

Merricks Matters

Spring 2023

Welcome to the second edition of Merricks Matters for 2023. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Thank you to all our contributors for your articles and photos. In addition to our regular reports from the various Merricks Beach organisations, there are more Merricks Memories contributed by Di Hall and Rosanne Pittard, and a tribute to two of our long-standing residents who have sadly left us during the year. Thank you also to Lainie Larsson for her photos and memories.

Please send in your own contributions for future editions. Letters, photos and articles are all welcome. Send your contributions to the Editor at contact@mbra.com.au.

See you on the beach or around the village soon!
Joyce Lawrence, Editor

MBRA Update

It has felt like a long, cold Winter, but Summer at Merricks is now just around the corner, and the MBRA Committee has been busy on various projects, consistent with our objectives of seeking to conserve the environment in our village and to promote residents' enjoyment of it. This has included multiple working bees (two in the Foam Street walkway), and a great deal of work on our current major project, which is the vital renovation of our village drainage system. More details on that project are elsewhere in this edition of Merricks Matters, and there is much to be done, but residents will see some significant works already completed, including a new drain at the bottom of Merricks Beach Road.

The MBRA is our association. Those who give up their time to serve on its Committee do so because they care about our village and its residents. There will always be issues upon which Merricks Beach residents have differing views and perspectives – dogs on the beach and mains water, to name just two – and, indeed, Committee members do not always agree on everything, but MBRA members should not doubt that its Committee only ever acts on the basis of that care for the village. Our AGM this year will be held on Sunday 7 January at 10am at MYC. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the meeting.

The Committee welcomes comments, suggestions and feedback from members. Please send them to contact@mbra.com.au.

Peter Cash – MBRA President

Davies Cup 2023/24

The annual competition for Merricks Beach's Davies Cup is planned for Friday 29 December. This will be the first 'tournament' using the mod-grass courts. There's plenty of time to practise between now and the end of December, so we hope to see lots of newcomers as well as regular competitors determined to win on the day!

Peter Cash – MBRA President

On the MBRA Agenda

The MBRA Committee has held 2 meetings since the Autumn edition of Merricks Matters.

The major topics for discussion have been infrastructure, especially drainage; maintenance of the Foam St walkway; and how the Committee (and the Association overall) can best support our association's aims, particularly when it comes to Shire and State Government planning and decisions that affect our village and its environs.

We anticipate fruitful discussion on these topics, and potentially others, as part of our AGM, to be held at 10am on Sunday 7 January 2024.

Kathy Clarke – MBRA Secretary

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

29 th December	MBRA Davies Cup, Tennis Courts
30 th December	Sand modelling competition
7 th January, 10am	MBRA AGM, Yacht Club
Every Tuesday, 10am	Craft Group, Yacht Club (Excl school holidays)



Merricks Beach Drainage Update

As MBRA members will be aware, drainage at Merricks has long been a source of concern to many. As noted in the Autumn edition of Merricks Matters, the MBRA Committee is making a concerted effort to work with residents and the Shire to improve things.

Here's what's been done so far, and in the pipeline!

- Resident Stormwater Information Pamphlet issued.
- The crossovers across the village were cleaned/jetted out to make sure they did not have sediment and can function as best as they can - pending size and the levels of drains adjacent.
- A range of new crossovers have been installed by residents in Minto St / Palmers Hill Rd.
- We have organized to get the residents along Merricks Beach Rd between Wave and Surf Sts a new cut drain and a crossover for the pedestrian path at the bottom that goes towards beach and yacht club.
- We are proposing a driveway crossover subsidy program to assist residents to replace broken, non-functional or non-existent driveway crossovers, where the existing arrangements are preventing the roadside drains from functioning properly.
- We have met with John Phillips from the Shire on a Merricks Beach Stormwater Strategy – potentially similar to Shoreham's.
- We have established a sub-committee with local water experts (who we are very fortunate to have as residents in the village) to help design and plan the long-term strategy, using a best practice Water Sensitive Urban Design approach. We are hoping to present some ideas related to this to the MBRA AGM, and get some pilot projects up and running during the next year.

