arts House website at [artshouse.com.au](http://artshouse.com.au), on 9322 3720, or at the Arts House box office in North Melbourne Town Hall. Discounted tickets for locals: all shows \$25 except *Token Armies* \$39. Use the code LOCAL if you’re a local resident.



Overture. Photograph: Peter Rosetzky



Students coped well with their temporary work area. Photograph: Manatosh Chakma

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4-page Program liftout



# Flowering of a dream of arts and academia

John H. Smith

“If we had really thought it through, I don’t think we would have embarked on the project,” says Phillip Darby, recently retired founding director of the Institute of Postcolonial Studies. Phillip recalls the day in the 1990s when it all began. He and fellow University of Melbourne academic Michael Dutton were enjoying a glass of wine in Phillip’s roof-top garden, overlooking a derelict hotel in Curzon Street.



Phillip Darby – IPCS’s recently retired founding director.

Michael said, “Why don’t we buy it and live there together?” After a thoughtful moment Phillip replied, “I love you, and your family, but I have lived alone all my life. I don’t know if that would work.” After another glass of wine, Michael asked, “Why don’t we buy it and develop an institute?”

So they did. Phillip explains, “We set out in a modest way to create an Institute of Postcolonial Studies that would engage in critical thinking through a book series, a recognised international journal, and a regular series of seminars”. Their spontaneous decision captured an opportunity to work, as Phillip puts it, “on the critical edges of knowledge, and the life of communities”. The independent institute that resulted has operated for 23 years with the blessing of, and formal affiliation with, the University of Melbourne. Gradually the institute broadened out beyond traditional academic activities to encompass the highlight of Phillip’s work: a remarkable series of seminars in the performing arts. “This venture demonstrated that critical approaches to knowledge are not restricted to intellectuals

and their pursuits, but can reach into all areas,” he explains. One regret is that he never achieved his goal of a postcolonial opera featuring Indigenous soprano Deborah Cheetham. The choice of the institute’s founding patrons, the Justice Michael Kirby and Professor Lowitja O’Donoghue, reflects its commitment to working across cultural and disciplinary boundaries. Phillip speaks highly of both. “In themselves, and through their support, both were terrific advocates for the institute.” He also praises Ashish Nandi, from the Centre for Developing Studies in Delhi. “More than anyone, he helped put the institute on the international map.” A spontaneous decision, supported by a benefactor, transformed a wreck of a property into an institute that is a vital forum for community,

conversation and critical thinking. Well done, Phillip, and all who embraced your efforts! When Phillip stepped down as director, he said, “I’ve handed the baton to younger members of the academic community, so that generational change can take place.” He has high praise for new executive director Melinda Hinkson and executive officer Carlos Morreo. “They have put together a remarkable program.” Phillip is confident the institute will continue to investigate and respond creatively to the pressing concerns of our time.

John H. Smith writes regularly for the News.

**Want to find out more?**  
Learn more about the Institute of Postcolonial Studies at [ipcs.org.au](http://ipcs.org.au); email [info@ipcs.org.au](mailto:info@ipcs.org.au).

# Fling into spring

Doné De Beer

The Spring Fling Street Festival is back for its 42nd year, with some new twists and old classics. The festival will take place on Saturday 19 October from 11am to 4pm, in George Johnson Lane, Little Errol Street and Raglan Street. We can’t think of a better way to celebrate our inner-city diversity and local talent than in the sunshine among friends. The beloved Dog Show will be back, from 1pm to 2pm on the main stage. Enter your talented pets and show off their slick skills and silly-frills outfits, or just come along to watch a parade of adorable pooches. Returning this year is the enchanting suitcase market, a forest of odd finds and rare handmade items you can’t get anywhere else. Travel through this mini-market wonderland in Little

Errol Street and support our local artists and creators. Getting us off to a great start on the main stage we have Bryon Siren, whose voice is like a siren’s call. His original songs are sure to tug at your heartstrings and lure you closer for a better look as he flies between guitar, ukulele and tambourine. The inimitable Homebrew Verandah Singers hit the stage at 2.55pm. Their joy of singing together is clear to see. Celebrating life to the full, this men’s choir might croon about broken-hearted love before erupting into a rousing Elizabethan drinking song or one reflecting Australia’s social history. Ever wanted to try out West African drumming? Sessi Sessi will not only put on an amazing performance but will be bringing some extra drums so you can try your hand at tapping out a beat.



Morris dancers joined the festivities at a previous Spring Fling. Photographs: Jim Weatherill

The groove doesn’t stop here. There will be interactive dance performances in the laneways, so keep an eye out for when you can bust a move. All this dancing can be thirsty work, and your food and beverage needs will be covered. Stroll past our range of food trucks and fuel up on some delicious fare so you can keep the good times going. Your little ones will be enthralled by Varietville’s daring stunts and mini-circus show, as well as some fancy hula-hoop tricks by Merryn. Your kids (and you!) will love Delyse’s Drama Academy’s skit on *The Jungle Book*. From 11.40am, here’s your chance to make your acting debut in an interactive drama game. Can’t get enough good tunes? Don’t worry, we’ve got you sorted with Luke jamming in the side streets. Rounding out the day, Caine Trindall, a Yui man, will be drawing us into a beautiful world

of nostalgia and stories through his acoustic folk music. Keep updated through our social media – Instagram: [springflingfestival](https://www.instagram.com/springflingfestival), and Facebook: Spring Fling Street Festival. Whether it be for a boogie, a delicious snack or a hunt for some special goods, you won’t want to miss this event. Lock it in your calendar!

Doné De Beer is a Spring Fling volunteer.



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# Old church inspires a village

Geoff Pound

In the 1860s, when North and West Melbourne were Melbourne's new growth suburbs, a large, oddly-shaped allotment bordered by King, Hawke, Curzon and Miller streets became the base for local Baptists.

The West Melbourne Baptist Church's place of worship was a stark bluestone building, about which an observer wrote: "It was not built for show. Its architecture is extremely severe, designed for use and durability."

Today, the West Melbourne Baptist Church (now known as the Eighth Day Community) is housed on this same land but in a stylish mid-rise apartment complex.

The church community, under the leadership of Gary Heard, has completed a development in which 75 apartments have been built on this site in several towers. Several communal areas give it a campus or village feel.

Since July last year, up to 200 residents have made the 'Hawke+King' apartment village their home. The church has retained several apartments for use in various ways: affordable housing for people struggling to find private rental homes; an accessibility apartment; accommodation for 'community builders' both within the complex and local suburbs; and an apartment for the pastor and family.

Compared to the 1860s, the church has been much more attentive to its architecture. Working with the developer and architect, it has come up with an attractive design that encourages community. In June, the apartment complex's designer, Six Degrees Architects, received two significant architectural awards in the categories of residential-multiple housing and sustainability.



'Hawke+King' apartment village. Photographs: Eighth Day Community

The judges commended the variety of communal spaces (shared gardens, outdoor seating, barbecue areas and communal laundry) that facilitate interaction with neighbours. They also noted the open walkways and living areas, the edgy use of raw and recycled building materials, the red brick hat-tip to the former buildings, and the industrial designs that reflect the former days of the suburb.

Due credit also went to the many environmental features, including a food waste system, a compost maker, rainwater tanks, a green rooftop creating a habitat for native birds, and a seven-star energy rating.

On the ground floor at the southern end of the apartment complex (4 Miller Street, West Melbourne) there is a hall and

smaller meeting rooms to house church activities. They also serve as a community centre, 'eight days a week'.

No longer does the church stand alone as the original bluestone building did. It is now part of a vibrant apartment village. It answers our question: "How can we help to make North and West Melbourne better places for all people to enjoy?"

Geoff Pound is pastor of the Eighth Day Community.

**Want to know more?**  
Worship gatherings are held at 5.30pm each Sunday. The Community Centre is available for hire – priority is given to local not-for-profit groups. Contact centre manager Cathie Staunton at [eighthdaycommunity@gmail.com](mailto:eighthdaycommunity@gmail.com).



The bluestone West Melbourne Baptist Church c.1860.

# Rosie is back in full bloom

Shannon Stacey

Rosie, a 10-year-old Staffordshire terrier, was very happy with life until the day that her carers brought another dog into the home.

Rosie was none too pleased and growled to indicate her displeasure. This one incident was enough for her carers to surrender her to Lort Smith.

Lort Smith operates an animal hospital, adoption centre and many community outreach programs. A lasting legacy of founder Louisa Lort Smith is to never give up on an animal capable of being rehomed. We weren't going to give up on Rosie!

Like any ageing dog, Rosie wasn't going to be running any half marathons and had a range of health issues – some predictable, but others more serious. Itchy skin, red eyes with green discharge, chronic ear inflammation, and a hot spot thrown in for good measure. All relatively manageable with appropriate medication, some of which she will take all her life.

First, Rosie underwent a major dental procedure that saw six teeth extracted to alleviate her mouth pain. What was more concerning, however, were her numerous lumps and bumps. Four lumps were removed and pathology results indicated they were benign. But there was one sinister looking hard mass on her ribcage. A biopsy confirmed she had bone cancer.

Not prepared to give up on Rosie, vets embarked on an operation that had never previously been carried out at Lort Smith. Using their state-of-the-art CT scanner, vets were able to carefully plan exactly how they would carry out a rib resection to remove the nasty mass.



Rosie takes a seat. Photograph: Jacqui Boyd

A team of two surgeons and two nurses successfully carried out the delicate operation. Rosie then recovered in our intensive care unit before being moved to foster care for some loving care and attention. From ICU to TLC!

Days later, Rosie still wasn't quite herself. Her breathing was laboured and she was rushed back to Lort Smith. Blood tests indicated she was anaemic and needed a blood transfusion. It worked a treat and she has never looked back.

After Rosie recovered, she was adopted by her foster carer. Now, she enjoys playing at her local park and is able to keep up with the other dogs. She is happy, healthy and very much loved.

Shannon Stacey is communications specialist at Lort Smith.

**Want to know more?**  
Lort Smith was only able to provide Rosie with her needed medical care by the support of our generous donors. If you want to make a donation to help other animals like Rosie, visit: [lortsmith.com/donate](http://lortsmith.com/donate) or call 03 9287 6468.



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# Angelic voices light up Peter Mac

Rosie Greenfield

Back in 2002, when our community choir began, we had to decide on a name. The establishing committee proposed four possibilities.

Helen, one of our original members, tells us that Errol's Angels was chosen by popular vote. We found this out as members recently sorted through choir records when creating an archive.

Singing like an angel is not a prerequisite for joining the choir – but participating in a vast range of musical styles is! Our library includes a wide variety of songs in other languages as well as a range of early music. For example, there is *Ave Maris Stella*, based on an 8<sup>th</sup> Century vespers hymn, there are Broadway musicals, and more recent popular music.

We find learning and singing songs from other cultures and languages increases our awareness of diversity and that it connects us in a very real way to how others see and experience life.

This was most evident in the choir's recent performance at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Hospital in Parkville. Our repertoire included *Welcome to All People* from Ruby Hunter; *Yemaya*, a Nigerian chant; *Ave Maris Stella*; *The Space With Light*, written by our musical director, Maryanne Clements; and *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, a Doris Day

Right: Errol's Angels on stage.

