

The Wamboin Whisper: The Whisper is a monthly community newsletter established in 1981 by and owned by the Wamboin Community Association. The Whisper is printed at EnvoPrint in Fyshwick at the start of each month, excluding January. It is distributed to every letterbox in Wamboin, Bywong and Queanbeyan-Palerang Council residents just southeast of the Federal Highway. Each issue goes to volunteer deliverers by the first Sunday of the month and is also then available at www.wamboincommunity.asn.au. Any proceeds from advertisements in The Whisper after printing costs go to the Wamboin Community Association.

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Contributions to the Whisper: Contributions from all residents are encouraged, valued and the main content of the newsletter. The current editor is Ned Noel, 17 Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin, 2620, phone 0409 997 082. Paul Downey of Cooper Road also shares in doing the editing. Please email contributions to nednoel@optusnet.com.au or mail them or drop them off. On contentious matters the Wamboin Community Association will strive to maintain a balanced view, by seeking advice from the editorial team and by seeking alternative views to be published in the same edition. The deadline for each issue is the last Sunday night of the month before. There is, by tradition, no January Whisper, mainly to give all its volunteer workers a rest. The **deadline for the February 2024 issue is 7 pm Sunday night, January 28, 2024.** Advertising prices, per issue, based on rough fraction of inside the margins A4 area: 1/8 \$24 1/6 29 ¼ \$35 1/3 \$44 ½ \$70 2/3 \$97 Full Page \$140. email or phone the editor as above

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Wheels of Wamboin

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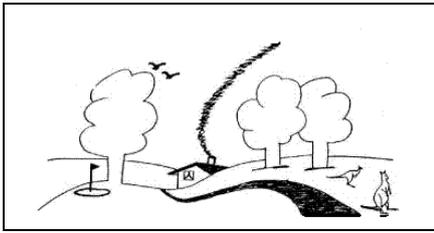
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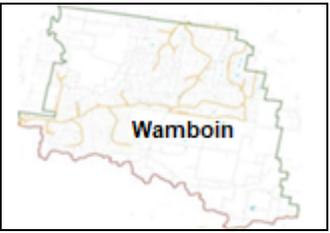
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President's Notes



Well the end of the year is fast approaching. We have had a busy month and set to get busier as Christmas approaches.

1. **Spring Talks.** Our final Spring Talk for the year was an unqualified success. Well over 100 people attended the Hall on Tuesday 21st November to listen to Dan Lloyd the Chief of Corporate Affairs at Opticom discuss the problems of the network roll out here in Wamboin and Bywong. Dan was ably assisted by the Opticom team and a valuable question and answer period followed his presentation. I believe everyone who attended the meeting got a great deal out of the event which is why of course the WCA puts on the Spring Talks. Thank you to Dan and his team for participating, David McDonald for organizing it and Ned, Diana and Anita for additional support. It was a great night and most people would agree well worth attending
2. **Christmas Carols.** By the time the Whisper reaches you we will have already held our annual Christmas Carols event. Scheduled for the **1st December at 7pm** this is a great family event. I hope to see you there and remember if you do see this before the 1st of December I'm still looking for children for the Christmas Play. You can contact me on **0490020165** if you have any questions about the play or the night in general.
3. **The Wamboin Wall.** Yes its finally happening. Work has begun on our Wamboin Wall. Although we can't promise a wall by Christmas we should be able to announce the erection of a fitting replacement wall sometime in the New Year.
4. **WCA Christmas Party.** After the flurry of the Spring Talks and the excitement of the Christmas Carols the Wamboin Community Association's final meeting for the year and also its Christmas Party is perhaps more subdued. Nevertheless this event will take place after our normal monthly meeting on the **19th December** at the **Community Hall at Bingley Way**. The event begins at **7:30 pm** and Christmas cake and drinks are supplied. Everyone in Wamboin is welcome so please come along and take part in our Christmas Cheer. - *Jenny Richards – President.*



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Well hello from the BCA.

It has suddenly become the Christmas Season and by the time this edition of the Whisper comes out, hopefully, I will have met a few more of you at the Bywong Community Association **Christmas party** that was at the hall on the weekend. This event was an adjustment on previous Christmas gatherings and we are attempting to get involve a wider range of locals. For that reason we thought a BBQ / picnic type activity might be better for some families with younger kids whilst also allowing for all age groups to come and go and for the community to get together in a way that suits a wide range of people, this helping to create some new networks, and strengthen existing ones.

As a group of locals knowing each other, knowing who is around to help or who need help is part of what makes a community. With that in mind, the BCA is going to focus on Increasing Community engagement this year. One of the ways we feel will increase community engagement is broaden our reach. So for us, the BCA committee, we are going to spend time working with the Hall committee and the Greenways committee and run some collaborative events.

We are thinking that to combine Greenways working bees, Greenways walks, activities at the hall and all coming back together and gathering for a BBQ or sausage sizzle type activity would be a good place to start.

We are keen to hear any ideas you have so email me president@bywongcommunity.org.au or hit us on the Face book page. @Bywong Community association.

Whilst we at it, I would like to put out a big thanks to the hall committee. Over the last little while a large number of repairs have been undertaken. The outside sensor lights have been repaired along with the Water tanks getting a clean and a spruce. This helps to make the Community hall a better place for the community.

Our next BCA meeting will be January the 18th as the monthly meeting in December traditionally is not held.

Merry Christmas to you and your families. - Justin Jarvis, President BCA

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Callouts and what we have been up to.

The brigade continues to be very busy with a range of callouts, community engagement, training and the Bingley Way hazard reduction. Luckily the 2 escaped pile burns in the area have not been followed by similar instances.