MB Rd Works in progress



Kriston Symons – MBRA Committee

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What is Water Sensitive Urban Design?

The Mornington Peninsula has a stormwater strategy underpinned by the principles and practices of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD for short). Information about the strategy is at [Stormwater - Mornington Peninsula Shire \(mornpen.vic.gov.au\)](http://Stormwater - Mornington Peninsula Shire (mornpen.vic.gov.au)).

A key principle of WSUD is protecting natural systems by protecting and enhancing natural water systems within urban developments. Promoting and protecting natural waterways as assets allows them to function more effectively and supports the ecosystems that rely on them.

Suggested actions under this strategy include:

- Rainwater tanks
- Streets with swales instead of traditional kerb and channelling
- Vegetation buffers or filters within swales
- Swales with infiltration capability
- Sediment and retention basins
- Rain-gardens
- Wetlands and
- Retention ponds and detention ponds

A number of these actions are already in place at Merricks Beach, but we think there is more we can do. The Cape eco-development at Cape Paterson, was a finalist for an Industry Leader award in the Premier's Sustainability Awards 2021 – Sustainable places category, and includes a significant amount of water sensitive urban design. This absorbs stormwater and delivers what isn't absorbed into wetlands.



Here are some photos of some of the roadside drains at the Cape to give readers an idea of what can be done.



Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve

Tree down at the Bill Carroll reserve

In case it's escaped anyone's attention, strong winds in July brought down a large section of tree at the front of the Bill Carroll Reserve. The council sign was mangled and the Corden memorial rock was laid bare. A month later, an orderly and quite beautiful stack of branches appeared, created by David Stewart as part of the clean up effort. These have since been chipped by the council. The committee has decided to let the fallen log lie and plan to restore the garden bed in front of the Corden rock in Autumn. The council has told the committee that the sign will be replaced before the end of the year.



The Friends of the Bill Carroll Reserve had a full house at our AGM with everyone re-elected

After the meeting, we set to work cleaning up the debris from the old fallen tree.



The hand of the Maestro at the Bill Carroll Reserve. Shadowing Andy Goldsworthy Thanks Dave!

The huge log will stay as a feature, and become part of the habitat.



Barbara Hoqarth & Elaine Larsson - FOBCR

Merricks Beach Craft Group

Craft group aligns with the school year, so we are now into our final term for 2023. Our Christmas lunch and hand-crafted gift exchange will be upon us in no time!

MYC is a very pleasant place to sit and chat on a Tuesday morning. A lot of creative work is being done – from knitting, crochet and basket making to even the mending. We enjoy sharing ideas and expertise and learning new skills.



Feel free to drop in and see what is happening between 10.00 and 1.00 pm on Tuesdays. We are a friendly bunch and welcome "crafty" newcomers and also those who come for coffee and a chat!



Penny B – Craft Group Convenor

Foreshore Committee Update

With help from the Merricks Beach community, the Foreshore Committee has been working to maintain the beauty of the natural environment on the foreshore reserve. There have been a series of working bees to remove invasive weeds and to plant indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses. This included planting opposite the tennis courts to complement the work of the MBRA, weeding and planting along the east end of Surf Street and planting either side of Coles Creek to extend the continuous biolink of indigenous planting to support native wildlife.



We have also been improving safety and accessibility for the coming summer. Beach access paths have been getting their annual maintenance. Four Emergency Markers have been installed at locations on the beach. The markers will help people identify their location to emergency services, such as ambulances, and enable the emergency services to quickly identify the closest beach access point. Point Leo and Balnarring are also installing markers. The Foreshore Committee have repaired and replaced the fence at the Cave Lookout and, at the request of the CFA, the fire access gate at the corner of Bluff Rd and Surf St has been widened to enable better access for CFA trucks.

Living Culture Indigenous Walk

In September the Foreshore Committee hosted another Living Culture indigenous walk on the foreshore. These walks were originally initiated by the MBRA, and there have now been four walks over several years. They are always well attended, with participants hearing about indigenous plants and their uses and participating in a Yidaki (didgeridoo) meditation session.



