



# THE ROCK

Official Newsletter of

**ST. John's Uniting Church, Millowl, Phillip Island**

**[www.cowes.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.cowes.unitingchurch.org.au)**

**Season Easter Volume 72**

*St John's Acknowledges the Boon Wurrung as the First Peoples of Millowl*

## Sharing Stories

Stories we read in scripture come to us through many mouths and hands, each with their own way of telling, writing, interpreting and framing the narratives that we hear.

Each of us hears the text differently depending on our language, heritage, education, experience, current situation and wellbeing. To say that Easter is about Jesus being arrested and crucified, dying, being buried and rising to life is faithfully true. To say that this is not the end, but a new beginning is also right. However, the stories we read about these events more than 2,000 years ago are varied and often contradictory. Can it all be true? What do we do with that?

We keep on telling the stories, and exploring how they intersect with our lives, how they inform our faith, uplift our spirits, and importantly how they disturb and urge us on in the ministry that we are given, individually and in community. We retell the stories of Easter, not because we have forgotten, but because we are re-membering, through the action of the Spirit, joining ourselves and each other again as members of the body of the crucified and risen Christ. We rehearse our faith stories, so they dwell within. Each year we find some phrase, word or story that speaks to us more strongly and it is usually what we need to hear at this time, for us, or for those around us.

A decade ago, I was living alone, in the unpredictable company of a wonderful white border collie, in a farmhouse in a Yarra Valley vineyard, close to my ministry placement. As a Lenten discipline I wrote a poem each evening, when the day was done. This year I've shared that collection of poems as a Lenten journey, with reflections for each Sunday, to use on your own or in groups. I've shared it because there might be something in the telling of my story, in words and images, that resonates with you and offers you companionship through the wilderness of Lent. The Synod Communications Unit has turned this collection into a downloadable digital flipbook. You can find it here:

<https://victas.uca.org.au/weekly-worship/>. I have a simple printed booklet available too.

Often the stories that we share about the things that have shaped our lives resonate with the lives of those around us. It's important to tell our stories and to listen to the stories of others. That's why we produce The Rock, to share our stories in words and images. This weaves us together as companions on the road, walking in the way of Jesus, who leads us through the valleys into life, for the sake of the world.

Blessings on the way,

Jennie



## Services at St John's Sunday

**8.45am Circle of Contemplation, 10.15am Sunday Service**

**& anytime on-line via our website**

**Good Friday 9am & Christmas Day Service 9am**



The Rock is the official newsletter of St. John's Uniting Church, Cowes. Its purpose is to provide a readable, informative & challenging read for the members of St. John's congregation, our Shearwaters (holiday members) and other interested friends. Members and friends are invited to contribute articles by the deadlines listed below. Late submissions may not be possible to publish.

Articles to be submitted, with pictures, to [news@cowesuc.org.au](mailto:news@cowesuc.org.au) or posted to PO Box 600, Cowes, 3922

The views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of the Minister, St John's Church Council or the Editor.

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### St John's Pastoral Carers



Dianne  
Holtrop

Kerry  
Francis

Lyn  
Francis



Ann  
Reynolds

Clive  
Smith

Judy  
Rogers



### Church Council



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Safe Church Contact



Ruth McIntosh  
Treasurer



Ron Owen



Clive Smith



André Whitton



Linda Livett



Reverend Jennie Gordon  
(Jennie)



Faye Haslam



Janet Owen



Jim Murray  
Church Council Consultant

As usual the church council has been compassionate and hardworking. At the December meeting Andre, Faye and Ron were re-elected to the church council. Hamish was co-opted as Secretary for 12 months. By consensus Gil approved as chairperson, Clive approved as Deputy Chairperson, and Ruth approved as Treasurer, and approval was given to invite The Rev Deacon Wendy Elson to be Minister in Association. Jenny's annual leave for 2025 was approved. Committee reports were received from Worship, Audio-Visual, Discipleship and Education, Pastoral care Representation. Property and Maintenance and ESM meeting. Ron has replaced the Key Safe at the back door. As Jenny will be having Wednesdays off in 2025 Church Council Meetings will be held on Tuesdays.

