# MURRA -BIT -A -NEWS PUBLICATION

## October 2024

Community News Contributions Gratefully Accepted

P.O. Box 3, Murrabit 3579

Website: www.murrabit.com.au Facebook: www.facebook.com/whats-on-in-murrabit

### Murrabit Community News

Murrabit and District recently celebrated 100 years since the Murrabit Township was established, the British migrant settlers arrival to take up land across the district, and the official opening of the Kerang-Murrabit Railway. It was wonderful to see so many people return to our little town to help celebrate this historic occasion. The weather was superb for market day on Saturday 5 as well as the main anniversary day on Sunday 6. Thank you to all the community volunteers who contributed to putting on this fantastic event. Approximately 180 people attended. The event commenced with a number of open days and historic displays at Murrabit's buildings – Golf Clubrooms, Recreation Reserve, T.A. Lornie Scout Hall, Tennis Clubrooms and Murrabit Group School.

Morning tea at the school was followed by speeches, storytelling, planting of a commemorative tree and unveiling of a plaque. Visitors than enjoyed lunch at the hall which was full of historic items, memorabilia and photographs. Vintage vehicles were also on display.

Lunchtime speeches focused on the history of Murrabit and District along with storytelling based around a 1924 Scribbling Diary which traced the journey of one of the British migrant settlers, Brian W. Cockell, enroute to Australia with his family on the T.S.S. Demosthenes. Arriving in Melbourne on 19 January 1924, the diary provides an insight into the first year of life in Australia for one of the settlers who came to Murrabit and District during 1924. The event was assisted by flood recovery funding provided as part of the Gannawarra Flood Recovery Program.



Phone: 03 5457 2205

Murrabit Advancement Association Inc. Email: murrabit1@bigpond.com

#### Murrabit 100 Years Celebration



Above: Murrabit Township 100th Anniversary cake cut (below) by lifetime Murrabit resident and Murrabit & District Heritage Group member, Doss Monk (nee Heffer) and Betty Scanlan (nee Mulhall), the sister of Murrabit's only living centenarian, Kath Erickson (nee Mulhall) who was unwell and unable to attend on the day. More photos and stories on pages 2 and 3.



Remembrance Day Monday 11 November 2024 10:30am Murrabit Cenotaph Followed by cuppa and chat at the back of the Murrabit Hall. Contact Neil Hopkins 0490 830 641. Lest we forget

#### Murrabit as a Railway Town

The official opening of the Kerang-Murrabit Railway occurred on **20th December 1924.** 

Imagine the excitement of that day when a big DD steam engine came rolling into town for the first time.

The train back then ran three times each week – on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The roads were pretty crook, so the railway connected Murrabit and district people to Kerang and on through to Bendigo and Melbourne – for shopping, recreation, for getting produce to market, and to maintain connections with friends and family.

Once the Kerang-Murrabit rail line was open, the building of the bridge across the Murray River continued and four years after the opening of the railway here at Murrabit, the line opened through to the great metropolis of Stony Crossing in New South Wales.

Back when the railway was being constructed, equipment was pretty thin on the ground. The railway in the main was constructed by Clydesdale horse teams.

The men's wages to work on the line were about 15 shillings (or \$1.50 per day) and chaff for each horse costing 5 shillings (or 50 cents) per day with teams of 4-5 horses required.

The work was hard and tough. There was plenty of flood country between Kerang and Murrabit and formations of 1.8 to 2 metres required through this low lying, flood prone land.

There were also many creeks and irrigation channels to cross. On completion, there were 36 bridges between Kerang and Murrabit. The rail line was fully fenced and all crossings and directional signage in place.

The redgum sleepers for the line came mostly from the Barham/Koondrook Forests and were transported from Koondrook to Kerang via the Koondrook Tramways.

Sleepers had to be placed every 600mm, heavy steel rail in sections of 14 metres in length laid, spiked and bolted, between sleepers filled in with gravel ballast and packed down. An engine pushing rail trucks loaded with heavy materials would move slowly forward as the line was constructed.

