

Christmas stories for any age

Christmas is a wonderful excuse, if you need one, to enjoy timeless children's Christmas stories. Warrnambool Books select their top five Christmas books for kids...

Walking with strength and purpose



Susie Alexander, second from right, with the women she planned to walk with in Melbourne before relocating the walk to Warrnambool: Alison Ridley (left), Lisa Petherick and Pip Norton.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I
[/dropcap]n October, we [brought you the story](#) of **Susie**

Alexander, from Warrnambool, who we nominated as one of our first quiet heroes for her inspirational approach to her fight against breast cancer.

At that time, Susie hoped she would be well enough after her series of often debilitating treatments to participate in the annual **Sussan Women's Fun Run** held in Melbourne on December 8 to raise funds for the [Breast Cancer Network Australia](#).

Unfortunately Susie couldn't make it to Melbourne, because the health of her mother, who is also battling cancer, is deteriorating*. But she was determined to still do the 5km walk to fulfil the promise that she made to herself and to her dozens of supporters who had donated funds to the cause.



Friends for life: Susie (centre) with Warrnambool High school friends Susan Bruce, Heather Dickie, Caroline Parker, Karen Svensen and Jane Parker. (They have married names now, but they didn't back then!)

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] S
[/dropcap]o Susie held her own version of the Sussan Women's Fun Run down at the Warrnambool waterfront and invited her

friends, family and supporters to join her. They came on foot and on bicycles, with children, and with dogs and, by 9am, about 100 people were ready to walk for Susie, for her Mum and for everyone else who is facing the challenge of cancer.

It was one of those uplifting moments when people gather for a common cause and, in this case, to celebrate all that makes life so precious.

Thankyou, Susie, for reminding us of how even taking a simple walk by the sea is such a gift.

** (Susie's mother, Jan, passed away peacefully on Dec 18, 2013).*



Ready to stride out: Susie Alexander with her sister, Lynne Wormald.

[box] As of this weekend, Susie had raised \$3500 toward the [Breast Cancer Network Australia](#) and donations were still coming in. She had set herself a target of \$1000. [/box]



If you enjoyed this story, you might enjoy...

[On the road with the Schoolies](#)

[Tackling a hidden terror: Pat McLaren](#)

[A life-changing adventure: Schoolies with a Cause](#)

[A winner for Woodford](#)

[United we stand – Wbool Uniting Church](#)

[Kylie Thulborn – pushing boundaries](#)

A spotlight on creators this Christmas

New book on the faces of Warrnambool



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]his is **Brian Mills** and he works nights, or very early mornings, depending on how you measure 4am starts.

Brian is one of a team of people at the **Timor St Newsagency** in Warrnambool who ensure that the morning newspapers are delivered each day to the doorsteps and businesses of Warrnambool for people who still enjoy reading a physical copy of a newspaper.

It is a job Brian has been doing for more than 25 years and this is why he – as a newspaper delivery man – has been chosen to appear in a photographic book **due to be published in the first half of next year** that will feature 30 of the iconic people and places of the Warrnambool community.

It is not a history book, nor does it include every well-known Warrnambool identity, but rather it is a personal selection of people and places that meant something to me – Carol – when I was growing up in Warrnambool in the 1970s and which are still a part of the community today, even if only a shadow of their former selves.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]here is a deep nostalgia and an inter-connectedness that binds the people of Warrnambool, perhaps more so than most other regional cities, or maybe that is just because other regional cities don't have a Kermonds, or a Politis fish and chip shop, or a Fletcher Jones gardens, or a Chitticks...you get the picture.

These are the names that have become a part of Warrnambool's cultural identity and trigger such strong stories and memories – especially if you are sharing them in a bar with another Warrnamboolian you have bumped into somewhere across the world.

There is also a growing awareness, however, that such icons do not last forever (the demolition of the Criterion Hotel, in Kepler St, was a stark reminder of this truth) and this is what inspired me to race around with my camera and do the best job I could to capture the faces – and some of the places – while we still have the chance.

The book is yet to be titled, but it will be limited to just

500 copies, so we will keep you up to date on when it is due to hit the shelves.

In the meantime, if you are a nostalgic Warrnambool person or ex-pat, you can join more than 2500 people just like you at the [Lost Warrnambool Facebook page](#) and share memories and some terrific old images. Be sure to let them know Bluestone Magazine sent you!

[box] Our regular Bookmarks by [Warrnambool Books](#) will return for our final edition of the year next week, with a list of great Christmas books that add a sparkle to the festive season.[/box]

Keeping the spirit of Fletcher Jones alive



Pleasant Hill in its prime in the 1970s. Image: Corangamite Regional Library Corporation. Copyright 2004.

It says a lot about the importance of the **Fletcher Jones gardens** to Warrnambool that even though the Raglan Parade factory has fallen silent and into disrepair, the gardens continue to hold on.

“Pleasant Hill” was once a major tourist attraction for the city, with busloads of visitors pulling up to the kerb and pouring out to take photographs, while locals all have their favourite memories of the beautifully landscaped gardens: the fish pond, the stepping stones, the wishing well, the sun-warmed cement turtle, the archways, the mosaic ‘basket’ garden bed, the tall man in the white trousers who advertised Fletcher Jones menswear.

The gardens were established over a period of years after Fletcher Jones first selected the site – a disused quarry – for his factory in 1948. And while they are a shadow of what they were in their prime, when up to eight full-time gardeners

were employed, the fact they are maintained at all is quite incredible.



Fletcher Jones gardens volunteers: Lester Campbell (left), Philomena Headen, Don McLean and Lex Caldwell.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] F
[/dropcap]or this we can thank our **Quiet Heroes** for the week: **Lex Caldwell**, who oversees the gardens in exchange for living in a cottage on site, and a small, rotating team of volunteers who turn up each Tuesday morning to weed, mulch, mow or do whatever else needs to be done.

When we visited, the volunteer crew included **Don McLean**, **Lester Campbell** and **Philomena Headen** who were hard at work weeding one of the garden beds and picking up bits of broken glass.

Imagine how the place would look without them?

[box]The FJ gardens crew will receive a coffee and cake voucher from [Lozzar's Lounge Cafe, 52a Kepler St Warrnambool](#). Thankyou to owners Loretta and Phil for supporting this week's Quiet Heroes.[/box]



Meet some of our other quiet heroes...

[Tackling a hidden terror: Pat McLaren](#)

[A life-changing adventure: Schoolies with a Cause](#)

[A winner for Woodford: Tania Ferris](#)

[United we stand – Wbool Uniting Church](#)

[Kylie Thulborn – pushing boundaries](#)