

Fancy a lunch with the Farmer's Wife?



CLOSED MARCH 23 – winner Louise Parlour

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap] love to reward our [Bluestone Club members](#) (our wonderful paid subscribers) for supporting our online magazine and helping us to produce a quality read each week.

Already we have given away a number of great prizes and this week we are offering one paid subscriber **two breakfast/lunch vouchers (valued at \$28)** from [The Farmer's Wife Harvest Cafe, Port Fairy](#) thanks to owner, Jo O'Keefe.

All you need to do to be in the draw is be a paid subscriber – ([that's easy, just click here](#)) – and you will be automatically in the running.

We will draw the winner at random next Wednesday March 26 and announce the winner on our [Facebook page](#) that night (and contact you!).

Keep your eye peeled under the "Win" tab for more great

competitions that are open to all of our Bluestone Club members.

Winner: Louise Parlour.

Helping to mend broken family ties

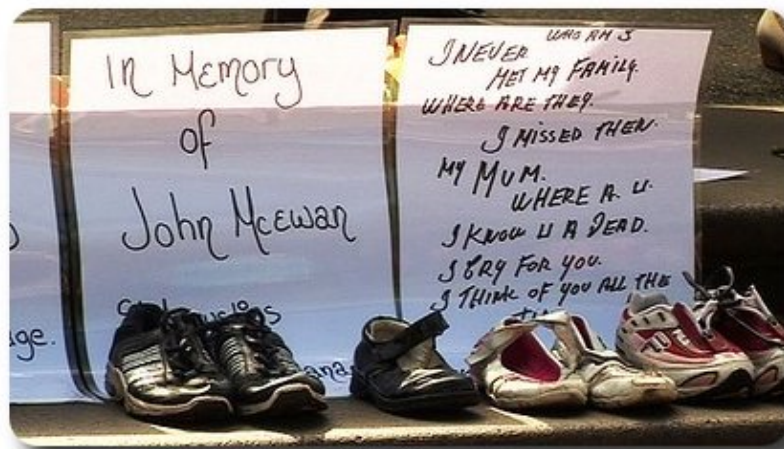


Jenny Fawcett at home in her research library. Her research skills have helped to mend broken family ties.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] E
[/dropcap]arlier this year, we [revealed the full story behind the “Granny” of Granny’s Grave](#), in Warrnambool, with the help of volunteer researcher **Jenny Fawcett**.

What we didn't tell you at the time, but have kept up our sleeve, is that Jenny has also used her substantial research skills to help some of the people affected by forced adoptions – or other family separation – to piece back together their family history.

In November 2009, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull delivered a bi-partisan national apology to the more than half a million children – the so-called Forgotten Australians – who were raised in institutions, foster homes and orphanages where, more often than not, they suffered mental, physical or sexual abuse. Many of these children were forced child migrants from the UK who were told they were orphans, when in fact their parents were still alive.



A poignant symbol of the effects of the forced adoption policy and the agony of not knowing. Image: The Age.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A
[/dropcap]nd in March 2013, the then Prime Minister Julia Gillard issued another, equally emotional, national apology to the parents and children at the centre of the nation's forced

adoption policies from the 1950s to the late 1970s. It is estimated up to 150,000 children were forcibly removed from their (usually single) mothers during this time.

Together, these two historical wrongs equate to a lot of hurt...and a lot of not knowing the truth.

And this is where Jenny comes in. Some of those affected by either of these wrongs have asked Jenny, of Warrnambool, for help in tracking their past.

While Jenny can't personally track every family history, she has provided guidance on where to look for information and records, and how to interpret documents that can lead to more clues: this is the art of the researcher.

It is such important, healing work and, for this, Jenny is our very deserving Quiet Hero.

[box] Jenny will receive a pack of four coffee vouchers from [The Pavilion Café](#) in Warrnambool. Thankyou to owners Mary-ellen and Jon Watson for supporting this week's Quiet Hero.[/box]



Meet more of our Quiet Heroes...

[Lost history finds loyal following: Lost Warrnambool](#)

[Giving comes naturally: Virginia Marshall](#)

[Australia Day awards – did we forget someone? Vicki Jellie](#)

[Oh Possum, you're a hero in the heat: Nalini Scarfe](#)

[Walking with strength and purpose: Susie Alexander](#)

Don't drop the ball on FJ's silver icon



And up it goes...the Fletcher Jones silver ball (which is not looking quite so silver) is carefully placed onto its

tripod. The ball has watched over Warrnambool for more than 45 years. Image supplied by: Julie Eagles.