When finished the train averaged 11.5 miles per hour (approximately 30 kms/hr). At top speed, it would take about an hour to get to Kerang – however....there was Westby Hill to traverse in the middle. There are stories recorded in our history books were passengers on the train had to alight and walk so that the train could gain enough traction to get up to the top of the hill. The passengers would then hop back on the train and continue their journey to Kerang!

For the official opening day on Saturday 20th December 1924, 700 people gathered to celebrate.

A parliamentary and official party arrived by special train, headed by a heavy DD steam engine.

The ceremony took place on the banks of the Murray River near where the bridge was under construction.

A blue ribbon was stretched across the line and Mr. Henry Angus M.L.A. standing on the tender of the engine, said that no more important work had been done for the State of Victoria than that accomplished under the Border Railway Agreement.

The ribbon was cut by Mrs. Angus and the 16  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles of line declared open for traffic.

The line, it was intended, would open up the rich Riverina to the Port of Melbourne.

A luncheon took place in two large marquees erected on the banks of the Murray River where the bridge was under construction. It was a gala occasion with many hundreds attending.

The Church of England ladies, who were raising money to build a church, catered both for the official party and for locals who came to see the ceremony. The original luncheon booklet for the event describes an extravagant banquet.

The menu: Poultry, Boiled turkey with ham, Roast gosling and apple sauce, Joints, Ox Tongue and ham, Horseradish sauce, Roast pork, Roast lamb with mint sauce

And for Sweets: Apple Pie and whipped cream, Raspberry jelly, Fruit salad, Trifles, Cheese straws, Fruit in season, topped off with Café Noir – a French black coffee (very fancy!)

Remember that this banquet, besides being on the banks of the Murray River, pre-dates the arrival of electricity to the district by 38 years, and it was on a hot December day!

From the 'meaty' main course menu, it would seem that there were a few less chooks, turkeys, ducks, cattle, pigs and sheep in the district after feeding 700 people at this event!

Stations along the railway line from Kerang were located at Westby, Myall and Murrabit.

At the time the district of Murrabit was an established farming area and becoming the largest citrus growing area in the southern hemisphere.

The first commercial production of citrus grown in Murrabit was transported to Echuca by paddle steamer then on to Melbourne by train. This was in the late 1800s.

Pioneering farmers wanted their own rail to transport produce more quickly and efficiently.

The line was originally known as the 'Gonn' line as it was first intended that the bridge would be located at Gonn Crossing, where an established settlement had developed and a public punt was running across the river, connecting New South Wales with Victoria.

A solid riverbed suitable for a bridge coupled with a straight enough reach for the river boats to line up and run the bridge, was however not found.

The bridge needed to be erected three miles upstream from the Gonn Crossing settlement. Hence, a new railway town known as Murrabit was surveyed.

Earlier in 1924 the British Migrant Settlers had docked in Melbourne on the 19th January. The building of the bridge over the Murray River had commenced on the 29th January, and the blocks in the new township of Murrabit were auctioned on 9th May.

The first sale of blocks in the newly surveyed township of Murrabit was conducted by Mr Arthur Kelly, on behalf of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, in Kerang. All 26 blocks sold at good figures.

There was great optimism for the future of this new railway town.

The Murrabit township was the last railway station on the Victorian side of the new Gonn railway extension and situated a little over a mile from the River Murray.

The set back from the Murray River was a requirement of the Victorian-New South Wales Border Railway Scheme.

Wool, livestock, firewood and citrus were transported south, and the local people had transport to Kerang and beyond.

The railway provided valuable service to Murrabit and district for thirty-seven years. The difference it made to the struggling lives of residents was tremendous.

Although the railway is long gone, the sturdy, all steel bridge over the Murray River remains a lasting legacy, and continues to connect residents on both sides of the river.

The above was one of the stories presented as part of the Centenary celebrations on 6 October 2024.

### Murrabit 100 Years Celebration



Commemorative Tree Planting (above) at the Murrabit Railway Precinct by long term Murrabit residents and Murrabit & District Heritage Group members, Stephen O'Donoghue and Alex Monk, Railway Enthusiast, Ted Godwin, and Kathy Shackleton (nee Walters) representing her dad and past Murrabit Heritage Group President, Dick Walters, who was unable to attend on the day.