Gil Chairperson



# Communtiy Meal

St John's Community Meal – written by Rev. Jennie



It's 5.15pm on Monday and as the doors open people flow in, having been gathering outside for at least 15 minutes. It's a warm, breezy afternoon in late summer. Faces lift with a greeting and a smile, little ones skip along the path while parents wander in weary. People arrive in singles, couples, groups, on foot and in cars. Here we are again at St John's Uniting Church, Community meal. The doors opening mark the beginning of the meal but not the day's work. Pick-ups from local vendors have been going all weekend. Planning and cooking and set-up and sorting have all been done. The foyer is full of boxes of bread and vegetables for guests to take home and sometimes the smell of bananas or broccoli is overwhelming. A welcome and a blessing start the meal at 5.30pm and the sound is a glorious symphony of clattering plates and chattering conversations. No one sits alone.



The original objectives, for the Community Meal from December 2016 are as follows:

We sought to help the disadvantaged / marginalised and specifically that would:

- have a local impact such that we could "do good" and make a difference
- stimulate local engagement in both the church and wider community
- provide a spotlight on the church engaging in "good things"
- fill a gap in local community services (we did not want to duplicate services already available)

Jennie sat down with Glen and asked him, 'Why do you invest so much time and energy into the Community Meal?'

*"It's who I am, my faith says we need to help people in any way we can. We initially thought it was about helping the marginalised and people who are economically low. Getting a meal on the table, doing the work, doing it however we can. Now I know it's about creating community, people come because of the relationships that develop. It has blossomed. We took our hands off trying to control everything – let go, let God. We are just facilitating people in our community getting together and caring for each other. Our people, the church people who come regularly to the meal are doing the most important job by remembering names, building relationships, they are literally transforming people – there's the face of the church, the gospel in action. There are others who make phone calls, keep connections, knowing who is not here as well as who is here. They visit people who used to be connected but don't come anymore. It's a village that looks out for each other. We're not looking for payback, for people being 'saved', but that love will do its work through us."*



Thanks Glen, good and faithful servant.



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



## A Period of Discernment

- A period of Holy Moly What Have I Signed Up For?

I'm sure it wouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who's met me that I'm not one to sit on the edges and watch, not if I really want to enjoy something. My late father said of me in his speech at my wedding, "Patrick is going to thrash this life until it gives him everything he wants" and I think he was referring to this tendency I have to throw myself at my interests, headlong and brash, with an eye to clean up the mess later. "Move fast and break things" has been my lived experience for far longer than its recent popularisation in today's corporate world.

But this is how I learn. By putting skin in the game.

And so the simple backstory is, with a small education in theology and two decades (only) of facilitating church programs and my own ministry ventures, I sought to undertake the ministry of Lay Preaching for the Uniting Church. I thought I could be of service to some of the smaller communities in the area, and also to perhaps have a small income to cover expenses whilst I kept my public speaking skills honed. Additionally, I also thought to myself,

"Surely this is the simplest process! Do a few meetings, give a few references, have my education verified and done! Roberta's your Aunt, I'll be helping lead services across Gippsland in a few months' time, tops!"

I know, I know. I can hear you laughing at me from Cape Woolamai.

One of my immediate takeaways as I began to peel back the layers and peek inside the inner machinations of the Uniting Church is that there is no such thing as "rush", no urgency, no shortcuts, no fast tracking, absolutely no circumventing the processes and no apologies given. No matter your intended goal, you start at the beginning, which is where everyone who is not part of the Holy Trinity starts. (Which definitely includes me, just to be clear!)

And the start, for me, was to be welcomed as a member of the St Johns community.

Of course, it makes sense to me now that I could not begin a POD without actually being a member of a home church community. Although I was surprised that this was essential, I immediately appreciate its value and am grateful to see it enlivened. In my meagre two decades of service in

churches, this was never, ever a question. IF you came back a second time, you were counted as a member and an able body. However, not so with the Uniting Church. Being a member, as you all know, is not reflected by attendance, badge wearing, serving, committee membership or how many people know me by my first name.

Membership is by ceremony.

A dedicated time set aside in our service where we see, hear, recognise and value the individual amongst us and deliberately, intentionally, warts and all, welcome them in.

Potent stuff these ceremonies. I can easily say that it is a highlight of my Christian life to have been welcomed, ceremoniously, as a member of St Johns. It was impactful in ways I'm still reflecting on, some of which I'm not sure I'm entirely comfortable with either.