Dogs on the Beach

As summer approaches, more locals and visitors take time to enjoy our foreshore. We all need to remember that we share our foreshore with our valued native wildlife and be cautious as we never know where the magnificent wildlife will appear or how an off-lead dog may react to it.

In September, a number of Merricks residents had an amazing experience seeing an echidna shuffling along the beach near Balnarring. Check out the video on our Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore/>. However, not all experiences on the foreshore are positive. Unfortunately, there was a dog incident on the beach in May involving two dogs, one of which was injured. The incident was reported to Council, and we remind dog owners to ensure dogs are on lead at all times to ensure the safety of people, other dogs, and our native wildlife.

The Committee is trying to take steps to ensure regulations applying to dogs on the beach are less confusing and a good balance is found for all. As noted on the Foreshore Committee's Facebook page in May, the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council released its final Dogs in Public Places policy. Community viewpoints were collected through the consultation conducted by the Council, the MBRA and the Foreshore Committee over an extended period. This included the community survey conducted by the MBRA in consultation with the Foreshore Committee. In its submission to Council, the Foreshore Committee supported changes that would better balance beach users' enjoyment, public safety and environmental concerns, including reducing the period that dogs are not allowed on the foreshore. You can read more about it here [The Mornington Peninsula Shire... - Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve | Facebook](#)

To implement relevant changes in the regulations, the Foreshore Committee is engaging with Council and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) about next steps including updating signage, community education and enforcement options. Importantly, the existing regulations remain current and we will keep you updated on the timing of any changes and provide notice in advance of the date of any changes.

Beach Cleaning and Working Bees

The regular beach cleaning events will commence shortly. These are typically held on the first Sunday of the month in the holiday season, and more frequently in January, so please keep an eye out for the notices with dates and details and the sign-up station at the at the bottom of Merricks Beach Road. With the help of the whole community, we can maintain the pristine nature of Merricks Beach.

There will be upcoming working bees for weeding and planting, with details posted on the community noticeboard next to the tennis courts and on the Foreshore Committee's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore>. We look forward to seeing as many people who can make it to these events. Have a wonderful summer.



Merricks Yacht Club Update

After a cold wet winter, the Yacht Club is looking forward to warmer weather and the summer sailing season. For those needing some off season sailing, a *Frostbite* sail was enjoyed in light winds on a recent sunny Saturday afternoon. Apart from launching and retrieving, most sailors did not fully experience the brisk water temperature – however a few capsizing sailors confirmed that the 12°C water in September is in fact - cold!

While our members are aware, some residents may not know of the Club's plans to build a shed in the north-east corner of the boat yard in 2024. Our Committee received member approval for the shed at our June 2023 AGM. A significant contribution to the cost of the shed will come from the Bendigo Bank. We are extremely grateful to the Bendigo Bank for their continuing support of the Yacht Club. The shed will be a steel framed Colorbond clad building 9m wide x 10m long with a conventional gable roof 4.5m high. The purpose of the shed is to store the Club's three rescue boats, tractor and other boating equipment. This will allow the ground floor of the clubhouse to be used more effectively.

Our Club is being used more and more - all year round you can enjoy craft, pilates, meditation and mindfulness, Thursday night drinks and other social events. Once the shed is complete, we plan to make use of the ground floor for junior activities – a dedicated area for our younger members will markedly improve the club.

The planning permit application is presently with Council. By the time our permits and approvals are in place we expect the Summer sailing season to be in full swing. That being the case, the shed will be built in May/June of 2024. If residents have any queries about the shed, they can contact me at commadore@merricks.org

In closing I remind everyone the club has a full program of sailing and social events on offer this Summer. There are activities for young and old and we welcome new members to sail, socialise and have fun.



Bring on Summer!!

Peter Balka – Commodore, MYC

Sand Modelling Competition

Save the Date

Express your creativity! The annual Sand Modelling Competition is scheduled for Saturday 30 December 2023. If the weather is unsuitable, the alternative date is Tuesday 2 January 2024.

