

National Seniors AUSTRALIA

PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS BRANCH INC

ConnexioNS Newsletter December 2023

Executive Committee

President	Teresa Iwinska
Vice President	Dee Watkinson
Secretary	Lesley Cooney
Treasurer	James McAdam

SUB COMMITTEES

Activities	Lee Brown
Memb/Welfare	Erica De Carlo
Guest Speakers	Erica De Carlo
Newsletter	Bill Wendt
1 Thing about Me	Linda Philp

OUR PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Christmas gives us an opportunity to stop and reflect on our year, the things that we have achieved, the people we have missed and the friends and family that we enjoy.

Christmas can also unite us all to show kindness and caring for the members of our family and community who need a hand up. We are what we give not what we get.

I want to thank our committee Dee, Lesley, James, Erica, Lee, Bill, and Linda for the fantastic, endless work they all do to support our Branch. A harder working committed group of people would be hard to find.

Let's all continue to be kind to others and take care of each other. John and I wish you a healthy, prosperous, peaceful, and joyful Christmas and 2024.

Your President
Teresa Iwinska



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Dorothy Barron	Nola Davies "0" Birthday
Robyn Fisher	Sue Gardiner
Helen Lutz	Joan Mitchell
Jane Morris	Ken Myles
Marie Northcott	Denise Onslow
Helen Parker	Ian Richardson
Ross Symons	



Comments and contributions to the newsletter are very welcome.
Please contact: Bill Wendt on Ph. 0407 565 049 or email bssharp@bigpond.net.au

MEMBERS ACTIVITIES - MELBOURNE CUP LUNCH

All dressed up and ready for "The Race that Stops the Nation". On our arrival we were greeted by Erica De Carlo with Bill Wendt and Steve Watkinson helping those needing to use the lift to enter the dining room, where we were greeted by Linda and Allen Philp and a glass of "Bubbles" or orange juice. Mingling and chatting with everyone, looking chic in their outfits, we were also able to appreciate the wonderful effort our N.S. committee and others had made to create a great horse racing atmosphere.

Max Carrick brought in a fabulous, handcrafted silver cup **won by his grandfather** at a country horse race.

Our wonderful MC, Dee Watkinson, introduced the afternoon's programme with an interlude between Lunch, Mains and Dessert for horse racing jokes,



An enjoyable 3 course lunch was served promptly, by friendly staff, followed by Lee Brown's activities which included a table quiz in the form of a crossword with some interesting and sometimes taxing questions all horse racing related. Lee also organized a well patronised horse race with 6 participants moving a step forward according to their number on the dice being thrown.

Three races were run, and the winners were James McAdam, Maryanne Black (a visitor) and Sue Scott. Thank you, Lee, for all the fun activities.

Our *Fashion of the Field* winners were Anne Cross for the Quirkiest hat, Vera Gowling, best dressed lady, and our best dressed gentleman went to Bill Wendt in his racy pink shirt. Well done!



There was much anticipation and excitement before the race, everyone hoping their horse would win. John Urquhart with his assistant Max Carrick conducted professional \$10 and \$5 Sweeps which were very well patronised.

Continued On Next Page

MELBOURNE CUP LUNCH (CONTINUED)

The final results saw some very lucky and very happy winners. Our President, Teresa assisted by drawing the horses for each sweep.



Our venue, The Town Green Bistro also donated 5 X \$20 vouchers which were placed to the underside of selected chairs. There were 5 very happy members.

The Afternoon was a lot of fun and a great time had by all who attended. We must thank our wonderful enthusiastic committee and others for all their time and effort because without them it would not have happened.

Helen Lutz



Mom: "Leave the darn sign in the kitchen where it belongs!"

BOOK REVIEW

"Just one Wish"

Author Rachael Johns

A fascinating story about three generations of women and their choices in life. A grandmother, a single mother and scientist and renowned feminist in her era. A TV goddess with her own show titled "Happy Happy Housewife". A tenacious journalist with a popular newspaper, in charge of the "Weekend magazine". At a crossroads in their lives they embark on a celebratory trip together but instead of bringing them closer, the holiday lifts the lid on a fifty year old secret that is life changing for everyone. A moving read.

Anne Jackson

HUNTER VALLEY LIGHTS & WINERIES TOUR

Today started when 36 members left Port Macquarie on their 3-day trip to the Hunter Valley. Most "carpooled", and this gave us a chance to learn more about each other.