From there it has been a slow and gradual (did I mention no shortcuts?) un-peeling of processes, policy, practice, tradition, councils, authorisations, tribalism, history, traditions, councils (I did already mention councils, but they deserve many mentions) and many repetitive, overly wordy (in my honest opinion) religious documents. The latter incidentally has given me great insight into 1970's Australian Christianity.

And on this point, I have a confession to make, which may appear sacrilegious... But please bear with me as I am a Millennial. Are you sitting down? Here it comes. I am yet to read the Basis of Union in its entirety. You might want to take a minute if you haven't thrown this edition of the Rock across the room in disgust. I recommend box breathing techniques...

To be honest I got lost in some of the language somewhere on the second page and decided it would be more expedient if I copy and pasted it into ChatGPT and asked the AI to give me the dot points. Which it did. (Breath in and count 1,2,3,4) (Breath out and count 1,2,3,4).

I did get it to expand those dot points several times to add a little more flavour to it, because the initial rendering was pretty lean. Suffice to say that I do understand the document broadly, but also suffice to say, I am yet to sit and meditate on it in full.

So, I am seeking to remedy this somewhat. I would appreciate it if anyone and everyone who cares to, would take me aside and explain to me their personal connection and affinity for the Basis of Union. It does seem uniquely sacred, and I do want to understand its value, in ways which I'm confident ChatGPT has yet to convey.

Catch me for a cup of tea after a service one day and help a brother out. Please and thank you.

And finally, I have been introduced to and met with my mentor, Rev Alister Pate, who facilitates several faith



communities in Northcote and Preston. I was fortunate enough to be in the city for work late last year and was able to share in their Christmas service.

He is a remarkable man, with a mind as busy and full as mine. It is a privilege to have his time regularly and I am confident his will continue to be a significant relationship as I continue along this Period of Discernment.

Please keep me and the family in your prayers at this time, as I look to God for His miraculous supply of wisdom and understanding. Oh, and endurance... I'll need endurance. This is going to take some time.

In the fullness of His Peace and Joy

Your friend

Paddy Mulcahy



## GABBY FORSYTH

Gabby Forsyth has lived and worked on and around Phillip Island for 25 years. She worked for Bass Coast Council as a Social Worker before joining Beata Homecare as a Client Relations Manager.



Gabby attended and recommended others come along to our Community Meal Program in our inaugural year of operation. She was also invited and spoke to our Church Council about Aged Care a number of years ago, so that they could advise our members pastorally if the need arose.

With her years of experience in the system, she has been of tremendous assistance to many on a personal level, helping us to navigate the maze of Aged Care requirements and information.

She will retire at the end of February 2025.

We truly thank her for the part she has played in our lives; she is empathetic, helpful beyond her working role and always made herself available in a crisis. It has been a pleasure knowing you Gabby, and we wish you a happy, healthy retirement. God bless you and keep you.

Faye Haslam &  
Ruth Mc Intosh



ONE CHILD  
ONE HOUR  
ONE CHURCH  
ONE SCHOOL

Recently, teachers and Principals from participating schools were invited to express their reactions to having a Kidshope mentor in their school.

Here are a couple of responses:

"Having someone to reliably show up every week with a sole focus on her has undoubtedly been a significantly positive experience for this child. Her life lacks consistency and predictability, and she experiences many challenges in her relationships with peers and teachers. The impact of having such an unconditionally positive experience with a caring, trustworthy adult can't be overstated... it must be impacting to see herself as being **worthy of such positive attention.**"

*"This student is **completely engaged** while the Kids Hope Mentor is at school with them. They feel cared for and special and are much more likely to attend school on the days they know they will be with the mentor. They find it much easier to communicate with the mentor than any other person at school."*

"If you feel that you would like to be part of our Kidshope team, speak to me for more details."



Clive Smith (Coordinator) 0419 103 942



We welcome the  
**Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson**

back home to St John's  
and are enjoying her  
presence amongst us.



# Kitchen Blitz

a winner!! Let's do it again next year! January 23rd. and 24th. saw real life action in the church kitchen! The focus began with bleaching all the stained cups, ably achieved by Lynore in her one-hour shift. While the drawers were empty Lyn cleaned out and washed them.

Lynore also tackled the backsplash and windowsills while she waited for the dishwasher to finish off her cups. If you stood still, she'd bleach and wipe you too! Donna and Josie then tackled the rest of the drawers in the island bench. Same thing ... everything out ... then clean. A lot of sorting as Lyn put the items back in the drawers! Found John C's lost keep cup and communion serviettes! Lots of rubbish too!



