



THE GRANITE NEWS

18TH MAY
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ISSUE 14

WHITEHEADS CREEK • TERIP TERIP • CAVEAT • RUFFY • HIGHLANDS • HUGHES CREEK

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Many people living in the area have incredible bonds with their livestock, pets and visiting wildlife. It is what makes country life so diverse and special. The recent visitation by a prized, "pink male pig", complete with nose ring and curly tail at Habbies Howe enticed me to attempt to interview the new-comer. How did he come to choose this destination? Did he have links to the area? To all these questions and more, I hoped to get answers. After all, it is not just the human inhabitants that make a community, but the furred/scaled/feathered ones too.

Porkus, our now famous pink pig, was happy to tell me his tale. Sorry, tale. Pigs, as we know, love a bit of lime-light, especially with a twist. Although a young boar (not bore, since he is acutely aware of the delicate springy balance of our bogs), he has strong connections to the area. It emerged that his great grandmother, Donna, used to reside at Dropmore approximately 13 years ago. Having heard great things about the district and its inhabitants from his descendants, Porkus was keen to reconnect with this haloed turf.

Donna, a pink porker-Tamworth cross of pale orange and voluptuous build, was a gregarious resident for some years at Dropmore and made special bonds with a number of visitors. Some would describe her as a boisterous leftist feminist, others as a stubborn sow who should be sent to a sausage factory. This is in part due to her lust for life and men with particular odours delectable to pigs on heat (which occurs every 3 weeks). It may also be due to the fact that Donna knew how to break into cars, steal picnic lunches, terrify Jehovah's Witnesses, and adjust tractor dipsticks and motorbike spark plugs as well as terrify the odd male ego. Porkus cannot understand why 200 kilos of energetic pig would scare people, but apparently this is so.

Sadly Donna was evicted to an animal farm not far from Don Smallgoods in

Dandenong, where she resided until she scared the disabled horse riding group once too often. She was then (precariously) moved to Strathbogie, where she continued breeding and exploring the countryside that she loved so much.

Porkus is keen to make contact with anyone who remembers Donna, and he can be contacted at Habbies Howe. (Other curly tails from furred/feathered or finned residents are also welcomed-please send to Sam, who would like to compile them for GN strong_sam@activ8.net.au)

PS Scott McKay is in the middle of writing a poem to tell us all what in fact has happened to Porkus. It's not all as sad as you may be thinking, he's still alive!

NOTES FROM HIGHLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Student of the Week

John Bennett: For amazing detail with his work on another country. Well done John!

This week we had a visit from Don Campbell. Don's family lived in Highlands and his son attended Highlands PS. Don's son completed an engineering degree when he left school and is now working in Germany for BMW. Yet another Highlands success story!

Welcome:

Highlands PS is very happy to welcome Zac Degalitis. Zac is in grade 3. He has made many new friends and has thoroughly enjoyed his week.

Zone Cross Country:

Congratulations to Imogen, Kassie and Laura who have all qualified for the Zone Cross in Yea .

WELCOME TO ISSUE14

Please send all articles to miranda@omnipotent.com.au

Fire Restrictions for Region 12 area have been lifted from 1st May 2009.

FENCERS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

Landcare coordinators Bridget Clarke and Janet Hagen have been busy organising community volunteers to help bushfire-affected landholders restore their land. The volunteers have a wide range of skills and backgrounds and can help with fencing to protect waterways and environmental projects, erosion control, weed control, revegetation, farm infrastructure repair, nest boxes, etc. Contact Janet Hagen 57904268

STOCK CONTAINMENT

These will be a great advantage in times of fire and drought. Funding is still available – contact Bruce Radford at DPI Broadford on 57 840 600.

RABBITSCAN

This a nation-wide challenge for community and schools to help scientists map where rabbits are, by asking people to 'scan' their landscape (school, farm, parkland, roadside reserves, etc) for signs of rabbits and their damage, and to load their results online"

We are trying to determine the distribution and density of rabbits in Australia. We know that rabbits are coming back after more than a decade significant relief through calicivirus. When we look, we are finding populations further north than our current maps indicate and in great densities in some coastal areas, for example. The densities are important, because we have a greater awareness of the impact of low rabbit numbers on native vegetation.

"Try and go for a walk this week and log on yourself. We did it as a family in an area we walk a lot, but it was quite a different experience for us to take note of rabbit signs and damage - the boys found three warrens that we must have walked past a hundred times before and never really noted."