Our first stop was at Thornton where we all met and visited the oldest continually operating sheepskin factory in Australia, Mortel's.



This was a massive factory and showroom complex. We all took a tour of the factory and were shown the various procedures in the manufacture of a large range of UGG boots.

The attached museum showed

many old machines that were used in the early days of production.



It also told the story of the growth of the business from the early 1950's to the present site which has nearly been outgrown. It was interesting to learn that the factory produces only 2% of waste with even the small offcuts used for many ingenious items like pet toys and souvenirs.



Our next stop was Restaurant 19 at Pokolbin for a nice lunch stop before heading off to our first winery, Ivanhoe, just a short drive away.

HUNTER VALLEY LIGHTS & WINERIES TOUR



Here we were treated to a wine tasting with a selection of cheeses, together with a talk by the owner as to the best way to handle the various wines and a lesson in the various soils where the various types of grapes were grown.

It was here that after a sunny warm day turned into a torrential downpour, which could have put an end to our trip to the lights tonight.



We then headed to the Mercure Resort Hotel at Pokolbin where we had free time to shop at the village shops next door, or as most of us did, we had rest time in our room. It was later in the afternoon that we shifted to "plan B" for tonight's entertainment. We decided to have an early dinner at Harrigan's Irish Pub hoping that the weather would clear up.



By 7.30, we got our wish and headed off a short distance to what would be the largest Christmas light display most of us had ever seen.



HUNTER VALLEY LIGHTS & WINERIES TOUR

The display covered a massive 18 acres and was a great way to spend a few hours.



It was then time to tuck in for a good night's sleep to be ready for day two tomorrow.

Friday morning after our breakfast, we had free time to try shopping, chocolate tasting, and checking out another winery. There was no sign of wasting any time.

At 12 noon we all met at "The Two Fat Blokes" winery just a short 15-minute drive from the Mercure. We all gathered in an outside covered area where we met our hostess Julz.

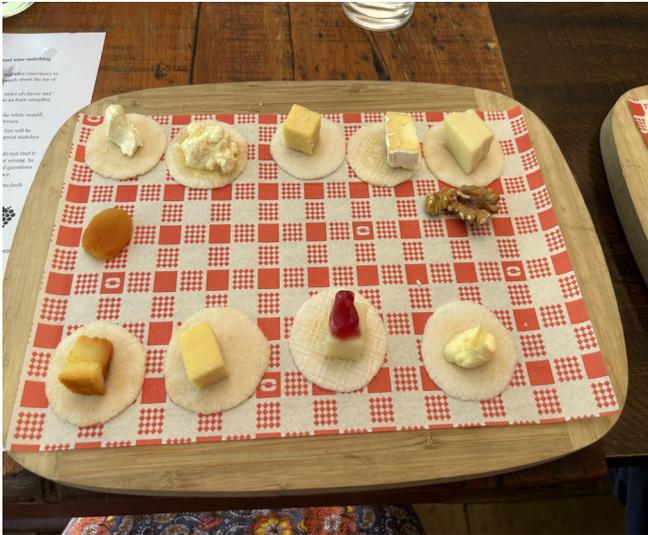


After being seated we were given a history of this winery, which again was family owned. Again, we learned a similar lesson to the one at Ivanhoe, only this time with a real "WAG".

HUNTER VALLEY LIGHTS & WINERIES TOUR

Julz's sense of humour stayed with us for the entire experience. Here, we sampled 9 different wines mated with 9 different cheeses (not to be moved out of order under the fear of death).

As the lunch menu was not



available today, after making our purchases, we headed off to find another winery or two to visit and sample. We spent some free time later in the afternoon until we all met at the hotel for our "night to remember".

Our event tonight was a dress up in something "w" related. Pre-dinner drinks followed by a fully catered for, sit down, three course meal. This would be followed by a quiz on what we had learned from our wine tastings, "sing song", "joke telling" session together with the judging of the best dressed male and female.

To say the least, there were some amazing outfits with lots of thought used. Our MC for the evening, Australia's Cultural Attache, Sir Les Patterson, (aka John Urquhart), really dressed for the part.

Other dress-ups of note were



President Teresa (a great looking witch, complete with broom), Jakob as a well-dressed ("William Tell") and Helen & Walter as (Wee Willy Winkie) and (Where's Wally), the latter being a worthy winner.



