

## From the Committee



**Our Annual General Meeting will be held on September 24th at 10.00am in the Creswick RSL. A light lunch will be served following the meeting to allow us all to catch up.**

The election of office bearers and committee will also take place. Give some thought to joining the committee and helping in the running of our U3A. Nomination forms and documentation will be sent prior to the meeting.

Our Guest Speaker will be Alain Young from **Equip4Life** which is a FREE Government-funded, group health and wellness program. The program makes changing your lifestyle a simple and motivating process for groups of any age or ability. It starts with a one-on-one session with one of their health experts, so they can understand your individual health risks and goals. This leads into 5 group sessions over 6 months that teach you all about healthy eating, physical activity, reducing stress, improving sleep and preventing chronic disease through proven lifestyle modification strategies.

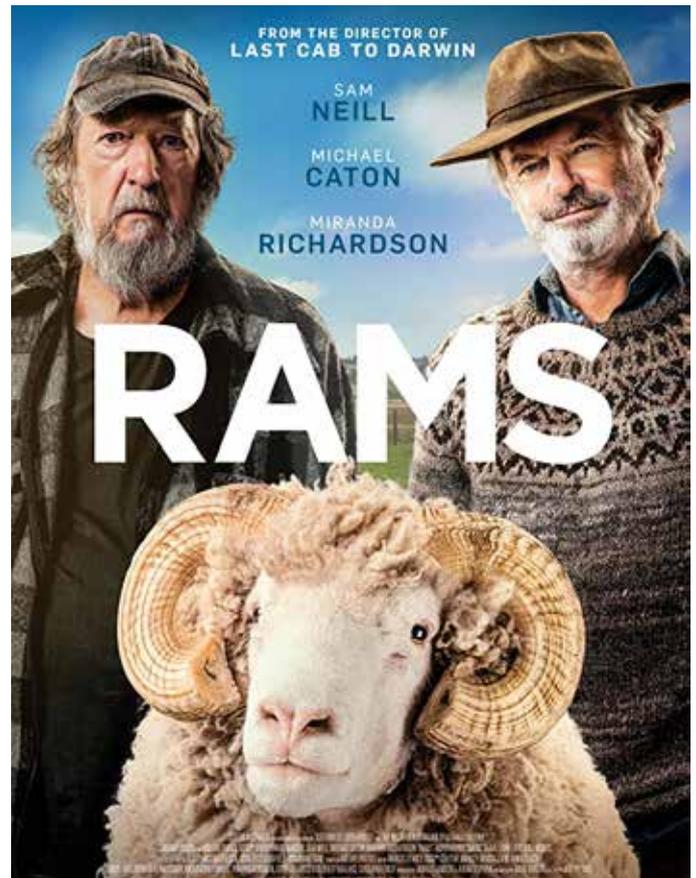
Alain will outline the program and depending on the level of interest, we may run it in Creswick .



**Anne and Robin** are planning on a trip back to Creswick in late August and we are planning a luncheon to catch up with them. We will keep you informed as the date gets closer and we know the restrictions operating at the time.

We are planning on a **Movie Luncheon** at the new cinema in Delacombe, where an Australian comedy-drama called “Rams”, starring Michael Caton and Sam Neill, will be showing soon. The plot is:

*In remote Western Australia, two estranged brothers, Colin (Sam Neill) and Les (Michael Caton), are at war. Raising separate flocks of sheep descended from their family’s prized bloodline, the two men work side by side yet are worlds apart. When Les’s prize ram is diagnosed with a rare and lethal illness, authorities order a purge of every sheep in the valley. While Colin attempts to stealthily outwit the powers that be, Les opts for angry defiance. But can the warring brothers set aside their differences and have a chance to reunite their family, save their herd, and bring their community back together?*



Our **Christmas BBQ** is booked in for the first weekend in December. This will be another mighty day and the weather will be perfect. I cannot vouch for the company; that is up to you to judge.



## Why me?

If you have to ask *Why me?*  
 When you're feeling really blue,  
 When the world has turned against you  
 And you don't know what to do,  
 When it pours colossal raindrops  
 And the road's a winding mess,  
 And you're feeling more confused  
 Than you ever could express.

When the saddened sun won't shine,  
 When the stars will not align,  
 When you'd rather be  
 Inside your bed,  
 The covers pulled  
 Above your head,  
 When life is something  
 That you dread  
 And you have to ask *Why me?*...

