

Merricks Matters

Autumn 2024

Welcome to the second edition of Merricks Matters for 2024. I hope you enjoy it.

Thank you to all our contributors for your articles and photos. In addition to the regular reports from the various Merricks Beach organisations, there's a welcome and introduction to some new residents and information about some upcoming local events and initiatives.

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.

Hope you stay warm and comfortable at Merricks, or elsewhere, during the cooler months!

Joyce Lawrence, Editor

MBRA Update

The MBRA Committee has met several times already this year, although our winter hiatus will soon be upon us. We continue to progress medium-term and, through the village working group, long-term solutions to our drainage issues and the potential basketball ring, among many other projects and initiatives. Two of these are the subject of other articles in this newsletter: the outreach program to new residents and the very pleasing (apparent) *volte-face* by the Department of Transport & Planning regarding the speed limit on Frankston-Flinders Road.

On the Labour Day weekend, the MBRA Committee came together with members of the yacht club, foreshore and Bill Carroll Reserve committees for a casual get-together. The primary purpose of the event was to enable us each to keep informed about the issues our community groups are tackling, and how we can help one another, and it was certainly a great success in that regard. Many thanks to the organisers and their helpers.

Over the King's Birthday weekend, the MBRA will once again offer all members free indigenous plants. Thanks to Richard Anderson, we will have a wonderful selection of grasses, shrubs and koala-friendly trees to choose from. Come to the tennis courts from 10am-12 noon on Saturday and Sunday.

Recent visitors to Flinders will have noticed that it is one of the Shire Council's Paid Parking "Pilot" locations. Our friends in that village are not well pleased with some of the flow on effects of this program. They suggest that one of these unintended consequences is increased visitors at Merricks Beach, where the beach parking is free, albeit not plentiful. If this is something you have noticed, please drop me a line at president@mbra.com.au.

Peter Cash – MBRA President

On the MBRA's Agenda

Frankston Flinders Road Speed Reduction Advocacy

The MBRA previously advised of its correspondence with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Hon Melissa Horne MP, and is pleased to advise that a further letter from the Minister appears to indicate that a speed limit reduction is now being actively considered (subject to government budgetary constraints).

In addition, the Department of Transport and Planning is working with the MPSC more generally regarding the speed limits along the Frankston Flinders Road and a draft report is expected to be produced in late May or early June.

The MBRA is in contact with the MPSC regarding the report and, once we have had the opportunity to review it, we will most likely support a general reduction. The Shoreham Community Association plans to set up a petition for the local communities also to indicate their support – stay tuned for further details.

Brad Vann – MBRA Committee Member

Reminder from Stormwater Working Group

It is worthwhile in this autumn to remind residents to clean out bark and leaf matter from the crossovers in front of your property.

After walking around the village after recent rains, it was observed that, at a few locations, the crossovers had become blocked with sticks/bark/leaf matter and the water had built up and then spilled onto the road. This creates a water channel along the road, which not only damages it, but also finds its way back into the drain at some point, carrying road gravel with it.

Noting that some residents are not around much the time, if anyone sees any drains needing attention and are unable to do the physical work themselves, send an email through to the MBRA and the storm water working group will attend to it!

The more eyes we have watching the drains and how they are flowing, the better we can keep up the integrity of the roads and keep that gravel out of the drains as much as possible.

Kriston Symons – MBRA Vice President

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

8 th /9 th June, 10am-12noon	MBRA plant giveaway, at the tennis courts
16 th June, 10am	Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, Yacht Club
Every Tuesday, 10am	Craft group, Yacht Club

Friends of Bill Carroll Reserve

Annual Easter in the Park

Easter Sunday and the weather was sensational for our annual Easter in the Park. The locals turned out in droves; whole families came along and joined in. It was wonderful to see some “free range” tree climbing.



Andrea and Andrew Ellery wrangled the kids and superbly ran the show starting with egg decorating.

Egg and Spoon Races for everyone from grandparents, mums and dads, teenagers, kids - even their dogs.



Then what they were waiting for, the classic Easter Egg Hunt.



Thanks to all on the committee of Friends of The Bill Carroll Reserve and to sponsorship from The Bendigo Bank.