Callouts since early October included 4 x grass fires, 1 x smoke sighting, 3 x MVA's and 1 x hazard reduction.

Summer outlook

By the time you get this issue, we have hoped a significant rain event had occurred from the 27th of November for 3 or more days, with expectations to fill or at least substantially top up rainwater tanks, dams etc., some that were at very low levels. Remember of course that we are not even in the fire season until December, so for the next 3 months, the weather is still likely to be hot and dry. With much of the area having very dry cured grass, unless cut or grazed, it is unlikely that a green return is unlikely, even if the November event dumps a reasonable amount of rain. The fire danger ratings have sneaked into the high region on and off, and we are often asked why a "high" FDR a day after rain. The answer is usually related to our enemy, the wind. Dry grasses that are totally wet, can change to totally dry, in a matter of hours with strong, warm or hot winds, just like your washing on the line! Long cured grasses generally won't allow new growth to push through, so that fuel will remain until it is eaten or cut.

Community attitudes towards property preparedness and protection is definitely working out here, and congratulations to those that have made significant attempts to do what they can. Residents are definitely getting the message to reduce fuel loads by burning off in the autumn and winter, and when the grass does grow, the push and ride-on mowers are out frequently, keeping the grass short. Driving around our brigade area, it's great to see a clear asset protection zone around the home and in most cases, a further clear zone outside the property to the bitumen. Keep it up people, it's something that everyone can do to reduce the intensity and spread of a fire.

Access to your property or neighbours property in the event of fire.

A frequent subject we tend to dwell upon is access to a property. Of that, one of the biggest problems we find is actually identifying your property. A large, easy to read roadside number, with preferred reflective numbers or background will assist crews to get on site as quickly as possible. A fire on your neighbour's property may involve accessing it from your property, to attack the fire from the side or rear or just if there is no access from their property. The Rural fires Act allows us to access to any property to locate or deal with a fire. Adequate clearance for our trucks, width and height should be considered. A locked gate or electric gate may have its benefits as far as security, but if we can't get in, we can't deal with the emergency.

Fire Danger Ratings and signs, and weather conditions

Our dedicated team will change the FDR's daily in the fire season, and they are also shown on our Facebook page. We ask our residents when the danger is HIGH or above, that risky outdoor activities are avoided where possible. That is activities that might cause a spark, such as welding or cutting metals and grass cutting or machinery that might cause a spark. Windy days are usually on High FDR days, so when checking the forecast, check the temperature AND the wind speed forecast.

We hope our readers have a safe and fire free Christmas and holiday period. Avoid those risky activities and keep your community safe!

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Come and join us to sell or buy (or both) at the December market. Try out your Christmas craft and cooking ideas for the festive season! There will be all sorts of goodies for last minute Christmas gifts - cards, jigsaws, jams and preserves, jewellery, art work and photos, quilting, craft, plants, woodwork and heaps of interesting small things for stocking stuffers! Lots of cakes, puddings and Christmas food too!

The November clothing stall managed to raise \$200 to contribute to 'Jogging for Jon'. The funds raised will go towards their 'Go Fund Me' campaign to raise money for a car that can convert to take an electric wheelchair for 3 year old Jon. This is a local family - please support. Check out <https://gofund.me/38af2cf8> where you can read Jon's story. We will collect again and also donate all proceeds from the clothing stall at the Christmas market. See you at the Christmas Market!

Nature Notes – November 2023

After a lot of dry days, many of them with temperatures above the average for November, we're finally getting some decent falls of rain again. There has already been enough for some of the grasses to look a bit greener. The trees and larger shrubs seem to have found sufficient moisture deeper in the soil to continue growing a lot of new foliage providing a tapestry of different shades of green on some of the hillsides.

The cream flowers of *Acacia mearnsii* (Black Wattle) are fading now, but the tall Cauliflower Bushes (*Cassinia longifolia*) have taken over adorning the roadsides with their heads of small white flowers, often accompanied by patches of golden Sticky Everlasting Daisies (*Xerochrysum viscosum*) and Clustered Everlasting Daisies (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*). And there are still a few populations of the low-growing white Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans*) flowering. In the moister areas, the Common Buttercups (*Ranunculus lappaceus*) flowered well this year, but are beginning to form seed-heads now. Yellow and white seem to be the dominant colours in local flowers at this time of the year, but there are also quite a few Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia stricta* and *W. communis*) providing a bit of blue now.

The Wattles have developed large loads of seed-pods this year. *Acacia mearnsii* develops seed from the previous year when it is flowering, so already has well-developed seed. This seems to be a popular food for the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos as there are usually several of them in the trees here and a carpet of chewed seed-pods on the ground.

A family of White-winged Choughs has returned recently causing irritation to the pair of resident Magpies. There has been a bit of swooping and chasing, with the Pied Currawongs occasionally joining in. Recently, a single Grey Currawong turned up and decided to stay, but seems to be a much more peaceful bird.

Long-necked Turtles and reptiles are getting around at present. I moved three Turtles and a Shingleback Lizard on local roads on the way over to Bungendore last week.

A local Wombat wasn't as lucky - a large healthy female Wombat was dead on our road recently. As I was moving her further off the road, a little arm waved out of her pouch. The little joey was still furless, but strong and healthy, and has gone to be reared at Possumwood Wildlife Hospital.

On a happier note, I recently found two large slugs, a black millipede and a scorpion together under the same rock – peaceful co-existence in Wamboin. - Jo Walker



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What the Heck Chapter 19

Well December is here which means many things to us all, including, another year gone somewhere, school hols about to start, fire season in full swing, gifts to buy, how much will Christmas dinner cost this year, and anything else you can bring to mind relating to the season.

But mainly it means the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Happy birthday, Jesus!