**Want to know more?**  
Contact The Centre on  
9328 1126.

and Gordon McCrae song from the 1950s. It was wonderful to perform for the patients, staff and visitors in the central atrium at the Peter MacCallum. Our performance was part of the music therapy program that runs during the Thursday lunchtime concert series at the hospital. The Angels performed with fellow community choirs Heartsong and Sound Waves as we sang with each other in front of an appreciative audience. Many hospital people attended, with the comment made that it was wonderful to hear the songs of a by-gone era being sung. We'd love to share experiences like these with you – either by your joining our choir or being part of an audience. We are an

a cappella (unaccompanied) choir who would welcome you to sing with us. It doesn't matter whether your voice is high, low or somewhere in the middle. There are no auditions, you just have

to enjoy singing. Maryanne creates an encouraging and inclusive environment for all. Come and try for yourself!  
*Rosie Greenfield is a member of Errol's Angels.*



## Early voice for women in politics and in sex

Michelle Brett

Wander down Errol Street and at number 51 you'll pass the local CBA branch. It's a building with a past. In the 1870s it was a greengrocery run by William Smyth and his wife, Brettana. When he died in 1873 and left her with three children, she converted it into a drapery and druggist business. Brettana was a remarkable woman. An interest in health led her to enrol at university and be one of the very few women of that era to study medicine. When economic depression hit hard in the 1890s, she couldn't pay the fees and had to leave. Undeterred, she continued to study privately, focusing on women's health and sexuality. She even wrote a book, *What Every Woman Should Know: Diseases Incidental to Women* (1895) that provided information to women that they couldn't access elsewhere. Brettana's beliefs were unusual for her times. She asserted that marriage should be an equal partnership and, while she didn't champion birth outside of marriage, she advocated for voluntary motherhood and controlled birth rates. A commanding presence at over 180 cm, she delivered a series of public lectures informing women about birth control. Her druggist store sold devices such as the rubber 'French Pessaire Preventif', described then as "the only article of the kind that can be used without the knowledge of the husband".

In that unenlightened era when only men could vote, Brettana joined a group that advanced the case for women's suffrage. In 1888 she formed a breakaway group when her progressive ideas for contraception were deemed too radical.



Brettana Smyth. Photograph: PROV

She continued her work until her death in 1898, at just 57, from kidney disease. Just ten years later, Victorian women won the right to vote. Brettana Smyth's pioneering work – in health, contraception and women's suffrage – was well ahead of its time. She bravely helped women understand their bodies and have control over them.

Michelle Brett is a new contributor to the News.

**Want to know more?**  
Brettana Smyth's story is part of a new exhibition, *Wayward Women?*, introducing characters who don't fit the stereotype of demure Victorian womanhood. It is showing at Old Treasury Building in Spring Street until June 2020, presented in partnership with Public Records Office Victoria. Visit [oldtreasurybuilding.org.au](http://oldtreasurybuilding.org.au) or [prov.vic.gov.au](http://prov.vic.gov.au) for more information.

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# Hotham Mission’s helping hand lifts its community up

Joey Rebakis

**H**otham Mission is part of North Melbourne’s Mark the Evangelist (Uniting Church) in Elm Street.

We are a small not-for-profit agency helping people overcome the barriers in their life, engage in their community and achieve their potential.

Operating in Melbourne’s inner-suburbs since the early 1900s, we mostly work with public housing residents, many of whom are of African and Middle Eastern backgrounds.

Our primary focus is on helping young people and their families to engage with and continue their education. One example is our weekly after school homework



Hotham Mission workers: (L-R) Greg, Joey and Neysa. Photograph: Hotham Mission

club for grades 4 to 6 at the North Melbourne Community Centre.

We also work with local schools and other organisations as we provide materials (for example, electronic devices and books) to help enable equal access to education for secondary students with limited financial capacity.

A third program is food security. Here, we aim to provide students with good quality, healthy food that will sustain their learning. We provide lunch vouchers and

weekly food packages to around 60 local families. This is linked to a fortnightly cooking class at a nearby high school. Students learn practical life skills and we foster a knowledge and interest in healthy, quick and cheap food.

Hotham Mission has had a long commitment to supporting refugees and asylum seekers. We currently provide accommodation to a number of women and their children who are living in the community while their visa status is being assessed.

With the support of other local organisations, we also facilitate a boys group that nurtures positive male role models, teaches life skills, and enables a safe space for young people to engage with their emotions.

Next year we plan to launch, in partnership with other local organisations, a weekly community program to complement our other work. We hope to engage young women aged 12 to 25 with their education, community engagement and social support.

Hotham Mission’s work is only made possible by the passion of donors and volunteers. We thank all those involved for their continued interest and support.

Joey Rebakis is community development coordinator at Hotham Mission.

**Want to know more?**  
More information on Hotham Mission’s work can be found at the website: [hothammission.org.au](http://hothammission.org.au).

# Light up the night

Grant Banks

**A**s we welcome the warmer spring weather, the City of Melbourne Bowls Club has plenty to offer experienced and novice lawn bowlers alike.

Our popular Friday nights-under-lights competition, the City Mazda Cup gets rolling again next month. Entries are now being taken. Each Friday in October, the club will host this fun barefoot bowls competition with weekly spot prizes and a prize for the winning team after four weeks.

The not-so-serious format of the City Mazda Cup encourages bowlers of all skill levels to get involved. Groups can either register a team for the four weeks competition or individuals can be placed in a team if they are keen to participate.

The attractions are not only out on the green. Tasty bar specials at attractive rates are available for all bowlers. Lunch at half-time is also available for all the keen bowlers we’re sure will be rolling up for the event.

As lead-up to the more serious summer pennant competition, Monday night coaching has also started, with a new fun format recently unveiled. Our club coaches have been busy over winter devising creative new ways to learn about lawn bowls and to hone the sport’s finer skills.

Come along any time between 4.30pm and 7.30pm to see the bowls revolution for yourself. New bowlers, including novices, are most welcome. The invitation also includes existing bowlers wishing to play in this year’s pennant season.

Pennant will commence on 1 October for midweek (Tuesday) competition and 5 October for Saturday pennant. Any prospective bowlers will be warmly welcomed at our Monday evening practice. You’ll find our club nestled in the beautiful Flagstaff Gardens.

Bowls is an inclusive sport, perfect for everyone regardless of experience or ability. Monday evenings practice is a great way to start your bowls career. Coaching is free and equipment can be provided.



Dick Dowling and Jeff Moore show what they think of the club’s activities and amenities. Photograph: City of Melbourne Bowls Club

Grant Banks is vice chair of the City of Melbourne Bowls Club.

**Want to know more?**  
To be involved in the club’s City Mazda Cup (teams of four \$20pp pre-booked or \$25 at the door), enquire at the club or email [mazdacup@citybowls.com](mailto:mazdacup@citybowls.com).

## Thinking of selling?

We are a family of 3 including our little girl (almost 2). We love the community feel of North Melbourne and don’t want to leave! We’ve been renting here since 2011 and searching for our first home for over a year. Looking to buy a 2 or 3 bedroom apartment, large lounge room, bath and small outdoor area. Not too many stairs to access the apartment. Pre-approved.

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# Dig down in the archives to make sense of our past

Rosalynd Smith

On the south-west side of North Melbourne's Shiel Street, straddling the slope down to Macaulay Road, stands a modern building, bland but not unattractive. Its purpose is declared by the name above the glass entry: Victorian Archives Centre.

Inside is a foyer with tables and chairs, and a receptionist behind the desk. Behind it is a small gallery holding a *Time and Tide* exhibition, featuring marvellous old photographs of Melbourne's wharfs and dockyards between 1936 and 1959.

Down below, the temperature-controlled basement contains the collection of the Public Record Office Victoria as well as part of the National Archives of Australia. There are records of government departments, courts, councils, schools, hospitals and inquiries. There are also photographs, maps and illustrations.

Behind the reception is the reading room, where quiet researchers are bent over their materials. Here, many users are tracing their family history, using the births, deaths and marriages link, a connection to Ancestry, as well as census lists, school records, wills, immigrations records and land titles.

Darren Arnott is here, pursuing a story he has been unable to let go. He has followed it for years through the records in this office and elsewhere. As he rode his bike around Rowville as a boy, he had noticed the bluestone foundations of what had been an



A PROV staff member helps a researcher find information. Photograph: PROV

Italian prisoner of war camp in the 1940s. Years later, when he bought a nearby house, he started to investigate the site in earnest. This led to him unearthing a story that included a sensational incident in which a prisoner, Rodolfo Bartoli, was fatally shot by the camp commandant.

Using records from both Victorian and national archives, Darren was able to piece together a fascinating slice of Victorian history. His painstaking research enabled him to fill in the last gaps in the story when he found several copies of the coroner's

report into Bartoli's death. Unfortunately, they were missing the pivotal exhibit, a photo of the scene of the shooting that was referred to repeatedly during the inquest and inquiries.

The trail finally ended here in the Archives Centre in North Melbourne when Darren found another copy of the report, unopened since 1946 – and this time with the missing photo.

Another late discovery was that Bartoli's Australian girlfriend was still alive, living in Queensland and happy to be interviewed.

Rosalynd Smith writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
Find out more about Darren's discoveries in his blog, linked to the PROV website: [prov.vic.gov.au/about-us/our-blog/missing-piece-puzzle](http://prov.vic.gov.au/about-us/our-blog/missing-piece-puzzle) and at [italianprisonersofwar.com/2018/12/17/no-regard-for-the-truth/](http://italianprisonersofwar.com/2018/12/17/no-regard-for-the-truth/). Darren's book, *No Regard for the Truth*, is to be published in October. Find it at [www.bookstore.bookpod.com.au/](http://www.bookstore.bookpod.com.au/) or through Amazon.

# Simone nurses her artistic flair into a business

Mike Muscat

West Melbourne-based artist Simone Deckers can be found in her space at River Studios, on the banks of the Maribyrnong. It's a fascinating facility that accommodates 80 artists in its 63 studios.

Simone tells how she received an unexpected email from commercial website Etsy, which focuses on selling handmade or vintage items and craft supplies. She had never dealt with the site and suspected it was a con.

The email was an invitation to collaborate with major cosmetics brand Kiehl's for a David Jones holiday promotion. "I thought it was a gag email, but it turned out that someone loved my designs and wanted them on a Kiehl's gift box being produced for Mother's Day."

Simone designed the gift boxes and spent many hours making zippered pouches to hold the beauty products. "I blew the motor



Simone Deckers involved in her screen printing. Photograph: Mike Muscat

on my sewing machine," she laughs. "The poor thing couldn't handle the workload."

Long days and broken machine aside, it was a decision she's never regretted. "It was a fantastic opportunity," Simone says. "I can't describe the feeling of walking into a major department store and seeing my designs in a display, knowing they'd be seen by shoppers all across the country."

She has since turned her work into Femke Textiles, a business that hand prints fabric to make products such as bags and tea

towels. Australian botanicals are a theme in her work, influenced by a childhood spent camping in the bush with her family.

While Simone initially sewed these products herself, she now prints her signature designs on fabrics that people buy for their own creations. "I just love the physical process of screen printing. I get a thrill out of hand drawing my designs and pulling ink across screens to produce beautiful original patterns."

For Simone, there's an ethical dimension to her art. "I'm conscious of the role designers have in reducing the environmental impact of the products they create. I choose to work with non-toxic inks and natural, sustainably-sourced fabrics."