Ruth and granddaughter Betsy tackled the teapot and saucepan drawers. The polishing was superb, and they went to find a power scrubber which Lyn had not supplied! A cuttlefish. It made a good job of the saucepan bottoms!



Meanwhile Marg went quietly and capably about her own business and completed six drawers in her shift.

In fact, ... all the tasks Lyn had planned for Thursday were mostly completed by lunchtime, so we all went home/out for lunch!

Friday morning saw the eager beavers there before nine moving out the tables to all be scrubbed and power washed. Andre and granddaughter Betsy were in flight and ready to power on! Lyn joined the team and found some great detergent!

Initial efforts with power hoses were dismal, but at 9:30, starting time, Ron turned up with the big guns! A superb job was done with David and Ron completing the task after the early birds left. They were heard to comment ... "we should do this each year at the same time".





Two of our Shearwaters turned up to help. Between the two of them they had two decent legs! Carol began on the cupboards above the stove. However, by the time she got to the corner cupboard she found her arms were too short! David had finished on tables by then, so he was roped in to complete the task.



Josie and Donna came for a second go, and we proceeded to the finish line. The last two jobs were to vacuum all the floors and then mop them. As Donna was doing the mopping the mop handle broke and we could not complete the task! We looked around and admired our handiwork!!



THANK YOU  
ALL!!

Lyn Francis



## Operation Christmas Child 2025



It is a good time of the year to collect items for the shoeboxes because the end of summer sales and back-to-school sales make items more reasonable in price.

I have printed bright yellow shopping lists available in the church foyer. I have enclosed a copy here. On the list beside this you can see the word NO next to some items. For example, don't buy face washers this year as I already have over 400 of them! Next to some items you can see a number which indicates how many I already have. Since we aim to do 150 boxes, 100 for boys and 50 for girls all aged between 5 and 14 years we aim to purchase or make 150 items in each category.

### Operation Christmas Child SHOPPING CHECKLIST

#### Toilet Bag

face washer **NO**

soap - **80**

toothbrush - **150**

comb - **150**

Hair ties/ clips etc. **lots!**

handkerchief - **70**

#### School supplies

exercise books Less than A4 size **NO**

pencil case **NO**

biros Red & black - **100**

coloured pencils **NO**

eraser - **30**

sharpener - **50**

ruler **NO**

#### Clothes children's size 4 - 14

shirt - Girls sizes 5,8,10,12

shorts Boys size 5,6,7,8,9 10,12

thongs/ socks/ scarf **Lots!**

sunhat/beanie/cap **Lots!**

Soft toy - **80**

Plaything yo-yo, skipping rope, mouth organ, slinky **LOTS**

Something special Puppet, wind up torch, yo-yo, sunglasses **LOTS**

Lyn Francis







## Faye's 80th Birthday Celebration

Like many of us I faced a dilemma about where to hold my celebration! Here on The Island with immediate family, many members of my Church Family, Resort Family and other longtime friends or do I have a function in Melbourne at my daughter Tracy and family's home in Blackburn, with many of my own and extended family and old friends.

To overcome, for many, the travel issue, a solution was found, hold two events, one on my actual birthday, the 26th of October at The R.S.L. Cowes and one the following weekend, in Blackburn.

Both were noisy, happy events and I'm sure Michael was with us in spirit throughout. Many attending renewed connections with my mutual friends and good conversations seemed to be had by everyone.

We were offered and accepted the use of The Anzac Room at the R.S.L. which provided a little more privacy. Many photos were taken, and a selection are included. Thank you all.







**Rural Australians  
for Refugees (RAR)  
Phillip Island group  
Lesley Oakley**



For many refugees, life in Australia comes after years of living in a refugee camp after fleeing their home country. A challenge of social, cultural and physical dimensions.

For example, Jean Bosco Munizikintore lived in Burundi (a tiny country in Africa) where brutal civil occurred between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. Conflict appeared to be resolved until the Hutu president was assassinated. After fears of ongoing violent conflict and 100,000s of lives killed in conflict, persecution and crossfire, Jean lost contact with his family. As a 20-year-old he fled to neighbouring Tanzania to a refugee camp. He lived there for nine years.