We know the story of how Jesus was born in a stable and slept on a straw bed with sheep, cattle and other animals around, unlike most of us who arrived in a hospital with nursing staff around (yes I know there will be some exceptions). But how many of the young people in the area know that Santa Claus was not at Jesus' birth? I have heard that there are children who think that it was he who brought the gifts, not the wise men.

Let us make sure children know the true reason for Christmas?

Sometime between now and the end of the year, go to St Peters church in Sutton where there is a (nearly) full size display of the Nativity Scene to help you relate the story to your children (of all ages). Take photographs of yourselves amongst the animals and with baby Jesus. Having the whole family would be a good idea then you could have a real life Mary and Joseph and shepherds. Maybe even a 'wise man' or two, depending on your family interpretation. We don't have any 2000+ year old fashion clothes for you to put on, but take along a check tea towel to plonk on your head and nobody will be any the wiser. A scarf around your shoulders, a sheet around your body and sandals on your feet, would make the scene a little more realistic.

This year would have been Jesus' 2026th birthday. Why not 2023rd? Well nobody knows exactly when he was born. In those days records were not the most accurate. Biblical scholars have generally accepted the year of Jesus' birth as 4BC. So he was 1 in 3BC, 2 in 2BC, and then turned 3 in 1BC. Jesus would have reached 4 in 1AD, 5 in 2AD... and you can keep counting till this year if you have the time and inclination. There was not a year zero, probably because no one thought about it, which means one day it was 31/12/1, next day 1/1/1, a bit confusing! But of course they were not using the Gregorian calendar then so who knew what day it was?

All birthdays need a party and this one is no exception. But the SRMD congregation thought that some families would not be able to attend a party on Christmas Day, so there will be a sing-along of carols at the Sutton church from 7.00pm on Sunday 17 December and all are invited. So come and join us in the party. There will be live music from the popular 'Poetry in Motion' and the more voices we can get will help spread the cheer through the village. – Alan Rope

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 **LJ Hooker**
Country

The Millynn family: illustrating the lifestyles of the Bywong/Wamboin selectors in the 1890s

David McDonald (email david (at) dnmcDonald.id.au), ph. 0416 231 890

The initial European exploration of the Wamboin/Bywong region occurred in 1820. Over the subsequent four decades, a limited cohort of individuals acquired substantial land grants, typically spanning one square mile. Notably, several proprietors resided in Sydney or other places, administering their estates through overseers.

A significant shift in land use occurred following the enactment of the NSW *Crown Lands Alienation Act* of 1861, effective from January 1862, along with its accompanying regulations and protocols. The Act created the system of conditional purchases of land, i.e. selections. By the end of the 1870s, most of the land of the parishes of Wamboin and Bywong had been taken up by selectors. The selections were small—in many cases probably too small to adequately support the family, given the harshness of the climatic conditions of our area.

In 1876, Irish immigrant Peter Millynn (born Moate, County Westmeath, Ireland 1837, arrived Sydney 1844 as an assisted immigrant, died Bywong 1918) selected 100 acres of land and subsequently settled there with his wife Ellen (née Murphy, born at ‘Molonglo, Queanbeyan’ 1842, died Bywong 1906, married at Bungendore in 1864). That first selection (conditional purchase, por. 96, parish Bywong, 17 Feb. 1876) was on the eastern bank of ‘Shingle House or Brooks Creek’, immediately south of the border between the parishes of Bywong and Purrumbidgee. Peter Millynn and his sons subsequently took up many additional selections in those two parishes, with some of them abutting the first, creating a quite large land holding. Peter and Ellen’s home was a slab house with a bark roof, named ‘Greendale’, located to the east of the end of the present-day Wyoming Road, Bywong. (Source: Deidre Sillis, Bungendore History Facebook page, 11 Feb 2019. An 1880s photograph of the building and family can be found there, posted by Greg Nye.)

Given the paucity of documentary evidence regarding the lives of selectors in this locality, the account provided by Miss Elizabeth Kellett offers valuable insights. Miss Kellett was the teacher at the Brooks Creek Public School from 1890 to 1895. (This was during the 1890s depression and immediately preceded the Federation Drought that largely ruined the selection system.) Dalton (1985, p. 36) observes that ‘During the depressed and droughty early years of the 90’s Peter managed to keep his flock together and increasing ...’. Miss Kellett recollected, at 100 years of age (Gunter 1967, p. 13):

Brooks’ (sic) Creek lies on the road which runs west and north-west from Bungendore. The creek itself has an unpleasant habit of ‘running a banker’ on a perfectly fine day. This is caused by the melting of snow on the hills near Queanbeyan. The holdings on the Creek were owned by men who cultivated small areas of wheat and also owned a few cattle. The women bred turkeys which nested in the briars along the creek banks. The river was beautiful in Spring, with its briars covered with pink, pungently-scented blooms, and drooping green willows. All the men were shearers. They gathered in June of each year, riding one horse and leading a pack-horse. They rode hundreds of miles west and south looking for a shed. They shored the sheep in ill-equipped sheds with hand shears, and during the season lived in ill-fitted and often filthy barracks, paying dearly for food (or possibly only for the cooking of the food). Some of them refused to use the barracks, carrying each his own tent and cooking utensils. The men were absent from their homes for about six months, returning in time to plough a few paddocks of wheat. They also cultivated fields of potatoes ...

Brooks’ Creek lies about halfway on the 25-mile road between Gundaroo and Bungendore. There were no business-places – not even a Post-Office. There was a horseback mail between the two towns ... The women of those remote days deserve great admiration for the industry and skill in producing cleanliness and comfort in their homes with such primitive equipment: camp ovens, wooden wash tubs, home-made brooms. Their households were more remarkable for what they lacked than for what they had! I have been pleased to hear that all the old bark huts have disappeared and that the scrubby hills are now cleared and carrying well-fed sheep.