The business name came in a moment of inspiration while assembling her graduate collection at university. "My family background is Friesian, from the Netherlands, and I would have been Femke had my parents

not chosen Simone. In a parallel universe you might be talking to Femke at Simone Textiles," she smiles.

Simone's transition to full-time artist came after 17 years of nursing. "I knew nursing wasn't my passion but it took a particularly awful day for me to recognise it was the wrong vocation for me." She quit the next day and enrolled in textile design at RMIT.

The colourful, creative disarray of Simone's studio is in stark contrast to the white-walled sterility of her former workplace. "I don't miss that life at all. I'm happiest in here with my hands stained with ink, creating beautiful prints people want to buy."

Mike Muscat writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
Check out *Femke Textiles* at [femketextiles.com.au](http://femketextiles.com.au) and read more about the artists at [River Studios at creativespaces.net.au](http://RiverStudios.net.au).



# Enjoy old Killarney’s blarney with a Guinness

Tim Cremean

Of all the places in North Melbourne to have a quiet drink, I know my favourite. It’s the Drunken Poet in Peel Street, just opposite the Queen Vic market. Siobhan Dooley has run this authentic Irish bar for more than 12 years. Six nights a week there’s music and poetry, all with a dash of Guinness, Bushmills Irish Whiskey and a boutique wine list. Siobhan creates a great vibe with her eclectic taste in recorded music between performances. It can be a tight fit as musicians, backs to the front window, play in the long skinny room. There are tables for four down one side and a grand mahogany bar down the other. Small groups and single punters are all welcome. Soak up the atmosphere and you might just find yourself in conversation with your neighbour at the bar. I’ve lubricated my tonsils here while enjoying the intimacy of blues performances from the late great Chris Wilson, the roots music of Lucky Oceans, and the rock of Lloyd Spiegel. You can test your knowledge of poets old and new by checking the large collection

## The Drunken Poet

of portraits hanging on the walls. Apart from Les Murray, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, you might spot Nick Cave, Bob Dylan or Shane MacGowan. While in New York recently, I had a drink at the Dead Poet in the Upper West Side. The manager made me feel at home when I told him about North Melbourne’s Drunken Poet. I didn’t tell him that that our Poet has twice the atmosphere. If you like music, conversation and a drink, you can’t beat the Drunken Poet. On a Friday, there is Irish music, tribute acts and heaps of blues. How such a small venue can put on two or three great acts a day is astounding.

Tim Cremean writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
To find out more about the Drunken Poet, visit [www.thedrunkenpoet.com.au](http://www.thedrunkenpoet.com.au).

Harry Patte-Dobbs

Step inside the Celtic at Metropolitan on Courtney Street and you might just imagine for an afternoon that you’re back in old Ireland. Go past the churchlike, stained glass windows and you’ll find the Cúchulainn bar. The walls are adorned with Irish flags, words of the national anthem, posters for Irish-authored books and radio shows. And of course, there’s always Guinness on tap. Every Friday afternoon from 3pm, you can walk in and be part of a traditional Irish folk music session. Players Gary Sullivan, Graeme Pilkington and Leo Quinn will usually be holding a tin whistle, box accordion, and a fiddle respectively. And it’s a fiddle, not a violin! The musicians will be joined by Allister, Mike and Eamon around a small table in the main bar. In a typical session, where all who can play are welcome to come and go, around five to eight players reel off Irish folk songs, hornpipes and – if the mood is right – perhaps even a lament. “The sessions stem from an interest in tradition, and it’s great fun to play,” says Gary. The rules of how each song is slotted into the afternoon are loose. In true Irish fashion, the music just strikes up.

## The Celtic Club

There’s one thing that never changes. As long as the Celtic on Metropolitan, the Celtic Club’s temporary home on Courtenay Street home, runs these informal sessions, feet will be tapping under tables laden with Guinness. Nodding along to the players is infectious. If you enjoy live Irish music and a chat, head on down to the Celtic on Courtney Street from 3pm on Friday afternoons. As patron Barry says: “I love the culture and the music; it’s a real place.” So, it’s *sláinte* (cheers!), and come down for the *craic*.

Harry Patte-Dobbs is a new contributor to the News.

**Want to know more?**  
To find out more about the Celtic at Metropolitan, visit [www.celticclub.com.au](http://www.celticclub.com.au).



The Drunken Poet in Peel St.



Musicians share their passion for Irish music at the Celtic Club. Photograph: Harry Patte-Dobbs

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I've been looking through some of my old journals. In one I came across an old autograph collection from the old days. Once, way back in 1991, I had a chance meeting with Windsor Davies in a Christchurch café. I walked him to a nearby theatre where he was acting in a panto. I was given a complimentary ticket to see him perform as an ugly stepsister.



One autograph I don't have is that of Matt 'The Magnificent' Lucas. I bumped into him in Smith Street in Collingwood but I was so star struck that the thought of an autograph never crossed my mind. He admired the way I was dressed and he asked directions to the Grace Darling Hotel. As we walked down the street we talked about fashion and comedy.



**VERY IMPRESSIVE**



Dear Sigrid (Thornton), could I get your autograph? That would truly be my captain's pick. I know you walk among us in North Melbourne. Friends say they have actually seen you in the supermarket or in local shops. I saw you on the telly device in 1983 in *All The Rivers Run*. I loved it and I've loved your work ever since. Come and sign my journal.



Do you remember the federal election earlier this year? Hundreds of thousands of dollars spent, many nasty campaign ads and all that. We had to put up with that Clive Palmetto Stuff and all we got

was the worst possible result. Lots of Climate Inaction. If Adani ever gets built, then the mine Clive Palmetto wants to put right next door will be worse.



The Government is saying No, it couldn't possibly be our fault. But someone's been taking the water. And someone's drained the Darling's Menindee Lakes system twice in the last five years. It's water that apparently

takes around 50 years minimum to fill up. Now, it wouldn't be the pastoralists stealing water, would it? Or useless governmental rules contributing to the problem, would it?



I could keep writing this column forever. Things of interest just keep happening to me. Don't know why. But you really must read *Atlas Of Untamed Places, An Extraordinary Journey Through Our Wild World* (2016). And is the universe AMAZING or what? Two stunning meteors have been caught on camera in three days, in Victoria and in the Northern Territory. Wow! Go the Universe!

*Very Impressive shares his views on life in each edition of the News.*

# Take a ride to explore Melbourne's 'other' river

Saddle up, guerrilla riders. Today we are exploring the wonders of Melbourne's forgotten river, the Maribyrnong.

It's a two-hour scenic ride, but try to avoid a windy day as this route can leave you exposed to strong winds coming downriver.

First, nip down Arden Street under the freeway and go straight ahead to the silos and train line. You'll have to push your bike up three flights of stairs (a wheel-friendly ramp will help) to cross the tracks on a pedestrian bridge. Train addicts can admire the diesel locomotives passing below into the silo area.

Over the bridge, and now on the Kensington side, keep heading down Arden Street, past its many restored Victorian homes, into Tennyson Street. It is in this part of South Kensington that

**WHEELS ON FIRE**  
Tim Cremean

the planned underground Metro lines will eventually emerge and link into the existing network.

Ignore the 'Don't Enter' sign – it's intended for cars. Continue to South Kensington station then pedal across Holland Park to the traffic lights on the corner of Kensington and Hobsons roads. Down Hobsons and you'll cross the river on the wonderful old stock bridge.

Kensington Banks estate, to your right, used to house stockyards and abattoirs. A bluestone walk snakes through the estate. It is the same path that thousands of animals walked down as they went to be sold or slaughtered.

Turn downstream for just 200 metres and check out the Buddhist Temple of the Heavenly Queen. It is a great addition to our multicultural city. Then turn back and scan Newell's Paddock Wetlands for birdlife.

You can follow the riverside path for kilometres from here. Flemington racecourse is on the right and, further on, the imposing Edgewater Estate overlooks the river, its lagoon and extensive wetlands. Soon, on your left, you'll spot the solid bluestone Jack's Magazine, once used to store explosives.

For refreshments, you have a choice of riverside coffee shops and the Angler's pub. If you cross the river at the Afton

Street bridge, you can ride to Brimbank Park. But be warned, it's a rough track and you might need a hybrid bike.

If keeping to my recommended loop, you'll ride back home past Poyntons nursery and café. From the east side of the river you can diverge a few metres at Holmes Road and see the old incinerator designed by famed architect Walter Burley Griffin. It is now an art gallery.

Close today's suggested loop by crossing the river back at the Maribyrnong Road bridge. Retrace your pedalling back to the stock bridge and from there you'll get back to North Melbourne.

It's a rich and rewarding ride, especially on a blue-sky day.

*Tim Cremean shares his love of bike-riding in each issue of the News.*

# A pain in the patella takes the spring out of your step

We're deep into September and spring is well and truly here. The birds are singing their telltale song and the flowers are blossoming.

All over Melbourne, runners are swapping long sleeves for singlets. I can't wait to feel the wind on my arms again. With winter's chill now behind us, many of us will be updating our well-worn running gear.

However, many runners are not so lucky. Many of us are battling with niggling injuries like runner's knee, stress fractures, muscle pulls and tendinopathy. If you're a runner, it goes with the territory.

My own recent struggles with patella tendinopathy (tenderness and pain in the kneecap) have left me restless on

**MARATHON GIRL**  
Thea Oakes

the couch. Any injury is annoying, but this has become a nightmare.

There's a physical pain with any injury, but for me the enforced boredom is worse. It's left me sitting at home and feeling like I'm losing my mind. It's comforting to know I'm not the only runner who feels like this.

To make it worse, the tedious physiotherapy exercises I'm doing are leaving my body sore. I'm doing hip abductions, leg presses and hip extensions – all organised neatly on my phone.

The tech revolution has given me apps to track my recovery, but is this helping or just making things more complicated? For me, it's a bit of both.

*Runner's World* calls running our 'best friend', and I couldn't agree more. Running not only keeps us fit but it's also our happy place, the cheapest therapy around. It's a source of stress relief and self care for many runners.

After a stressful week at work, the only thing that helps me unwind is my long run at the weekend. So what do I do when injury prevents me from those

regular runs that keep me sane? The answer is strength training. I can focus on my arms and other muscle groups while my legs are taking a much-needed break. I rely on aqua aerobics or core training workouts at my local gym.

I'm crossing fingers that I can recover enough to run the Melbourne Half Marathon next month. So, that's my message to my fellow injured runners. Just be patient.

I know your pain because I've been there too. It's just our bodies telling us we need to rest. When that pain in your knee and that tightness in your calf have disappeared, you'll be glad you waited. I know I will be.

*Thea Oakes writes a regular running column for the News.*



# Heavens above! Clerics speak up on life-and-death issue

News editor Maurice Gaul caught up with our local churchmen to talk about their views on assisted dying after it recently passed into state law.

**Fr Brian Kelty**

*Sts Peter and Paul (Ukrainian Catholic)*

As a Catholic priest I cannot write in defence of what is called euthanasia (Greek for good death). My role is a pastoral one, therefore I plead for love, attention, prayer and spiritual support.

Good palliative care demands human effort and financial support. The Catholic position on this issue is to support the value of life above all else. Human suffering, of course, flies in the face of this. We face the fact that life from its beginning until end is a paradox. It is paradoxical that life desires endurance but in the end faces death. Also, that belief systems grasp for what is beyond death.