He married and after a successful application as a refugee he arrived in Australia in 2005. He has served as the cultural coordinator for the Burundian community since 2006. He has also completed a certificate in Community Service at TAFE.

His was a protracted process of refugee migration. The wheels of the Australian immigration bureaucracy moved slowly and they continue to move slowly. There are thousands of people with approved refugee status waiting for a decision about their future.

There are close to 30,000 people on Temporary Protection Visas, 10,000 on Bridging Visas. Many of these people are dependent on refugee support organisations such as the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) and Friends of Refugees in Springvale, both practically supported by the RAR group.

In the financial year 2023/4 ASRC provided 9657 community lunches, supported 3769 with foodbank groceries, 548 with housing services and 814 were assisted by the Health Team. Staggering figures, which of course, doesn't tell the whole story. As with all supporting organisations the prevailing financial situation of many previous donors has meant that community support of money and food is down while demand for support is up.

There is another refugee cohort who have arisen out of catastrophic conditions because of war resulting in the destruction of homes,

infrastructure and food supply. Think of Ukraine, Syria, Gaza.

The Refugee Council of Australia is working on a plan to develop a crisis response to a humanitarian crisis – A Path to Safety. They see the need to prioritises people safety, a process that is timely, accessible and uses the resources of the multicultural diaspora to address the cultural and social needs of the refugees coming here in a crisis situation.

A tribal response of taking sides helps no-one, least of all the refugees fleeing in crisis. We have brought the tensions of overseas conflicts into our own national backyard, and we see daily reports of expressed animosity, abuse and senseless damage and destruction.

There is not much good news coming out of Afghanistan, but some great news for women refugee cricketers living in Melbourne and Canberra. They are coming together to form a Twenty20 cricket team and will play the Cricket Without Borders XI in Melbourne.

This is the first time they will play as a team since migrating to Australia as refugees following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban. When the Taliban took over in Afghanistan they banned women's participation in all sport, and since that time the Taliban has passed 'laws'/decrees' that virtually erase women from public view unless they are totally covered up and accompanied by a male relative. Cultural prejudice as theological practice.

The RAR group has continued to support girls' and women's education through Women for Change, fundraising for ASRC and taking goods in-kind to Friends of Refugees in Springvale. We meet every Friday morning and ring Bells (including the Harmony Bells) to remind passersby that the refugee issue in our country is alive and chronically unwell.





## They say a pictures worth a thousand Words



Last year Rob and I were fortunate enough to escape the worst of winter, enjoying another caravan trip exploring this amazing country of ours. We set out in mid-June with no fixed itinerary, travelling where the mood took us and staying for as long as the mood lasted.

We packed a lot into 2½ months! Of course there were many highlights, here are just a few of my very favourites:

- Time spent watching platypuses foraging in the middle of the day, at both Carnarvon Gorge and Eungella National Park



- Tree climbing lizards – I was wondering how they got down when the one we were watching just turned slightly and fell the 3m to the ground!
- Lots of beautiful birds and butterflies



- A striking yellow and blue lizard at a Salt Lake in South Australia
- Amazing shadows in the pools at Finch Hatton Gorge which we eventually discovered were made by spiders sitting on the surface



- The Daintree rainforest – such a dense collection of trees and palms, entangled with vines climbing up and strangler figs reaching down, that only a few steps from the clearing it became the whole world, feeling like it continued for ever in all directions.
- The rainforest's amazingly camouflaged Lichen Huntsman



- The ever-beautiful central Australian landscape



- Some great bird-watching at Lake Menindee near Broken Hill, Hasties Swamp near Atherton, TYTO Wetland in Ingham and the billabong at Camooweal (are you writing these down Gil?)
- An echidna climbing a rocky cliff face



- The Flinders Ranges' 550 million year old Nilpena Ediacara fossils of our earliest complex animals



What a wonderful world



# Shearwater Sunday

We have been official St John's Shearwaters since 2008, although we have been Island Shearwaters since the early 1980's. There was a family holiday house at Cape Woolamai. We crossed the bridge and looked for the place to nest. Our children and grandchildren are like that now and use the bridge to switch their minds to Island time. We purchased our own place in late 2007 and Cowes became our shopping centre. We were always intrigued by the unique architecture of St John's and often wondered if the parishioners were as adventurous and outward looking like their building. As Uniting Church members in Manningham, it was an easy decision to make a visit along with all the other holiday makers, just to keep our consciences clear. It took very little time to realise that the building was in fact far behind the people's vision. We were immediately welcomed as individuals, not just visitors. After our first couple of visits, we found several of our acquaintances from the Island were also St John's members, or Shearwaters themselves, which made it even more comfortable for us.