Murrabit residents, former residents and visitors enjoyed the magnificent historic displays set up in the Murrabit Hall for the day.





The Murrabit & District Heritage Group Inc acknowledges the generous funding support towards the centenary celebration received from the Gannawarra Shire Flood Recovery Funding through the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee.



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Australian Government

### Murrabit Book Club News

We recently received some BAD news. CAE book groups (which is the organisation that we get our books through) will be closing down after 77 years.

For the past 77 years, the CAE Book Groups have brought people from all over the country together through their love of literature. Using our books and discussion notes, hundreds of thousands of you have explored new ideas, new worlds and expanded your horizons.

While people's love for reading has only grown stronger, the way they consume literature has continued to evolve in this digital era. Between laptops, e-readers, tablets and even mobile phones, books are now more accessible than ever before in human history.

As an organisation, we are also becoming more aware of our environmental footprint. There is a significant impact from the carbon emissions generated by transporting hundreds of hard copy books across the country every year.

For these reasons, we've made the difficult decision to bring the CAE Book Groups program to a close.

Book Groups will close as at 31 December 2024.

We are all feeling a bit shocked and disappointed, but we will continue as a group at Murrabit. We are not sure yet how that will work, but we will find a way. Jeanette Coulter 5457 2331

### Thanks from Dick Walters

I would like to take the opportunity to use the Murrabit newsletter to thank the people of Murrabit who helped with the clearing sale at Stephen and Narelle's place. Thank you, Stephen, Narelle, Amber and Olivia for your support and assistance.

Whilst my son Peter bore the brunt of packing up the goods and chattels, some of it going back 100 years, the assistance and advice from Stephen was greatly appreciated. Also, I really appreciated the local men, including members of the Men's Shed who came to my place to load and move the items for sale.

While I greatly appreciated the help of people at this time, I wasn't at all surprised that locals quickly volunteered to help because this is the attitude that makes Murrabit such a great place to live.

The number one reason for moving south to Strathalan Residential Care in the suburb of Macleod is to be closer to my children. Whilst I found it a difficult decision, it is already proving to be the right thing to do.

If it may appear to you that I just disappeared down to my new home without contacting my friends in Murrabit, I felt it the easiest way to leave after associating and living in a such a great community for 89 years.

Murrabit has been a marvellous place to live, attending primary school, and being part of organisations such as the Scouts, Heritage Group, Men's Shed, sporting groups and many others. And of course, being fortunate to capture a young lady from Kerang, named Cresenz and raising our children in the same environment that I grew up in.

Because of the involvement of the next generations in all aspects of life in Murrabit I can only see a bright future for the community.

I am sorry I was unable to attend to help, but I wish the community well as you commemorate 100 years of the Murrabit Township in October. **Dick Walters** 



A coach load of visitors from Adelaide (pictured above) enjoyed morning tea in the heritage shelter in the Lions Park on October Murrabit Market Day. The coach trip was on its way through to Echuca and stopped off at Murrabit.

#### MURRABIT NETBALL CLUB AGM

New members please join our community to stay informed and get involved.

When: Tuesday 12 November, 2024 Location: Royal Hotel Kerang - upstairs Time: 6.30pm to order meals. 7.00pm start.

### Murrabit TCV and Transgrid Event

TCV and Transgrid will be holding a joint event for landholders and near neighbours to talk about the VNI West preferred easement, the border crossing and the project in general.

Ensuring we put the most directly affected people first, this event will focus on landholders and near neighbours.

We want to listen to your feedback and understand what you need from the project moving forward.

#### Date: Tuesday 29 October 2024 Time: 5pm – 7pm Location: Murrabit Public Hall

Food will be provided.

For the broader community, TCV will be hosting an event at Kerang Memorial Hall on 13 November from 4pm – 7pm. For any other enquiries please call 1800 824 221

### Centenary Congratulations

Congratulations to the heritage group members on the wonderful weekend they organised for the town's centenary. The display in the hall was just amazing! There was so much chatter, catching up with people that haven't seen each other in ages and of course the FOOD. Typical Murrabit spread. I don't know what time some of those visitors left, but when I went home about 4pm there was still quite a group standing around talking.

