

New book: Warrnambool – This is home



Me – Carol Altmann – with my self-published tribute to my hometown of Warrnambool that will be launched on August 19.

[box] “Warrnambool – This is home” is limited to 500 signed and numbered copies: \$30 plus \$8 flat postage anywhere in Australia. You can [order a book direct from the author by direct deposit or Paypal](#). Books are also available from [Warrnambool Books](#), Fairy St. [/box]

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] W [/dropcap]hen I first returned to live in my hometown of Warrnambool in early 2013 after being away for more than 20 years, I had a new appreciation for the ties that bind people from this seaside city.

Despite Warrnambool now being a place of 32,000 people, we all feel like we know each other and, if we don’t, we spend a few minutes playing what one friend described to me as “the game”.

This is where you ask each other what school you went to, or the names of your parents/brothers/sisters, or if you knew such-and-such and – usually – within no more than four or five moves, “bingo!” you have made a connection.

But it is also more than that.

It is the environment that also connects us: the wild ocean, the bent trees, the Norfolk pines, the whales, the restless wind...

And it is even more than that.

It is the iconic people and places that are so familiar to us and that we remember so fondly, even nostalgically, as we all age and they start to slip away. Names like Swintons, Kermonds, Macks Snacks, Ryan’s Removals, The Savoy, Rauert’s shoe store, Politis fish and chips, the Matera Brothers and on it goes.

I chose 30 of these icons to photograph and write briefly (snapshots) about – I could have chosen many more – as a small collection of some of the places and faces that connect us as being “from Warrnambool”, even if we live many miles away.



Warrnambool identities: John, Maroulla and Peter Sycopoulis in front of their Kepler St family home. The book is dedicated to Maroulla, who passed away earlier this year.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] A [/dropcap]s the book unfolded, I felt an increasing sense of urgency to capture these special places and faces before it was too late, because there is no doubt Warrnambool is facing unprecedented challenges that are seeing many businesses close and not replaced by others.

In the 16 months since I started this book, the Savoy has closed, the Criterion Hotel building has been pulled down and Lucas Bros butchers was sold out of the family. Just this week it was announced that Capricorn Records would come to an end next month after 35 years.

Warrnambool is changing and, as with any change, there is both an anticipation about what might come and a sadness about what has been lost.

This book is my attempt to preserve some of our shared and precious past.

As I say in the introduction: "Whether you live in Warrnambool, or you simply carry it in your heart, this is a tribute to the place by the sea that no matter how widely we travel, we will always call home".

* * *

***Warrnambool – This is home* features the following:** Swinton's Supermarket (Val Grundy/Dot Grauer); Lucas Bros Butchers (Ken Lucas); Materia Bros (Mario, Paul and Mark Materia); the Sycopoulis family home (John, Maroulla and Peter Sycopoulis); Kermond's Snack Bar (Rob and Bill Kermond); Mack's Snacks (Graeme, Keith and Paul McLeod); Savoy Restaurant (Alan Tampion); Rauert's Shoe Store (Ron and Peter Rauert); The Bowl (Lucas Reid and Andrea Occhipinti); Politis Seafood (Helen, George and Chris Politis); Robert Ulmann whale mural (Justy Ulmann); Warrnambool Surf Lifesaving Club (Lisa Logan (Cole), Ben Logan, Ron Cole); The Warrnambool Standard (Peter Collins and Peter Fletcher); The Warrnambool Woollen Mill site (Mary Jackson); Chittick's Bakery (Ian Robb and John Chittick); Capitol Cinema (Ivan Berndt); Fletcher Jones Gardens (Lex Caldwell); The Quarry/ art collectives (Claire Drylie) Ryan's Removals (Frank and Graeme Ryan); 3YB radio (Steve Welsh and Lyndsay Hill); W'bool Grand Annual Steeplechase (Brian McIver); W'bool Aquarium (Donna Krebs (Livingston)); Timor St Newsagency (Brian Mills); Bojangles Pizza (Simon Mugavin); Isles General Store (Ken Isles); McNeil's BP Service Station (Noel McNeil); the War Memorial Angel; T&G clocktower (Peter Hogg); The Criterion Hotel.

