



MARCH 2009

GEORGE MACKRELL STRATHBOGIE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2009

On Australia Day, 26th January 2009, to the applause of a large crowd under the trees in front of the Strathbogie Memorial Hall, long-time Tableland resident George Mackrell was announced as Strathbogie Citizen of the Year for 2009 and presented with a framed certificate recording this award.

The background to George's award received only a brief mention at this ceremony. This article tells more of his story and why he so richly deserved to be honoured in this way.

George was born here and has lived his whole life on the Tableland. He comes from an extended family of Mackrells who are to be found around the district and beyond. It's no surprise that George has such a strong sense of community obligation and concern for fellow citizens, growing up during a time when mutual help and support were so necessary for life on the Tableland.

He has worked the family farm on Tames Road since he was a young man, after doing National Service in the early 50s, and has seen a lot of good and bad times. George also worked for many years in the timber industry and probably knows the Strathbogie forests better than anyone.

He felled trees and dragged them out to be milled, but always with care and choosing only the most suitable specimens. He has a deep respect for the natural environment. He was even known to put off dropping a particular tree until a koala had evacuated from it – a kind man!

Throughout his life, George has contributed to the community. He recently received a CFA medal marking 50 years of service to the Strathbogie Rural Fire Brigade and had been an active firefighter for 15 years before that, having first hopped on the old 'Bogie Rural Fire Brigade truck as a 10 year-old with his dad, Herb. He is legendary in his role as unofficial firespotter and has a long history of finding and reporting fires. All through the fire season he's to be found up on his hill with his binoculars after thunderstorms or cruising the forest in his ute, looking for and sometimes finding lightning strikes or a spot fire under way. This carries some risk, as an episode last year showed when a huge bolt hit the rock next to where George was sitting in his vehicle!

He has been an active volunteer for many local projects, ranging from working on the construction of the Memorial Hall in the mid-fifties to keeping many of the old logging tracks in the state forest open for fire fighting, all in his own time and at his own expense.

Less well known is his kindness to people in need of help. Driving a neighbour to and from hospital for treatment, comforting a bereaved person, visiting a mate who's down in the dumps – George has given a helping hand to a lot of people around the district, always unobtrusively but always thoughtfully. He's a mine of information and is always happy to share his knowledge and experience but never patronisingly. Many of us have learned a lot from him about topics ranging from sheep farming to the history of the Tableland and its environment.

"First on the scene and last to leave" is a standing joke about George when it comes to fires. He's quick to respond to the callout, but, when the situation is under control, he's invariably to be found leaning against his ute yarning and telling tales of past events. And as often as not, he'll be back at the scene of the fire the next morning, just checking that it's really out.

All this adds up to a picture of someone who has given a great deal to the Tableland community over 65 years. It would be remiss not to mention his wife, Joy, who has given stalwart support for George, keeping the home fires burning while he is out and about. Hers is another story of great community service but that's for another day. George is, above all, a kind and generous man whose extensive contributions have often been unremarked. But his long history of community service makes him an absolutely fitting candidate for Strathbogie Citizen of the Year and we congratulate him for being awarded this honour.



Welcome to TT - in this issue there is a letter to the editor in response to last months article submitted by Cr Neil Murray; seedsaver news; Donmil comments on Black Saturday; Stargazing; landcare news and lots more

Euroa Cinema

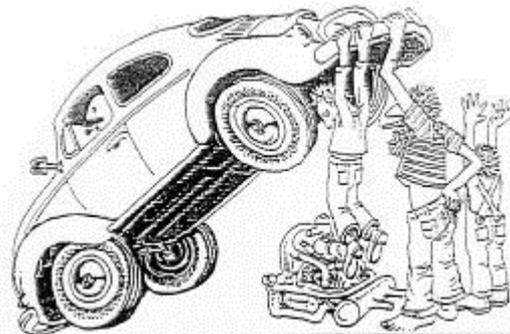


Saturday 28th - Sunday 2nd March
 "Marley and Me" (PG)
 Saturday 7th - Sunday 8th March
 "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" (M)
 Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th March
 "Twilight" (M)
 Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd
 "Yes Man" (M)
 Saturday 28th - Sunday 29th
 "Frost Nixon" (PG)

Session times
 Saturdays
 8 pm
 Sunday's
 4 pm

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2009 Mobile Library dates for Strathbogie (every second Saturday from 9.30 - 12noon) -
 7th March, 21st March, 4th April.



