

Life as a sole sister



At its height, legendary shoe store Rauert's, in Warrnambool, employed seven shoe repairers. Now they have just one. Bluestone went to meet her:

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]here are so many witty one-liners that can be used about a shoe repairer, so let's start with one: **Heather McVickers** saves soles.

In fact, she has saved so many in the past 12 months that a priest is known to have quipped that she was doing far better than he was.

Heather has also helped the down at heel, worked on several annoying wagging tongues and proven to be a deft hand at nose jobs.

"There is always a different challenge that needs to be solved, and that's one of the things I really love about my job," Heather, 46, said while cutting a piece of rubber with what looked like a very sharp paring knife.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] H
[/dropcap]eather began as a shoe repairer for Rauert's a little more than a year ago after seeing the position advertised. She had no shoe repairing experience, but she could sew.

"I was a sewer from the age of seven, when Mum bought me a hand-driven Singer sewing machine.

[quote]I would ask Mum to make me something on it, but she would say 'no, you make it,' so I would work out how to do it. Sewing taught me how angles work, how to draft patterns and how you need to cut to make things fit together,' she said.[/quote]

Despite a flair for sewing, Heather spent most of her adult life working as a dairy farmer and calf rearer and only revived her sewing skills for a living after she moved to Portland about 12 years ago.

There, she started an alterations business, but it was so successful that the number of people needing help with their hems, buttonholes and seams became overwhelming.

"I was working on my own and, I know it sounds a bit funny, but I got burnt out. I would have piles of jeans next to the

sewing machine and the pile never seemed to get any smaller," she said with a laugh.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] H
[/dropcap]eather left the business and, after another stint back in farming, spotted the vacancy for a shoe repairer. Skilled shoe repairers are hard to find, with few young people taking on the trade.

"I thought I might enjoy it, so I applied and I got the job. Ken (Brown) was retiring (from Rauert's) and he spent seven weeks training me up, which was wonderful," she said.

The workshop at Rauert's is full of character with some of the equipment used to repair shoes little changed from that used by cobblers a century ago: metal shoe lasts, pots of glue and industrial strength sewing machines.

It is heaven for someone with the skills of Heather.

"I can honestly say that I haven't had a bad day at work since I started," she said.

"I am one of those lucky people who can say that they love their job."

Gumtree gems: 12 things...

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] B
[/dropcap]efore starting Bluestone Magazine, we tested out a few ideas on good old Facebook, just to see what people liked to read. One the most popular was a regular posting of odd, unusual or just plain different ads on Gumtree (the online buy/sell/swap site) from around South-West Victoria, or close by.

So it is only fitting Gumtree gems has found a place in our new venture.

(All adverts are reproduced direct from Gumtree, but some wording may be changed to protect privacy or for editorial smoothness. If you would like to follow up an ad, please do so through Gumtree: although it may not still be listed.)

Here is this week's offering:



Twelve Items for Twelve Dollars – Combination 2 – new/used (as per descriptions): –

1 pack (1kg) of OMO washing powder, 2x concentrate, suitable for top loaders, rrp \$16.31 (Coles) (new, unopened);

– 1x 600ml bottle of Pepsi Max soft drink (new, unopened);

– 1x Breast Cancer Crusade pen, new, black ink, replaceable ink cartridge, ideal gift;

– 1x Philips globe, new/never used, good condition, bayonet type fitting, clear, 100 Watt, 240 volt and 1x Mirabella, halogen energy saver globe, screw-in type, 53 Watt, 240 volt (not shown), unused;

– 1x magnifying glass, used, fair condition, 100mm diameter;

– 1x calculator, good condition, solar powered, handy;

– 1x pack of 10 fold-back clips, 50mm, black, good condition;

– 10x clothes pegs, new, unused, excellent condition;

– 11 metres of handy twine, orange, good condition, unused;

– gift bags, ideal for Xmas, etc, good condition; – handy wipe, ideal for computers/tablets/phones/etc, cleans screens with out scratching (no photo);

and – 1x Coles Fuel Offer voucher, 4 cents per litre discount

(no photo).

(Carol: I think the last item is my favourite. You really can try and sell anything...)

What is a tray cloth?

George Swinton & Sons

PTY LTD

GEORGE SWINTON FURNISHINGS PTY. LTD.
Reg. Office: TIMOR STREET, WARRNAMBOOL

● DRAPERS, HOME FURNISHERS
● FINE CHINA SPECIALISTS

TELEPHONE 8151

STATEMENT
for Month
FEB 59

MRS. W. ALTMANN
66 NICHOLSON STREET
WARRNAMBOOL.

DETAILS OF ACCOUNT RENDERED					BALANCE
MEMO	OUTSTANDING 3 MONTHS & OVER	OUTSTANDING 2 MONTHS	OUTSTANDING 1 MONTH		
DATE	REF.	PARTICULARS	DEBIT	CREDIT	
24		2 TRAY CLOTHS	1 10 0		
		1 TRAY CLOTH	11 6		
		1 CLOTH	3 11		
					2 5 5*
		Paid 4/3/59			
Interest charged on Overdue Accounts.			TERMS—STRICTLY 30 DAYS.		
					Last Amount Shown in this column is the sum due

My mother kept everything...and I mean everything. This used to be a source of great embarrassment, but now I am grateful.

Each week, I will upload something from Mum’s drawer – bits and pieces from Warrnambool’s past.

This week is a receipt from George Swinton and Sons Furnishings, which still forms part of the Swinton's complex in Timor St, Warrnambool.

I am not sure, however, if they still sell tray cloths.

Does anyone remember what a tray cloth was used for?

Our first quiet hero



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #9b9b9b;"] Most artists don't make much money. Only a handful can pursue their art full-time, regardless of their talent.

Despite this, many artists remain committed not only to their work, but to encouraging other artists so that, together, they can form a vibrant and resilient community that makes our world so much more interesting.

Megan Nicolson is such a person. The Warrnambool artist makes stunning lino cut prints and a range of quirky soft toys called 'softies' (more about those in later editions), and also donates a huge slice of her time and energy to building up the local arts community.

She has been a central figure in the collective, [The F Project](#), and this year organised two successful artists' markets that helped raise funds toward the establishment of the new [Artery](#) art space at 224 Timor St, Warrnambool.

Somewhere in there, Megan also parents four children – two still below school age – with her partner Lachlan. It is this combination of creativity and generosity of spirit that makes some artists so special and this is why Megan Nicolson has been chosen as our first quiet hero.

Bluestone Magazine is donating a voucher for coffee and cake to each of our quiet heroes. This week it will be at Wyton Events and Catering, Warrnambool.

[box type="bio"] *Do you know somebody in South-West Victoria who is worthy of recognition as a quiet hero? If so, let us know via email – in 200 words or less, plus a photo – and we will consider them for our weekly column. Email us at editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au[/box]

Why not...give away flowers?



[box] This section – why not? – is a place to consider ideas: no matter how small, large or outrageous.[/box]

This week: Why not give away something to a stranger?

Our first ‘why not?’ was inspired by a routine trip to the East Warrnambool Woolworths supermarket early one morning, where Louise was suddenly approached by a man bearing a bouquet of flowers. This doesn’t happen often.

He introduced himself as the store manager, or something similar, and explained that the flowers were past their sale date, but still too beautiful to throw in the bin.

‘Take them,’ he said.

So Louise did. And that simple gesture made the perfect start to a day.

If you own a business, maybe you too have something a little past its sale date, but still too beautiful – or useful – to throw away.

Why not pass it on?