Then when the world seems right and true,  
 When rain has left a gentle dew,  
 When you feel happy being you,  
 Please ask yourself *Why me?* then, too.

Excerpt: "Suzie Bitner Was Afraid of the Drain"  
 by Barbara Vance at SuzieBitner.com

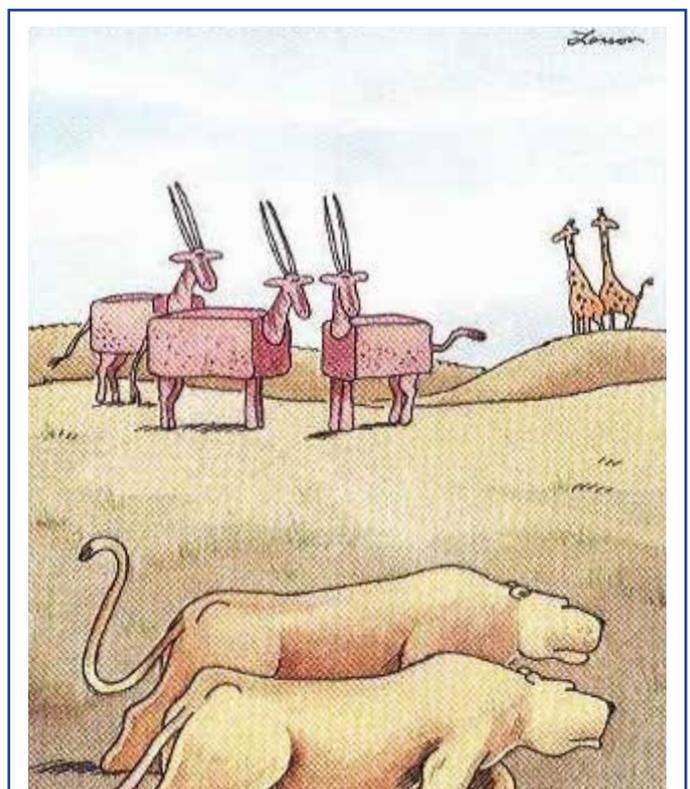


There is a place where the sidewalk ends  
 And before the street begins,  
 And there the grass grows soft and white,  
 And there the sun burns crimson bright,  
 And there the moon-bird rests from his flight  
 To cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black  
 And the dark street winds and bends.  
 Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow  
 We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,  
 And watch where the chalk-white arrows go  
 To the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,  
 And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,  
 For the children, they mark, and the children, they know  
 The place where the sidewalk ends.

*Shel Silverstein*



Knowing the lion's preference for red meat, the spamalopes remained calm but wary.

# Museum of Underwater Art

## Townsville, Australia

**Not many museums literally take your breath away.** But then Australia’s Museum of Underwater Art (MOUA) isn’t like most museums.

The first – and only – underwater art museum in the Southern Hemisphere, the non-profit MOUA is set off the coast of Queensland, 40 to 50 feet below the waves.

The museum is actually spread across four locations, all accessible from the port city of Townsville (an area often overshadowed by more popular destinations nearby, such as Cairns or the Whitsundays).

Its underwater sculpture installations were created to raise awareness of the issues facing the iconic Great Barrier Reef – including coral bleaching and warming water temperatures – and to boost tourism in the area. Designed by underwater sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor, with the support of the Queensland state government, the museum aims to challenge the way we think about ocean conservation, and to help create new areas for coral growth.

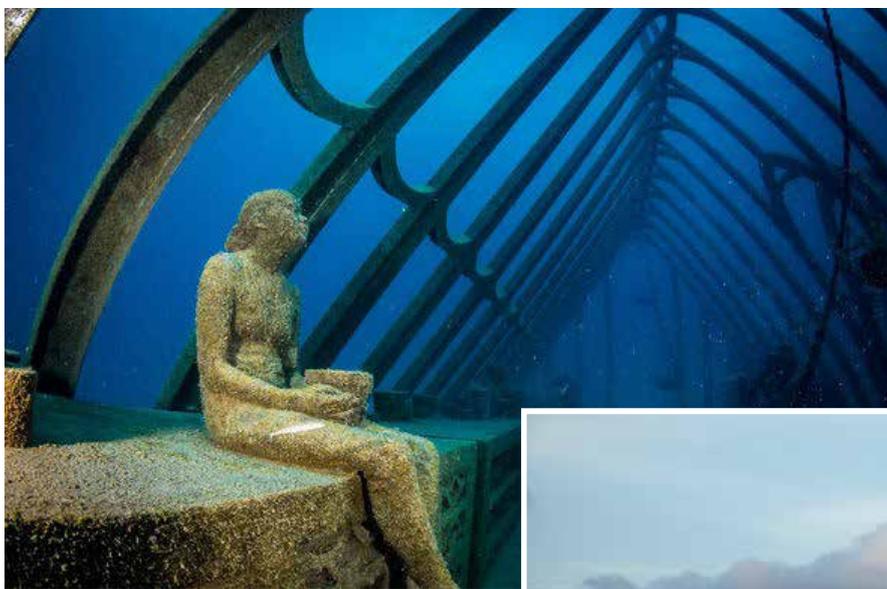
All of these sculptures are anchored to the seabed – except for one. The MOUA’s first installation, unveiled when the museum opened in December 2019, is called “Ocean Siren.”

