

A different way of doing things



Up it goes: The Fletcher Jones silver ball (sans silver) is hoisted into position in 1967 with campaigner Julie Eagles' sister watching the action.

OPINION

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap]oday marks the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the former Fletcher Jones factory and iconic silver ball, with confirmation that it has been sold for about \$1 million to a man by the name of **Dean Montgomery**.

I say a new chapter, because Dean – even at face value – appears to be a person who does things very differently to what Warrnambool is used to in that he doesn't see heritage as

an obstacle, but as an asset.

We know this because he is already involved with restoring and renovating the historic Leura Hotel in Camperdown. We also know this because, even more incredibly, Dean joined the grassroots campaign, [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens](#) which is being driven via Facebook, prior to the announcement of the sale. He even posted a wonderful photograph of the ball that he was given by the volunteer groundsman at Pleasant Hill, **Lex Caldwell**.

This doesn't sound like a man who is about to bring in the bulldozers and knock the whole thing down to replace it with apartments or "big box" retail like that which dominates the outskirts of Warrnambool.

Indeed, in 2011, Dean was quoted in the [local Camperdown newspaper](#) as saying: "We're (he and his brother) both passionate about heritage buildings and restoring them, it's what we do."



The new owner of the former Fletcher Jones factory, Dean Montgomery, who is passionate about history. Image: Camperdown Chronicle.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]D[/dropcap]ean, to my mind, represents a generational change for how things can be done in Warrnambool, where a developer with a vision and the funds works *with* the community to create something special, and enduring, on what is one of the most prominent and important sites in the city.

This doesn't mean the whole derelict building will be preserved (nobody expected or wanted that), but it does mean that an iconic landmark that is so special to the community will be retained. Word has it that Dean already has cranes organised to start tidying up the ball.

That all of this is happening is testament to how grassroots activism can work when people unite for a common cause, and the Save the Silver Ball campaign has united people.

Living in Tasmania for about six years taught me everything I know about the ability of ordinary people to fight for something they loved, even if they were told that they were being unrealistic, out-of-touch or nostalgic at the expense of progress.

The people who fought, and continue to fight, for Tasmania's precious native forests have had everything thrown at them, including physical violence, yet they keep going because they know the battle is worth it. Native forests cannot be replaced simply by planting more trees: each forest is unique.



The Weld Angel (aka Allana Beltran) became a potent symbol of the campaign to save the Weld Valley in Tasmania from being logged. Image: Matthew Newton/Tasmanian Times.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [dropcap]mong the bravest of those fighting for Tasmania's forests was a woman called **Allana Beltran** who became the potent symbol of the anti-logging movement after dressing as an angel, decorated with cockatoo feathers and a long white curtain, and hoisting herself high among the trees in the Weld Valley, in southern Tasmania, where she sat poised on a tripod in silent protest.

"The Weld Angel", so beautifully captured by freelance photographer **Matthew Newton** who's image went around the world, provided an evocative reminder of what would be lost if the value of everything in the world was measured only by economics.

In Warrnambool, the Fletcher Jones silver ball has proven to be a Weld Angel: a galvanising symbol of what is irreplaceable

and worth preserving.

More than 600 people fell in behind the campaign on Facebook to share their memories, photographs and ideas about how to preserve a unique part of the skyline and landscape.



An early image of the silver ball that was posted to the Save the Silver Ball page by new owner, Dean Montgomery.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] B
[/dropcap]ehind the scenes, campaigners **Julie Eagles** and **Tonia Wilcox** – among others – met with the powers that be, agitated, asked questions, wrote reports, emailed, filmed, phoned, photographed and held gatherings at the Warrnambool Hotel to thrash out how to keep the ball in the air. (And *Bluestone Magazine* was right behind them.)

Of course there were the critics and doubters who said it was

all too hard (for whom?) and would cost too much (compared to what?) and that it would be so much easier to just knock it all down and start over again, just like in the Tasmanian forests.

But some people think – and act – very differently and **Dean Montgomery** looks like one of those people.

A new chapter is not only starting for Fletcher Jones, but for the whole city.

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Imagine the skyline without the silver ball?