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Deadline (as always) - 20th of each month. Email: f.a.townsend@activ8.net.au, ph 57905203, post PO Box 23 Strathbogie, or leave contributions at the store. Fiona Townsend

Stop Press - Community Meeting - 4th March 2009

to discuss and plan a combined submission from the Strathbogie community to the Bushfires Royal Commission: Wednesday 4th March - 7.00 - 8.30pm at the Strathbogie Memorial Hall.

The purpose of the meeting is to workshop the Strathbogie community's thoughts in preparation for a submission to the Royal Commission. Steven Segona, a consultant to Council, is to facilitate the process and STAG are invited to chair the meeting. An agenda will be sent out tomorrow and a letter drop is being arranged for the Strathbogie district.

Dear Editor,

I was most disappointed to read in last months Tableland Talk of how disempowered our new councillor feels. Working as a councillor is probably not the same as working for a big corporation where jobs can be slashed and moved offshore at the stroke of a pen, but I am sure there is a good reason for that. To hear such a tone of resignation so early in a Councillor's term is very worrying to me. Having briefly read the Local Government Act 1989 it seems that councillors do have decision-making power and that the Chief Executive's responsibilities are limited to

- a) Establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure for the Council; and
- b) Ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented without undue delay; and
- c) The day to day management of the Council's operations in accordance with the Council's corporate plan; and
- d) Providing timely advice to the Council.

Come on Neil, surely section 94A1b of the Act gives you some power to influence the decisions that the majority of Mt Wombat Ward elected you for.

John Hooper, Strathbogie

Welcome to another TT. While I was putting this TT together, I was saddened to hear of the death of Pip Borman in an air crash in his stunt plane at Shepparton. Pip was extremely generous to residents of the Tableland 11 years ago, when he came and flew an aerobatic display at an air show at Strath Hill, when Andrew Harris owned the property. The air show was part of a fundraiser for the community, and Pip volunteered his time completely, only requesting a tank of fuel, which Andrew donated. Pip was an extremely quiet and generous man, and an exceptionally competent pilot.

Many in our community have volunteered their time to the continuing fires to our south, and donated hay to the drive organised locally by Brian Law. To date 95 bales have been donated. In the meantime, read the enclosed Firewatch and make sure you have a fire plan to follow, and keep vigilant and alert. And keep safe. Fiona and the TT team.



NEWS FROM ST ANDREWS.

After the first week of facing the tragic news from the bushfires, it was good to come together at Boho South Church on February 15th to remember all those who had been affected by them. The service was most capably led by Rev. Mark Blackwell who had himself been burnt out on the Strathbogie fires in 1990. (You can read Mark's address in Euroa Gazette 17th February.) It is well worth the time taken to read it. An offering was collected to go towards the fire victims through the Uniting Church with no administration charges taken out.

It is in times of great loss that we really value our churches and find them places of comfort and solace. It would be a pity for any church in our community to close so I would encourage Strathbogie residents to show their support for our churches. At a recent Church Council meeting involving members from Violet Town, Strathbogie and Boho South Uniting churches, a decision was made to **continue** services at the **Boho South Church** on the **3rd Sunday** of the month at **11.15 am**.

Services remain at St. Andrews **Strathbogie** are on the **2nd and 4th Sunday at 11.30am.**, and at Violet Town every Sunday at 9.30am.

It has been wonderful the way people have responded after the devastating bushfires in so generously donating goods, money, time, and support. It seems that the response has been greater than in any other disaster. It is in times like these that we really see the very best in people.

A very big thank you to our local CFA members who have been tireless in their efforts to fight these fires. One can only imagine how difficult the tasks required of them have been. Thanks too to all the partners left at home to do all the chores and look after their families without their usual support.

It has also been very reassuring to hear Geoff Broughton's calm voice on the top of Mt Wombat. A big thankyou to him for his vigilance and many, many hours spent keeping watch for all of us on the Tableland. Let's hope and pray for any early autumn break to bring some much needed rain to our pastures, fill up our dams, and extinguish all those fires permanently.

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STAG NEWS

Revised Action Plan - The community Action Plan has now been refined to include input from community members at the public meeting at the end of last year. The Action Plan will be presented to Council in the near future.

In the meantime those who raised specific issues will be contacting the volunteers who offered to work on projects.

STAG has written to Council seeking clarification on a number of issues, in particular the ongoing need to address the state of roads and several dangerous intersections on the Tableland and the need for pedestrian access across Spring Creek.