Everyone is invited to participate. Lots of prizes and special awards for

- Best on the Beach** – Rose Bowl Trophy
- Most Original Prize**
- Rick Daly Trophy Junior Encouragement Award**

MBRA Sand Modelling Competition Subcommittee

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Merricks Memories

Saving Westernport 70s style

On Thursday 31st December, 1970, the following photo and article appeared in the *Herald Sun*, featuring some of our local kids, many faces well known today.



Left to Right- Mandy Walsh, Doug Varey, Joyce Lawrence, Chrys Penn-Tonkin, Phil Johnson, Sandy Richards, Geoff Lawrence and Sue Darby.

The article reads- About 600 people yesterday condemned plans by Ampol Petroleum Limited and H.C. Sleight to build a \$60 million oil refinery on 100 acres of rural land near the Balnarring Racecourse. Farmers and homeowners turned out in strength to the protest meeting, despite the blustery weather. The area earmarked for the refinery is at Bittern, outside the Hastings Council's planned industrial area. The chairman of the rally, Cr. Stanley Smith, said the meeting was designed to show the Government what the people felt about the refinery plans. During 1971 petitions were collected, and rallies held, including at Melbourne Town Hall where the poet Judith Wright spoke, and 2000 people attended. A petition with 20,000 signatures was filed, protesting the refinery. By mid-1971 the Ampol/Sleight development was abandoned.

Di Hall – MB community member

Merricks Beach Cave in the 60s



The Cave - taken around 1965-67. Locals, or school students on a geology excursion?

Rosanne Pittard – MBRA Committee member

Merricks Beach Farewells

Sadly, the Merricks Beach community lost two community stalwarts during the last few months, Peg Corden and Mary Hansford. The MBRA Committee joins many others in expressing our sympathies to their families and friends at Merricks.

Thank you to their families for their permission to include the following information about Peg and Mary. Many thanks also to Elaine Larsson for her memories and photos.

Vale Margaret (Peg) Corden 26 August 1930 to 10 July 2023

It is with great sadness we report the passing of Peg Corden after a long struggle with dementia in her twilight years.

Peg and Gerald Corden were active members of the Yacht club from the mid-1960s and produced two club champions, an outstanding achievement given Simon and Martin's lack of sailing skill.

Peg loved Merricks. She spent many years in the race control tower and participating in social events. She and Gerald were also active in the Bill Carroll Reserve committee. She had so many good Merricks friends and was always welcoming to Simon and Martin's friends at their Palmers Hill Road home.

Peg loved to travel, starting with an adventurous bus trip from the UK to India in the 1950s, to more conventional bus, air and sea travel into her 80s.

She leaves behind her two sons, Simon and Martin, her daughters-in-law, Sally and Philippa, and beloved grandchildren, Madeleine, Patrick, Eleanor, Douglas and Abbie.

Peg at Art Group and Book Club at Merricks



Vale Mary Hansford

13 March 1931 to 10 September 2023

It is with great sadness we report the passing of Mary Hansford at the age of 92. Mary was an active Merricks Beach resident for over 60 years. She was committed to making Merricks an inclusive community and was an active contributor to many activities, including tennis tournaments, sand modelling competition, the Yacht Club and the Bill Carroll Reserve. In fact, she was the driving force behind the Yacht Club installing the lift so that all Merricks residents could access the clubrooms as a community hub.

Mary and John were active contributors to the yacht club and the wider Merricks community. She was an avid supporter of both the social and sailing events, although remarkably never once got her hair wet!

She was particularly proud of her time as the 'First Lady' when John was the Commodore and worked hard behind the scenes to develop sail training for juniors and to 'free' the women from serving the sailors post-race afternoon tea by arranging a self-service system. She had so many good Merricks friends, taking a genuine interest in their families and was always encouraging them to join club activities.

She leaves behind her four daughters, Rosemary, Patsy, Geraldine and Paula, her sons-in-law, and twelve beloved grandchildren.

A moment in time, possibly 18 years ago.



Mary loved a yarn, she was always interested in you, and always said 'NOW, what have you been up to'?