Gerhard Lohfink takes up the question of death and resurrection in his recent book, *Is This All There Is? On Resurrection and Eternal Life*. He reveals the power of Christian resurrection, showing it is not about events that lie in the distant future but rather occurrences incomprehensibly close to us.



**Rev. Dr Craig Thompson**

*Mark the Evangelist (Uniting)*

A good death is one that accords with who we are in life. The question that best reveals who we are is "What do I think is worth dying for?" Perhaps family, friends or God; our answer is rarely tested. Yet that question prompts another: "What is worth living for?"

Suicide – assisted or not – asks this question. Is pain, dependency, persecution or loneliness worth living? If I choose death, the first question presses again: "What am I dying for?" If I die for myself, my death no longer corresponds to what I've said is worth dying for – others.

We are not our own but are given being for others. The bell tolls for us all, indeed, but we ought not ring it before time. Living into death – perhaps especially a difficult death – does something for those who watch with us, and for God. We ought not deny them that.



**Rev. Dr Geoff Pound**

*The Eighth Day (Baptist)*

Amidst commandments that encourage people to display a reverence towards all life, there are instances in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures that respect one's personal freedom in special circumstances to choose the timing and manner of their death.

When the Israelites were being routed by the Philistines, King Saul asked his armour-bearer to draw his sword and kill him "so that these uncircumcised may not come and thrust me through, and make sport of me". His terrified armour-bearer was unwilling to assist his master's death, so Saul fell on his own sword (1 Samuel 31: 1-6).

In each instance, the time and nature of death is voluntarily chosen when death is regarded as being inevitable. The choice is motivated by a desire to die with dignity. The Scriptures report these events without making judgment. A person's freedom to choose the timing and manner of death is respected.



**Fr Anthony Bernal**

*St Mary Star of the Sea (Catholic)*

Euthanasia or mercy killing (falsely called 'assisted dying') is an action or an omission that of itself or by intention causes death, so that all suffering may be eliminated. Life belongs to God from conception to natural death. He has a perfect plan for each person so that we all may merit eternal life in heaven.

Therefore, no one has the authority to kill, asked to be killed, or consent to it. Nor can anyone legitimately recommend or permit such an action. Euthanasia is a violation of the divine law, an offence against the dignity of the human person. Experience shows that where it is legal, many people have been killed by deception, without their consent.

What a sick person needs, besides medical care, is love – to be surrounded by the human and supernatural warmth of parents, children, friends, priests, doctors, nurses. And thus to die a holy, dignified death and to enjoy God forever.



**Fr Jan Joustra**

*St Mary's (Anglican)*

Having worked for decades in supporting people with motor neurone disease and similar debilitating illnesses, I can only support the right of people to choose to end their life early.

This was brought home to me when working in an oncology unit where a woman had a gynaecological cancer that caused her distended body to decay from the inside.

The staff were unable to help. She was in a horrendous position, her decaying body could be smelled throughout the ward, there was no way to make her comfortable. Nobody should have to endure such suffering if a dignified, peaceful, voluntary end is medically available.

I struggle to believe in a God who would be happy to see anyone suffer like this. I can only conclude that patients should be able to end their lives on a voluntary basis if there is no hope of a cure and they are in chronic pain.



**Rev. Canon Matt Williams**

*St James Old Cathedral (Anglican)*

Pastors are often called to walk gently with people in dark places, and I would do that with people seeking assistance to die, as with any other person saying "no" to their own lives.

But, for my part, I want them to know that God has a "yes" for them instead. I don't believe that giving a person the means by which to take their own life – or ending it for them – is the right response to suffering.

The biblical story is fundamentally an affirmation of life, and the goodness of life. God created life, and called it good. God defeats death, recreates life, and makes it for ever, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Because I live from this story, looking to this future, I cannot take the side of death. I am compelled to be always affirming the value of life, including lives in pain and lives in despair, through hope in Jesus.



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# Boys' fowl deeds cook up a feast

Giovanni Di Fabrizio

Four year 9 students from Simonds College recently cooked up a storm in an inter-school culinary competition. The boys – Yosef Meselu, Nati Teshome, Allan Shen and Brandon Liu – represented the school in an event conducted by the Associated Catholic Colleges (ACC) that organises events for 12 Catholic colleges across Melbourne. The ACC conducts an annual culinary competition along the lines of a junior MasterChef. This year it was hosted by the Holmesglen Institute's Glen Waverley campus and overseen by professional chefs. Simonds jumped at the chance to participate. Cooking has a high profile among the students, both in the school's food technology department that feeds into the curriculum and in a weekly after-school cooking club. On the night of the culinary competition, all participating schools faced a daunting task. Each team had just two hours to produce four plates of main course using two fresh whole chickens. The Simonds students worked under tight time pressure. They had just 15 minutes to set up, 90 minutes to do all preparation and cooking, and 15 minutes to clean up. Even more challenging was that that they had to do everything without help – teachers were banned from the kitchen. The first rule was to reduce waste, so any parts of the chicken not used were set aside for soup stock. The best parts were used to prepare a chicken scaloppine in

a white wine sauce. The required side dish was roast potatoes with herbs such as rosemary, sage and thyme. Our boys were awarded fourth place, a fine effort given their competitors were all in year 11 or 12. They received excellent feedback on their preparation, presentation and teamwork under pressure. They also enjoyed tasting all the food prepared by the other schools. All four were thrilled with the experience. "I was so nervous at the start, but I learned so much," Nati said. For Allan, the event might prove to be a landmark. "It was so good that I'd like to work in the food industry," he said with a smile.

Giovanni Di Fabrizio runs the after-school cooking club at Simonds College.



Students slicing and dicing in the cooking competition.



Simonds boys at the cooking competition: Nati, Brandon, Yosef and Allan, with teacher Giovanni Di Fabrizio. Photographs: Luther Blisset

**ADAM BANDT MP**  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MELBOURNE

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# Show rocked along with a KISS

Rita Totino

St Michael's Primary School really rock and rolled at last month's musical event, *KISS – Battle of the Bands*. The narrative of the show was that 1980s rock band KISS was looking for a support act for their Melbourne tour. Every class auditioned for the gig in an exciting event that showcased the performing arts talents of our students. Over the five weeks before the big night, children and teachers put in hours of preparation. Initial auditions were followed by many rehearsals. The final result was some fantastic choreographed dance routines, all supported by endless making of costumes. By the day of our final dress rehearsal, nervous excitement and eager anticipation of the performance were reaching a crescendo. The performance night itself, on a big stage at St Aloysius College, was a perfect opportunity for families and teachers to celebrate the children's achievements in front of an audience of more than over 300.

Every grade performed while children from the senior classes took on the lead roles. The songs included *Get Up and Dance*, *Geronimo* and *Moves like Jagger* with the whole school, including staff, performing *Don't Stop Me Now* in a the grand finale. From out littlest performers, the Preps, right through to the oldest in year 6, the night was a spectacular success. It was inspiring to see the students' growing confidence and the sheer joy of performing under the bright stage lights. Year 4/5 teacher Hayley Kermonde shared her expertise with dance and capably led the children in their performance. She uncovered hidden acting and comic talents among the students. For their first ever stage show, the students' level of professionalism and skills was amazing. Guer (year 5) had the role of Gene Simmons. He owned the stage and did a wonderful job at engaging such a large audience. At the end of the night, he had just one question: "Can we do it again?" Bettie (year 4), the night's MC, lit up with an electric smile and had just one word: "Awesome!"



Performers in St Michael's Primary's Battle of the Bands. Photograph: Rita Totino

The show ended with ringing applause and a request for an encore. The finale was duly performed again – but this time it was the parents who joined in with singing and dancing! The children were thrilled and everyone present took away lasting memories. Prep teacher Claire spoke for all her fellow

staff. "It was wonderful to see the children's confidence grow as they prepared for the show. They were brilliant," she said. Teacher Chris couldn't agree more. "It was great to see them beaming with pride. They really rocked!" Rita Totino is the teaching and learning leader at St Michael's Primary.

# Girls goggle-eyed with new career choices

Andrew Delmastro

Can girls handle science, technology, engineering and mathematics? Of course they can! St Aloysius College recently held a Women in Technology summit, attended by 300 guests from colleges around Victoria. The aim was to encourage our year 10 students to open their eyes to a career in the broad field of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Dr Dong Yang Wu gave the opening address, sharing the story that led to her heading up the aerospace division for the Ministry of Defence. The students were spellbound by the passion and intelligence of this world-class thought leader.

The girls saw presentations from 3D artists and heard virtual reality designers explain their experiences in this new field of design. Later, an industry panel of women from engineering, mathematics and business analyst backgrounds gave presentations on their areas of expertise. Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to move between the various sessions and workshops on offer. These included a design thinking workshop,

a panel discussion led by industry representatives, and a hands-on virtual reality experience. Year 10 students Ava McLeod and Audrey Savage were thrilled with the day. "It was awesome to hear from women succeeding in technology-based careers," Ava said. "The highlight for me was definitely the virtual reality session. I now see that area as a possible future career."

For Audrey, the most memorable aspect was meeting the empowered and passionate female presenters. "They challenged all the gender stereotypes surrounding the STEM industry. Like Ava, I loved getting hands-on with the virtual reality headsets and engaging in the design thinking workshop." Andrew Delmastro is design, innovation and learning leader at St Aloysius College.



Students experiencing virtual reality goggles. Photograph: Jodie McLeod



Students participating in a design thinking workshop. Photograph: Jodie McLeod



# Grate story of draining the swamp

Felicity Jack

Alluring, fascinating, intriguing. How, you may ask, can these adjectives be used to describe a drain?

North Melbourne resident Geoff Leach has been interested in one particular local drain since 1989. He was then living in Harris Street and a downpour caused the drain to overflow and flood the street to the depth of one metre.

One night recently, Geoff took eight committee members of the Hotham History Project on a tour to discover how an unglamorous drain can attract such a description.

Geoff has chosen to dignify the drain, which has its source near Royal Park's Australian Native Garden, with the name 'levers Channel'. Before European settlement a small creek wound its way down the lane between Park Drive and Gatehouse Street and through the open area of levers Reserve that fronts onto Flemington Road.

It continued under Errol Street Primary School, along Harris Street and Gardiner Reserve, under the hill on the North Melbourne football ground, and emptied into the Blue Lagoon. This later became known as the West Melbourne Swamp as human settlement and industrialisation turned the lake into an open sewer.

The creek was buried sometime in the 1890s when serious efforts were being made to drain the local area to allow for residential and industrial development. The drain's diameter in Parkville is three feet, but once it reaches North Melbourne it has increased to six feet. The channel has a heritage listing.

Our recent walk started from the south side of Errol Street Primary School where, with the aid of a strong torch, we could clearly see the bluestone drain through the grating. A small trickle of water was flowing through but, when we viewed it again in Harris Street, there was a significantly greater water flow. This suggested that somewhere in the vicinity there was a burst water pipe as there had been no significant rain for many days.

We were peering through a grating in the median centre of Macaulay Road when a police car stopped to ask if we were OK. Clearly, a night-time inspection of drains is not a usual occupation for a collection of mainly grey-haired individuals.

Flashing lights were evident as we approached the railway line that crosses Arden Street beside the Moonee Ponds Creek. Trucks and earth-moving equipment were busy at work and orange-vested men helped us to reach the safety of the bridge that spans the drainage creek into which the


channel deposits its water.