HUNTER VALLEY LIGHTS & WINERIES TOUR



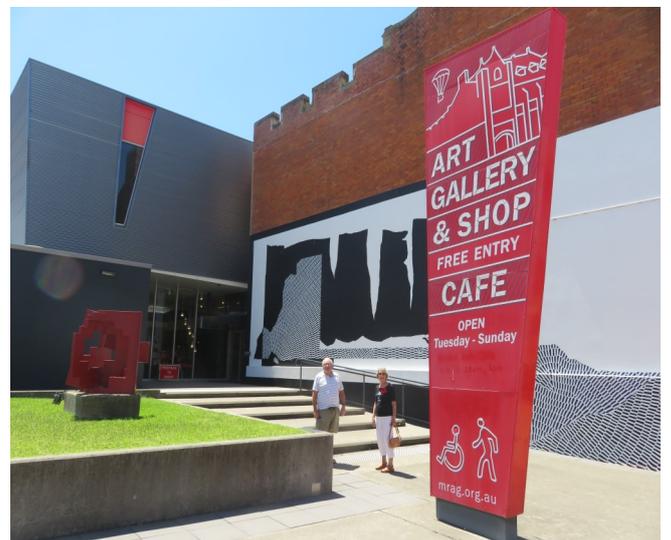
It was then off to our rooms for a good night's sleep in readiness for another busy day ahead.

Another fabulous night of fun and friendship.

Saturday's activities started after breakfast and a 10.30 checkout from the Mercure. Some members had commitments either at home or at other destinations and headed off while the rest of us took a short trip down the road to a local vineyard where a Craft Market was set up. There were many stalls set up displaying locally made crafts and artwork. It was supported by many of us who purchased a range of various items.



We then travelled to Maitland to visit their Art Gallery where we saw many displays of art and crafts in the multi-storey building. It was interesting to learn that in the front of the building on two levels, in 1910 it housed a girls' technical college, featuring cooking, sewing among other subjects.



In 1914 a boys' section was added to the rear featuring trade subjects. At ground level at the entrance was a small gallery which formed the original Art Gallery. Unfortunately in 1955, the building was inundated with flood waters reaching 1.5 metre high destroying everything.

HUNTER (CONTINUED)

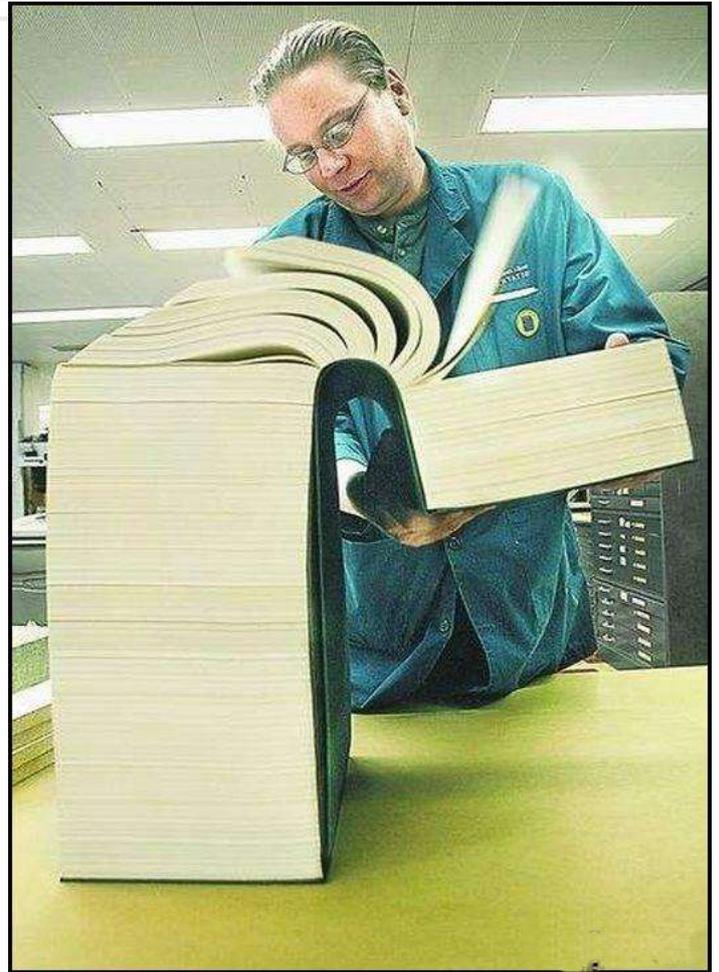
Fortunately, it was insured.