<<http://www.rabbitscan.net.au/joomla/index.php>>

Community What's On Calendar—May/June 2009

Fortnight beg 11th May	Terip Terip mowing roster Geoff & Jan Penn Mark Ireland Both sides of Springs Road and all 4 courts
April 26 until May 25	... the JOURNEY is an exhibition of works on paper and canvas, textiles and sculptures from Susan Fell Mclean at the Mitchelton Winery, Mitchelstown Road, Nagambie (03) 5736 2222 . See more of Susan's work at: http://visibilityedge.blogspot.com/
17May-24May	WHITEHEADS CREEK- TARCOTTE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE TRUCK ROSTER Paul Neibling M Greer Brian Tolley Lindsay Heffer
21st May	Highlands-Caveat Brigade post-season meeting commencing at 1930 hours (that's 7.30pm if you are wondering) at Highlands Hall. All welcome, copies of the agenda for the meeting and the minutes from the mid-season meeting are located in the station.
24May-30May	WHITEHEADS CREEK- TARCOTTE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE TRUCK ROSTER Glen Watson Anthony Wallis Doug Halpin Gary Richards
28th May	Secret Men's Business at the Caveat Church on the last Thursday of every month. Come along at 5.30pm and enjoy a snag and a chat by the fire. Everyone is welcome, even Chloe.
31st May	White Hart Hotel T: 03-5798-5203 E: white.hart@bigpond.com In the Dining Room, we're looking forward to our first food & wine event of the year. Shades of Autumn will be a sumptuous four course menu, matched to local wines. The menu is a celebration of 'all things tasty' from Strathbogie and the region and includes Avenel Mushrooms, Ruffy Turkey, and Local Venison. Price is \$65 per person including wines. Bookings are essential so call early to avoid disappointment.
Wednesday June 3,	Terip Terip RFB Biennial General Meeting 7.30 pm at Terip Terip Rec Reserve All welcome - Bernie McMahon Secretary-Treasurer 57904352
4th June	Ruffy Community Action Group - 1st meeting of this newly constituted Group, Ruffy Hall, starting at 8.00 pm.
Saturday 6th June	Black Market: 10:00-12:00 at Rocky Passes [1590 Highlands Rd]. It's a very casual, local food exchange. This month's guest cook is Jocelyn Bennet and Paul MacGregor, cooking a lovely curry ... just the thing for the cooler months! All welcome. Any questions, call 57969366.
7th June	White Hart Hotel T: 03-5798-5203 E: white.hart@bigpond.com 4.00pm - Jimmy Davidson (a Longwood FC legend from the 70's singing old time rock)
10th June, Benalla; 11th June, Long- wood	Soils Alive – . Free workshops on understanding organic matter, soil biology and the benefits of dung beetles. Lunch and notes provided. To book in contact Charlie Sexton on 57 611 560 or email kirsty.youman@dpi.vic.gov.au
Sunday 14th June	Melbourne composer and classical guitarist David Adams will be giving a recital in the Highlands. David will be playing works by Tarrega, Sor, Carcassi, Bach, Navarez, Adams and Primrose. Venue: Dennis Spiteri's Studio/Gallery, 'Hillcrest' RMB 6020 Old Highlands Rd. Everyone welcome. Time: 2pm. Entry by donation. No booking is necessary, but to give us some idea of numbers to expect, could people that are interested in coming please contact Dennis or Margaret on 57969373 or email: dennispiteri@ctiv8.net.au
20th June	White Hart Hotel T: 03-5798-5203 E: white.hart@bigpond.com 7.30pm - Ruckus (one for the diary - these guys and girl will be performing foot stompin' country rock - listen to them at www.ruckus.net.au)
25th June	Secret Men's Business at the Caveat Church on the last Thursday of every month. Come along at 5.30pm and enjoy a snag and a chat by the fire. Everyone is welcome, even Chloe.

Classifieds & Community Notices

HELPFUL DUNG BEETLES

As many of you know, over the last few years I've been conducting research on the impact of dung burial (by dung beetles) on soil health. Data analysis is far from complete, but some early conclusions are worth sharing now.

The soils at the Merton research site typically have a compacted hard pan just below the surface (~2-5cm; where the clay starts). At ~15cm depth there is a ~10cm thick buckshot layer that overlies a mottled orange-red clay. Typically, pasture root development is concentrated in the top few cm, with only limited root penetration into the layers below.