The channel is fascinating. The bluestone lining is clearly visible, and some of the openings show steps allowing for maintenance. The drain is self cleaning – no leaves or other debris were visible. The opening in Macaulay Road has evidently been repaired, or possibly constructed later, as brick has largely replaced bluestone.

*Felicity Jack is a member of Hotham History Project.*

### Hotham History Project

Hotham History Project is always keen to extend its membership. Its extensive website provides details on how to join as well as being a treasure trove of interesting historical information. See [www.hothamhistory.org.au](http://www.hothamhistory.org.au). More information about the channel, including some old maps, is available at [www.nawmil.org](http://www.nawmil.org). Geoff Leach can be contacted on [geoff.leach@bigpond.com](mailto:geoff.leach@bigpond.com). If you are interested in learning more about the Blue Lake-West Melbourne Swamp, Hotham History Project has arranged for David Sornig to talk about his recently published book on this topic on 24 September. The story also follows the fascinating lives of three residents of the area.





The pond in Australian Native Garden in Royal Park, the likely source of levers Channel. Photograph: Felicity Jack

# Smashed avocados on the No, 57 tram

John H. Smith

Travelling on the number 57 tram is often full of interest. On a lovely sunny day I boarded at Queen Victoria Market with a trolley full of goodies.

I settled on one of the parallel seats at the front as the tram squealed around into Victoria Street. We lumbered up to Peel Street and ground to a halt. A man with several bags of produce got on and stood by the driver's door and put his bags on the floor.

The tram lurched forward from Peel Street and made its way up the hill towards St Mary Star of the Sea church. As it picked up speed, a plump blue plastic bag at the man's feet began to move. He had forgotten to tie its handles.

Its mouth opened and half a dozen dark green avocados peeped out. He tried to control the bag with his feet, but the avocados jostled with one

another, struggling to escape.

Further up the hill, three avocados rolled out and danced together on the floor. Two rolled under a seat while the other headed for the front. A passenger with a walking stick tried to catch one, but it escaped from his crook. A few more yards, a bit more speed and it teetered on the edge of the front steps.

We had a green light at William Street so we rumbled on past Common Ground and smoothly crested the hill. On the down hill run we picked up speed and were all set to zoom past Simonds College when catastrophe struck.

The bell rang for the Chetwynd Street stop. Tensions rose. The brakes jammed on. The avocados rolled forward. Oh no! The stray bounced down into the stairwell. Panic!

With a squeal and a grind, we stopped. Seconds passed in deathly slow motion. Silence reigned. No-one moved. Then –

catastrophe! The door opened, folding up like a concertina in play. Squelch! The avocado was smashed. And not a single piece of toast in sight.

New passengers arrived. The door closed but the tram stood still. The driver burst out of his cabin and retrieved the avocado. It had a deep split in its side, its flesh open to the air.

The brown stone at its centre leered at us like an eyeball set between two creamy yellow-green eyelids. The driver sat it next to him on his desk and we rumbled on to Errol Street.

Was this the first avocado to be smashed on Victoria Street? Probably not, but most likely the first involving a tram door. Of course, tons of them have been smashed differently in North Melbourne.

'Smashed Avo' recipes have multiplied and are served daily in our many local cafes. The test would be to find a menu that

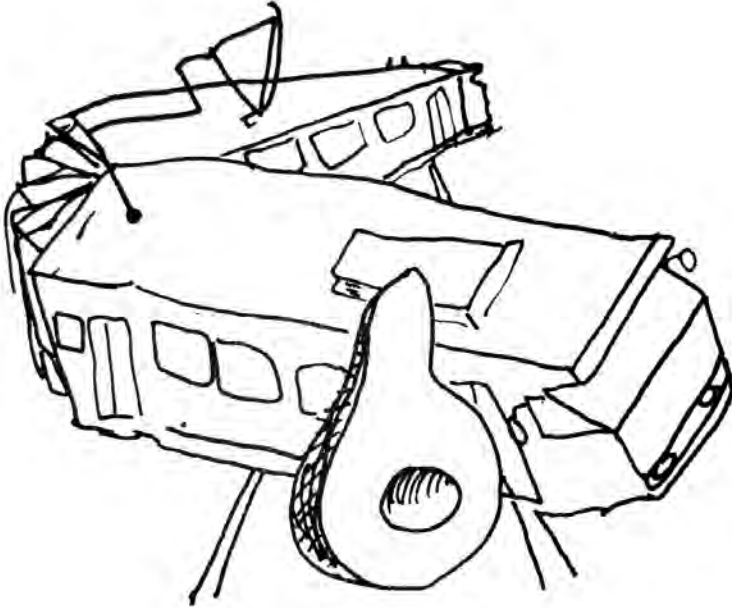


Illustration: Ptolemy Culvenor

didn't include a variation of this now trendy meal.

According to writer Larissa Dubecki, the avocado revolution in Australian cafes originated with Bill Grainger who, in 1993, opened Bill's Café in Sydney.

From there, avocado and coffee has become the signature meal of the Australian coffee culture cuisine. It has spread to cities as distant as Singapore and London, Hong Kong and New York.

If you have ever wondered if Australia has contributed a unique cuisine to the world, surely it is smashed avo served on toast with a well-made coffee. But a trendy North Melbourne version, 'tram-smashed avocado on toast', is a new twist.

*John H. Smith writes regularly for the News.*



# Music creates links with Laos

Nancy Lane

Two years ago, North Melbourne’s School of Living Music director, Andrew McSweeney, found out that I was going overseas to teach English. He issued a challenge. “Why only look for a place to practise your music? Why not teach piano while you’re there?” What started as a cheeky dare has ended up as an ongoing musical link between North Melbourne and Laos.

In Luang Prabang, a city of 50,000 in the north of Laos, I located a chaotic but friendly music school and offered to teach music. I’d never done it before but the director, Vansay Somboun (better known as Max), took me on.

The school provides Lao children with free music lessons and the use of instruments, including ukuleles, guitars, keyboards, bass, drum sets and traditional Lao instruments.

I had a wonderful time teaching keyboard basics to Lao teenagers two evenings a week. When I emailed Andrew that I’d acted on his dare, he generously offered to send a recording microphone for the school.

Director Max was thrilled. It enabled him to record teaching videos that the students could watch as often as they wanted. It also gave the students an incentive to perform.

A year later, I was back in North Melbourne at the School of Living Music

end-of-year concert. That evening, Andrew encouraged me to tell my story to the parents of his music students attending the function.

These North Melbourne locals understood the importance of music for their own children, and generously donated more than \$320 to support access to music for Lao children.

Meanwhile, back in Laos, disaster had struck. The owners of the building that Max rented for the school had decided to convert it into a guesthouse and wouldn’t renew his lease. “I had to move all the instruments to my little house, and my house is now full,” he said.

The good news is that the North Melbourne donation arrived at just the right time. Max decided to use the funds to help build a new school on land just behind his house. Never again would he have to worry about renewing his lease.

When I visited in June, the new three-floor music school wasn’t quite finished, but Max gave me a guided tour. “There will be teaching and practice rooms on the first two floors, and a recording studio on the top floor,” he said proudly.

It is so uplifting that the money donated by North Melbourne locals at the School of Living Music’s end-of-year concert has helped to build a permanent Music for Everyone School in one of the poorest



Music school director Vansay Somboun (Max) with writer Nancy Lane.

countries in South-East Asia.

So, just as Andrew dared me, let me dare you. Why not create your own musical link and spend your next overseas holiday as a volunteer music teacher at the Music for Everyone School?

I guarantee you’ll have an amazing experience.

Nancy Lane writes regularly for the News.

**Want to know more?**  
You can view Max’s teaching videos at [meslaos.com](http://meslaos.com). Contact him via [meslaos.com/support-volunteering](http://meslaos.com/support-volunteering). Or contact Nancy in Laos at [lanethailand@yahoo.com](mailto:lanethailand@yahoo.com),



Max, wife Saimany and their children in Luang Prabang music school. Photographs: Nancy Lane



Max’s school gives children in one of the poorest countries in South-East Asia a chance to learn music.

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# Take your cubs to the Zoo

Tim Cremean

The Melbourne Zoo offers family memberships that offer unlimited visits. They have proved a boon in our family. My wife and I were blessed with two healthy but mischievous little boys. Damage to the house and furniture was an inevitable and almost daily part of life. The boys' games saw them try to disassemble most of our property. The solution was simple – take them to the zoo! It was just a handy five or so minutes to the zoo gate. Inside, there was a network of garden paths. Even as toddlers, they loved wombling along these windy leafy tunnels of adventure and mystery. In those days, our favourite destination was the elevated monkey walkways. The gibbons' nonchalant hanging about and then their performance of impossible swings and twists would surely have made Cirque de Soleil performers deeply envious. My own memories go way back to the long-gone centre

circle elephant rides of the 1950s. Two elephants gave rides to hundreds of children each day. There were also elephant balancing acts and monkeys riding on miniature bicycles. There was a different philosophy to the zoo's education and protection practices of today. An adult annual membership is only \$111 and gives unlimited entry and other benefits. Kids under 16 are free. They will love the new enclosure for ring-tailed lemurs, agile creatures with long stripy tails, which leap from post to post and mingle with the human visitors. The jungle pathways in this area are atmospheric and kids of all ages enjoy winding through the dense foliage to discover elephants, gorillas, tigers, and all types of monkeys. Not to be missed are the comical orang-utans, so cheeky and laid back as they interact with children through large viewing windows. These 'men from the jungle' play dress-ups and do handstands much to everyone's delight, using all the props the zoo staff have put in their enclosure. Finally, don't miss the seal section. Go past the pelicans



The zoo offers many exciting experiences. Photograph: Tim Cremean

and the aquarium and down to the underwater viewing windows. Seals demonstrate the grace and pleasure of torpedoing through the water, perhaps rolling and barrelling at the same time. This enclosure also includes micro-aquariums displaying Victorian undersea environments and has a big surround-screen animation on undersea ecology. Don't miss out on a regular visit to the zoo. Tim Cremean writes regularly for the News.

# Salty finds our streets to her taste

Lucy Percival

Hey there! I'm Salty the greyhound. You might have seen me around. I just love hanging around the cafes in North Melbourne. You might think I'm just a regular pet. No way. People all around the world know me from my Instagram page. I'm your local internet celebrity. Have you ever wondered why you see so many of us greyhounds around North Melbourne? Well, we've become very popular pets in inner-city suburbs. At first glance that seems crazy. But although greyhounds are such big and fast dogs, we're perfectly happy in small homes and units. We're also very lazy. We might be incredibly fast but we're also very slow 99.9 per cent of the time. We sleep around 20 hours a day and need only moderate exercise. My favourite is padding up Errol Street to find a nice cafe for a puppuccino. Or strolling down to Flagstaff Gardens to sniff the possums. We make good neighbours because we're very quiet and clean. We tend not to bark as much as other breeds, which is appreciated when you live in terrace houses and apartments. And we have a thin coat with very little doggy odour. The downside of having thin fur is we get cold easily. So we need to wear a coat when the weather cools. But at least I know that when my mum, Lucy, pulls out my nice coat, we're about to head out and hit the local bars. I also wear little shoes because sometimes I get glass in my feet.