OPINION – Carol Altmann

[box] The campaign to restore the Fletcher Jones silver ball is gathering pace, amid questions of whether it is still structurally safe. [The group working to save the ball](#) held its first think-tank last week to map out a strategy.[/box]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] I [/dropcap] want to offer some words of reassurance about Warrnambool's iconic Fletcher Jones silver ball: it will not suddenly topple off its perch and roll down Lava St.

Ralph Jones, an engineer and the son of Sir Fletcher, was much smarter than that. He made sure that the water tower not only looked fabulous, but was engineered to withstand Warrnambool's excoriating weather.

According to those who worked on the ball, it sways a few centimetres in the wind and this is not a bad thing, as it means it bends to weather, rather than chests it like a brick wall.

The ball also has legs that extend into the silver ball itself (see photo above), and this means it can't roll away unless all three pylons were rusted through and, as of its last thorough inspection in 2010, there was no suggestion of this being even remotely close.

Now that we have cleared that up, the question remains as to why this magnificent, retro, visionary and unique piece of industrial art that has watched over Warrnambool and welcomed its visitors since 1967, is being left to rust.



The campaign to preserve the silver ball has prompted some wonderful images of the structure, including this one by Kate-Maree Jackway.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] D
[dropcap]espite being heritage listed for its local and state significance, the job of caring for the silver ball has fallen into the too-hard basket all because its most recent owner, Ian Ballis, went into receivership in 2012.

The financial misfortune of just one man has been enough to throw the future of an iconic Warrnambool landmark into jeopardy.

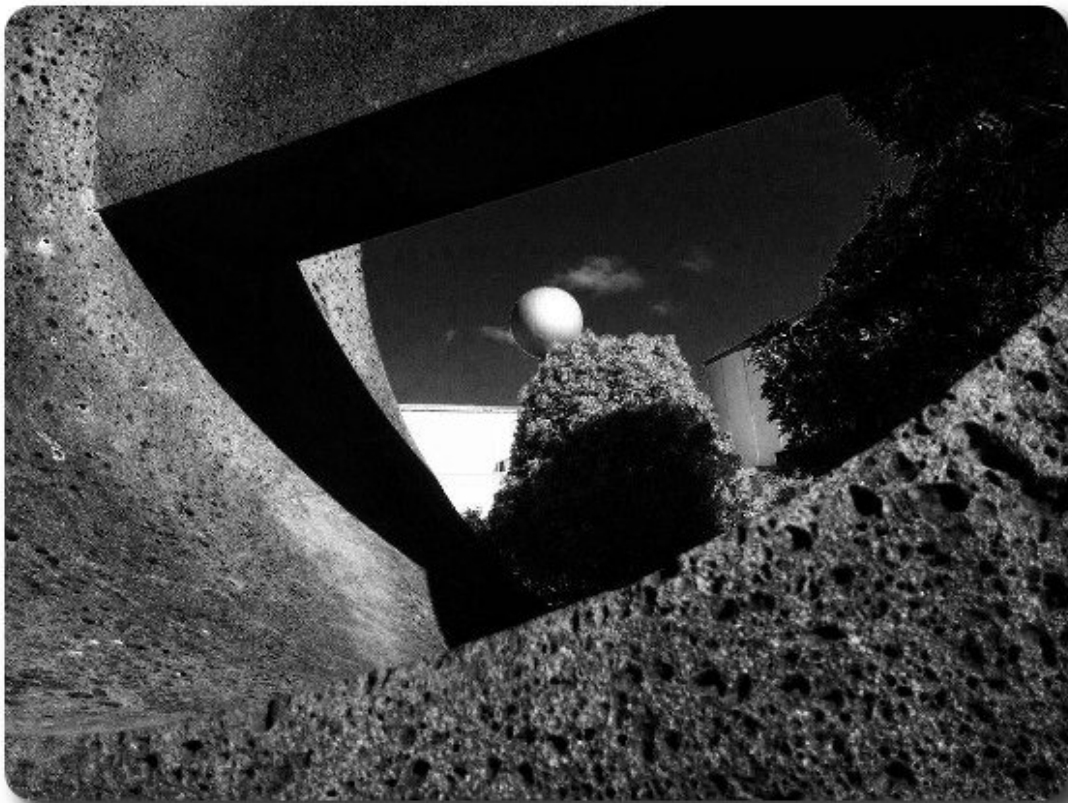
There was no plan B.