Well Done! Jeanette Coulter

#### **MURRABIT MARKET CLEAN UP ROSTER 2024/25**

November - Murrabit Fire Brigade December - Murrabit Tennis Club January - Murrabit Tennis Club February - Murrabit Playgroup



### Busy Bees of Murrabit

Community owned and operated gift shop and visitor centre, Gonn Avenue, Murrabit (part of the Murrabit Market Office Complex).

Open Murrabit Market mornings 9am to 12:30pm. Keep up to date by giving our **Murrabit Promotions** Facebook page a LIKE

#### KERANG TO ECHUCA BUS SERVICE 1st Tuesday & 3rd Friday of each month Timetable, Bus stops & Fares

8am - Departs Kerang Railway Station -

8.25am - Departs Murrabit Hall

8.45am - Departs Koondrook Hall (side) 9.05am - Departs Cohuna Hall (rear)

10.15am - Arrives Echuca CBD

2pm - Departs Echuca CBD for the return service

One-way, part way and non-concession fares are also available. No bookings necessary. Tickets available from the driver and allow for free transport on Echuca buses whilst there. For more information, please call Public Transport Victoria on 1800 800 007.

#### Murrabit Accessible Defibs -Snake Bite Kits included



24 hour accessible defib machines are mounted externally next to the kitchen door at the Murrabit Hall and at the door to the Murrabit Men's Shed. These life saving machines are available to anyone in an emergency.

### Murrabit Book club

Book Club meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 8pm, usually in member's homes. New members welcome. Please contact Jeanette Coulter 5457 2331 for more information.



#### Men's Shed is held 1:30pm to 4pm Sundays or join us for a cuppa and chat at 3pm

The Men's Shed has funding for social gatherings from October to December and these special activities are advertised in this newsletter on page 8.

The Men's Shed sets up for each Murrabit Market - all welcome to come along and help out - meet at the Lions Park at 9am on the Friday morning - next set-up is Friday 1 November. A market stall will also be held at the November market. We love having new people join us for any activities so please feel welcome to come along at anytime.

Membership fees for the 2024/25 year are \$35 to cover insurance costs and can be paid by dropping into the 'shed' on a Sunday.

Contact: Stephen O'Donoghue, Secretary 0418 577 238. Facebook - Murrabit Men's Shed

#### MURRABIT NEWSLETTER DETAILS

If you are not already receiving this free community newsletter via email, please send us your email address so that we can add you to our email list.

The monthly editions of this newsletter are also available from our website:

www.murrabit.com.au/murra-bit-a-news Deadline for articles for upcoming edition is TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2024

Information can be emailed to murrabit1@bigpond.com, delivered or posted through our door.

Community interest info is free. Advertise from \$10.



#### Wed 30th October

Wed 27th November (Christmas meal) Murrabit Hall Bookings to NDCH Community Care (03) 4429 1900 A great way to socialise and enjoy a home-cooked two-

### Murrabit Rec Reserve

The Murrabit Recreation Reserve is managed by a DECCA appointed committee of management. Hiring enquiries to Terry Morton President 0409 692 630 or Stephen O'Donoghue Secretary 0418 577 238.

Camping enquiries to Terry.

This little item was displayed as part of the 100th Anniversary with a 'Can you help identify this item?' There were lots of convincing conversations had, including that it was an implement for tensioning fences and a cigar packer. Thanks to Mark Thomas who went away and emailed through a photo of a similar item found in an online auction. The correct answer is a brass 12 bore shotgun maker machine, with fruitwood handles, and stamped 12.

Thanks Mark for your research!



### Hum n Strum Music

We had a very big day last Friday when we performed for a large group at the Cohuna Seniors annual birthday in the Cohuna Town Hall. Thank you to our lovely Doris who prepared a delicious lunch for us all before we played. The Hall looked a picture and the crowd were enjoying the music then Ficko, Michael, Robyn and Merilyn really got them involved as they joked, yarned and danced their way through the show. It was all topped off with a lovely afternoon tea and we even won a few lucky door prizes.