Salty takes a train ride. Photograph: Lucy Percival

It's the downside of being a city dog. But I don't mind as I know it's walkies time when my booties come out. They also protect my feet from hot pavement and wet grass. My absolute fave thing about being a city dog is catching the train. Lucy doesn't have a car, so we often catch the train. I love them so much that if she lets me choose where we walk in the morning, I always take her to North Melbourne station. Greyhounds are the perfect inner-city hipster pups. We're quiet, gentle, affectionate and snuggly. That's why you see so many of us around. Next time you see me in the street, come up and say "Hi". I might be a celebrity but I'm always keen to meet my fans.

Lucy Percival is Salty's mum and lives in North Melbourne.

**Want to know more?**  
If you're interested in adopting a greyhound yourself, contact Gumtree Greys, the lovely people who rescued me, at [www.gumtreegreys.com.au/](http://www.gumtreegreys.com.au/) And you can follow Salty's adventures online @thesaltyhound on Instagram.

## SHAPING OUR STREETS Syd Sherrin

### Warehouse history lives on

Over the past 30 years, many warehouses throughout the city fringe have been converted to residential apartments or townhouses. Many of these conversions are in streets that have an industrial flavour. In earlier decades, residential buyers would not have contemplated the thought of living in these areas. Today, residents enjoy the quirky aspects of living close to the CBD in buildings that have a historic nature. For example, there is a wool store in Spencer Street that was converted about 20 years ago. The builder noticed a dark patch on the floorboards where an old wool press was positioned. The oil and lubricants for the press had seeped into the floorboards and the developer was unable to remove them. The wall behind the old press had hand-painted instructions on how to operate the press. So the developer left the dark patch on the floor and signwriting on the wall, as a reference to the type of industry that had occupied the property for close to 100 years. Buyers loved the historic reference.

Another example is the old cable tram depot on the corner of Abbotsford and Queensberry streets, North Melbourne. Impressive modern apartments have now been built within this historic building. The foyer is dedicated to the fabulous history of Melbourne's cable trams, and shared by the occupants of the building to reflect on the site's past glory. One warehouse in Lothian Street, North Melbourne, was renovated to such an extent that it won an award in the prestigious *Vogue* magazine. The builder had to consider what to do with a large gantry positioned in the exposed beams in the roof that enabled goods to be moved around inside the warehouse. The cost of the removal was high, so the developer retained the gantry as a feature of the property, emphasising its rich commercial history. This feature was an important factor in the property winning the *Vogue* award.

Syd Sherrin, W.B. Simpson's sales manager, has worked in North Melbourne since 1989.

### Local volunteer drivers sought

The Leukaemia Foundation is calling for volunteer drivers in the North Melbourne area to help transport people living with blood cancer to vital medical appointments. The foundation's much-loved patient transport service has been providing people with free transport for more than two decades. It currently has limited

volunteers available, so many local people living with blood cancers are either unable to access the transport service or are on long waiting lists. Local residents can help continue this vital community service by giving a few hours of their time – either weekly, fortnightly or monthly. You can make a real difference for a person living with blood cancer. To find out more, contact 1800 620 420.





A keen volunteer planting trees in a CVA project east of Melbourne. Photograph: CVA

**More information**

North or West Melbourne locals keen to volunteer for one of our outstanding environmental projects will be very welcome. As well as doing something to care for the environment, you'll be close to nature and you'll feel better for the fresh air.

Call in to our office at 120 Rosslyn Street between 8am and 4pm for a chat and a coffee. Or call 9326 8250 and we'll help you book in over the phone. More details can be found at the website at [www.cva.org.au](http://www.cva.org.au).

# Volunteers care – naturally

**Mark Paganini**

Conservation Volunteers Australia cares for our unique environment. Since we began in 1982, we have welcomed hundreds of thousands of volunteers from home and abroad to participate in projects to protect and enhance our landscapes, habitats, species and heritage.

We are still based in West Melbourne, although we have recently moved from Adderley Street to our new Rosslyn Street office. And we are still managing great environmental projects in the local area. We are able to offer volunteers from North and West Melbourne some exciting opportunities.

One current project is environmental restoration at Pipemakers Park in Maribyrnong. It is an eight-hectare conservation park with two wetlands, native bush areas, a history garden and green open spaces. Volunteers can work in the History Garden, the Frog Hollow or the general park to create an improved urban native landscape.

For volunteers who care about the environment, the choices are appealing. They can choose from a range of conservation activities including weed removal, native plantings, rubbish removal, frog surveys, bird surveys, community gardens and the creation of a working nursery.

American backpacker Nancy Borders was far from the

cornfields of her native Iowa, but she loved being part of a similar Conservation Volunteers-run environmental project. "It was great working outdoors, meeting people with similar values and being part of a native vegetation planting project," she said.

Another project likely to interest locals is the well-known La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary that began in 1967. The sanctuary extends in a sweeping network to the north of Bundoora's La Trobe University and is a classic model of the restoration and management of indigenous flora and fauna. Bird watchers flock to the area.

*Mark Paganini is regional manager of Conservation Volunteers Australia.*

# Magical dream in Iran's shining jewel

**Suzie Luddon**

Dusk was falling as the bus pulled in to Esfahan. It was a warm evening with a taste of autumn in the air. The bus from Shiraz had taken us through stunning desert landscapes framed by mountain ranges, and now here we were in the jewel of Iran.

They say that half the world is in Esfahan, and it sure seemed that way, as hotel after guesthouse after hostel that we tried had no vacancies. Evidently, we didn't get the memo about the public holiday, when the whole of Iran seems to flock here. Eventually, with the help of a friendly local, we found a hotel overlooking the historic Si-O-Se-Pol Bridge,

spanning the Zayendeh river. Meaning 'the bridge of 33 arches' in Farsi, and built of yellow bricks and limestone, Si-O-Se-Pol Bridge is a popular meeting place.

Lit up at night, it casts a golden glow on the river, creating the ultimate Instagrammable scene. Niches formed by the arches create further photo opportunities, and are perfect for sitting and chatting while enjoying the view of the city.

Once the capital of Persia, Esfahan is majestic. Its centrepiece is the world heritage-listed Naghsh-e Jahan Square, also known as Imam Square. Constructed in the early 17th century, the square is ringed by stunning palaces, mosques, and one of the oldest and largest

bazaars in the Middle East.

Once a polo and horse-racing ground, it's also a meeting place for locals to gather for parties and to picnic on its expansive lawns.

We eventually found a traditional restaurant upstairs in the bazaar with an imposing view of the dome of the Lotfollah Mosque. Lounging on a bed-platform ringed with cushions and being served exotic delicacies while admiring the intricate mosaics of the huge dome, we felt that life doesn't get much better than this.

Until, that is, we went shopping in the bazaar, where our senses went into overdrive with the scents, the tastes, the sounds and the sights of this centre of trade and artisanship that was once a



The imposing dome of the Imam mosque. Photograph: Suzie Luddon

major trading post on the Silk Road.

On the western side of the square we explored Ali Qapu Palace. Built by Shah Abbas in the early 17th century, the palace reflects the shah's love of music and beauty.

The ceiling in the music room is punctuated with cut-outs of vases and musical instruments, which are decorative but also absorb echoes and create what was perhaps the first low-tech quadrophonic sound system, showing genius levels of acoustic knowledge for the time. From the upper veranda the views of the mosques, the square and the city are sublime.

Over the next week we continued to savour the delights of Esfahan before we eventually boarded a bus to further explore this intriguing country. Never have we experienced such hospitality as we did here, and indeed everywhere we went in Iran.

The visitor experience is totally at odds with what we typically read about in the media. This means that Iran has got to be one of the world's best-kept secrets as a holiday destination. Sshhh, don't tell anyone!



The 17th Century Imam Square is ringed by one of the oldest and largest bazaars. Photograph: Suzie Luddon

*Suzie Luddon writes regularly for the News.*



## BETWEEN THE COVERS

### Chris Saliba



#### The Pillars

**Peter Polites**  
(Hatchette Australia, RRP: \$32.99)

Pano is slumming it, his work as a poet barely making an income. When he sees an advertisement on a gay website, he moves in with Kane, an IT specialist. The designer house, in upwardly mobile Pemulwuy, is everything he's ever aspired to.

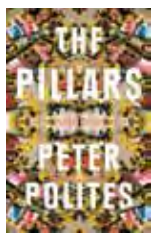
When Pano and Kane fall into bed together, Pano almost allows himself the fiction they are a happy couple. Kane is more interested in a proposed Albanian mosque, to be built across the road. He talks Pano into a plot to discredit the mosque.

Meanwhile, Pano has taken on work as a ghostwriter for a dodgy property developer. Can he maintain this middle-class facade, or will it all come undone?

Peter Polites' second novel is a dry, witty exploration of class, race, sex and money, firmly set in Sydney and with a cast of mainly gay men. *The Pillars* drips with an irony worthy of Jean Genet and Joe Orton.

One of its main concerns is artifice and the presentation of self. Everything – clothes, décor, cosmetics – are described in mesmerising detail, working up a picture of a superficial, branded world and its deluded denizens.

An astute work of social observation that entertains with a seductive, sly humour.



#### Plots and Prayers

**Niki Savva**  
(Scribe, RRP: \$34.99)

Who were the plotters in Malcolm Turnbull's downfall, and why did they want him gone? And how did Scott Morrison come up the middle, surprising everyone to win the Liberal Party leadership?

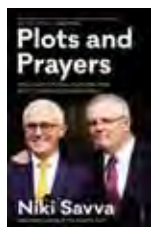
These questions and more are answered in *Plots and Prayers*, a detailed account of the tumultuous leadership challenges of 2018.

Niki Savva has worked both as a political journalist and as a Liberal staffer, giving her unique insights and a broad range of insider contacts.

She brings all this into play, painting a drama of almost Shakespearean proportions, with a cast of ego-driven, ambitious men and women, all sharpening their knives and either plotting or planning. The book is a stark, if ugly, reminder that politics is primarily about personalities, with policy coming a poor second.

What went wrong? A decade-long war between two of the party's titans, Abbott and Turnbull, meant the Liberals were in constant turmoil. Turnbull didn't help. Brilliant, yes, difficult according to his friends, he was a poor communicator with a Quixotic streak who couldn't see what was happening around him.

Comprehensive and with a wealth of fascinating interview material, Niki Savva's analysis has given us a definitive document of the times.



#### Zanzibar

**Catharina Valckx**  
(Gecko Press, RRP: \$16.99)

Zanzibar the crow is enjoying his dinner at home when there is a knock at the door. The surprise visitor is a lizard wearing glasses.

His name is Achille LeBlab, a reporter for *The Voice of the Forest*. He wants to know if Zanzibar has ever done anything extraordinary. The crow thinks for a while, but can't come up with anything. Unimpressed, Achille LeBlab caps his reporter's pen and leaves.

Zanzibar thinks about this and decides to lift a camel with a single wing. He asks the postman, Monsieur Seagull, where he can find a camel. In the desert, comes the answer, and Zanzibar flies off.

When he arrives in the desert, he meets Sidi the fox and Cheb the dromedary. A dromedary is similar to a camel, so he decides to lift Cheb. But can a crow lift such a large animal?

French illustrator and writer Catharina Valckx's charming chapter book for early readers concentrates on the sweetness of friendship and community.

There is a wonderfully gentle tone to the writing and a delightful cast of characters, including Paulette (a mole), Ginette (a frog) and Madame Adele (a moth). *Zanzibar* will leave you feeling cheerful for days.

Suitable for 5+ years.