Lainie Larsson - FOBCR

Merricks Beach Craft Group

The craft group normally meets on Tuesday mornings, except during school holidays. For something different though, please come and join craft group members and others in supporting Australia's Biggest Morning Tea on the third Sunday in June: 10am 16 June Merricks Yacht Club. Details below



Please join us for Morning Tea in support of people affected by cancer.

Venue: Merricks Yacht Club

Date: Sunday 16th June

Time: Between 10am and 12 noon

**BYO your favourite cup
(perhaps one from your granny).
Coffee, tea and morning tea provided.**

**Please help us surpass our target of \$1,000
(suggested \$25 per person) by donating through the
link below.**

**If you'd like to assist with baking or on the day,
please contact:
Penny 0423 213 551
Charlotte 0409 236 573
Megan 0438 080 416
Kaye 0409 358 433**

We look forward to seeing you there.

Penny B – Craft Group Convenor

Foreshore Committee Update

Swamp Wallabies in the Foreshore Reserve

Over many generations, the community has been working to enhance and maintain the beauty of the Foreshore Reserve. The historical photo below shows the foreshore impacted from a time when cattle grazing, in some places all the way to the sand, had significantly reduced the native vegetation. We think the photo is from around 1945, but cannot be sure. A walk through the reserve will show the amazing progress that has been achieved to revegetate the foreshore, creating habitat to support native birdlife and animals; the change can also be seen in the second, more recent, photo from Google Maps.



It may not be well known, but Swamp Wallabies are present in the Merricks Foreshore Reserve. There has been a population in the “bush block”, which is about half way to Point Leo, and in the adjoining foreshore, for a long time. However, the extensive revegetation undertaken by the Merricks Beach community has enabled them to colonise the entire Reserve. Swamp Wallabies are able to survive in modified environments (there is even a population on the lower Merri Creek) by staying in areas with dense shrub cover and avoiding risky areas such as roads and housing during the day. At night they move further from cover to feed, and can come surprisingly close to the residential areas.

Recent research by University of Melbourne PhD student Manuela Fisher on Phillip Island has found Swamp Wallabies have no effect on native plant populations, but they can reduce weed species diversity. So we now have some furry helpers in our weed control efforts!

Swamp Wallabies are hard to spot. They are stocky, medium-sized marsupials with dark grey fur and rusty coloured patches on their chest and head. Typically, you will only hear them moving, and then most likely in the early dawn when they can be active. Actual sightings are rare. The Foreshore Committee has been lucky enough recently to capture a couple of photos of the Merricks Swamp Wallabies. If you follow us on Facebook or Instagram <https://www.facebook.com/merricksbeachforeshore/> and https://instagram.com/merricksbeach_fc?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y= you will have seen the amazing photos, and a couple are included here. One is from just west of Coles Creek, where we had a community planting to create a bio-link across an open area of the reserve, the other is from down in one of the gullies in the reserve opposite the eastern end of the fire track.



So, even though you may rarely hear them, and even less often see them, you can be assured the wallabies are here, along with the echidnas, antechinus, native bush rats and all the birdlife. Which is one of the many reasons we are continuing our efforts, with the help of the community, to maintain and improve the foreshore.

Repairs to the public toilets

We are pleased to report that repairs to the public toilets at the end of Merricks Beach Rd have now been completed. There was a significant leak from the pipes leading from the water tank that meant the toilets were not available for several days. Thank you to everyone for their patience while the repairs were completed.

Working bees – thank you

Thank you also to everyone who assisted in the two recent working bees. We have spread a large amount of mulch along the walking track from Cliff Rd, down towards Kingswood Crt to improve the

track for pedestrians. Particular thanks to Mary Daley for providing the mulch and to Adam Bellgrove who brought a bob cat to the working bee, which made moving the huge pile of mulch much easier. We also undertook weeding and maintenance around the toilet block and removed a section of old barbed wire fencing from the reserve.

Please keep an eye on the community notice board and our Facebook and Instagram pages for details of our next working bees and other activities.

Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management

Merricks Yacht Club



The Merricks Yacht Club welcomes new members to join our Social, Youngerset and Sailing activities. Information on joining the club can be viewed on the **Membership Page** [Merricks Yacht Club - Information for new members \(wildapricot.org\)](https://merricksyachtclub.wildapricot.org/page-1792011), (Merricksyachtclub.wildapricot.org/page-1792011) or if you want to see things for yourself, come to sailing on a Saturday during the warmer months or join the fun as a guest at Thursday night drinks starting at 5.00pm (or 5.30pm during daylight saving time).

Peter Balka – Commodore, MYC

Welcome to New Residents

A longstanding objective of the MBRA Committee has been to welcome new residents into the village. In the past, the Committee has held social events for this purpose, inviting new residents to meet members of the MBRA Committee and the other Merricks community organisations, usually at an informal gathering at a Committee member's home. Unsurprisingly, this was suspended during the Covid pandemic and there have not been so many new residents since then.

Currently, the Committee's approach is for a couple of its members to visit new residents, welcoming them and providing them with information about the village in the form of a new residents kit.

Already this year, Committee members Di Hall and Angela Richards have met with several newer residents, who have shared their stories and interest in Merricks Beach, for publication in Merricks Matters.

Many thanks to those concerned, and if you are new to the village and haven't received a copy of the new residents kit or spoken with Di or Ange so far, feel free to contact them via the MBRA.

George and Mary Arapoglou, Wave St

George and Mary Arapoglou's journey to Merricks Beach reads like a love letter to the Peninsula. Their story is one of childhood memories, shared adventures, and finally, the fulfilment of a long-held dream.

As children, George and Mary developed a deep fondness for the Peninsula, spending summers picking cherries in Red Hill, leaping off the Flinders beach pier as teenagers and riding waves at Point Leo in their younger years. These experiences laid the foundation for a strong connection to the area, igniting a dream to one day call it home.

With their children growing more independent, George and Mary seized the opportunity to embark on a serious search for property along the Westernport side of the Peninsula. Initially intending it as a holiday retreat, their plans shifted as retirement loomed closer. In November 2017, after a tireless search, the Arapoglous secured a piece of land at Merricks Beach. They wasted no time in building their dream home and crafting a beloved garden. By 2022, with work opportunities on the Peninsula beckoning and their nest empty sooner than expected, Merricks Beach became their permanent residence.





For George and Mary, living in Merricks Beach isn't just about owning a house; it's about living out a cherished dream surrounded by a community that feels like family. Their journey serves as a reminder of the enduring allure of the Peninsula and the joy of finding home in its welcoming embrace.

Di Hall – MBRA Committee Member

Peter and Bronwyn Cass, Spray St

1. Why did we choose to come to MB?

After selling an investment property in town, we decided it was time for us to have a property at the beach that we and our family and friends could enjoy. We wanted a semi-rural environment with a bigger block of land, but not a farm. It also had to be within walking distance of the beach, be bike friendly and close to town so

we can minimise car use. After looking at the Bellarine Peninsula, we started to look on the Mornington Peninsula. After staying at my sister's place at MB we decided that MB would meet our requirements.

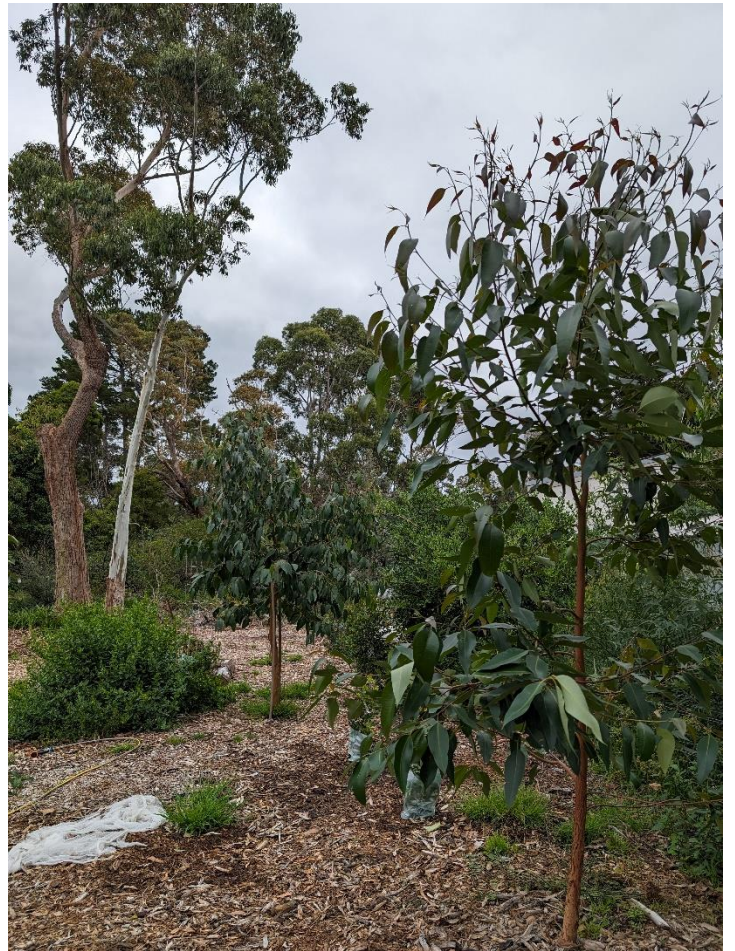
2. What year was that?