After a lunch break at the café at the gallery, it was into the cars for the trip back home.

Special thanks must go to John and Teresa for the massive amount of organization and planning that made these three days of fun and friendship and relaxation and one we will all remember.

By Bill Wendt.



**Understanding Women
Now in paperback.**



It should be noted the work that our "Front Of House" attendance officers, Gavan & Pamela Pead have put in over many years. They were always there to check us all in, collect our entrance fees, and mark us all off for lunch at Settlers Inn. They are still a valued couple who have opted for some well-deserved free time. They were always smiling and welcoming on the front desk. Thank you both for your valuable contribution to our branch, A hard act to replace.

PLAYERS THEATRE– JENNY GOULD & BILL HARROW

We were delighted with our speakers, Jenny Gould and Bill Harrow, who entertained, amused and informed us on the history of our own Players Theatre.

Jenny's husband, Terry, a pragmatic engineer, was the passionate and determined driving force behind the dream – "A theatre to call their own". Plans were drawn up showing a steeply raked auditorium seating 225 with perfect viewing and acoustics.

Hastings Council gave the Players the site and a 40-year lease was negotiated with the Crown Lands Department so, with the theatre dream and great enthusiasm, raising funds became a priority. In 1975 the federal government offered a grant of \$75,000 which, with the support from the community, building commenced. Alas, this support was abolished, and the "dark years" of vandalism, damage and decay caused the site to be labelled "bombsite – blight on the landscape". The Royal Shakespeare Company from England made a generous donation to the theatre. The Players members were always intent on raising money – using the site to film publicity shots – and continuing a busy schedule performing in a variety of venues around town receiving an enormous amount of publicity in the newspapers – both good and bad.

Terry was appointed director of a play "The Long, The Short and the Tall" set during WW2.

The stable of actors from which he could choose were either too young – too old – or too female so – down to the RSL at drinking time and burly brickies and builders were encouraged (with a few beers) to become, in full army uniform and with Lee Enfield 303 rifles, part of the show. The smallest of these draftees was commandeered to play a Japanese soldier. A success with a great deal of fun! They toured with the Aussie classic play "Dimboola" in town and the Hastings area and even to the Beechwood Hall where they played to an audience of 3 (one of which was a dog).

In 1982, money was available from a Federal Government Grant, but community labour had to be used so Terry had to oversee many unenthusiastic drink drivers who were sentenced to community service. Now the theatre was finished to an operable stage and opened in 1984 to the lavish production of the "Pirates of Penzance". Players were presenting 5-7 productions a year until 1993 when the worst news – the theatre was on fire!! An arsonist had piled a lot of costumes against the wall and set them on fire – everything burnt to a cinder however, because of the construction of concrete slabs, the actual theatre only suffered smoke and water damage. It had to be completely refurbished and, with the massive support of the community, it was up and running again.

In 2011 Terry was awarded an OAM for his service to the performing arts but unfortunately, he passed away days before the official announcement.

PLAYERS THEATRE (CONTINUED)

A very worthy recipient and we thank him for his foresight, enthusiasm and hard work in creating our Players theatre.

So, for the past 30 years the theatre has gone from strength to strength presenting musicals such as Brigadoon, My Fair Lady, Sound of Music and lately, to the enjoyment of so many of our National Seniors members, the wonderful "Me and my Girl" due in part to the presentation by Jenny & Bill.

By Erica De Carlo.



WILLING & ABLE – All Together in Jindalee Road.

Our National Seniors Group has chosen Willing & Able to be our charity in 2023/4 and has already held a very successful auction to support them. The following is a note from our contact at the organization, Linda Elbourne:

Willing and Able have continued to work hard this year to strengthen community ties and give back where possible to the groups and community who so loyally support them.

They have been busy exploring ways to expand on their positive environmental impact by advancing their recycling and reuse effort, Willing & Able are committed to continue to reduce landfill. Some big changes in November have seen the relocation of their Renovation and Recycling Warehouse, Return and Earn Centre and Woodworking to 38 Jindalee Road, which is directly across the road from the Op Shop and office.

It is hoped the move will facilitate a better shopping experience for customers by having all the businesses located together, it also means the shopping space in the OP Shop will now be doubled in size.

The sorting areas and workspaces will also be more structured as a result. This in turn will allow for more training opportunities and better support for the team; there are currently 44 supported employees.

The Grand Opening Day for these improved ventures was held on November 22nd, it was a chance to celebrate the move with the team and enjoy a BBQ and some cake.