[box type="bio"] ***Warrnambool – This is home* will be limited to 500 numbered and signed editions. If you would like to order a copy (\$30 plus \$8 flat postage if required) from Bluestone Magazine, [you can do so here](#). Books are also on sale at [Warrnambool Books](#).** [/box]

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Warrnambool – This is home



[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] T [/dropcap]his limited edition book is no longer available for general sale.

The last two copies will be offered as a Bluestone Magazine subscriber-only giveaway in February, so if you are a Bluestone subscriber, keep an eye peeled.

Thankyou so much to everyone who has bought this book, read it, loved it and taken the time to write to say how much they enjoyed this small tribute to our hometown.

[Warrnambool – This is home](#)

Carol

Unravelling a tale of love in Port Fairy



Port Fairy glass artists Freya Marriott and Robert Gatt are behind an exhibition being prepared for

Whale Bone Gallery on the fantastical lives of Peregrine Devereux and Katherine Wakefield.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] A [/dropcap] love story quite unlike any other will be captured in a new exhibition at Port Fairy's Whale Bone Gallery next month.

The romantic story of 19th century English scientist Peregrine Devereaux and his adventurous lover, Katherine (Kitty) Wakefield, an English explorer, is being slowly pieced together by Port Fairy artists **Robert Gatt** and **Freya Marriott** who have become entranced by the couple – and they are not alone.

People are invited to follow the unfolding story around the couple on [Facebook under the page Project_R1000](#), which Robert also used to document progress on his installation, *Alien Crash Site!*, that he created and exhibited with his son, **Hugh**, on Port Fairy's Civic Green late last year.

Then, as now, Robert has immersed his latest project in mystery and intrigue, and the full story will only be revealed when *The Third Expedition of Kitty Wakefield* opens at the Whale Bone Gallery on the weekend of September 5-7.

The exhibition will feature a range of artefacts that Robert and Freya already have in their possession which relate to Peregrine and Kitty's story, in particular to events in the early 1880s when the couple was exploring and travelling through Africa.

"The idea is to take (the viewer) on a journey...and to explore the idea of storytelling," says Robert.

"It looks at where we get our information from and the facts we gather to tell a story," he adds.



A pocket-sized brass travelling microscope is one of the artefacts that will appear in the exhibition next month.

A At the time of writing, Robert had six more Kitty and Peregrine artefacts to photograph and post on the Project_R1000 page, to add to the three that have already been revealed.

These include a gorgeous antique travelling microscope, made of brass, that is only 10cm tall and perfect for the pocket of an explorer like Kitty who, in Robert's mind, represents all of the early female explorers whose names have been lost to time.