The ball is not about to topple over, but it does need annual

inspections and on-going repairs, as required, to keep it from rusting in Warrnambool's sea air. It has also not been painted for many, many years.

Given how shabby it looks these days, no wonder some people consider it an eyesore and question whether it is worth saving.

But the [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens](#) group thinks differently.



Another perspective, this time by Gordon Baldwin, shot through the Robert Ulmann sculpture that pays tribute to Sir Fletcher Jones.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]his motivated bunch of people know that if the silver ball is removed, Warrnambool will lose an irreplaceable

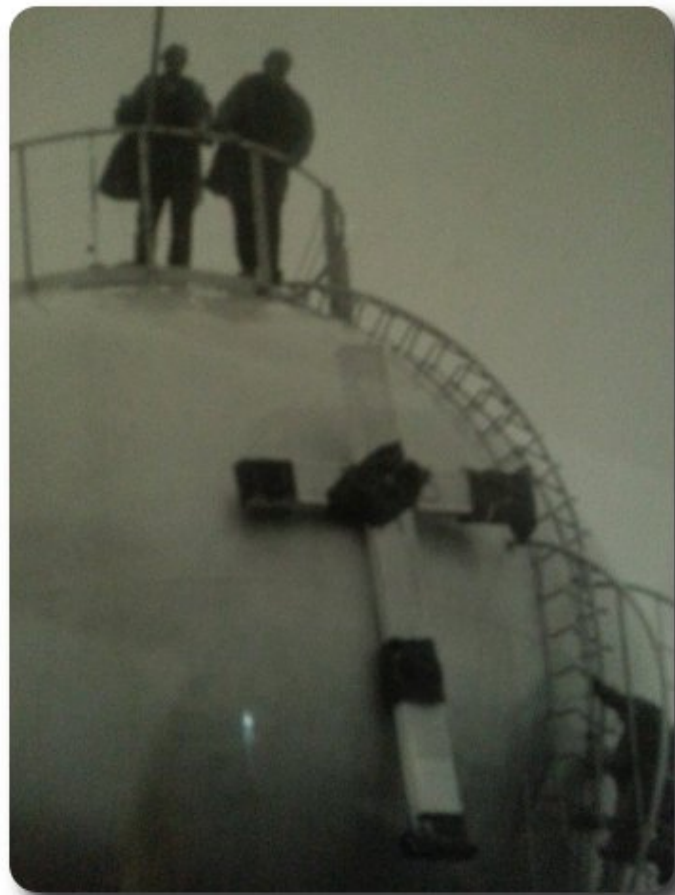
part of its skyline and its social heart.

The group held a think-tank last Thursday to brainstorm ideas to save the ball and a lot of the discussion was around how much it would cost to maintain each year, where to find a crane for the work, and how to raise funds for all of these things.

In trying to answer these questions, it is worth looking back at recent history.

The Warrnambool City Council owned the Fletcher Jones site from 1992 to 2007 and, I presume, had a maintenance plan in place for the ball during those 15 years. How much did this cost and what work was involved? Could it continue this work if the community helped to off-set some of the expense, as is happening with [the \\$4 million redevelopment](#) of the Reid Oval football park?

There is a precedent with the Fletcher Jones silver ball for such an arrangement.



This image, supplied by Amy Fitzgibbon, shows workers pulling up the illuminated cross for the festive season. Vertigo? What vertigo?

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A
[/dropcap]fter the site was sold to Ian Ballis in 2007, the council continued to pay for the illuminated cross to be hoisted onto the silver ball each Christmas up until 2010, when the cross was removed completely.

For those three years, **Keppel Prince Engineering** donated the use of a crane, so perhaps Keppel Prince would consider donating a crane again for annual inspections and maintenance work?

And maybe Hammonds Paints, Ponting Bros or even Bunnings might

consider subsidising the cost of the paint and other materials?

If one thing is certain, it is the ball will only be saved through creative – not mainstream – solutions.

The Save the Silver Ball group is already working on ideas for a public fundraising campaign and a spring picnic. I really like the idea of a reviving an annual Christmas picnic in the fabulous Pleasant Hill gardens, with food, musicians, market stalls and a treasure hunt for the kids, with a portion of the proceeds to go toward annual maintenance of the ball.