Standing just off the Strand Jetty of Townsville, it’s made from stainless steel, translucent acrylic, and 202 LED lights. Hooked up to a temperature gauge on Davies Reef – part of the Great Barrier Reef – it changes color as a real-time response to the conditions in the water. As temperatures rise, visitors can watch the sculpture (modeled on a local student and Wulgurukaba descendant named Takoda Johnson) change from a calming blue to an alarming orange and red – a visible, tangible reminder of the dangers facing marine ecosystems.

Scheduled to open in April 2020 – but delayed till later in the year due to the global pandemic – the “Coral Greenhouse” on John Brewer Reef, some 45 miles from Townsville, contains 20 “reef guardian” sculptures. Placed in an underwater greenhouse that divers can enter and explore, and secured on a sandy base, the marine-grade concrete sculptures are covered by coral. The more covered they become, the thinking goes, the more marine life they’ll attract to the reef.

More underwater art installations are scheduled to open off Magnetic Island and Palm Island in 2021.

Here are two examples and if you Google Museum of Underwater Art Townsville you can see this magnificent monument to creative genius.



*Ocean Greenhouse on John Brewer Reef.*



*Ocean Siren standing above the waves.*

## Lennie & Ginger Mick



**It's 1932 and Australia is in the grip of the Great Depression.** One in three workers are unemployed. Decrepit shanty towns hug the outskirts of the big cities. A scrawny rabbit caught in a trap will feed a family for a week. Country roads are filled with broken men walking from one farmhouse to another seeking menial jobs and food.

On the outskirts of the South Gippsland town of Leongatha, an injured farmer lies in bed unable to walk – or work. World War I hero Captain Leo Tennyson Gwyther is in hospital with a broken leg and the family farm is in danger of falling into ruins. Up steps his son, nine-year-old Lennie.

With the help of his pony Ginger Mick, Lennie ploughs the farm's 24 paddocks and keeps the place running until his father can get back on his feet. How to reward him?

Lennie has been obsessively following one of the biggest engineering feats of the era – the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. He wants to attend its opening. With great reluctance, his parents agree he can go.

So Lennie saddles up Ginger Mick, packs a toothbrush, pyjamas, spare clothes and a water bottle into a sack, and begins the 1000+ kilometre (600+ miles) trek to Sydney. Alone.

That's right. A nine year old boy riding a pony from the deep south of Victoria to the biggest and roughest city in the nation. Told you it was a different era.

No social media. No mobile phones. But even then it doesn't take long before word begins to spread about a boy, his horse and their epic trek. The entire populations of small country towns gather on their outskirts to welcome his arrival.

He survives bushfires, is attacked by a "vagabond" and endures rain and cold, biting winds.

When he reaches Canberra he is welcomed by Prime Minister Joseph Lyons, who invites him into Parliament House for tea. When he finally arrives in Sydney, more than 10,000 people line the streets to greet him. He is besieged by autograph hunters. He becomes a key part of the official parade at the bridge's opening.

He and Ginger Mick are invited to make a starring appearance at the Royal Show. Even Donald Bradman, the biggest celebrity of the Depression era, requests a meeting and gives him a signed cricket bat.

A letter writer to The Sydney Morning Herald at the time gushes that "just such an example as provided by a child of nine summers, Lennie Gwyther was, and is, needed to raise the spirit of our people and to fire our youth and others to do things – not to talk only.

"The sturdy pioneer spirit is not dead ... let it be remembered that this little lad, when his father was in hospital, cultivated the farm – a mere child."