*Chris Saliba is co-owner of North Melbourne Books, 546 Queensberry Street. He writes regular reviews for the News.*



## BEST NEW MUSIC

### Ruby Smith



#### Keepsake

**Hatchie**

Hatchie, Harriette Pilbeam's alias, has produced a gorgeously catchy first

album in *Keepsake*. This album is dream pop that focuses on sugary production, an emphasis on 'pop' ahead of 'dream'. Regardless, *Keepsake* is packed with tiny moments of true dream pop delight, with shimmering guitar lines melding with Pilbeam's voice.

*Keepsake* is smooth throughout, a consistently listenable album, with an unfortunate tendency to drag on in the same way for several long songs in a row. This is an album that would have felt much smarter if 10 minutes shorter than its current run time.

Album standouts like *Obsessed*, a catchy pop song, run just slightly longer than their welcome. This can be forgiven by how much fun it's apparent Pilbeam is having. *Keepsake* is a road trip album, a party album, a bubbly, delightful summer album.



#### This Is Not A Safe Place

**Ride**

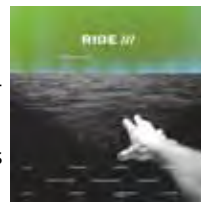
In their second album post-reunion, Ride sounds like they're simply

having fun. In the first half, Ride sound like a competent indie-pop group, young and modern and pumping out slickly-produced hits. It's not until *Clouds of Sils Marie* and *Jump Jet* that they start to sound like the Ride that fans know and love.

Every song feels like an experiment. With Erol Alkan, the same producer as their previous album *Weather Diaries*, *This Is Not A Safe Place* still sounds cleaner and more modern than their catalogue pre-reunion.

But *This Is Not A Safe Place* is far more creative and adventurous. The band has settled into their place as shoe-gaze heroes, and they have nothing left to prove, so why not have some fun with it?

*Ruby Smith is a university student and works part-time at Heartland Records.*



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# ELLEN SANDELL

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## Boomerang bags

Volunteers make 'Boomerang' shopping bags from recycled fabric. Buy one from the Centre or come and help us make them.



# Royal Park tells sad tales of pain and of loss

Tim Cremean

I have a framed 1855 Hotham Hill subdivision map on my wall. It shows part of Royal Park back then. While I'm no historian, over the years I have learned quite a lot about the riches of this great park.

Melbourne developed quickly after Batman and Fawkner arrived in 1835. The original inhabitants, the Wurundjeri people, were known to hold ceremonies near the park and had a small camping space reserved for them in the zoo grounds as late as 1880.

If you sit among the gum trees on the hillside on a warm summer's evening and gaze into the middle distance of open woodland, you can soak up the peace the original locals would have known. They would have been able to see down to today's Docklands, which were then wetlands filled with bird and fish life.

In 1860, Burke and Wills assembled their expedition in the park before setting off on their ill-fated journey through Australia's centre. The first night they camped near Moonee Ponds junction so Wills could make one last visit to his beloved. As Alan Moorehead's *Cooper's Creek* tells us, their trip ended in tragedy when they missed their depot party by hours.

The planned Town Hall underground station will feature the Burke and Wills statue in a prominent place to acknowledge the fatal expedition that so deeply touched Victorians of that era. Soak up this past by reading the plaque on the rocky memorial near MacArthur Road.

The saddest monument in the park is a private one. It stands at the corner of MacArthur Road and The Avenue, erected by grieving parents to honour their only son, Lieutenant James



*The adventure playground on the site of the old Royal Children's nurses' home on the edge of Royal Park. Photograph: Tim Cremean*

Roberts, who died in the Boer War. As a child, he had played in the park. He died for the empire, just 11 months before there was an Australian nation.

When the Duke of Cornwall and York came to Victoria in 1901 as part of his trip to declare Federation, a grand ceremony took place in the Royal Exhibition Building. The scene is captured in Tom Roberts' iconic painting of all the assembled dignitaries. To prepare for the celebrations, detachments of soldiers from each colony's army camped and drilled in Royal Park.

Other soldiers' boots have pounded the park's grassy expanse. In 1942, when Australia feared invasion and Melbourne was the headquarters for the Allies' Pacific campaign, American General MacArthur stationed his troops in Royal Park, then known as Camp Pell. The guard posts are

***Strolling through the open woodlands, with so many native birds, is a rural experience.***

still there in Brens Avenue.

Not every visiting serviceman was here to help. When the city lights were dimmed to deter possible enemy bombing, three local women were murdered in just 16 days. The murderer, dubbed the 'Brownout Strangler', was identified as Private Eddie Leonski. He was tried by an

American military court then hanged in Pentridge.

Camp Pell remained until 1956 with the Nissen huts used as interim accommodation for poor families displaced by a slum demolition program. Many said the camp was worse than the slums and it became known as Camp Hell for its high levels of crime. Famous standover man Kelham Young was found dead on the doorstep of his Nissen-hut home in 1953.

The camp was finally cleared for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics so that visitors to the Games would not see its rundown state. Only in 1984 did the City Council draw up a master plan that still guides the care of the park today. Native plants, passive recreation and views are the theme.

In 2019, the park looks the best it has in decades. More people

are using it, especially since the successful adventure playground was opened on the site of the old Royal Children's nurses' home. The Grace Fraser-designed native garden at the corner of Royal Parade has grown to full maturity.

The wetlands off Manningham Street on the far side of the railway track are worth a visit. The ponds are alive with waterbirds and they help the zoo manage its water usage.

As a regular walker in the park, I enjoy wandering and reflecting on nature, history and our changing city. Strolling through the open woodlands, with so many native birds, is a rural experience. Royal Park is a multilayered rich experience on our doorstep.

*Tim Cremean writes regularly for the News.*



*Camp Pell gates in Brens Avenue in Royal Park. Photograph: Tim Cremean*

## Get involved through the Centre

Looking for a volunteer opportunity? The Centre has lots of them, from office administration to event management. Or we can point you towards other organisations that also rely on volunteers.

## Take a walk with a purpose

If you enjoy walking around North and West Melbourne, a great way to explore areas you may not usually visit is to help with delivery of the North & West Melbourne News to homes and businesses.

If you are interested, please email [staff@centre.org.au](mailto:staff@centre.org.au) or call in at The Centre in Errol St.





# Homework Club sows seeds in school and for life

Frances McMillan

**H**ome Away From Homework Club is proud to announce that it has expanded its provision of homework tutoring support to a new, eager group of year 4 to 10 students at North Melbourne Language and Learning (NMLL). This new session was made possible by a grant from the R.E. Ross Trust.

Through consultation with NMLL it became clear that there was a need for a homework program at a location convenient to the residents of the flats, and at a time that suited students returning from schools they attend outside of the zone.

A perfect marriage resulted: The Centre provides the model,

the staff and volunteers and all administration; NMLL provides the learning resources, food for snack preparation and space at its premises at 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne.

The new session got off to a flying start in July when students and their families came along to hear how the homework club works, its expectations of students and families, and the responsibilities the club has to all involved.

Sharing chocolate biscuits and strawberries, parents enrolled their children with help from the volunteers, feeling happy and excited that the program would begin in earnest the following week.

We recruited and trained a

strong team of volunteers. The first official tutoring session was a shining example of how well students respond to the care and attention of adults who can spend a significant period of time with them focusing on their learning needs and homework tasks.

Noticing at one point that all the students and tutors had their heads down over the work in front of them, I proclaimed enthusiastically: "This is my idea of heaven!" Everyone was happy, engaged and safe in an environment that promotes learning, cooperation, respect and inclusion as well as personal responsibility.

To enable the homework club to run three sessions concurrently

on Wednesday afternoons, three volunteer tutors were trained to take on coordinator/supervisor roles at The Centre (secondary students) and North Melbourne Library (primary students). They have taken to the task like ducks to water and their achievements are commendable.

These folk, assisted by our team of dedicated and skilled tutors, are making sure the expanded club runs like a dream. I congratulate everyone involved.

Home Away From Homework Club has been part of the educational support landscape of the North and West Melbourne community for the past 16 years. It has supported hundreds of children and their families as they navigate the rigours of the



Homework Club tutors give students a helping hand. Photograph: Homework Club

school system, the curriculum and the ever-changing social environment.

The club has always evolved and grown in response to the community's needs, and we are thrilled that it continues to do so.

Frances McMillan is foundation skills coordinator at The Centre.

# On course with the Centre



## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

### Errol's Angels Community Choir

Time: Thursday 7.00pm–9.00pm  
 Membership: \$176 / \$109 concession\* per term  
 Venue: Maternal & Child Health Centre, 505 Abbotsford Street, North Melbourne  
 Find us on Facebook!

### Home Away From Homework Club

**Primary (Grades 4–6)**  
 Time: Wednesday 3.30pm–5.00pm  
**Secondary (Grades 7–10)**  
 Time: Wednesday 3.30pm–5.00pm  
 Cost: Free  
 Venue: North Melbourne Library

**Open (Grades 4–10)**  
 Time: Wednesday 4.30pm–6.00pm  
 Cost: Free  
 Venue: North Melbourne Language & Learning

**Open (Grades 4–12)**  
 Time: Thursday 3.30pm–5.00pm  
 Cost: Free to City of Hobsons Bay residents  
 Venue: Altona North Community Library  
 Find us on Facebook!

### Centre Adventures – Monthly Bus Trips

Time: Tuesday 22 October: Ballarat Tramway Museum and Lake Wendouree  
 Tuesday 26 November: Buda Historic Home and Garden and The Mill, Castlemaine  
 9.00am–5.00pm  
 Cost: \$42 / \$32 Health Care Card concession\*  
 Meet at: 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne

### Community Morning Teas

Cost: \$5 or bring a plate of food to share  
 Time: Tuesday 3 December  
 10.00am–12.00 noon  
 Venue: 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne

\* subject to conditions # subject to staff–student ratios

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAM

### General Pilates Sessions for Term 3 break

The Meat Market, 5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
 \$23.50 per session  
 Tuesday 5.30pm–6.30pm, 24 Sept & 1 Oct  
 Thursday 6.30pm–7.30pm, 26 Sept & 3 Oct

### Tuesday Pilates

The Meat Market, 5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
 Commencing 8 October  
 5.30pm–6.30pm – General  
 6.30pm–7.30pm – General/Rehab  
 7.30pm–8.30pm – Introduction to Pilates

### Wednesday Pilates

The Legion (behind North Melbourne Library)  
 Commencing 9 October  
 9.15am–10.15am – General

### Thursday Pilates

The Meat Market, 5 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne  
 Commencing 10 October  
 5.30pm–6.30pm – Beginners  
 6.30pm–7.30pm – Intermediate Plus  
 7.30pm–8.30pm – Intermediate

### Older Adults Exercise Classes

The Legion (behind North Melbourne Library)  
 10.15am–11.15am – commencing 9 October  
 12.15pm–1.15pm – commencing 11 October  
 Cost: \$194 per term or \$142 Health Care Card concession

## COURSES

Bookings are now being taken for next term.  
 Contact The Centre on 9328 1126, at [admin@centre.org.au](mailto:admin@centre.org.au) or [www.centre.org.au](http://www.centre.org.au) for dates.

### Information, Digital Media and Technology

16 weekly two-and-a-half-hour sessions  
 Wednesdays 9.30am–12.00 noon  
 Cost: \$120 / \$90 concession\*  
 (Next course commences summer 2020.)