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [dropcap]bove is a small tribute to the hard-working team behind the [Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens campaign](#) who, today (8/5), have seen a reward for their efforts.

The purchase of the former Fletcher Jones Factory by businessman **Dean Montgomery** – a member of the Save the Silver Ball Facebook page – has provided hope that the ball will be preserved. Dean is a believer that history should be treasured and he has already shown that he is a man of action, not just words, by upgrading the Leura Hotel in Camperdown.

Today is the first step in what we hope is a new chapter in the life of the iconic ball.

Just imagine what the skyline would be like without it?



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Win a warming bottle of red



CLOSED FRIDAY MAY 9 – winner Sandra McGuire (and a second draw won by Rachel Peters)

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]
F[/dropcap]eel that nip in the air? For *Bluestone Magazine*,

this marks the time of year to enjoy a warming glass of red in front of the fire.

[Topsy Tips](#) has this week selected her Top 5 reds for under \$20, but of course she couldn't stop at five, so she added two more just to be on the safe side, including one that is just a little over \$20 but is a terrific local wine from Newton's Ridge in South-West Victoria.

[You can read the story here](#) and we are inviting our **paid subscribers** to email us with the name of one wine from the list that they would like to win.

Simply drop us a line at **editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au** by **Friday May 9** and we will announce the winner in our next edition on **Monday May 12**. Paid subscribers who live outside of South-West Victoria are also encouraged to enter, as we are happy to post the bottle to your door (just be sure to include a mailing address in your email).

This is just another small way of us thanking our paid subscribers because without you, there would be no us.

If you would like to become a member of the Bluestone club, you can subscribe (for just \$8 per month or \$85 a year), by simply [clicking here](#).

The winners of this competition were **Sandra Maguire** (Newton's Ridge Shiraz), and **Rachel Peters** (Saint Clair Pinot Noir).

Warrnambool's own Laverne and Shirley



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] S
[/dropcap]hirley Handley and Brownyn Greene are two Warrnambool friends who are rarely seen apart when it comes to spreading a little joy in people's lives.

The pair, who met through their local church, volunteer to visit people who may be sick, lonely or just in need of some company for an afternoon, be they in hospital, in an aged care home, or in their own home.

Their cheerful, smiling personalities are infectious and it is rare day when Shirley, in particular, is not armed with a

quick joke or a funny one liner.

Between them, they bring light to the lives of those who are often forgotten, isolated or finding it hard to cope with daily life, including people struggling with addictions, and they never judge, or try to change anyone: they are just there to listen.

Philosopher Alain de Botton, on his recent tour of Australia, talked about how the mainstream news media has an obsession with the wrong sort of celebrities and that ordinary people who do good, simple deeds should instead be celebrated.

So, using Alain's approach, we celebrate Shirley and Bronwyn as our Quiet Heroes: in our eyes, they are the "Laverne and Shirley" of Warrnambool who bring much-needed good humour and fun to every day lives.

[box] **Shirley and Bronwyn will receive a coffee and cake vouchers from [Lozzars Lounge Cafe](#), in Warrnambool. Thankyou Lozzar's for supporting our quiet heroes.**[/box]



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Fulton crosses threshold at The Artery



“Choosing a direction” is among the striking works to be included in Warrnambool artist Barb Fulton’s

show at The Artery that opens on April 30.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he new exhibition space at The Artery, in Warrnambool, is already proving its worth with another top-shelf exhibition that runs until May 24 and features the works of Warrnambool artist **Barb Fulton**.

The exhibition is entitled "Threshold" and explores the themes of discovery, journey and possibility. The viewer is tempted to ask what lies beyond the threshold? What is hidden behind that door? What will I discover if I take a risk and step beyond my comfort zone?

Barb is the second artist to exhibit in the Timor St space, following the inaugural – and popular – exhibition by **Gareth Colliton**. Barb is also a much-loved figure on the local art scene, which she has been a part of since studying as a mature-age student in the now-defunct Fine Art Degree at Deakin University in the late 1980s.



Warrnambool artist Barb Fulton with *Barrier*, another of her works to feature in the exhibition, Threshold.

[box type="bio"] The Artery is at 224 Timor St. Warrnambool, and is open Wed-Sun 10am – 4pm.[/box]



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