When Lennie leaves Sydney for home a month later, he has become one of the most famous figures in a country craving uplifting news. Large crowds wave handkerchiefs. Women weep and shout "goodbye". According to The Sun newspaper, "Lennie, being a casual Australian, swung into the saddle and called 'Toodleloo!'". He finally arrives home to a tumultuous reaction in Leongatha. He returns to school and soon life for Lennie – and the country – returns to normal.

These days you can find a bronze statue in Leongatha commemorating Lennie and Ginger Mick. But Australia has largely forgotten his remarkable feat – and how he inspired a struggling nation.



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## The Three Lost Children Walk & Monument

**On a quiet country lane, on the crest of a hill overlooking Daylesford, is a small stone memorial enshrined with flowers and toys.**

It marks the final chapter of a 150 year old saga of three little boys lost. It started on Sunday June 30 in the cold and wet winter of 1867. Brothers William and Thomas Graham, aged just six and four, went looking for wild goats by the banks of Wombat Creek with neighbour Alfred Burman, aged five. Daylesford at the time was a mix of timber huts and grand edifices built on the back of the gold rush. The boys were seen that afternoon on the outskirts of town and were told by a storekeeper to follow the recently erected telegraph lines back into town. When the three failed to return home that evening their parents raised the alarm. A search began but as darkness fell, the rescue party returned to town without the boys.

The 30th had been a clear and sunny winter's day, and the three boys had been warmly dressed. But that night one of the worst frosts since white settlement hit the Central Highlands covering the ground. The following weeks saw the fledgling community come together as one, with lowly woodcutters and hard rock miners

joining landed squattocracy and mounted police in the search.

Winter gave way to spring with no sign of the missing boys. Then one day a local timber cutter's dog brought a small boot complete with foot into his camp. In a hollow tree, just 200 metres from the woodman's hut, the two smaller boy's bodies were found, huddled together as if protecting each other from the cold. William's re-mains were found scattered nearby. It was assumed he had been outside, waiting for help. Thousands attended the service and burial of the boys and a memorial was built at the Daylesford Cemetery. William and Thomas's father donated a sum of money to the local school and to this day a student at Daylesford Primary receives the Graham Dux award.

The tree in which they died survived for another 80 years until it blew down in a storm in 1950. The remaining stump was burned in a bushfire in 2009. A century and a half since Wilfred, Thomas and Alfred died cold and alone, the memorial is now a place where people still bring tributes and where others come to keep the memory of the boys alive.



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## Who was John La Gerche?

**Many of you will have walked the track named after him but do you know who he was?**

The walk is lovely any time of the year. And soon spring will herald the new growth on the deciduous trees on the walk.

La Gerche was born in 1845 on the island of Jersey in the English Channel. He grew up on the family farm and excelled at school. At the age of 20, he emigrated to Victoria, and, six years later, was running a small sawmill in the Bullarook Forest.

In 1871, he married Elizabeth Nora Bendixon, also from Jersey. Almost nothing is known about his private life, but his granddaughter, Eugenie Johnston, describes him as a very cultured man who loved to read Shakespeare with his wife and six children in the eve-nings.

Powerful neighbouring timber mills forced La Gerche out of business in the early years of his marriage, and he became a public servant. In 1882, he was appointed crown lands bailiff and forester to “supervise the Ballarat & Creswick State Forest and to take legal proceedings under the 1869 Land Act against all persons found cutting or removing timber in the forest”.

The job not only involved the prevention of illegal timber cutting, but growing useful trees for commercial use and reforesting denuded areas. It was a daunting task at a time when trees were regarded as a resource to be exploited and forestry, as a science, scarcely existed.

The fair-minded forester resisted pressure from his superiors in Melbourne to clear the Chinese, in particular, out of the forest. They were old men, he objected, mostly fossickers and vegetable growers, and “likely to die off soon”.

La Gerche had far more trouble from illegal wood cutters and wattle bark strippers (selling to local tanneries). They were his “natural enemies”, responsible for a “great slaughter of saplings”, he wrote.

He would often sleep in the forest at night to prevent the theft of young trees. His diligence, especially in the early years, was not always supported by distant officialdom and often made him unpopular locally.

In 1883, La Gerche embarked on the immense task of restocking the forest. Over the years, he experimented with a range of eucalypts, pines and introduced species. La Gerche planted each tree by hand.