The silver ball can be seen for miles around Warrnambool, including from above Lyndoch. Image by Butter Nutz.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A

[/dropcap]nd then there is crowd-sourcing through online fundraising sites like [Pozible](#), where author Regina Lane recently raised \$15,000 in a matter of months to write the story of [Saving St Brigid's](#) at Crossley.

If we can find \$4 million for an upgrade of a football oval, and [\\$2 million for steeplechase](#) horse racing in Warrnambool, surely we can't give up on the silver ball because it might cost 10, 20 or even 30 thousand dollars a year to maintain?

The greatest travesty would be to see the ball pulled down because of a perceived lack of money: what is lacking is not money, but positive, creative thinking and a large dose of motivation.

And the Save the Silver Ball group has this in spades.

Far from giving up, as [our local newspaper appears to suggest we do](#), the fight has only just begun because the silver ball does not belong to Ian Ballis, or the council, or the State Government or Heritage Victoria – it belongs to *all* of us and we each need to do what we can, however small, to help keep the ball in the air.



The iconic silver ball is far from a write off, but needs an ongoing commitment by the community to keep it in the air.

[box] Bluestone Magazine is committed to the campaign to save the best of the Fletcher Jones site. Please join the 500-plus people at the [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher's Gardens Facebook page](#) to be part of this effort. [/box]



You might also enjoy ...

[Mini FJ's silver ball to shine again for festival](#)

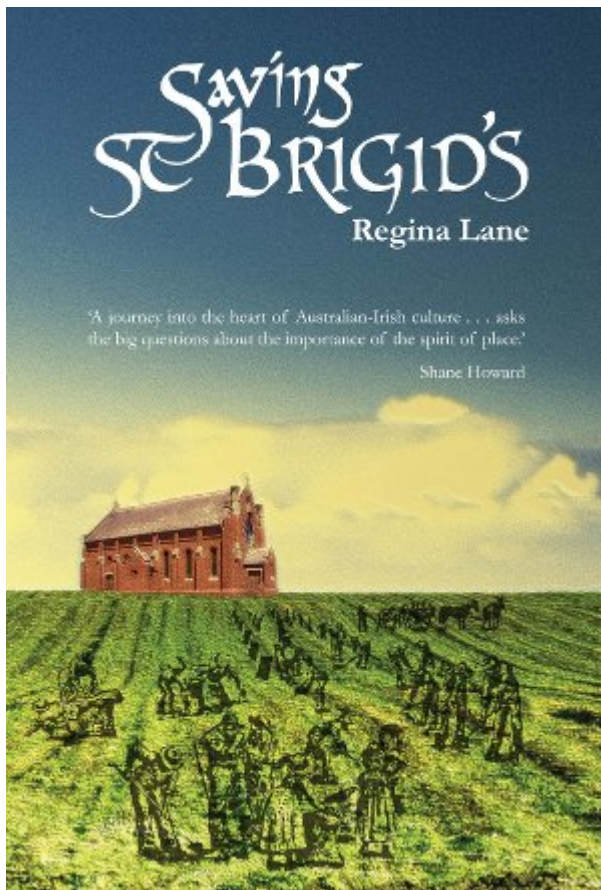
[Fletcher Jones site taken off the market](#)

[The Save Fletcher Jones campaign](#)

[Close Flagstaff Hill; save Fletcher Jones](#)

[Fabrication: Flaunting Fletcher](#)

St Brigid's story proves anything is Pozible



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] 0
[/dropcap]ne of the most highly anticipated local books in a long time is **Regina Lane's** story about the battle to save the 100-year-old St Brigid's Church at Crossley.

Just as the grassroots effort to save the church has been one of epic proportions, so to has the writing of the story behind the campaign that saw the church returned to the community after it was decommissioned by the Catholic Church in 2006.

Saving St Brigid's (Bridin Books) is Regina's first book and

was a true labour of love. Her deep, personal connection to the church, which was her family's local church when Regina grew up as a child at Tower Hill, spurred her on to raise the \$15,000 required to write and publish the book.

Late last year Regina launched a [Pozible crowd-sourcing campaign](#), where people are asked to pledge funds to meet a set target, and continued working on her 50,000-plus word manuscript.

Regina raised the \$15,000 – and polished the manuscript: both by deadline. What a magnificent achievement.