You can drop into see all of this ...and why not enjoy a coffee from the Coffee Bar whilst you are there!



WAUCHOPE SHOPPING, GOLF & LUNCH

This was a great day to end our monthly activities. Six brave members hit off at 8 am from Wauchope Golf course. We did get wet at times but finished an enjoyable round of golf at 12.30 pm in time to join the rest of the crew who went shopping at Wauchope in the morning for lunch. Again, we learned more about the small group of players and thoroughly enjoyed their company and some really good golf.



24 exhausted members rallied, with glass in hand, at the Wauchope Golf Club after pursuing bargains in many stores and chasing that little white ball around 18 very wet fairways. One bedraggled member had to scurry into the Pro shop to purchase dry clothing – score not recorded - but is still smiling.

We women, cards at the ready, visually devoured the wonderful, decorated windows at the Department Store and then, with a 30% discount offered, absolutely cleared quite a few racks of clothing and decorations. What woman can resist a bargain – do we need it? NO!! Do we want it because it is a bargain?

YES!! Card produced and smiles all around. Christmas presents, decorations, dresses and shoes packaged with a smile (from the lovely assistants and ourselves) What fun – and where to next?



Up and down and in and out of all the many shops, brows furrowed, bags becoming very heavy but, brave and determined, we arrived at "Circle of Friends" and "The Outlet" where we were generously offered a 10% discount voucher. Again, the bargains were absolutely too hard to resist – and we didn't (resist that is). Dresses, slacks, paper napkins (total bargain) knick knacks were slavishly purchased and stored in our cars because – we HAD to drive to our next destination "Wauchope Creative Hub Co-op". There, our eyes bulged as did our shopping bags. These very creative people welcomed us and attempted to tell us what was available at this treasure trove but we were already enthralled. Felted soaps and scarves, quilted gift tags, mens' shed woodwork, paintings, resin plates and decorations, quilts, hats, and far too many articles to describe.

MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

WAUCHOPE (CONTINUED)

What a find – and so to rest ourselves and our cards and brag about our bargains.

It was then off to lunch at the Wauchope Country Club Restaurant where



many tales of the bargains and the golf were exchanged.

A lovely shopping day – thank you Lee.

By Erica & Bill

A SPECIAL THANKS

National Seniors would like to thank **Very Much**, the team at **Lake Innes Village Pharmacy**, for their support in providing an amazing Gift Package for our raffle at the Xmas Lunch. They run a very friendly and efficient pharmacy service with a fabulous selection of chemist and giftware items. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.



EDITORIAL

As you will have seen by the contents of this newsletter, it has been one full of fun and great activities that were all well attended. It was also great to see that the last few General Monthly meetings have had numbers attending well over the 60 marks. This with the quality of our guest speakers has really helped interest new members. With no meetings until February, it only leaves our Christmas Party (which is must do) to round off a fantastic year. Please remember to book your place at the party and pay by the due date.

On behalf of your hard-working Newsletter team, please enjoy your break, have fun with your family and friends, and more importantly, **DRIVE SAFELY**. See you all in 2024.

Bill Wendt

SHARPENING FUNDRAISER

at

OUR NEW YEAR BREAKFAST

Tuesday 9th January McInherney Park. 8.30 am.

This is a chance to have your home equipment sharpened professionally at a cost well below the normal cost price. The best part is that not only do you benefit from the deal, **but the total funds paid will be donated back to the branch on the day to go towards subsidized projects that are coming up that again will benefit the members.**

Items available for sharpening include.

Knives (including serrated), Scissors (all types including dressmakers, Grooming, and pinking shears). Secateurs, Hedge clippers, Axes and Tomahawks, Chisels, and Planer Blades, handheld Tree Loppers.

(Please note that we will not sharpen saw blades of any type, chain saw blades, or electric hedge trimmers).

Please feel free to ask your neighbours, family, and friends if they would like to take advantage of the service.

The cost per item is.

\$7.00. Per Item

PROCEDURE

Your sharpening plus **THE CORRECT MONEY IN CASH** must be wrapped in a plastic bag or towel, secured with a rubber band, **A NOTE WITH YOUR NAME ON** and left in the blue crate **WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE VENUE. YOUR SHARPENING WILL BE DONE WHILE YOU ENJOY MIXING AT THE BREAKFAST.**

This will not only benefit the members and the club but if successful will continue as an annual fundraising event.

All work is fully guaranteed