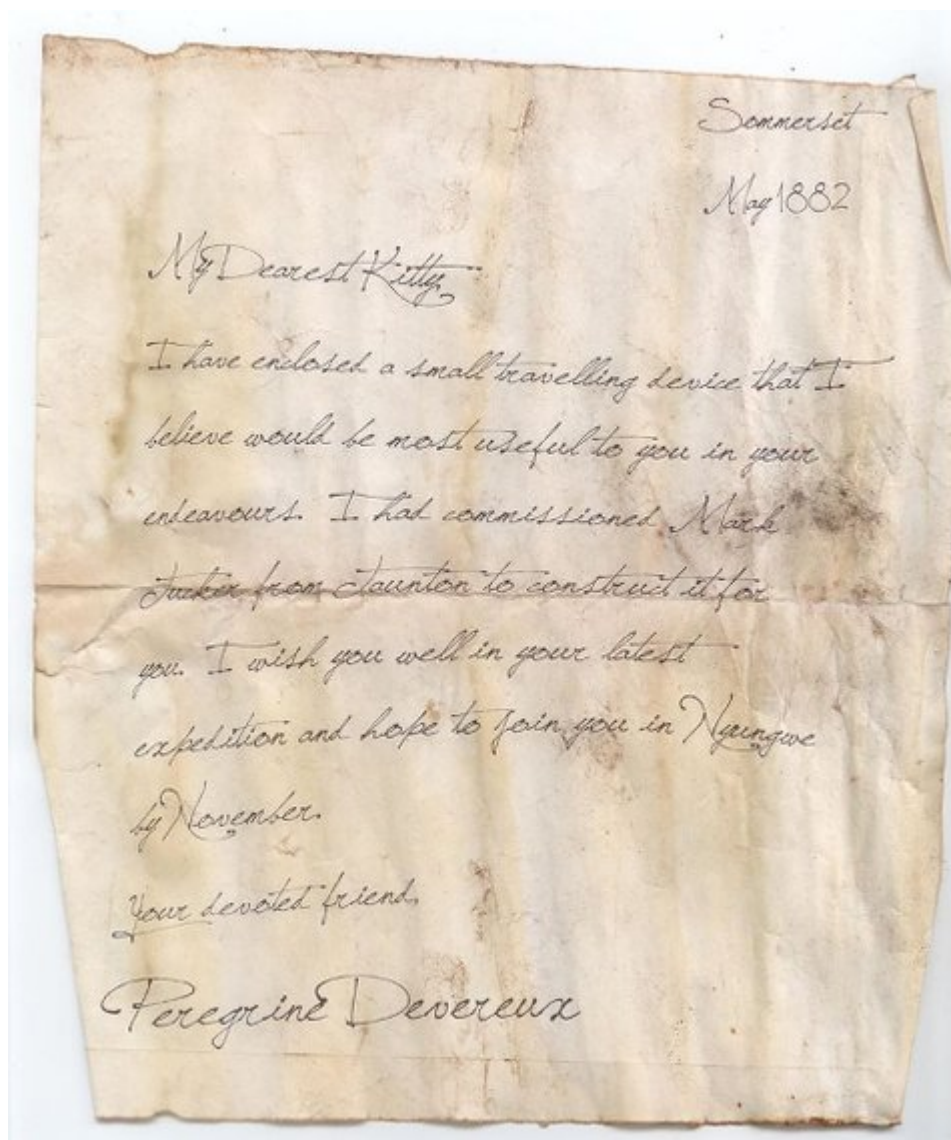
Another artefact is a beautifully hand-crafted and romantic letter from Peregrine to Kitty, dated May 1882, that was

stuffed inside the barrel of the microscope and reveals that the instrument was gift between the pair.

Robert has also posted an image of a marriage certificate detailing the union between Peregrine, at the age of 36, and Kitty, aged 31, on October 26, 1887. The certificate, which Robert describes as “gold to me”, came about as a result of his spending many hours on his computer.

By the time the exhibition opens, Robert and Freya will have accumulated more artefacts, including three sets of glass objects from Kitty’s collection, and a rather unusual piece linked to Peregrine, called a “plasmic resonance detector” that, as a scientist, he was keen to test in the field.

What a plasmic resonance detector looks like – and if it worked – will be one of many intriguing elements revealed next month. In the meantime, you can follow the project’s progress on the [Facebook page here.](#)



[box] **The Whale Bone Gallery is at 39a Bank St, Port Fairy.**
Ph: (03) 5568 2855[/box]

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Why am I running? Roy Reekie ALP



Labor candidate Roy Reekie will be aiming for the swinging voter when he takes on Dr Denis Napthine for the seat of South West Coast at the November state election.

[box] Roy Reekie has chosen a Q&A style for his piece. The questions were selected by an interested observer, not *Bluestone Magazine*. [/box]

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] R [/dropcap]oy, the margin of the Liberal Party in South West Coast is nearly 12%. No-one else seems to have been interested in running for the Labor Party in this election. Why are you running?

When I first ran in 1999, it was about getting a few key issues on the agenda – logging of native forests in the Otways and the impact of pokies. We had a win in getting logging stopped in the Otways, but pokies are still the scourge they were.

When I ran again in 2002, it was about building some momentum to make the South West marginal. We got awfully close (well under 1%) but couldn't quite get there.

I knew that was about as close as we might ever get, but felt honour-bound to run again in 2006. That was about making Dr Napthine accountable for the things he had promised in 2002 and trying to squeeze as much as we could out of our seat's marginal status. We got a huge amount for South West Healthcare and multi-millions for Portland Hospital and schools in Warrnambool, Portland and Port Fairy. We got Port Fairy its public swimming pool and got funding for Stage 2 of South West TAFE's infrastructure project. We got Warrnambool's new courthouse built.