However, all that changes when Bison start digging. Bison not only tunnel into the top of the buckshot layer; they go through it, into the subsoil. This gives plant roots, earthworms and other soil organisms easy and direct access to the sub soil (below the buckshot), which remains moist for much longer than the surface layers of the soil. Of course, the roots and earthworms are also feeding in the tunnels, which are filled with dung/loose soil, so improving pasture productivity significantly. By burying dung so deeply, Bison bring a lot of less-fertile subsoil, buckshot and all, to the surface, which can actually cause a temporary bare patch on the soil surface. But, over time, and in combination with improved earthworm activity (which follows naturally) the benefits to soils such as this are massive; breaking up hard pans, mixing soil/nutrients and providing roots and soil biology with access to the top ~30cm of the soil profile - pretty amazing really.

The summer active dung beetles don't tunnel nearly as deeply (not surprising, as soil can be rock-hard), so their dung burial and soil mixing occurs in the top ~10cm. A consequence of this is that summer dung beetles have a more immediate impact on improving and deepening the topsoil and they don't bring the infertile subsoil to the surface as much as Bison. These differences are clearly reflected in the changes in soil chemistry, when comparing summer dung burial, winter dung burial and controls.

So there's a good reason for having different types of dung beetle, that are active at different times of the year. And to get the benefits it's important that farms are dung beetle friendly. In this regard, making informed drenching decisions can be crucial.

By Bertram Lobert



STATE GOVT SUPPORTS RAIL TRAIL

THE Brumby Government is supporting the development of the Goulburn Valley High Country Rail Trail with an \$80,000 grant.

"The Goulburn Valley High Country Rail Trail has been identified as a priority in the Victorian Trails Strategy 2005-2010," Mr Hardman said.

"When it is completed the 134-kilometre trail will connect Mansfield to Tallarook via Yea and Alexandra.

"Appointing a project officer will ensure the development of the rail trail and help identify which sections should be brought forward for works."

Issues seen as critical to development of the trail include land tenure, licensing and planning application and permit arrangements and detailed design and cost estimates.

Another issue is prioritising implementation of the total trail and will involve project scoping and timeframes for delivery.

The project involves constructing a shared pathway along an old railway easement. Project works include:

Constructing a 12-kilometre compacted and rolled gravel surface;
Replace and/or refurbish six rail bridges and many culverts;
Visitor amenities (car park, toilet and interpretative signage);
Interpretative and directional signage for the trail; and
Gates and fencing where required.

YOGA CLASSES

Intro to Yoga Tuesdays 6-7.30pm at Abundance Wellness & Beauty, Yea
Gentle postures and relaxation.

General Yoga Wednesdays 6-7.30pm at Highlands Hall.

Graded practices, breathing, relaxation & meditation.

For more information and bookings contact: Sally (Shakti Mudra) 5796 9222 or shakti.mudra@gmail.com

INFLUENZA

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is caused by a highly contagious virus that is spread by coughs and sneezes. Older people and those with an underlying medical condition are more likely to develop serious complications as a result of the flu. There are various types of flu – the "Swine Flu" or H1N1 being of great global concern currently.

The flu is more than a bad cold. Cold symptoms last one or two days while the flu can last up to a week. The flu causes a high fever. A cold sometimes causes a mild fever. Muscular pains and shivering attacks occur with the flu but not with a cold. Colds cause a runny nose, while the flu usually starts with a dry sensation in the nose and throat. Flu symptoms develop one to three days after infection and include: high fever, chills and sweating; sore throat; weakness; headache; general muscle and joint pains; a non-productive cough that can later become more severe and productive. Serious complications are rare.

Good hygiene practices will reduce the risk of any type of flu virus spreading:

Always cough or sneeze into a tissue – dispose of it wisely and wash your hands afterwards;

Clean your hands, eg with alcohol rub, before and after visiting patients in hospital;

If you have the flu, avoid public places and close contact with others.

Flu Immunization - Influenza viruses change every year because the virus has a unique ability to change, so a new vaccine needs to be developed each year. Immunisation should occur between March and May, before the onset of the flu season. Protection develops about two weeks after the injection and lasts for up to one year. Influenza vaccine cannot give you a dose of flu because it contains no live virus. However, some people may still contract the flu because the vaccine may not protect against all strains of the influenza virus circulating in the community.

In Victoria, the immunisation is provided free of charge for everyone aged 65 years or older and for some other groups – check with your local doctor's clinic.

(Information from www.health.vic.gov.au and www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

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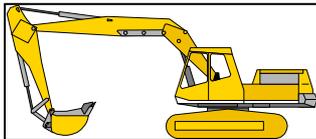
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