Mary was always seeking knowledge, always so friendly and had great conversation skills and valued opinions.

Marcus Crossley plonked his baby daughter on his lap, as he was wrangling his Golden retriever and son.

Jo Ferguson's dog was hiding under Mary's chair.

It really shows Mary in her element.



Even with her Macular degeneration Mary was able to give an insightful memorised speech at the MYC Lift Launch.

MBRA Committee

Fire Season Preparation

Merricks Beach Community Fireguard Group

The MBRA recommends residents take advice from the CFA on protecting their property and family from fire danger. We are also planning to re-establish the Merricks Community Fireguard group this year, most likely starting with an initial meeting in late November. Keep an eye out for details!

In the meantime, the CFA website has a lot of useful information on preparation for the upcoming fire season [How to Prepare Your Property | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#) and [Before and During a Fire | CFA \(Country Fire Authority\)](#)

Outdoor Burning

The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council is in the process of strengthening its regulations regarding outdoor burning. The current requirements can be found at [Open Air Burning - Mornington Peninsula Shire \(mornpen.vic.gov.au\)](#).

Except during October, or in very specific, limited and controlled situations (for which you will need a permit from the Shire), outdoor burning is **not** permitted on blocks of less than 1500 sqm. If you do have a permit to burn off, please call 1800 668 511 prior to starting open air burning to let the CFA know, so that neighbourhood fire alert calls do not necessarily instigate a callout.

If you become aware of an illegal burn-off outside the Fire Danger Period, contact the Shire on 1300 850 600. During the Fire Danger Period, the Shire advises contacting 000 in the first instance.

Brad Vann/Joyce Lawrence - MBRA Committee

Letters to the Editor

[Note: Please email your letters (or other contributions) to the Editor, Merricks Matters at contact@mbra.com.au]

Dear Joyce,

This is a quick note to respond to your request to send in any suggestions for an article in Merricks Matters.

On Friday afternoon, I was delighted to spend some time in the MB foreshore with a bright-eyed swamp rat like this one. (I did not take a photo but I took this photo at Somers on another occasion.) The little swamp rat was less than an arm-length from me and happy just to nibble on some grass stalks while I watched.



I wondered if an article about these little native rats would be of interest to residents. They are vegetarian, do not carry germs, and will not ever live in our ceilings or wall cavities. They can be readily discouraged from veggie gardens with netting buried to a depth of 200 mm around the veggie garden, and by keeping vegetation around the garden low as if they do not have cover they will not build their tunnels.

They will be active from now.

Warmest wishes,

Mary

PS I was on the path from Merricks Beach Road. The swamp rat only ducked into cover when an elderly unleashed dog wandered by.

[Editor's note: Thanks for your letter, Mary, the suggestion to include an article on swamp rats, or other local fauna/flora, sounds good. I will follow it up for our next edition. In the meantime, here is a link to listen to local Professor Nick Williams talk about bush rats in the Foreshore Reserve

<https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore/posts/pfbid02ESEf2t8JZJBVRnpeni8og44cHNpPWPFdHmgMdnFbYuZisJoyk85ybZwvMse8UB1FI?mibextid=YxdKMJ>]

Dear Editor

I have it on good authority that over Winter, the wildlife at Merricks Beach have been taking it amongst themselves to over-run the place. Not only have there been sightings of swamp and bush rats, but also an echidna exploring the beach and the sea! I've heard reports of sugar gliders taking up residence in rooftops and kookaburras and tawny frogmouths breeding like nobody's business! The onslaughts of possums continue and there has been koala activity as well.

Bring on Spring I say, the influx of human activity will soon put the wildlife on notice.

Yours truly, Moe M Alldown

[Editor's note: Thanks Moe, but, if like me, you have a soft spot for the native critters who share our beautiful environment, please be careful as you mow, trim, clean and prune, that you don't inadvertently destroy a creature's habitat in the process. Think twice before using pesticides; and try installing a nesting box or contacting Wildlife Victoria on (03) 9400 7300 to help you with any wildlife relocations.]