We had 2 new players come along in October: Pam Carey, who was the school's music teacher 15 years or so ago, and her mate Jim, who plays the harmonica beautifully. We all had a great afternoon and hopefully we'll see them again before too long.

Our regular Wednesday sessions are very informal with plenty of laughs and a very nice afternoon tea. You don't need to play an instrument, you just have to like music! So if you'd like to pop in every now and then and maybe sing along, we'd love you to join us!.

We meet at the Murrabit Golf Club from 2-4pm (although we often start earlier and finish later). We have 15 in our group and guitars, ukuleles, banjo (occasionally), keyboard, drum, tambourines and Maggie's whistles and bells are our instruments of choice (as well as our voices). There's always room for more! And for those who are like performing we also play once a month at different spots around the district

If you're interested in coming along, contact Neil Hopkins 0490 830 641 for more information.



#### Hall News

What a wonderful day our 100 year celebrations proved to be! The Hall played a key role as the centre for a wide range of amazing displays of photos and memorabilia covering lots of important and interesting events from the past 100 years. Congratulations to all of the Heritage Group and their special helpers on staging such a fantastic event!

The next community lunch is on Wednesday 30 October in the Hall. Next month, Wednesday 27 November, will be a special Christmas lunch as it's the last community meal for 2024. It's a great chance to catch up, or to meet some new people, in a very friendly atmosphere. With a delicious 2course feed thrown in for just \$10 – last month it was delicious corned beef with white sauce - why not think about coming along? Contact Community Care 4429 1900 to book.

You might remember that we received a grant from the Shire to help with the costs of resurfacing the Hall floor. That work will take place early in 2025 (late Jan or early Feb) so that we have our Hall looking her very best for the new year. If you're a bit arty or creative this might be for you! Kerang Neighbourhood House are running a Small Weaving session at the Hall on Sunday 3 November. If you're interested contact 4403 6640.

And we still have Yoga on Monday and Wednesday, and Line Dancing on Thursday every week.

The Hall is available for hire and is a perfect venue for a wide range of functions, day or evening, and is extremely well-equipped. To hire the Hall or for more information, contact Neil Hopkins (Pres) 0490 830 641 or Jeanette Coulter (Sec/Treas) 0458 572 331.

Have a great month everyone!



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### Let's Talk About the Weather - Gannawarra Community Gatherings

Our Gannawarra 'Let's Talk About The Weather' Community Gatherings are coming up fast! You're invited to attend these FREE events in Kerang on Wednesday 13 November and Cohuna on Wednesday 20 November. Join us at the Kerang community lunch at Grow Collective Garden and meet Gardening Australia's Millie Ross as she speaks on creating Positive Green Spaces for our homes, workplaces & neighbourhoods, along with local speakers Claire Fry and Angela Hird.

Come along to the community dinner at The Big Cohuna Stockyard and hear from Dale Grey from The Fast Break speaking on Big Wets, Big Drys, along with local speakers Jo Bear and Dale Boyd. Everyone is welcome, and we would love to see you there!

Wednesday 13 November, Kerang, 12:30pm to 2pm-Grow Collective, 64 Wyndham St, Kerang RSVP for Kerang via: https://events.humanitix.com/gannawarra-kerang

Wednesday 20 November, Cohuna, 6pm to 7:30pm, The Big Cohuna Stockyards, 105 King George St, Cohuna

RSVP for Cohuna via: https://events.humanitix.com/gannawarra-cohuna

You'll be treated to delicious food & great conversation, so be sure to register your spot for one or both of these FREE community gatherings!