We started to look at properties in 2018 and purchased at MB in September 2022. We moved here in January 2023.

3. Any other connections with families at MB?

The only connection we had was with my sister, Anne Ryan, and Laurie Ryan in Bayview Rd. Laurie has been at MB since about the 1950s and knows many of the residents. He gave us a lot of insights into the history and culture of the village. We had been at Mt Martha since 1967 and watched it get very crowded and become more suburban. Laurie gave us confidence that MB would not become suburban and its character would be maintained, which is why we chose MB.

4. Below is a photo of part of our garden that has been renewed and replanted.



Cheers
Peter

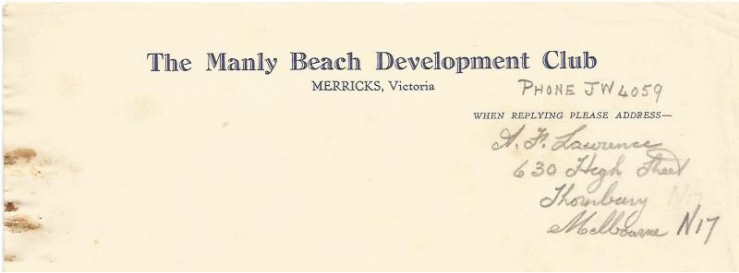
Peter Cass – MB resident

Merricks Memories and Conundrums

History of the Merricks Beach Residents Association

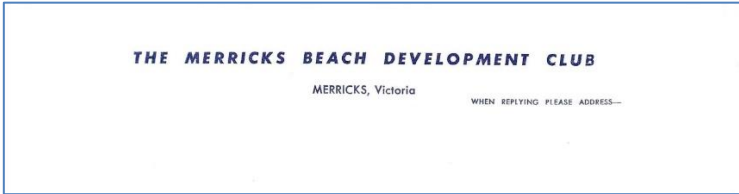
The residents in the emerging community of Merricks Beach (originally known as Manly Beach) recognised the need to form a group to manage and oversee the development of the village. In 1928 the Manly Beach Development Club was formed. This Club and its successors have been the focus of community cooperation to enhance and maintain the rural nature of the village.

The document below is the original letterhead used in the early days and belonged to A F (Bert) Lawrence (grandfather, great grandfather or great-great grandfather to members of several current MB families) who was a committee member of the Club in those very early days.

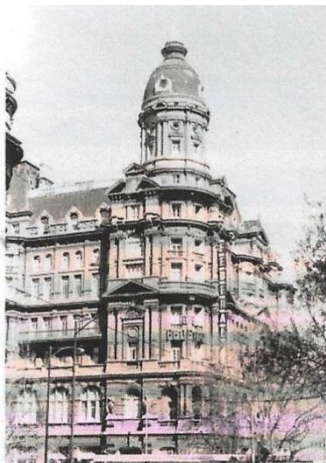


The Club met annually, and a small committee attended to matters affecting the settlement as they arose.

In the early 1950's, the name was changed to the Merricks Beach Development Club. This letterhead belonged to my father, Doug Maywood, who was a committee member in the 1960s.