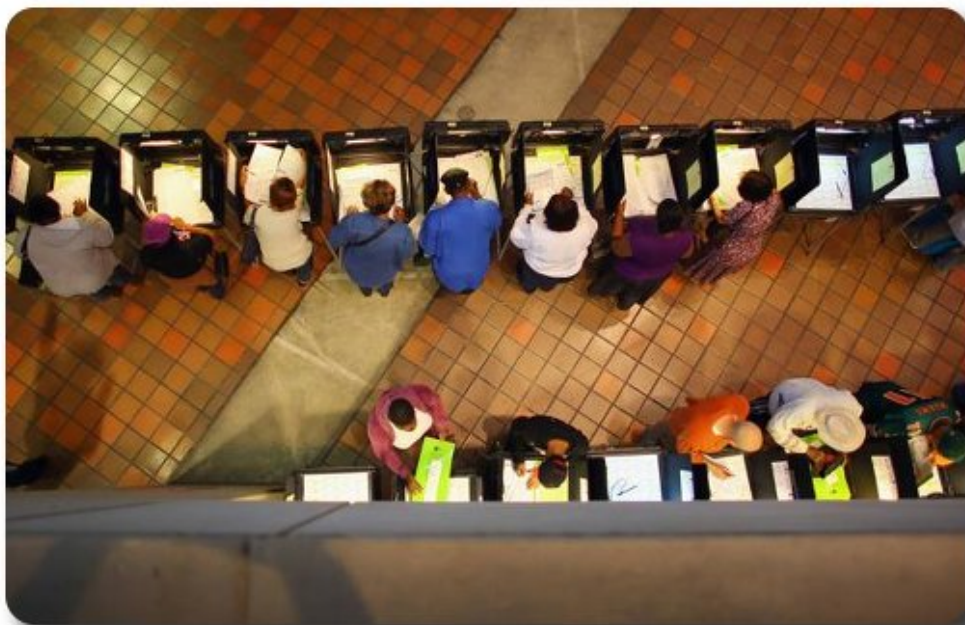
I left the region at the end of 2006 to live and work overseas, returning to Australia in 2009 to work in Melbourne, so I missed the 2010 State election down here.

Now that I'm back home, I feel that I have something to offer to get our region back into marginal territory.

This is largely about encouraging – enabling – people to think carefully about how they vote and why they vote a certain way

and what it might take for them to change the way they vote, to make their vote count and to make it work towards our region becoming relevant to both parties by being marginal. People down here tend to vote blindly the way their parents did. I want them to think about it.

I want both major parties to be forced to think about how they represent and support our region. I want them to fight for our votes. I look at Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo and what they get each budget and think 'why not the South West?' We need a strong voice for the South West that is listened to because both parties have to pay attention. I can help achieve that.



Mobilising voters to think about their vote and make the seat of South West Coast marginal again is at least part of Roy Reekie's motivation for running.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] Y [/dropcap] **ou said you were overseas. Where were you?**

I spent about five years in total in Scotland. I was working on addressing anti-social behaviour – neighbour disputes, vandalism, community issues, youth crime, family violence – of which there is a lot in Glasgow. I learnt a helluva lot doing

that work, and living in that environment – about myself and about what makes communities tick. I came back with a new set of skills and a renewed enthusiasm for community and an admiration for the power of community-based action. I'm keen to apply those skills here now.

What's your vision for the South West then?

Having travelled in the UK and Europe – and lived recently in Melbourne, I can honestly say that the South West is a special place with unlimited potential. I can sense that it has changed, matured. It really has amazing potential – mainly in food production, but also in renewable energy generation and tourism.

As a young person, I left Warrnambool to go to uni and to start my career. I returned to raise my children here and now they've all left for work and career advancement. Having been away and returned again, I've noticed that a lot of people my age are returning, like migrating whales.

My vision for the South West is that we have an economy, supported by social infrastructure (for health, education and transport), that makes it possible for our young people to either stay here for their education and careers or to return quicker. We need to keep our best and brightest connected to the South West and support them and welcome them when they return, and we need to provide those who prefer to stay with opportunities to advance their careers. This will help us to achieve our region's potential. I want to be part of that.

What are your chances of winning?

Let's be realistic – not good. But let's also have a red hot go at getting the seat as close as possible, and some fun in the process.