HOSTED BY THE LADIES OF MURRARIT ARTS & CULTURE GROUP AND MURRARIT PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

# MELBOURNE CUP DAY

\$5 ENTRY INCLUDING LUCKY DOOR ENTRY BRING ALONG A PLATE OF FINGER FOOD TO SHARE. SWEET OR SAVORY BYO DRINKS

#### TUESDAY NOVEMBER 5TH MURRABIT PUBLIC HALL FROM 11AM

Dress in race day attine ladies, gents and families welcome

> RSVP to Ang Morton 0408 313 257 Slangmorton@gmail.com

# Murrabit (

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

COMMUNITY LUNCH

Sunday, 27 October 2024 12 noon at the Shed - ALL WELCOME

#### DAY TRIP TO NYAH TRACTOR MUSEUM

Friday, 22 November 2024 Limited spaces on bus - book quickly \$10 per person Bookings to Stephen on 0418 577 238

#### COMMUNITY LUNCH

Sunday, 24 November 2024 12 noon at the Shed - ALL WELCOME

CHRISTMAS DAY TRIP AND LUNCH Sunday, 8 December 2024

For members and partners

#### MEN'S BREAKFAST

Friday, 20 December 2024 6:30am - 8:30am at the Shed - ALL WELCOME

Queries and further information: Stephen O'Donoghue. Secretary Ph: 0418 577 238



# Party in a Paint Box

#### Saturday 9 November 2-5pm

Join us for an afternoon filled with Fun and Laughter No experience necessary!



Spots strictly limited to 32 particpants booking essential 18+ BYO Snacks & Drinks

Codie Laursen 0458 237 789 or Olivia Monk 0427 603 912 www.facebook.com/murrabitplaygroup

> Murrabit Family Hub 45 Gonn Avenue, Murrabit

> > Murrabit





PUTTING THE FABULOUS INTO FUNDRAISING FOR OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH

#### FROCK UP AND JOIN IN THE FUN AT JULIE MADDEN'S FROCKTOBER EVENT

MURRABIT GOLF CLUB

#### THURSDAY 31 OCTOBER

6.30 FOR 7.00pm start \$30 per person 2 course meal drinks available

Raffles on the night Bookings please for catering purposes by 25 October to Julie on 0408 179 657 Pattie on 0427 570 295 Lyn on 0407 346 637 Proudly sponsored by the Murrabit & District Lions Club

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#### About the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF)

The DCRF is the leading independent funder of ovarian cancer research in Australia, supporting research projects across early detection, treatment, prevention and recurrence management. All Fracktober donations support this important work.

frocktober.org.au

ocrf.com.au

### Tennis Update

Welcome to the tennis season of 2024/25. Round 1 is set to hit off on 19 October. We are looking forward to a fun, social year of tennis ahead, with our two senior teams and a big group of junior players.

As reigning premiers in division 1 and juniors, we are keen for strong season across all grades. The NDLTA has welcomed Moulamein into the competition and we are thrilled to have them joining our comp.

We still have a few spots available in each of our teams if anyone would like to join us. We are especially short of men. All abilities and new members are welcome. Contact Ang 0408 313 257.

Thursday night training has commenced. Anyone is welcome to come down to the courts on a Thursday night for a social hit and catch-up. We have plenty of spare racquets. Bar is open and a BBQ is usually available.

Our very popular junior coaching programs will be held each Thursday night at 6pm, from October to December. Starts 24 October. The Hotshots program is for ages 3 and up and teaches kids the basic tennis skills. It involves lots of fun and games and is a great opportunity to get the little ones involved. Tennis 4 Teens is for those a bit older (adults are also welcome to join in for some coaching tips). This year we are going to focus more on sets and competition play. Each week the kids will be allocated a court and partner and will each play 2 sets. Thanks to Sally, Simon and the Committee members for running this program. See the flyer below for details. Happy Hitting!

Ang Morton President



Murrabit Lawn Tennis Club Season 2024/25 TENNIS SEASON IS ALMOST HERE Get your names in now for Saturday afternoon pennant in the NDLTA Divisions 1, 2 and Juniors Thursday night Season starts 19<sup>th</sup> October training and social hit to WE LOVE NEW MEMBERS AND BEGINNERS ARE begin on the MOST WELCOME 10<sup>th</sup> October All welcome to come along on Thursday nights for a caseaThit Hot Shots Junior Coaching and Tennis 4 Teens and BBQ tea Begins 24<sup>th</sup> October for 8 weeks Please let Ang know by **30th September** to be entered in a team

MURRABIT LAWN TENNIS CLUB P.O. Box 33, Murrabit, Vic. 3579 oid-murrabit lawrier nin clabilitymail.com an or Ph. 0409 313 257