In those days the annual meetings were held in the Venetian Room at the Federal Hotel, on the south west corner of Collins and King Streets, Melbourne. Some of the other early committee members were Merv Johnson, Nancy & Lindsay White, Geoff Padbury, Monty Penn-Tonkin, Wal Williamson, Bill Wood, Bill Daly, Barrie Woollacott and Bill Carroll; all of these people have descendants with properties in Merricks today.



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The constitution of the Club read:

- To assist in road maintenance until such time as they are taken over by the Council.
- To manage and improve the tennis court reserve and other reserves.
- To erect buildings or carry on such works not undertaken by the Foreshore Committee.
- To promote athletic sports and pastimes and encourage social intercourse between members.

At the annual general meeting on 3 January 1971, it was resolved to again change the name to the Merricks Beach Residents Association (MBRA). In 1990 the Association was incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981*. The Association remains active in representing the residents and working to maintain the environment of Merricks Beach.

Di Hall – MBRA Committee Member

Bird in the Tree



Does anyone know where the bird in the tree at the beach end of Merricks Beach Road came from, and why it was placed there? If you do and you are willing to share the information, please let us know, via diannehall3@bigpond.com

Di Hall – MBRA Committee Member

Preferred Tradespeople

It can be difficult to find the right tradesperson for work around your home, and getting a referral from a trusted source can make a big difference to your confidence in engaging someone. The MBRA Committee has decided to assist in this by making a list of “our preferred tradespeople” available to residents. If you have dealt with a local tradesperson or company that has impressed you with their service, and would like to share this information with the rest of the community, please email Di Hall diannehall3@bigpond.com

Di Hall – MBRA Committee Member

Upcoming Local Events

[Editor's Note: Residents involved with a couple of local organisations/events have provided information about them for the benefit of Merricks Beach residents who may like to participate. If you are involved in any local organisations, events or activities in which residents may be interested in participating, please contact me to include them in future editions]

Repower Mornington Peninsula

Interested in getting off gas? There is a local organisation dedicated to helping you. Repower Mornington Peninsula is sponsoring individual free consultations in May, book via their website:

[Repower Mornington Peninsula | Your Community Decarbonisation Network \(repowermornpen.org.au\)](https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Environment/Climate-Change/What-can-you-do-about-climate-change/Electrify-your-home)

The Shire is also providing information:

<https://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Environment/Climate-Change/What-can-you-do-about-climate-change/Electrify-your-home>

Kriston Symons – MBRA Vice President



FRIENDS OF
COOLART

Friends of Coolart

The Friends of Coolart Inc. is a volunteer organisation which supports Parks Victoria in the promotion, preservation and enhancement of the Coolart Wetlands & Homestead for its environmental, cultural and educational value to the community.

Upcoming events include a screening of the film *Rachel's Farm* on Sunday 19 May and *Dave Graney and Clare Moore Live in the Observatory* on Sunday 16 June.

New members are always welcome. More information about Friends of Coolart and the upcoming events can be found at www.coolart.org.au [Friends of Coolart | Coolart Wetlands and Homestead, Somers](#)



Letters to the Editor/MBRA

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

The MBRA was pleased to receive the email below from long term residents Ian and Caroline Watkins, whose family history at Merricks appeared in the Summer edition of Merricks Matters. Reprinted with their permission.

To: president@mbra.com.au

Subject: Thanks to MBRA for Efforts Over the Years

Over the last 70+ years I have enjoyed Merricks Beach, and especially 36 Spray Street with my family as a home away from home. Initially as a 10yr old with my Grandparents, and until recently an 80 yr old with our 8 grandchildren.

In the 50's my Grandparents Theo and Natalie Carey held the property for 10+ years, then my parents John and Gerta Watkins for 37+ years, then my wife Caroline and I for the last 23 years (3 children, 8 grandchildren). (Saw the train line go, the Merricks Store Beach Shop go, milk and ice deliveries cease, the arrival of telephone, electricity, gas, mains water for some and then sewerage connected)

With regret we decided it was time to sell And will now be visitors not householders!

We wish all residents and members of the Merricks Beach Community continued enjoyment of the wonderful Village. Our thanks to the MBRA for their great work on behalf of all over the years.

Our grandson Connor Watkins (a 5th generation resident!) was delighted a couple of years ago to share success in The Davies Cup!!

All the best

Ian and Caroline Watkins