Notes:

- 1) I am very conscious that descendants of Ellen and Peter Millynn still live in our local area, contributing to community life here. The editor of *The Whisper* will undoubtedly welcome contributions from family members, and others, that help the flesh out some of the matters touched upon here.
- 2) The surname Millynn is pronounced with a definite stress on the second syllable.
- 3) A large number of spellings exist for the name Millynn, reflecting the fact that the pronunciation of the name far predated the period when many people were able to read and write. The spelling differs between UK and Ireland. In some records Peter Millynn’s name is spelled ‘Malin’. ‘Malinn’ was also commonly used.
- 4) Millynn Road, Bywong, is possibly named after Peter and Ellen’s son James Henry Millynn (known as Harry, 1865-1934). A promising gold reef was found on his selection there in 1894, so he ‘... quickly announce plans for subdivision of his land into fifty or sixty-acre allotments which were to be dedicated as a township’ (Lea-Scarlett 1972, p. 87), hence the Bywong Reefs township site near the end of Millynn Road. The Bywong Community Inc.’s website gives this as the name origin. However, Dalton (1985, p. 51) implies that it was named after the family more generally, as the land was a sub-division of Donald & Grace Millynn’s property there.

References

- Dalton, H 1985, *Before Brooks Creek and beyond*, the author, Yenda, N.S.W.
 Gunter, E 1967, ‘A centenarian’s recollections’, *Canberra and District Historical Society Journal*, issue June 1967 part 3, pp. 8-14.
 Lea-Scarlett, EJ 1972, *Gundaroo*, Roebuck Society Publication no. 10, Roebuck Society, Canberra.

Thank you to each of you who delivered, wrote something for or ran an ad in this December 2023 Whisper. It would not exist except for the volunteer labour of 100 or so of us writing an article, paying to run an ad that paid the printer or putting copies into mailboxes.. In doing this we made for December 2023 one more little part of living in Bywong and Wamboin..

As has become customary, there will be no January Whisper to give us 100 or so a rest. The next edition is February, 2024.

A separate thank you is due to everyone who wrote a short story for the short story contest. Two more are published in this issue. Each and every one – there are still 7 more entries not yet in the Whisper – will be printed in one of the first few issues next year.

Please know, if you live Bywong or Wamboin, that contributions from residents are the main reason for the Whisper- editor

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Tomatoes

Ripe tomatoes before Christmas? Too easy. My aim is to have ripe tomato photos in time for the December Whisper. This year I have succeeded however, you will have to look on line to appreciate the rich red colour. The first photo was taken on the 16th of November and the second, showing our first 'harvest' was taken on the 21st. The taste is so different to store bought. I am planting seed now to ensure tomatoes in late June. - **Lofty Mason (Photos by Joan)**



Wamboin Golf

Sunday 5 November was the date for the much-anticipated Wamboin Open Golf Championships. Fourteen players braved the course and conditions. We welcomed two visitors, Phil Beard and Darren Hurley, to the course this month. The cooler conditions this year were a big change from the very damp conditions from 2022. The Open is played as both a stroke and handicap competition. The winners of the 9-hole and 18-hole championship competition are those with the lowest score 'off the stick'. The remaining competitors battle it out for the monthly handicap competition.

The sponsor this month was Wamboin Golf Club and we thank Joan Mason and Rob Gorham (ably assisted by Marylou) for the food and refreshments and Deb Gordon (ably assisted by Joan Mason and Marylou Gorham) for the wonderful array of prizes. The nine-hole competition was played using the Eastern course this year. The Men's 9-hole competition was taken out by Steve Lambert and Deb Gordon was the Women's 9-hole winner. The place getters in the 9-hole handicap event were Cameron Hansen (1st), Chris Hansen (2nd) and Matt Hawke (3rd). Larry King, Pete Harrison and Travis Makowiecki were the encouragement award recipients.

The eighteen-hole competition was very tightly contested with Tim Barter taking out the Men's Open Championship and Vicki Still the Women's Open title. The place getters in the 18-hole handicap event were: Paul Griffin (1st) and David Bailey (2nd). The other awards bestowed at the Open are the eclectic winners. These are the players with the lowest scores across the year based on their best results on each individual hole after handicap. The winner of the 9-hole eclectic was our talented junior, Robert Thompson, with Paul Griffin taking out the 18-hole eclectic. Ball winners for longest drives and nearest the pins went to: Matt Hawke, Cameron Hansen, Darren Hurley (2), and Tim Barter.

The club also presented gifts to our 'greenkeepers – The Mason's, Steve Lambert, Keith France and Pam Muston. Without their generosity of allowing us to play golf on their properties and the work they

put in to manicuring the golf holes we would not be able to conduct this great community event.

Ted's joke involved a sore thumb, the googly ball was awarded to Vicki Still who managed to hit the same rock twice, whilst the dummy spit award was passed around from Tim Barter to Rob Gorham for varying



complaints deemed unsuitable for publication.

Next month, the December event will be the Christmas Cup, sponsored by Matt Hawke.

