

Merricks Matters

Autumn/Winter 2017

Newsletter for the Merricks Beach Community

Enjoy the dappled days of autumn

April	Saturday	15 th	9.30am	Working bee - Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve (see noticeboards)
			7pm	Easter BBQ at the MYC (bring your own food, drinks at the bar)
	Sunday	16 th	4pm	Easter egg painting and hunt in the Park, Bill Carroll Reserve
	Monday	17 th	9.30am	Foreshore Working Bee (see noticeboards)
	Sunday	30 th	10am	MYC end of season working bee
May	Sunday	7 th	9.30, 10.30	Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve meeting, then working bee
June	Saturday	10 th	9.30am - noon	MBRA Plant giveaway
	Sunday	11 th		
	Saturday	10 th	3pm, 6.30pm	MYC AGM, Presentation dinner
	Sunday	11 th	9.30am	MYC Foreshore Committee working bee
<i>Remember that it is time to 'dead-head' the agapanthus</i>				

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The Davies Cup

On 30 December, the MBRA once again hosted the annual Merricks Beach 'Davies Cup', our joint MBRA/MYC tennis tournament. This year, teams were mostly cross-generational, so a feature of the day was the eagerness of the younger players to knock off their parents, and the sometimes desperate efforts of said parents – and their contemporaries – to hold them off! Thanks to the contributions of many, but particularly of Ian Basser and Bernard Barrett, everyone had a great day on the newly cleaned and line-painted courts. Congratulations to the winners, Ian & Ted Basser, who fought through from being lucky losers in the first round.

Speaking of the tennis courts: MBRA members who attended the AGM will be aware that, with Ian Rogers finally drawing the curtain on his long and much-appreciated role as unofficial groundsman of the tennis courts, the MBRA was looking at having to spend precious subscription income on maintaining them. However, John Cerdor (**Johnno's Garden Maintenance**) has generously stepped into the breach and will be keeping the court surrounds in prime condition throughout the year, at no charge to the MBRA. You can contact Johnno at johnnosgardenmaintenance@gmail.com.au

Peter Cash, President MBRA



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Summer sand modelling

Cold and misty rain greeted the participants on the 2nd of January for our annual competition, a big contrast to the year before! After much effort and decision making the results were: The Rosebowl for best exhibit went to Tim Roberts' *The Sunbaker*; Most original design to the Bunker group (Smith family) for *The Sandwich*; and The Rick Daley Trophy and junior encouragement award to Ocean Lui-Spencer for *Humpty Dumpty*. Congratulations to the winners and everyone who had a go. A big thankyou to the prize money collectors and those who assisted us on the day.

Sue Rutley, Coordinator Photos Mary Daley



From the archives

I was sorting through some stuff in my garage – that stuff included some old MBRA documents including THE BOOK – ie, the book in which the financial records of the MBRA were written. The earliest entry in the book is 7th November 1935, but there was already a bank balance of around 6 shillings. So, 82 years?? I think someone told me the sandcastle competition pre-dates the residents' association (which has had other names during its life). Does anyone know when the residents' association first met and when the sandcastle competition (really) began?

Rosanne Pittard, MBRA

The MYC lift - thank you to the Merricks Beach community

Our lift has made it all the way across the oceans from Sweden and is now installed and operational at the MYC clubhouse. If you haven't seen it yet, we encourage you to drop in and check it out. It's an impressive structure! The lift has already enabled numerous residents of Merricks Beach, who previously have been unable to navigate the stairs, to socialise and enjoy the ocean view. A number of these residents have not been inside the clubhouse for years. With the lift budget of \$96,000 raised from the whole community, there is now a strong sense of the Merricks Beach 'family' around this community hub, united by the yacht club, the residents' association and the foreshore committee. This new asset has been provided for the whole Merricks Beach community, and has already succeeded in bringing people from all groups together. For safety reasons, the lift will be locked when the clubhouse is not in use. Please contact an MYC committee member if you would like to use the lift to access the clubhouse.

Rosemary Nolan, MYC

Rabbit program update

The new variant of the Calisi virus has been released as part of a national program and coordinated locally through the Merricks Landcare group. Ian Jeffery and Brian Catterall roamed the paddocks of the Vann and Bassier properties after dark to count rabbits and then lay test baits, before finally releasing the virus in carrots at sites where the rabbits had been feeding. The virus is spread by flies, as well as by direct contact with rabbits and in the faeces of dogs or cats that eat affected rabbits. It is not harmful to other animals, but pet rabbits can be affected and should be immunised by a vet. (For more information see the MBRA website under Rabbit Control Measures.) The virus will not eradicate all rabbits so it is important to keep ensuring that burrows are removed and that access to places where burrows might occur are blocked off. The release has occurred at many sites across Mornington Peninsula so, hopefully, we will see another major reduction in the rabbit population this year. My very grateful thanks go to Ian and Brian as well as to the Vanns and Bassiers for enabling this program to proceed.