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Reviving classic Australian furniture by hand



Take a seat: Meg Jarrett and partner Jack van Roo are the creative force behind Be Seated, in Portland, where they revive classic mid-century Australian furniture.

A warning: by the end of this story, you will probably remember all of the stunning Australian-made furniture that you either threw away, saw poking out of a skip, or gave to a flatmate in the 1980s, and may end up in tears.

Despite working all day surrounded by chairs, stools and couches in various states of repair and disrepair, **Jack van Roo** and partner **Meg Jarrett** rarely have time to put their feet up.

Since opening their two-person business – Be Seated – early last year, the pair has been tapping into the huge demand for original, mid-century Australian furniture (1950s and 60s) that has been restored to its beautiful, retro glory.

Names like [Fred Lowen](#) (Tessa and Fler brands), Grant and Mary [Featherston](#), [Fred Ward](#) and [Clement Meadmore](#) have become the ultimate in collectable cool – not to mention quality – and

their original furniture pieces have become hotly sought after both nationally and internationally.

It seems more than a little odd, then, to find Jack and Meg operating not from a high-profile shop in inner-suburban Melbourne, where they used to live, but a shed in the Portland industrial estate, half way between the port and the aluminium smelter.

“It started with our own house,” is how Jack explains it.

“We bought Meg’s grandparents house about 10 years ago, supposedly for holidays, and we decided we liked it so much that we would move into it,” he says.



It began with a house: the Tag Walter’s designed 1960s house that Meg’s grandmother owned in Portland and which she and Jack moved into 10

years ago.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] T [/dropcap]he Portland house is a 1960s original designed by legendary Warrnambool architect **"Tag" (William) Walter** with the long clean lines, large windows and open fireplaces surrounded by stone that became his hallmark.

Jack and Meg couldn't help but slowly fill the place with furniture from the era and so began their love affair with mid-century design and designers.

It wasn't until early last year, however, that they combined their skills to open a furniture restoration business that can cater for all eras, but specialises in mid-century pieces.

"There is nothing made of timber, in my view, that can't be fixed," says Jack, who has spent most of his life working in and around the furnishing and upholstery industry.

"We had one lady who brought a chair in and an arm dropped off in transit, so we replaced the arm and it was impossible to tell the original from the replacement," he says by way of example.

Meg has a background in interior design and fashion retail and uses her skills and contacts to source and select top quality, natural fabrics from around Australia to use for re-covering.

Between them, they have created a slice of *Mad Men* heaven, with a shed full of classic pieces that have been either found in their travels, or brought in by others to be reupholstered, re-stitched, re-stained, or whatever other painstaking method is required to bring it back to life.



Jack with a work in progress – an early colonial chair – which, like with all of his work, is painstakingly restored by hand.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] T[/dropcap]heir clients, similarly, come from far and wide, and include some of Melbourne's top architecture and design academics, but also local graziers.

"We have seen some very, very tired furniture that has been dragged out of the shearing shed or wherever and brought in here, sometimes literally in pieces," Meg says.

"And it is not just about how much a piece might be worth, but how much people love it. If they love it, they want to see it brought back to life."

All of Jack and Meg's work is done by hand – they don't use acid dips or harsh machinery to take short-cuts – and one piece can take many, many hours to complete.

"It can be very dirty and it is very time consuming, but it is also incredibly rewarding," Meg says.



Meg comes from a background in interior design during which she developed a knowledge and love of quality fabrics.



A pile of ugly wooden school chairs – destined for the tip – have been given a new splash of colourful life.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] J[/dropcap]ack has handled hundreds of pieces of furniture, but admires the simplicity of the classic Australian designs – Clement Meadmore and Featherston are among his favourites.

Unfortunately to own an original, pristine Featherston lounge suite could cost around \$20,000 compared to several hundred pounds when they were first sold.

Perhaps Jack and Meg might stumble across a wad of cash hidden in the springs of a secondhand chair picked up at an auction?

“I’ve never come across anything like that so far,” Jack says with a laugh.

“The best I can offer are two rings that look like they come from a member of a bkie gang.”

[box type="bio"] **Be Seated is at 22 George St, Portland. Ph: Meg 0419 579 896. Follow them on [Facebook here](#).** [/box]