We hope you can join us at the community hall at 12.15pm on Sunday, 3 December for the usual 12.30pm start. - **Ken Gordon**

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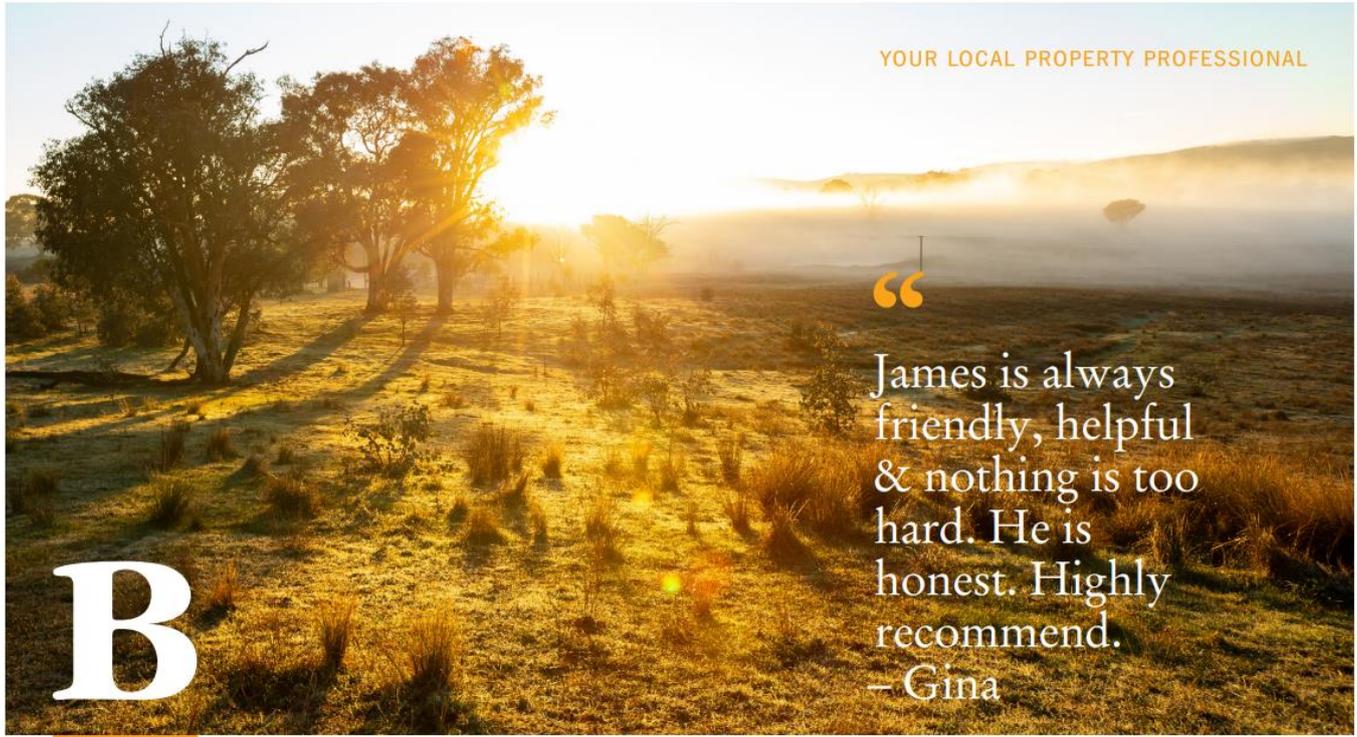
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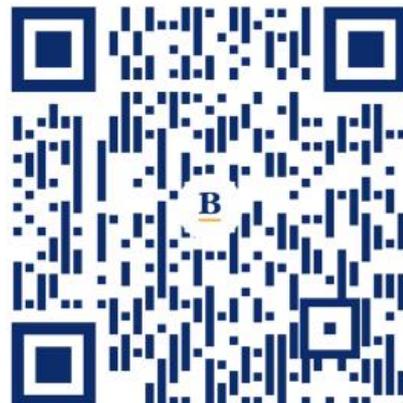
and Wagga Wagga, I now call Wamboin home and am raising my family in this incredible area.

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Bird Of The Month

By Luke Downey

For December I chose the White-headed Pigeon, a rare visitor to the local region which was recorded for the first time in Wamboin recently.

White-headed Pigeon (*Columba leucomela*)

Size: 38-41cm

Status: Rare visitor (vagrant)

The White-headed Pigeon is a very large pigeon with a white head and neck extending down to the front underparts, contrasting strongly with the dark grey, glossy upperparts and tail (wings and back). The bill is red with a pale tip and the eye is yellow with a red eye ring and red legs. The male has more contrast between the dark and white parts, while the female is duller with less contrast, with the white parts tinged greyish. Younger or juvenile birds are also duller and the colours patchy. White-headed Pigeons are a large bird but often can be inconspicuous, calling only infrequently and foraging or perching unobtrusively in fruiting trees or on powerlines. Single birds to pairs or small flocks are regular sights along the east coast of Australia, though they are strongly coastal especially this far south, so a recent record from Wamboin was quite unusual and the first for the area. There are records most years now in Canberra, though usually just of a bird in suburbia, seemingly moving through or 'off track'. One surprising report recently was of



8(!) birds on powerlines in Queanbeyan. Their range is expanding in the south, so perhaps this explains the increasing number of records. The White-headed Pigeon calls rather infrequently, making a deep booming "OOM" call which is repeated. They frequent denser treed habitats such as forests and rainforests, though are also regular in parks and gardens. In urban areas they benefit from bird feeders and planted fruiting trees. They are pretty unmistakable if seen, with the exception of some of the many aberrant forms of the Feral Pigeon, although none usually have such clear white head and underparts and dark upperparts. In addition, Feral Pigeons are smaller with a shorter tail. Make sure to keep an eye out for this distinct bird, though your chances might be better if you are visiting the coast than around Wamboin. (Photo from Google Images)

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Alien Terror, Short Story by Thomas McCutcheon, 10 yrs old

I was out for a morning walk when out of nowhere I feel the ground shaking. There is a loud crunching sound from under me. I feel the air around me change and see a humongous bubble form around me and the playground. The earth around me cracks as it rises into the air. I watch the sign for Bungendore Playground fall off the edge and into the dark hole below me. I could see the village disappear quickly from below me, turning into Queanbeyan, then Canberra, New South Wales, The Great Barrier Reef, Australia, the Earth...