Kathy Clarke, Secretary MBRA

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Caring for our local wildlife

We are so fortunate at Merricks Beach to be able to share our environment with a range of native animals and birds, including some quite rare species. Here are two ways you and your family members can become involved in protecting the wellbeing of our local wildlife, we hope you can help.

Citizen Science - Red Capped Hooded Plover, Western Port region

The Friends of the Hooded Plover (Mornington Peninsula) Inc. has been successful in obtaining a Coastcare grant to establish a monitoring and management program for Red-capped Plovers (RCP) on Westernport beaches. The program will be carried out in conjunction with the BirdLife Australia Beach-nesting Birds team, who run a similar program for Hooded Plovers across Southern Australia. The grant will provide information days, equipment for nest and chick protection and new signage.



Red Capped Plover (source: Peter Strauss)



Red Capped Plover Chick (source: FoHp)

The Merricks Beach, Point Leo, Shoreham and Balnarring Foreshore Committees and their rangers are very supportive of the new program. Trained volunteers will work with local rangers to manage new RCP nests and chicks, and the information collected will be recorded on an online BirdLife Australia Data Portal. Although the Red-capped Plover is considered to have a stable population, little is really known about its breeding habits and life cycle. With the easy access and increased usage of beaches it is a good opportunity to see if the data to be collected will show the birds to be under more pressure.

Like Hooded Plovers, these small beach-nesting birds nest on the sand above the high tide line. They usually lay two eggs, which can be very difficult to see as they use camouflage to protect them. Both parents incubate the eggs for 28 days. Once the chicks hatch they must feed themselves and it is another 5 weeks before they are big enough to fly. When disturbed, the tiny chicks hide, and they are so tiny that this might mean they are behind a piece of seaweed or in a footprint. By increasing Red-capped Plover awareness and commencing nest and chick management, we hope to start maintaining a balance between recreational use of the beaches and public awareness of the bird's vulnerability to disturbance.

Joyce Lawrence, Secretary, Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve

Traffic calming works completed

As Merricks Beach residents will surely have noticed, following a year-long period of planning and community consultation, the Shire's contractor built the long-awaited 'traffic calming' chicanes in Bayview Road and Palmers Hill Road, and re-built the traffic island at the corner of Palmers Hill Road and Foam Street, at the end of 2016. Unfortunately, to meet the Shire's commitment to have the works installed by Christmas, some aspects of the work were somewhat rushed, and had to be rectified in the new year. However, the construction work is now complete, and all that remains is for some planting to be done in order to beautify the raised areas and surrounds. In that regard, the Shire's officers have advised that they would welcome our input as to the most appropriate plants, so if you have any suggestions, please let the MBRA know.

The Shire will now maintain the works. We can help to minimise the potholes that are likely to develop from time to time by not braking or accelerating as we drive through.

The traffic calming works are a trial, and the MBRA will seek residents' feedback later in 2017. In the meantime, the response has been generally very positive, in that they have had the desired effect of slowing vehicles as they pass through some – although not all – of our traffic 'hotspots'. The works are not perfect, but the fact that they are the only known example of such works on unmade roads in Australia says a lot about the limitations within which the Shire's engineers had to work in order to devise a treatment to address our requirements. They are to be congratulated for the initiative they have shown in seeking to do so.

Peter Cash, President MBRA

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An overall road safety strategy is needed

As the local government representative of Red Hill ward, which covers 50% of the Mornington Peninsula Shire, I am very worried about the state of our roads on the Peninsula. I have received many complaints from residents about road conditions and dangerous intersections, and the accident rate is far too high. To alleviate all of these problems would be beyond Council or state budgets and Vic Roads' priority list for funding relies on deaths before action is taken. Nevertheless, it is time to take a stand on this issue.

We need an overall strategy to make our area safer, not a piecemeal approach. If roads cannot be maintained properly or fixed, and intersections made safer, then speed limits should be lowered. We must look at all of our non-freeway arterial roads and reduce the speed to 80kmh on most of them. Pressure from the public on local members of Parliament and the state and federal governments will serve to highlight forgotten Peninsula safe parliamentary seats and may force action before further carnage erupts on our roads.

Cr David Gill.

Now available on the MBRA website

- Cr Gill's report: My first 100 days in council
http://merricksbeach.org.au/sites/default/files/field/files/cr_david_gill_-_my_first_100_days_in_council.pdf
- The "Voice of the Peninsula" newsletter March 2017 <http://merricksbeach.org.au/useful-information>

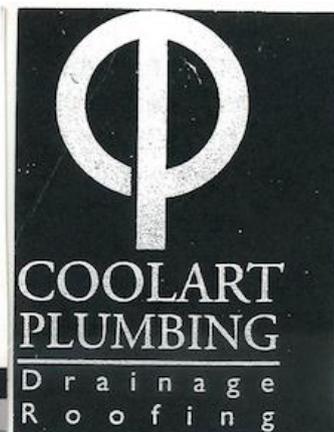
We welcome any items of interest and photos for future editions of Merricks Matters. Please email your copy to Gai Wilson, wilsong@iinet.net.au



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