At the recent CFA community meeting there was discussion about two issues of considerable concern: lack of telecommunication facilities on the Tableland and existing legislation that prevents the clearing of roadsides which are currently seen as a significant fire hazard. STAG is working closely with Council to prepare a submission to the Commission enquiring into the recent bushfires.

Our website has had over 7,000 hits since its launch late last year and our Website Sub-committee is continuing to refine the site and is identifying suitable links with other sites. We were unsuccessful in our application for grant funding from the Shire to purchase dedicated equipment for the site, however Council has offered to provide this from their resources.

Community members are welcome to attend STAG meetings which are usually held on the second Monday of the month however, because of the long weekend in March, that meeting will be held on Monday 16 March commencing at 7.30pm in the Soldiers Room.

An older resident of the Tableland decided to attend the Australia Day celebrations in 'Bogie in January, but he had a slight problem. Since he last dressed up he found he had put on a considerable amount of weight. In fact so much he found he couldn't fit into his best pants. He made a quick phone call to his neighbour for help. The neighbour rummaged through his wardrobe and eventually came up with a pair he thought might do the job. When they were delivered to him and he tried them on it was decided that they would do. But when he did them up he broke his one and only decent belt.

More frantic phone calls. It was arranged he would be able to pick one up in the township. So rising to the occasion he grabbed a bit of hay band which got him to Bogie where he duly pickup up a belt and all was well.

It shows that the neighbourly spirit is alive and well!

Ken Dunnachie



'Bogie BP's'
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At the Strathbogie Store
Thursday 12th March
2pm-4pm



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Free To Good Home: Treated Pine posts, various sizes. Leave message 5790 5135

BO HO GIE music
 Next on 27th March
 Boho Hall 7.30pm
 Ph John 57905271

Lost....Hi my name is



Woody and I've lost my friend Jackson James Hill. We were playing down at Creek Junction and he

just disappeared. If anyone knows where I can find Jackson James Hill, I am staying with Sandy & Dave Please Phone 57905235

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED URGENTLY!!!

Volunteers are needed to water the trees & shrubs in Main Street (between Spring Creek Road and the school entrance.) Charles & Hazel O'Connor have been doing this to date by themselves & we thank them for this. The time has come for other members of our community to take a turn. Let's get a roster up & running. Please contact Charles & Hazel on 5790 5378 if you can assist.

Black Saturday

by Donmil

Is all our country burning,
 Turning from green to black?
 Where have the rainclouds gone to?
 Are they ever coming back? -
 Does all hope lack
 Of normal life returning?

When that scorching wind was blowing,
 Throwing embers far and wide,
 Nothing could stand against it
 Or turn the flames aside:
 People died,
 For they had no way of knowing.

And what remains is caring,
 Sharing with those in need;
 Rebuilding lives and futures,
 Resowing hope and seed;
 And indeed
 Standing firm against despairing.

NEED FARM HELP? - NO JOB TOO BIG OR SMALL

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Contact Peter Mackrell
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INDOOR BOWLS - The Strathbogie Indoor Bowlers are desperately short of players for the 2009 season. Without more support there may be no indoor bowls this year. Indoor bowling is lots of fun and a great way to socialise. For more information ring Henry on 5790 5348 or Max on 5795 3597.

Seedsavers News

Our next gathering will be on Sunday 1st March at 1.30pm at Noel & Virginia's home, 10 Tulip St, Violet Town (5798 1774). We were to have met at Judith's in Tames Rd but have postponed that visit to another time later in the year.

This meeting will be a dedicated seed day, a few members have managed to save quite a bit of seed and we'll be entering the varieties into the records, and into the collection, also packaging the excess for sale. A good time to be getting fresh seed for autumn plantings.

A new book has been bought for our collection—Organic Growing with Worms by David Murphy. Highly recommended, it's also available from Benalla Library. If you still have books out from the collection, just a reminder to return them to Sandra (5795 1109). Hope to see you all on the 1st. Terry 57905635

MORE WOMEN GATHERING FOR ART

Mandalas - Tuesday 3rd March - drawing mandalas with Lisa Shenton. Bring a felt tipped pen and a piece of paper to draw on.

Indian Lunch - Tuesday 10th March (10.30-1.30) - we would like to come together to cook and eat, if you can cook something Indian, bring the ingredients, and teach everyone else so we can all learn something on the day.

These days are now running on a donation for materials basis. If anyone has anything they could teach us we would love to learn.