Earth begins to disappear, and the air gets colder. My dog Nala crouches down and tries to hide under the see-saw. She looks at me nervously and whines. I must be brave! I must save us and find our way home.

In the distance I see a red dot grow bigger and bigger. The air gets warmer as the red dot turns into a planet. Suddenly the light around the bubble starts to glow a dark red. The lump of rock Nala and I are on begins to shake more violently after the smooth ride in space. The dark red glow gets brighter and brighter as we get closer to the planet. Our rock begins to spin, slowly at first, getting faster and faster. We are heading for a canyon. I hold my breath as I watch the canyon grow and quietly hope we don't hit the edge of the canyon.

I race to get to Nala in my arms and hold her tight as we brace for impact. We make a ball together under the see-saw. I hear a loud boing as we bounce on the bottom of the canyon. I hear a loud 'pssss...' sound and see that bubble is damaged. We continue to bounce until the bubble comes to a stop. After the spinning in my head stops spinning, I climb out from under the see-saw to look around me. I can feel bruises on my body.

In the sky above me I can see two moons moving across the sky. The ground outside the bubble is dusty and a rusty red colour. The sky is brown as the sun beats down. On the horizon I can see mountains that look like old volcanoes. I think we have landed on Mars. I begin to wonder 'how did we get here?' and 'who brought us here?'

Suddenly out of nowhere green aliens come in front of us flying in the air. One of the aliens said "We are the ones who brought you to Mars. Now you have to escape this humongous bubble. Ha Ha Ha Ha! You will never escape this bubble." Then the aliens disappear into the mist.

I start looking around us. The playground has come with us!!! "We have to get out of here fast", I say. I start to look around for anything that could be useful to use. I find a metal pole on the ground. I pick it up and the pole touches the bubble. "It's fixed", I say.

Suddenly a gush of wind boosts the bubble up and out of planet Mars heading towards Earth. The aliens return in front of us. They try to push the bubble back to Mars but it is no use. The gravity is too strong for the aliens to push. The aliens disappear.

We enter Earth. The bubble disappears. I see Australia, then New South Wales, Canberra, Wamboin, and Bungendore. We are home! The grounds comes into position. It starts to descend into the ground. We have touched down. I get off the rock, catching Nala. I put Nala on the ground. What an adventure...

The Kangaroos - Short Story by Alannah Austin, 9 yrs old

I was out for a morning walk when out of nowhere a kangaroo jumped up and scared me. The big tough kangaroo said 'sorry'. He stared at me and hopped away. I stood with my mouth wide open and couldn't believe that he spoke.

I was so suspicious I followed the big tough kangaroo through a Wamboin greenway.

Some time later the big tough kangaroo arrived at a shiny green glade in the greenway. I turned my head around to see the surprising view. There were tree houses everywhere. The big bright tree houses had tough kangaroos living in them. I realised that the tough kangaroos were really tree kangaroos. And they all could talk.

Out of nowhere the kangaroos screamed loudly and took off up the big healthy trees. I looked around and saw a giant pack of some strong 11 foxes coming to eat the kangaroos in the village. They ignored me and terrifyingly snapped at the tough kangaroos. I picked up a hugely large branch and ran at the foxes. The foxes growled and ran away. The kangaroos came out of the huge trees and came up to me.

First the kangaroos said in a big voice 'thank you! My name is Greg.

'Nice to meet you Greg. How in the world can you talk?'

'Like this but we don't talk to strangers.'

'But aren't I a stranger to you?'

'Not anymore because you scared the creepy foxes away from us.'

'Do you want to be my friend?'

The tough kangaroo said 'yes'.

From that day I visited everyday, except Saturday because I have rock climbing- We became best friends for eternity.

The End!!



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Creating for a Cause: Wreath-maker in Wamboin

If you've stopped by the Gathering Café or the Little Sutton Bakehouse recently, you may have noticed a rare Christmas sight: fresh, handmade wreaths made from locally foraged materials, lovingly crafted by Wamboin resident and playgroup coordinator, me, Denise Lang. This is not something I do for money, but instead is a charity initiative I do every Christmas, where all profits go to local women's shelter, Karinya House. This is my third year of decking halls with wreaths big and small, and to date these efforts have generated over \$2500 for women in need. If you are interested in following my creations as they roll out this Christmas -- #MellowMeadows -- Floral design on Instagram or fb is the place to be. Thank you, and Merry Christmas! -Denise Lang, Wamboin



QPRC Mobile Library

The QPRC Mobile Library bus will be at the Wamboin Hall from 10.30-11.30am on Thursday 14 December 2023. This is a great opportunity to borrow books, CDs, audio books etc. Please support this wonderful service. After you have visited the library drop into the Social Group and have a cuppa. I have attempted to contact the Library to check if the bus will be visiting Wamboin during January. I am assuming there will be a break during January and the service will be back in February 2024. - Narelle Pumphrey

Wamboin Thursday Social Group

The Thursday Social Drop In Group operates each Thursday morning from 10 – 12 noon at the Wamboin Hall, Bingley Way. If you have some time free on a Thursday morning pop in, have a game of scrabble, or rummykub, a cuppa and chat. New people are very welcome to attend. The group will operate up until 21 December 2023, then have a break over Christmas and New Year. We will run fortnightly groups during January and back to normal weekly groups in February 2024. - Narelle Pumphrey



