

Maling Ward

December 2021



Year of Wonders

So much has happened since the July newsletter just a few months ago, when we were emerging from our fourth lockdown and feeling more hopeful. Little did we know that a longer and more onerous lockdown was in store, one in which we had to find the strength and forbearance to manage our frustration and disappointment. I know at times I have felt sad and anxious, and I think it is important to acknowledge these emotions are a normal response to what we Melburnians have faced this past year.

I am reminded of Geraldine Brooks' book *Year of Wonders*, based on the Derbyshire villagers who chose to suffer alone during England's last great plague which swept through London in 1666. Brooks explores the challenges of 17th-century science and religion in dealing with a little-understood pestilence. England's north remained untouched initially, until a bolt of fabric carrying the bubonic plague arrives in a village of 350 people. They face a plague they do not understand and for which there is no remedy. Initially they turn to herb lore and witch-hunting. But then, led by a charismatic preacher, they decide to segregate themselves in a fatal quarantine.

My much less deadly and frightening year of wonders has provided some insights: picnics with a card table and deck chairs are fun, pets are a lifeline, time with work colleagues is valued, family really matters, walking in nature and speaking with friends every day helps, shopping online is not as pleasurable as visiting the shops, going to work provides structure and a reason to dress properly, online card games with friends fill the evenings, and I have a lot to be grateful for. I would love to hear your year of wonders insights.

In this newsletter is an update of the Surrey Hills level-crossing removal project and a story about the history of the station. I recently attended several community consultation sessions on this project, and it was enlightening to hear community members' ideas, and heartening to witness their affection for, and pride in, the neighbourhood.

You can also read about a tree-renewal project that is very special for me. Council recently planted four hickory wattle trees in Canterbury's Claremont Crescent, joining two established hickory wattles that once marked the corner of local landmark Jack Fry's 'farmhouse' property.

I look forward to watching the new wattles grow to maturity.

I hope you will join me and Claire (see page 2) in lighting up Maling Ward for Christmas. I hope that 2022 will be a year of different wonders and one in which we all thrive, and I wish you the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

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Christmas in Maling Ward

After the isolated year we have had, I am looking forward to Christmas and to being with friends and family, and to the end-of-year traditions that characterise this time, including the display of Christmas lights in our suburbs' homes and yards.

Maling Ward resident, 12-year-old Claire (pictured), is keen for the houses in our area to make a big effort to display Christmas lights to bring joy to children who have missed out on so much this year. "Driving around the suburb at night and seeing all the lights makes me feel so happy," Claire says. "Let's make this Christmas the best ever and spread lots of joy."

Given Council's recent adoption of the Boroondara Climate Action Plan, I will be investing in more solar-powered lights,

and hope you join me in lighting up our area as a marker of a better year to come.

As we do every year, Council has installed Christmas decorations in all Boroondara's shopping strips, including Union Road, Maling Road and Whitehorse Road, in Maling Ward. I hope you enjoy them.



Surrey Hills level-crossing update

Since our last update, the Victorian Government Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) has been refining the design for the new station precinct.

The latest design identifies a new area of open space at Union Road, Surrey Hills. The LXRP has indicated the design for the new space has not been finalised, so over the past few months Council has sought feedback to better understand what our community wants to see in this space to support the Surrey Hills village and enhance amenity.

Key design features our community would like the LXRP to consider include more greenery, gardens that support biodiversity, and lawns to picnic on. More space for on-street dining, comfortable seating, and creative lighting to provide night-time atmosphere are also popular.

The activities people would most like to do in a new local open space include outdoor dining, visiting a pop-up market, going for a walk, lying on the grass, and using it as a place to meet friends, family or neighbours.

Other important feedback includes activities for children and young people and making the open space safe and accessible.

Council will use all the feedback to formulate a response to the LXRP on its design of this open space.