It was not just the innovative and inclusive services that continued to attract us. We have been able to participate in quiz evenings, even if our team was once robbed of a victory over St Phillips after a very questionable decision by a former vicar!! The Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra has delighted us on many occasions and the numerous markets and car boot sales have been very entertaining events. It was an honour once to be passed an apron and told we could help on the BBQ and Cake Stall because they needed extra assistance, we really felt accepted.

Some Melbournians think of Islanders as followers, but we have found the opposite. Each Minister has been unique in their leadership and the challenges they have set, not only for members, but for the community. We look at the positive outcomes of the Monday Community Meal with amazement. To us it's truly "Christianity in action".

We are not as regular as we would like, but when we attend it always feels as though we were there last week such is the welcoming feeling.

*Carole & David McNamara*





## Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra



On January 17th, 2025, the **Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra** once again graced St John's Church with their performance. As always it was wonderful to see them again. Their annual visits have become a much-anticipated tradition, drawing both loyal attendees and new people each year. For a small town like Cowes, having an orchestra of this calibre perform here is a true blessing.

For the Australian tour as they always do, they provided the opportunity for two young Australian musicians to join them on the tour and perform with them to develop and grow their musical ability.

The joy their music brings, and the enthusiasm of the audience makes each visit a special occasion.

We look forward to welcoming them back next year.



## Homeless and Displaced



Throughout last year **The Octopluses** have continued to advocate and agitate in regard to the homeless and displaced on our island.

So we were thrilled to be invited to the launch of Stable One - Winter Shelters workshop at Berninnet Civic Centre last month.

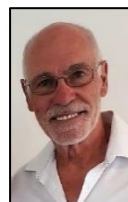
The Winter Shelter program provides relief to those in need of a safe place to stay during the harsh winter months.

Local church buildings are used to provide an evening meal, dormitory-style accommodation and a safe place of care and connection for guests and are supported by Stable One, a registered charity inspired by Jesus' commission to reach out to those in need.

Trained volunteers both from local churches and the community, come together to staff the Shelter, working at any venue that suits their availability.

Our local Inter church Council and Bass Coast Council have shown their support, so we wait excitedly to see what role the Octopluses can play in volunteering for this wonderful initiative in our local community.

Clive Smith (Facilitator)  
**OCTOPLUSES**



Hamish, Jack, Laurie, Alan L,



Alan Mc, John A and John C.





# All are Welcome



Of course, the dogs are the stars of the show and captured beautifully here in these photos. Hamish loves coming to church, he laps up the attention and admiration and knows the rhythm of the service well.

He is a great ice breaker and conversation starter, we enjoy chatting to people about him and sharing their pet stories.

He particularly loves John Christensen who brings him smackos (as he does to all the dogs he meets)

If John isn't there he looks mournfully in the spot where his motorised chair is usually parked.

We value the welcome given to dogs at St John's, it reflects a generous spirit of making all feel welcome. Blessings!

*Suzanne Swan*



This is my experience on the back of my grandad's motorbike. He had come down for the Grand Prix, because he loves motorcycles, and he decided to take me around the island on his, which was one of my best days of 2024. We went to Ventnor and drove across to Rhyll before driving home, and it was very fun.

*Christian Mulcahy*





## Gil Smith Bird Strolls



### Fishers Wetland

Thanks, Gil, for another great bird walk, how many species did we see? The count included native hens and black fronted dotterels, included here because I enjoyed playing spot the dot(terel) and was excited to see them.



Ventnor Common Bushland Reserve

## The Island Harmony Choir

The Island Harmony Choir is up and running for 2025 and has room for new singers.

Whether you are an experienced singer or like the idea of singing in a choir, you will be welcome to come along and try it out. You don't have to read music – many members learn by ear, and we go over parts in the rehearsal process. Maybe you have sung in a choir in the past and would like to rekindle the experience. It is a welcoming and fun-loving group as well as enjoying the singing together.