The hard slog: author Brigid Lane puts the finishing touches to Saving St Brigid's during the heatwave earlier this year. (Image: [Brigid Lane](#))

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] W
[/dropcap]hile the book will be officially launched tonight,

following the 'soft' launch at the Port Fairy Folk Festival last Saturday, we have asked **Michaelie Clark**, from [Warrnambool Books](#), for a synopsis:

"When the Catholic Church put St Brigid's church and hall up for sale in 2009, the reaction from the locals was fervent and swift.

They remembered the legacy of their ancestors, the fierce sense of faith that was represented by the church, built by the children of famine survivors in the Erin of the southern hemisphere. They weren't going to let such an important part of their heritage go without a fight – even if they had to take it all the way to Rome.

Regina Lane brings the spirit of the region's multi-faceted history alive through the tale of modern rebellion, and in doing so, creates her own culture of thought, which leaves a legacy of its own."

You can find out more about Regina and the story behind *Saving St Brigid's* on [her website](#) and the **Friends of St Brigid's website**.

[box] Keep up to date with new releases available from Warrnambool Books on their [Facebook](#) page.[/box]



Catch up on our other stories in Bookmarks...

[Books pave new road for Melbourne](#)

[Biblio-Art prize launched at Blarney Books](#)

[Preserving Indigenous stories: Fiona Clarke](#)

[Last Thursday a priority for Port Fairy book club](#)

[The Dressmaker still winning fans](#)

Old Holden just keeps rollin'



Early days at The Sisters: Russell Attrill off to football training in his beloved 1966 Holden HR and carrying his Gladstone bag.

[box] There is nothing like a classic car to stir up memories of youth, simpler days and early romance – we talk to **Russell Attrill**, of Warrnambool, about his treasured HR Holden that captures all three... [/box]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color:#A5CECD;"]W[/dropcap]hen it came to finding and buying a car that mirrored that of his younger years, Russell Attrill was a very patient man.

Russell, who now lives in Warrnambool but who grew up at The Sisters, had always hankered to replace the HR Holden that he had bought as a 21-year-old for \$2600 from the Christian's Motors showroom in 1966.

Like for most young men at that time (and perhaps still), Russell's car was his pride and joy and he drove it everywhere: to football training and matches, to the beach at Port Campbell with his mates, and to woo the young woman who would later become his wife, Fay Lilley.

Russell sold his original HR Holden in 1974, but, like Fay, the car was forever in his heart.

"That car was very special to me and you never forget a car like that," he said.



Russell today with the same Gladstone bag from football training and the 1966 Holden HR that mirrors his original.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I [/dropcap]t was not until decades years later, however, that Russell had the opportunity to reclaim a little of that lost youth when he and Fay were farming at Taroon and learned that Merv McDowell, who lived at nearby Laang, had a 1966 Holden HR Special Sedan in Minerva blue duco.

"I knew about this car and I really wanted this car," Russell laughed.

"So I kept saying to Merv, when you are ready to sell the car, be sure to let me know...that took about 15 years," he said.

Finally, in 2007, Merv's daughter contacted Russell to say that her father had not taken the car out of the shed for about three years and perhaps it was time to sell. Was he still interested?

It took Russell a nano-second to say “yes!”.



The pristine Holden came complete with its original owner’s manual and service books.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] " "

This car was immaculate,” Russell said.

“It had been stored under cover its whole life. It had never been driven in the rain and it had never been washed – only wiped down with a cloth – so there was virtually no rust at all in the body and all of the rubbers are original,” he said.

The interior upholstery, seats, steering wheel, boot, instrument panel and 98 per cent of the dashboard are also in pristine, original condition. The 2 per cent of the dashboard that is not original is where Russell added a stereo unit so he could play his beloved jazz.

The car had 99,000 miles on the clock when Russell bought it and has since clocked up another 24,000 miles from trips to, among other places, Victoria's Alpine area, Broken Hill, Adelaide, Philip Island, Mildura and Temora, NSW.

To date, it has never had a breakdown and cruises along easily at 110 kph.

"I like to drive it around as much as I can; it is a very comfortable drive," Russell said.

Given its age, it is also not too bad on fuel economy – around 10l/per 100km – but when a car looks and feels as good as Russell's HR, who is counting?



The car on one of its many journeys – this time to Tailem Bend – since Russell bought it in 2007.



You might also enjoy...

[Nothing minor about this Mini](#)

[T-shirt captures the infamous 'Cri](#)

[A coat of many memories: Di Clanchy](#)

[The smallest violin in Warrnambool](#)