For more information and the latest updates, visit:

 www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/surrey-hills-lcr

Seven things you can put in the FOGO bin

- ✓ **The greasy base of pizza boxes**
Separate this from the 'clean' lid, which can go in the recycling bin.
- ✓ **Spoiled food**
Including yoghurt that is past its use-by date, mouldy bread and leftover chicken soup.
- ✓ **Hair**
Human and animal hair can be composted.
- ✓ **Fish 'n' chip wrappings**
Greasy paper, lemon wedges, leftover chips, but not greaseproof paper.
- ✓ **Fruit pips and stones**
Including avocado and olive pips, stonefruit seeds, and nut shells like peanuts and pistachios.
- ✓ **Greasy or oily paper towels**
But not chemicals – so do not include paper towels used with chemical cleaning sprays.
- ✓ **Wood ash**
Cold fireplace ashes – wood only.

For more information, visit:

 www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/FOGO-bin



Palm tree a clue to station's past

Long-time Surrey Hills local Sue Barnett had always wondered why there was a mature palm tree in the northern car park of the Surrey Hills railway station.

Then a photo, taken in 1971, recently came to light. Capturing the sweep of the track and the northern platform, it also showed a palm in the front garden of a house set behind a picket fence.

"This explains it," says Sue. "The palm was part of the stationmaster's garden."

While the stationmaster's house was probably demolished along with the original station in 1972, the palm tree has thrived and remains in good condition.

The species is a Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), commonly planted in late-19th and early-20th-century gardens.

As a historically significant tree, it may be relocated when plans for the current Surrey Hills station precinct are finalised by the Victorian Government's Level Crossing Removal Project.

While a large number of trees are being removed for the project, Council has not seen the canopy replacement plan. We will continue to advocate to the LXP for the planting of more shade trees to replace those that are lost.

Balwyn Library's top loans of 2021

We know how important our libraries are to our community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our click-and-collect service and digital collections have proven very popular in the past 12 months, with an astonishing 1.25 million items borrowed across Boroondara.

For summer reading inspiration, our librarians at Balwyn Library have shared the most popular books for 2021.


Balwyn Library's most borrowed adult fiction books:

1. *The Survivors*, Jane Harper
2. *Where The Crawdads Sing*, Delia Owens
3. *Bruny*, Heather Rose
4. *Dictionary of Lost Words*, Pip Williams
5. *The Thursday Murder Club*, Richard Osman

Most borrowed junior fiction books:

1. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, J. K. Rowling
2. *Really Weird!*, Anh Do
3. *The 117-Storey Treehouse*, Andy Griffiths
4. *The 91-Storey Treehouse*, Andy Griffiths
5. *The 78-Storey Treehouse*, Andy Griffiths

To find out more, visit:

 www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/libraries



The wattle trees return to Claremont Crescent

Four new wattle trees, recently planted in Claremont Crescent, will once more mark the grass-edged boundary of the former site of one of Canterbury's old farmhouses.

The new *Acacia implexa* trees, known as lightwood or hickory wattle, join two remnant trees of the same species at the corner of Claremont and Bryson streets, at the boundary of the property where local character Jack Fry once lived – in what became known as Fry's farmhouse.

"It was overgrown and a very big block that roamed down the hill," recalls former Crescent resident Lorri Buttner.

"It was probably never operational as a farmhouse – there may have been the odd

sheep and some chooks – but he lived like it was a bush block."

Along with other local children, Lorri's son and his friend would wander to 'Jack's joint' in the early 1970s to "see what they could see" on the unruly and unfenced property. The weatherboard house was built in the 1880s as part of the original Claremont Park Estate.

The new trees planted by Council replace earlier hickory wattles planted in a 'grove' or 'copse' arrangement along the southern boundary of what was once Jack's place.

The species is native to the eastern Australian mainland, and the new trees have been spaced out to enable them

to achieve their expected mature size of up to 10 metres high and 5 metres wide. This means they will provide more shade and better biodiversity benefits – bigger trees have more leaves and more flowers and nectar for insects. Hickory wattles produce cream-white flowers in early summer.

Wattles are not often planted as street trees, as many wattle species are shortlived. However, as hickory wattles are a relatively long-lived species, locals can look forward to their shade and flowers for years to come. They also have good tolerance of waterlogging, drought, and soil compaction – an important consideration as the footway the wattles are planted on is unpaved.