There is an annual membership fee which covers the costs of our musical director, accompanist and music, etc. But you are welcome to come to rehearsals for a few weeks before formally joining.

We are currently working towards performances in June at aged care centres on the Island where we are always received enthusiastically. In the second half of the year we will prepare for our annual end of year concert at St John's.

Our repertoire includes old favourites, popular songs, traditional folk songs and some 'classical' pieces, with humorous as well as 'serious' offerings. There is usually something for everyone in the mix.

Rehearsals are weekly on Tuesdays, 1.30 – 3.00pm in the church.

If you want to know more, have a talk to Tony 0418 134 709 Terry or Lyn.







### Personal Profile - Alan Lacey

Alan was brought up on a dairy farm in rural Gippsland and could have had a farming future but chose a Scientific career path, graduating in chemistry, and moved into research and development with the Commonwealth Government.



**Leptospermum** (Purple Haze) Small, hardy shrub 1-2 mtrs. Flowers in Spring. Grows in full sun – part shade. Propagate from seed or cuttings.

By then living in bay-side Hampton, Alan and the lads of the local Methodist Youth Fellowship heard a rumour about the new minister and his family

(4 girls) arriving at Sandringham. This clearly needed to be checked out! (Much to the amusement of the new reverend.)

### **Alyogyne Huegelii**

Spreading shrub, with purple flowers from October to April. 1-2 mtrs x 1-3 mtrs. From SA to WA Produces masses of showy flowers. Propagate from seed or cuttings - will strike readily.



One day a good friend of Alan's called and said, "I've a date with Margaret but I'm committed to sing in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta production, will you look after her?" Alan replied "Yes, I will!" And he did!

**Telopea Speciosissima** (Waratah) Small to tall shrubs - excellent for cut-flower display. "Shady Lady" cultivars are more reliable and need well drained rich soils. Harvesting flower stems provides branching which supports next year's flower growth. Propagate from shallow sown fresh seed - seedlings prone to fungal attack. Needs good ventilation



A blossoming romance followed – then a wedding and a new home. Thus, any artistic expression, photography, or horticultural interests

were thrust upon him.

A higher Degree was completed, and senior management in private industry beckoned. Acquisition of a much larger block followed. Gardens and gardening are very personal matters. A garden reflects the character of the person who tends it, and part of the joy of designing a garden is the incorporation of one's own ideas into the natural way. A natural garden is where one has looked at nature and observed the way in which nature works and then tries to reproduce this aspect. It is possible to create your own impression of the natural way.

**Acacia Drummondii** 1-2 Mtrs. Best small garden wattle - Rod flowers in July – October. Partial sun. Propagate from seed or cuttings. Several forms available.



After a transient stint into professional Horticulture, Alan returned to academia, lecturing in Chemistry and Environmental Science at RMIT University.

Together with Margie, garden designs followed over many years (always evolving projects), first at Eltham where our family grew up (3 great children and now 9 grandchildren), then a hectare near the beach at Sandy Point, and finally downsizing to Cowes. Australian plant propagation and photography remaining important parts of the mix.

Alan remains Scientific Advisor and Professional encourager to Margie – the real artist in the family – and the garden continues to provide joy and inspiration.



### ***Ibis Visitors, Ventnor***

To us they came again  
back silently.  
Regal birds  
statuesque,  
pointed  
down curved bills  
probing grass,  
leaving gifts  
of shed feathers,  
silken soft  
white,  
black speckled  
and striped -  
early dot paintings  
of yonder years.



### ***Dating Dotterels***

Suddenly I spy  
a pair of hooded dotterels  
darting among the seaweed  
playing hide 'n' seek  
striding speedily across the sands ...  
fluting to each other  
as they fly off together  
sweeping over the sea ...  
soaring  
and  
circling  
till they return  
to their vulnerable nest  
on Ventnor's windswept shore.



### ***Black Cockatoos***

They come again and again  
the three,  
mother father and child.  
First seen flying  
over old Boronia home,  
now here in Glenwood Grove,  
they fly past to lakeside gums,  
where we have seen them  
stripping bark,  
searching for acacia grubs and  
foraging for stringy bark seeds.

Together, like our family  
of nighttime dreamers,  
these rare birds  
ever squawking  
calling from the air.

Three black crucifixes flying  
with yellow splayed tails,  
parents ever protecting  
their young in need.



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