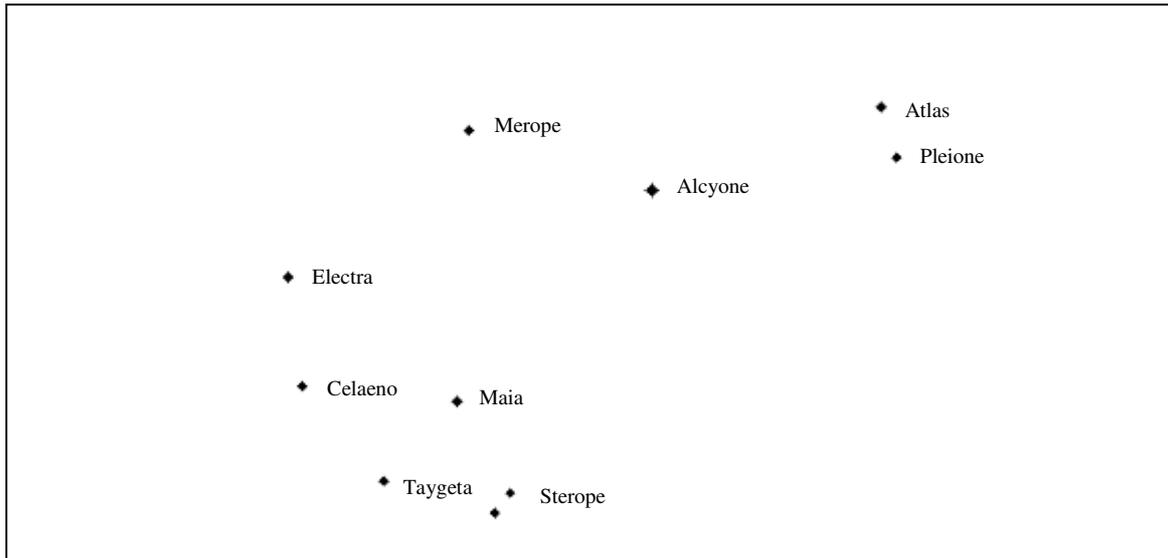
They are every Tuesday 12.30-3.30, except cooking is 10/30-1.30.

Thankyou to the excellent bunch of women who have been coming. We have had a lot of fun.

Enquiries Dana 57905153



Stargazing in Strathbogie



Pleiades

This most famous of all star clusters can be seen in the northern sky just after sunset, it lies on the shoulder blade of the mighty bull, Taurus. Binoculars reveal several dozens of the hundreds of stars in the cluster, and a larger nebulous area spanning three times the diameter of the moon. The Pleiades is about 410 light years away and has been forming out of a cloud of stellar dust for the past 50 million years or so.

The Pleiades have excited interest since antiquity, and have occasionally been treated as a constellation in their own right. For the Hindus they were a flame dedicated to the fire-god Agni, or sometimes a short-handled razor. They have frequently been seen as birds, and were popularly known as “hen and chickens” in medieval Europe. In reference to Taurus’ association with Bacchus, the god of wine and revelry, the Pleiades have been seen as a bunch of grapes.

However, the most enduring and widespread tradition sees this cluster as seven girls or sisters. For the Greeks they were the daughters of Atlas and Pleione, who figure as the eighth and ninth stars of the group. Listed in descending order of brightness, the nine stars including the parents are: Alcyone, Atlas, Electra, Maia, Merope, Taygeta, Pleione, Celaeno and Sterope. It is an interesting test of observation to see how far down the list a star-watcher can get, spotting Alcyone is an easy task but Sterope is usually beyond the range of the naked eye.

Information from The Starlore Handbook (David Joyce)



Landcare News - Rabbit Control - Warren Ripping

A 50% subsidy is available for warren ripping on the Strathbogie Tableland.

The subsidy applies to the hire of plant & operator.

Contact David Jamieson for details (5790 5236, 0448 814 472).



Urgently Needed - Land to Lease

I urgently have to re-locate my wethers and male alpacas. In the short term, for the next 12 months 10 acres would be ok.

I am however seeking to lease land - up to 50 acres (or more) for a long term lease for males and some female alpacas.

An area around Galls Gap Road would be preferable - but at this stage, anywhere around Strathbogie could be suitable

Please contact Robyn Betts- Jaegar Alpacas on 5790 5258 (A.H.) or 57611508 (B.H.) if you can assist

Alpacas (who come from Peru)

Find the Tableland pretty good too;

But the ones who are pets

Of our friend Robyn Betts

Need a home: Can they move in with you?

(Courtesy of Donmil)