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Cassie Fisher	Clare Ln	12	Lyle Montesin	The Forest Rd area incl Joe Rcks	65
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Nora Stewart	Rovere Ln	7	Justin Jarvis Smith	Macs Reef Birriwa to Harriott	14
Megan Wallace	Harriot Rd	28	Belinda Morris	Macs Reef Rd (Nwington2 Bankers)	11
Sandra Favre	Newwington Rd	23	Carol &Clive Boughton	Macs Reef (Bankers To Fed Hwy)	34
Chrystal Earle	Snowgum Road	26			

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WAMBOIN WEATHER – rainfall and temperature records

(48 years from Cooper Road) by Christine Rieber

November Rainfall Stats

November rainfall to the 26th 45.0mm
 2023 total rainfall to 26/11..... 552.25mm

Average November rainfall..... 78.4mm
 2022 November rainfall..... 57.75mm
 2022 total rainfall to 26/11..... 905.0mm
 47yr Av. to end of November.....639.1mm

December Rainfall Stats

2022 December rainfall..... 83.25mm
 Wettest December..... 177.75mm in 2010
 Wettest day..... 68mm on 2/12/10
 Driest December..... 0mm in 1979

Average December rainfall..... 63.3mm
 Average no. rain days in December... 8.2
 Highest no. rain days..... 17 in 2010
 Lowest no. rain days..... 0 in 1979

December Temperature Stats

2022 December maximum..... 33.6°C
 Dec. 2022. Av. max 24.3°C & min 8.5°C
 Hottest Dec. day..... 41.5°C on 21/12/19
 Coldest December day.. 12°C on 16/12/16
 Average day temperature..... 25.5°C
 Warmest December 2019
 (Av. day temp. 32.0°C & night 12.3°C)
 (warmest night 14.9°C in 1994)

2022 December minimum..... 2.4°C
 Av. Dec. temp.. 18.9°C (day+night comb.)
 Hottest December night.... 23°C (2 times)
 on 20/12/94 & 24/12/05
 Coldest December night.... 2°C (2 times)
 on 5/12/11 & 9/12/22
 Average night temperature..... 12.2°C
 Coldest December 2011
 (Av. day temp. 19.5°C & nights 8.7°C)
 (coldest nights 8.5°C in 2022)

January Rainfall Stats

2023 January rainfall..... 88.75mm
 Wettest January..... 197.5mm in 1995
 Wettest day..... 74mm on 21/1/95
 Driest January 5.5mm in 2010

Average January rainfall..... 60.8mm
 Average no. rain days in January..... 7.8
 Highest no. rain days..... 16 in 1976 & 78
 Lowest no. rain days..... 2 in 2003 & 14

January Temperature Stats

2023 January maximum..... 34.9°C
 Jan. 2023. Av. max 27.9°C & min 12.7°C
 Hottest January day..... 43.6°C on 4/1/20
 & 43.5°C on 31/1/20
 Coldest Jan. day..... 12°C on 29 & 30/1/78
 Average day temperature 27.7°C
 Warmest January 2019
 (Av. day temp. 34.1°C & night 16.8°C)
 (highest night 17.1°C in 91)

2023 January minimum..... 5.8°C
 Av. Jan. temp.. 20.9°C (day+night comb.)
 Hottest January night.... 26°C on 25/1/82
 Coldest Jan. night..... 5°C (4 times)
 on 24/1/00, 12-13/1/12 & 1/1/13
 Average night temperature 14.1°C
 Coldest January 2012
 (Av. day temp. 23.2°C & night 11.1°C)

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Summary of Opticomm Progress Meeting at Wamboin Hall on Tuesday Night, 21-11-23

The third and final session in the Wamboin Community Association's 2023 Spring Talks Series was a presentation by, and discussion with, the people responsible for installing and operating the fibre optic cable to deliver internet services to Sutton, Bywong and Wamboin.

The officials from Opticomm (the company contracted by the NSW Govt to install the cable, led by Dan Lloyd, Chief of Corporate Affairs) and the Dept of Regional NSW (led by Peter Adams, Group Director, Strategic Projects and Service Delivery) travelled to Wamboin from Sydney and found themselves in a packed hall at Wamboin, standing room only.

Glen Archer from the Wamboin Communications Action Group (WCAG) <https://sites.google.com/site/wamboincommunications/home> opened the discussion, providing background information on the project. He reminded us that WCAG is an all-volunteer local community organisation that has been working for seven years to obtain improved internet services for our area. He outlined the high level of frustration about the long-term lack of communication from Opticomm to WCAG and the community, and highlighted the adverse impacts of the lengthy delays in cable installation and activation.

Mr Lloyd responded, apologising for the poor communications with the community in the past and promised to rectify that situation. He explained that their contractor installing the cable is now in administration, so installation work has been paused. They are working hard to get a new contractor to resume cable installation, and expect work to resume fairly soon. Because of the unknowns with the contractor situation at present, and some other challenges such as geology, they could not give an estimate of when the project will be completed. But the cable won't be in Wamboin and Bywong by December 2023 as promised by John Barilaro!

It turns out that there is still a large proportion of Wamboin & Bywong premises that have not yet registered to receive the cable. If they don't register soon, they will not get the free cable and will have to spend many thousands of dollars if they want it in the future. Note that the cable will connect to just one house on each block. Additional connections will be at the home-owner's expense.

They also gave reasons why, in Opticomm's view, a fibre to the premises internet option is superior to other approaches such as fixed wireless (e.g. Yless4u) and satellite (e.g. Starlink). It was explained that 27 km of cable has been laid in Sutton and district, but it had yet to be activated. One Sutton community member who has received the cable described features of cable installation that were atrocious. Mr Lloyd invited them to provide details, promising to follow-up.