### iGadgets

Four weekly two-hour sessions  
 Wednesdays 1.00pm–3.00pm  
 Cost: \$25 / \$20 concession\*

### One on One IT Tutoring

Cost: \$60 per hour. Times to suit you.

### Introduction to Customer Service

Eight two-and-a-half-hour sessions  
 Wednesday afternoons  
 Cost: \$35 / \$25 concession\*#

### Introduction to Accounting/Basic

### Bookkeeping

Eight three-hour sessions, Friday mornings  
 Cost: \$75 / \$55 concession\*#

### Introduction to News Media

Ten two-hour sessions, Thursday mornings  
 Cost: \$35 / \$25 concession\*#

Classes follow school term dates unless otherwise stated.

The Centre also has tutors able to deliver workshops, short courses or one-on-one training on a variety of subjects. Minimum and maximum numbers may apply; fees (if any) will vary. If you are interested in Art Therapy, Photoshop, Teacher's Aide Training, Spanish Conversation, Job Interview Practice or Résumé Writing get in touch!

The Centre: Connecting Community in  
 North & West Melbourne Inc  
 58 Errol Street, North Melbourne, Vic 3051  
 Tel: (03) 9328 1126  
 Office hours: Monday 10.00am to 6.00pm  
 Tuesday to Friday 10.00am to 3.00pm





NOTICEBOARD



The *North and West Melbourne News* is a quarterly publication produced by volunteers from North and West Melbourne and the inner city. It is now in its 41st year of production. Readers' contributions and letters are welcomed. Where relevant the *News* may seek alternative opinions in the interests of balance. Contributors' opinions are their own, however, and the *News* takes no responsibility for them. We reserve the right to edit or omit articles and advertisements considered unsuitable or when space is limited.

Articles should be submitted by email to [editorial@centre.org.au](mailto:editorial@centre.org.au). Please use minimal formatting and do not embed graphics in documents. Photographs of suitable resolution for reproduction should be sent as graphic files attached with the article.

**Finance**

The *News* is a program of The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc, a registered charity. Costs of producing the *News* are met through advertising, sponsorships, subscriptions and donations. Donations of more than \$20 are tax deductible through the ANHCA Public Fund for DGR.

**News subscriptions**

Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$20 per year (four issues) sent anywhere in Australia. The *News* is distributed free throughout North and West Melbourne. Further copies are available from The Centre and the North Melbourne Library.

**Volunteers**

The *News* welcomes new volunteers. If you have skills in writing, drawing, photography, archiving, subediting and proofreading, computer technology, social media or design and layout, please consider joining the team.

**Editor:** Maurice Gaul

**Production:** Anne Burgi

**Proofreader:** Liz Harrington

**Advertising:** Janet Graham

**Distribution:** Rahul Velumani

**Writers:** Michelle Brett, Tim Cremean, Very Impressive, Felicity Jack, Nancy Lane, Mike Muscat, Tanaka Nyamvura, Thea Oakes, Harry Patte-Dobbs, Lucy Percival, John H. Smith, Rosalynd Smith

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**Please deliver contributions, letters and feedback to:**

*North and West Melbourne News*  
58 Errol Street, North Melbourne 3051  
Email: [editorial@centre.org.au](mailto:editorial@centre.org.au)  
Telephone: 9328 1126

**Copy deadline for Summer 2019–2020 issue:  
Friday 15 November**

Provisional publication date: Friday 6 December  
*North and West Melbourne News* is available online at  
The Centre's website: [www.centre.org.au](http://www.centre.org.au)

**Advertisement sizes and rates**

Size	\$/issue	Colour	Mono
Full page (24 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$1550		\$1300
Half page (24 cm wide x 17 cm high or 12 cm wide x 34 cm high)	\$750		\$650
One-third page (24 cm wide x 12 cm high)	\$545		\$475
One-quarter page (24 cm wide x 8.5 cm high or 12 cm wide x 17 cm high)	\$400		\$350
One-eighth page (12 cm wide x 8.5 cm high)	\$200		\$175
One-16th page (12 cm wide x 4 cm high)	\$105		\$90
Business card (in Services Directory) (9 cm wide x 5.5 cm high)	\$95		\$80

- Prices ex-GST
- The *News* reserves the right to reject advertising bookings that are outside the standards for a community-based publication.
- Book a repeat advertisement for four issues for a 20% discount.
- Make your advertisement stand out in *full colour*.
- Prices are for supplied artwork (high-res PDF). Layout services are available — talk to us about how we can help.

**IMPORTANT STREET EVENT NOTICE  
SPRING FLING STREET FESTIVAL**

**Road Closure Notification  
Saturday 19 October 2019, 7.00am – 8.30pm**

On Saturday 19 October the following streets will be closed or affected by the Spring Fling Street Festival between the hours of 7.00am and 8.30pm.

- George Johnson Lane, Little Errol Street and Raglan Street will be completely closed to vehicles between 7.00am and 8.30pm on Saturday 19 October.
- The southbound lane of Errol Street (North Melbourne Town Hall side) will be closed to all traffic between Queensberry and Victoria streets.
- Residents and traders located in the affected streets will have limited access until 7.00am on Saturday 19 October, at which time the precinct will be shut down to all cars. Access will be reopened to traders and residents within the precinct when it is safe to do so and no later than 8.30pm.

**Tram service:** The Route 57 Flinders Street Station to West Maribyrnong tram will run unaffected through North Melbourne on the regular Saturday timetable.

For further enquiries about traffic management for this event please contact The Centre on 9328 1126 or the City of Melbourne SP&L Coordinator on 9658 7094.

Thank you for your understanding and support of the Spring Fling Street Festival.

**North Melbourne Book Group**

Third Monday of every month at 6.00pm  
North Melbourne Library

<b>21 October</b>	<i>The Death of Noah Glass</i>	Gail Jones
<b>18 November</b>	<i>Any Ordinary Day</i>	Leigh Sales
<b>16 December</b>	Favourite books of the year	

All welcome — no bookings required

**Enquiries 9658 9700**  
[www.melbournelibraryservice.com.au](http://www.melbournelibraryservice.com.au)  
**North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol Street**

**THE CENTRE'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**



You are invited to the  
**43rd Annual General Meeting of  
The Centre: Connecting Community in  
North & West Melbourne Inc**  
**Monday 7 October 2019 at 6.30pm**

To be held at the clubrooms of the Australian Legion of  
Ex-Servicemen and Women  
North and West Melbourne Sub-branch  
16 Little Errol Street, North Melbourne

New members are welcome.  
Please join us for refreshments afterwards.

**RSVP 27 September 2019**

**Email:** [admin@centre.org.au](mailto:admin@centre.org.au)

**Phone:** 9328 1126

**Hong Kong students head back home**

Tanaka Nyamvura



*Regina and Jason at The Centre's front desk.*

Regina Pang and Jason Ng have just finished their six-week work placement at The Centre. The two Hong Kong university students said they learnt a great deal while they were with us.

"The Centre's activities and links to the community taught me so much about my chosen career of social work and how to create social change," Regina said. "For me, I gained a valuable insight into how to apply for grants and funding," Jason added.

While both our guests gained important hands-on experience, the real thrill was in experiencing a totally different culture. "I was nervous about my first trip to Australia," Regina said. "I wasn't confident in my English capabilities as it's not my first language."

She was surprised by Melbourne's shorter working hours and that the shops closed earlier in the evening than at home. She certainly got out and about. "On weekends I went on Puffing Billy and I visited the Great Ocean Road and the Grampians. And I saw all your famous animals at the Healesville Sanctuary — koalas, kangaroos, Tasmanian devils and even a platypus."

While Regina saw brief shots of an AFL game as she sat in a coffee shop, Jason experienced the real thing. "I went to see Hawthorn and Collingwood play at the MCG. It was amazing, the stadium was just so big and so crowded. I was cheering for the Hawks but I couldn't quite work out the rules," he said.

The weather intrigued him. "Some days there was sunshine, then a minute later rain and wind," he said. But there was another aspect of Melbourne that made an impact, something he had never seen at home. "I loved the graffiti in the city. It was so vivid, so colourful, so creative."

On their last day at The Centre before returning to Hong Kong both said how much they had learnt about their chosen careers as social workers. They have also taken home glowing memories of their six weeks in Melbourne.

*Tanaka Nyamvura writes regularly for the News.*



# Celebrating a milestone

Kristen Pepyat

The last day of July marked the 100<sup>th</sup> day at school for the Prep students at North Melbourne Primary.

The Prep corridor of the historic school building was decorated with streamers with the number 100 glistening from the ceiling.

Then all the children and their teachers magically turned into 100-year-old people!

The day started with all six Prep classes parading in their creative costumes. Those watching – the children’s families, their friends from years 1 to 6, and all the staff – were entranced and applauded warmly.

Everywhere there were walking sticks, wigs, hats, makeup, hair rollers and even suspenders.

The teachers got into the spirit of the day. Emma, Prep F’s teacher, was the slowest as she shuffled around on her walking frame and kept stopping to continue her knitting.

Fellow Prep teacher Susannah was thrilled with the day. “It’s been wonderful to share the children’s learning journey thus far. They have achieved and grown so much in 100 days. I loved seeing their smiles when they saw all of their teachers dressed up.”

The number 100 was at the centre of the day. The children counted collections and objects, made 100<sup>th</sup> day crowns and glasses, and explored stories with characters also celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> day.

A highlight when we all shared a Prep picnic. Mike, Prep E’s teacher, had made a giant 100-shaped red velvet cake with cream cheese frosting.

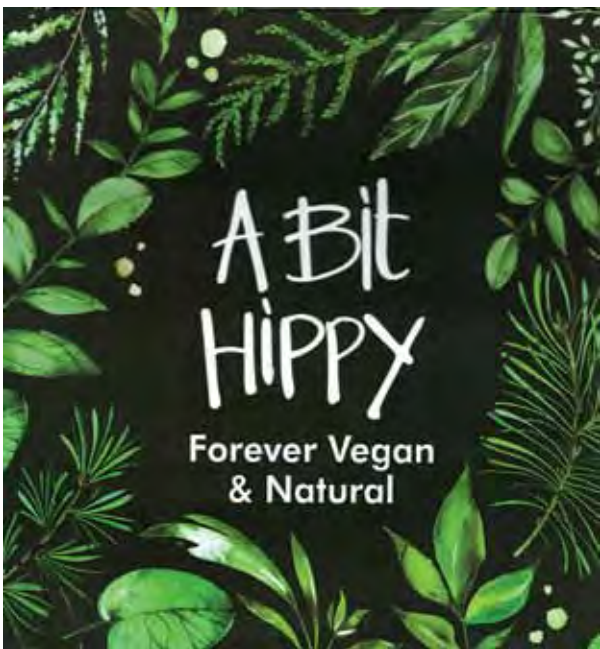
The children’s wonderfully supportive families whipped up creative costumes for their children, as well as generously contributing food for our celebration.

Kristen Pepyat teaches Prep at North Melbourne Primary.



Above: Prep teachers showed their style. Front: Susannah, Emma, Emily. Back: Mike, Mollie, Kristen. Below, from left: Harper, Sambhav, Gayathri and Arthur. Photographs: North Melbourne PS





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to share?**

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Would you like  
to start a club or  
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The Centre could be  
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us a line at  
admin@centre.org.au