Mr Lloyd also emphasised that Opticomm staff are very open to being approached by anyone in the community who has questions or concerns about the project. Contact and registration details are at <https://www.opticomm.com.au/nsw.../project-enquiries/>. - David McDonald, Hon. Secretary, Wamboin Community Association Inc.

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2024 Wheels of Wamboin 10th Anniversary

Well folks the 2024 Wheels of Wamboin to be held on 20 April 2024 will be our tenth celebration of all things automotive. The first Wheels of Wamboin was actually held in 2013 but we missed one show due to Covid. So, this makes 2024 our 10th actual show.

It's quite remarkable to think it was only a test it and try idea that I was worried would not make it past the first one. The idea was conceived due to the number of great cars cruising around Wamboin on weekends and the need to add some spark to our monthly markets.

I was discussing the idea with a dear friend of mine, Ian "Jacko" Jackson and he said give it a whirl and he will make sure the Mustang Club turns up. Our first show attracted around 50 cars and I was over the moon, and as simple as that we have an annual car show that last year attracted over 424 automotive marvels from many other clubs and individuals.

I think the key to the success of Wheels of Wamboin is the casual and easy-going atmosphere and the fact that the show is by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. It's always been supported by the Wamboin RFS, the WCA, and the local community and Meriel with the markets and all money raised goes to local charities.

So, what does 2024 hold. Nothing different just more of the same, just turn up and enjoy. I wish everyone a safe and wonderful Christmas and look forward to seeing you all at the 10th Wheels of Wamboin. – Peter Evans, Wamboin



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Aerial Displays over Kowen

It was a heavy lift transport aircraft escorted by a smaller fighter jet. They were flying in close formation, parallel to each other and at low altitude. This was all happening in Kowen Forest as I was on an afternoon bike ride. I had to stop, get off my bike and take a picture. Unfortunately, by the time I had removed my camera from its mount on the handle bars the smaller jet had peeled off, banking to the left, leaving the heavier aircraft to maintain its speed, direction and altitude. I was in awe.

Well, that was what it looked like. In reality it was a crow or more accurately a raven escorting a wedge-tail eagle out of its territory. The crow didn't bother the wedgie, it just flew very close and right beside the eagle until it was satisfied the eagle was moving on.

These birds were so near and so low, flying down a dip in what was a landscape cleared of trees. I could see all the details of this magnificent wedgie including its flight feathers and that steely eye.

The eagle continued to follow the terrain at low altitude, with deep, powerful beats of its wings. I couldn't take my eyes of this magnificent bird.

The crow had vanished and as the eagle continued away from me it suddenly banked to the left, flapped its wings and banked again. It continued with this pattern as it completed a tight circle. It had found a thermal. I could see no change in the atmosphere at this low level but this eagle had sensed a rising column of air, its solution to escaping the world of the crow and magpie and reaching familiar higher altitudes.

More beating of the wings but a little more gliding. Soon it was more gliding and very few beats of the wings. The eagle was rapidly gaining height. Suddenly the beating wings stopped and this bird was soaring in its own thermal column. It was in its element.

I was mesmerised and a photo was pointless at this stage. The eagle would simply be a dark pixel against a blue background. The wedgie continued to rise, getting smaller and smaller. In just a few minutes it was so high I could only make it out as a small dot against a back drop of a fluffy white cloud.

This spectacle unfolded so quickly. The crow had gone back to maybe its nest and the eagle, now out of sight, was soaring somewhere between Wamboin and the Molonglo River. I was back on my bike reflecting on how smart that crow was, not trying to attack the wedgie, just escorting it off its property. I was also thinking soaring like an eagle looked so easy compared to riding up some of the Kowen hills. I want to be an eagle. - **Kevin Rowe, Earthbound Resident**

Kowen Kapers - Fire Tower

Peter Komidar: Wamboin

With the fire season now in full swing, I thought it would be opportune to visit the Kowen fire tower.

A fire tower has been in place in Kowen since the establishment of the plantation estate. In 1954, the original wooden structure was demolished and a replacement metal fire tower was constructed; which still stands today. The tower was upgraded in 2018. The tower platform was replaced and the tower's access points were enhanced. The tower was also fitted with updated telemetry.

There are four fire towers in the ACT: at One Tree Hill in the north, Mount Tennant in the south, Mt Coree in the west and Kowen in the east. Over the bushfire season, the towers are staffed by ACT Parks and Conservation personnel.

Fire tower operators scan the landscape looking for signs of smoke. When a fire is spotted the tower operator communicates their sightings to the command centre to enable its position to be triangulated as well as communicating with emergency services to help coordinate their response. Tower operators also report local weather changes and plot the location of lightning strikes during thunder storms.

Despite advances in technology such as automated cameras, drones and satellite imagery, the future of the fire towers and their operators looks secure. From these towers, the trained human eye can spot a wisp of smoke within minutes of a fire starting. Using triangulation methods, tower operators can help pinpoint a location with surprising accuracy - down to 50 metres.

A fire tower operator's job can be a lonely one, perched as they are high above the forest floor day after day. It also carries much responsibility; the safety of life and property rests on their shoulders. However, as linchpins of the fire response system, their job is highly rewarding also.

The towers and their operators truly are the fire alarms of the forest.

Nearest Entrance: Cooper Rd. At the entrance to Kowen (A) turn left. At the first intersection - 7 Mile Rd - (B) turn left again. Continue following 7 Mile Rd for 1 km until you arrive at the Wamboin Break intersection. Turn right and climb the hill to the fire tower (D). The return journey is 4.7 km.

Kowen Events: December - February

Date	Event	More Info
21 January	Kowen Trail Run	kowen-trail-run.com

