

The heartache of saying goodbye

[box] This column is normally reserved for comment on local issues, but occasionally it will also be used for short thoughts about every day life. This is one of those occasions.[/box]



John Sycopoulis, one of Glenn's extraordinary carers, with Glenn and I, in January 2013.

SHORT THOUGHTS – Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I
[/dropcap]t has been a very tough week at *Bluestone* because we have lost two very important parts of our lives, and while these moments are normally kept private and hidden from readers, I want to share them with you, because you have been part of the journey.

You may remember that in October last year,

Bluestone recognised the generosity of the **Western Victoria Holden Car Club** by naming them as our Quiet Heroes. We did this because the car club [kindly organised to have several cars turn up](#) for the 50th birthday of my older brother, **Glenn**, who had Down's Syndrome.

Because of his condition, Glenn was expected to have a shorter life span than what most of us take for granted and so his 50th birthday celebration was an even more important milestone than usual. Even then, his body was not as strong and capable as it used to be – he needed to be lifted into the car – but that day was one of the happiest in his life.

Last Monday, April 7, Glenn passed away peacefully, with myself and three of his extraordinary carers by his bedside. Warrnambool has some of the most kind, capable and wonderful carers: people who do the things that I know I would be unable to do.

And they do it with love and laughter and a generosity of spirit that is increasingly hard to find in the world. Each one of them is a Quiet Hero.



Glenn with members of the Western District Holden Car Club who helped him celebrate his 50th birthday.

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[/dropcap]ust two days after losing Glenn, we said goodbye to one of our *Bluestone Magazine* cocker spaniels, Peggy, who has been a part of our family for 13 years.

And just like Glenn, Peggy's body was no longer strong and capable – each day that passed, she was getting smaller and smaller in the world.

It may seem odd to write about the loss of a beloved brother and the loss of a beloved pet in the same piece, but both Glenn and Peggy taught me so much and gave me so much, despite having so little to give – in terms of how we normally measure such things.

They reminded me of the value of time. Of non-judgmental love. Of caring for someone because of who they are, not for how they earn a living, or what they own.

Of appreciating the precious gift of good health and a body that moves freely, without pain.

Of not getting lost in the small troubles of life such as whether you have more 'likes' on Facebook this week, or what is 'trending' on Twitter.

To hug often.

These are the gifts they have given me and what I now cling to as we say goodbye.

I hope that I never forget these things, just as I will never forget them.



Peggy – one of the Bluestone Magazine cocker spaniels.

Lost history finds loyal following



The Warrnambool Foreshore Caravan Park in the days before Winnebagos were invented. Image: Lost Warrnambool.

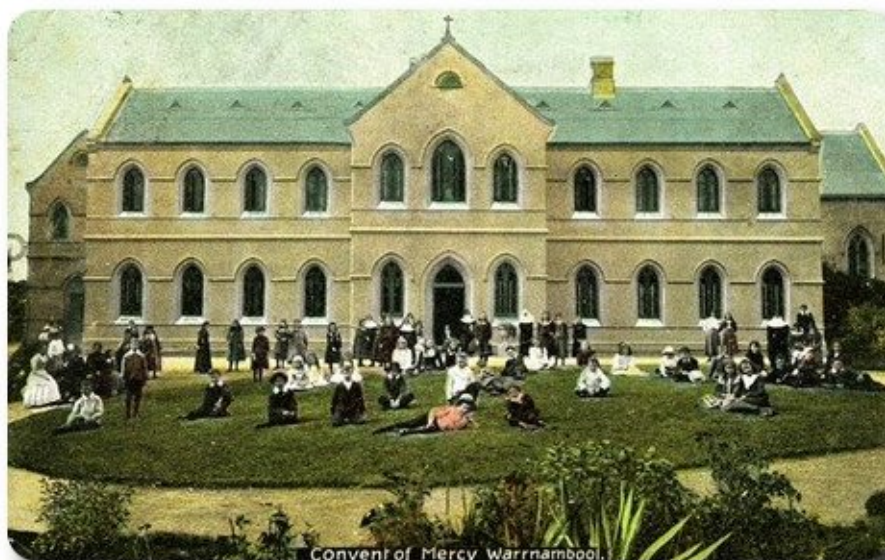
By Carol Altmann

Preserving and, just as importantly, *sharing* our history is no longer only the preserve of museums, academics and a few dedicated souls prepared to pore over faded documents.

Social media has created a new kid on the old block and that is the so-called “Lost” movement, where Facebook sites have been set up for a particular city or town and people are invited to share their photographs and memories.

The Lost Melbourne Facebook page, for example, has more than 41,000 followers who contribute and comment on photographs that capture a past life in Victoria’s capitol city.

Closer to home, we are fortunate to have a [Lost Warrnambool Facebook page](#) that has almost 3000 followers who are united in their love of nostalgia.



Do you recognise this? The Warrnambool "Convent of Mercy". Image: Lost Warrnambool.

The page is maintained, monitored and updated by a Warrnambool man whom we won't name here, because he doesn't name himself on the page, mainly because the page is not about him.

It is about us: where we come from, who we are, how we have grown, what has changed, what hasn't.

It is a social forum, a fun forum, like a giant reunion where we share our bond to this city by the sea.

But it also involves a lot of hard work and Lost Warrnambool shares photographs that he has either purchased, been given, or been sent – and anyone who writes a blog or maintains a Facebook page knows that this all takes time.

Lost Warrnambool is creating and maintaining an important social record and opening up our history for us all to enjoy, so, for this, we consider Lost Warrnambool to be a Quiet Hero. Well done, Lost Warrnambool.

Please visit [the Lost Warrnambool Facebook Page](#) and spread the word about this wonderful site.

[box] The founder of Lost Warrnambool will receive a \$20 voucher from [Wyton Cellars, 127 Kepler St, Warrnambool](#): thankyou to Steve and Jo from Wyton Cellars for your support of our Quiet Heroes.[/box]



Meet our other Quiet Heroes...

[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](#)

Australia Day awards – did we forget someone?



Vicki Jellie (Image:
Peter's Project)

This time last week, the City of Warrnambool was celebrating the announcement of its annual Australia Day award winners and, incredibly, there was not a single woman among the seven recipients*.

The absence of even one woman considered worthy of note for her contribution to the community is even more astonishing given there is a stand-out contender: **Vicki Jellie**.

If there is anyone in Warrnambool who does not know the name Vicki Jellie, then they have either been out of the city, avoiding all media, or unable to attend any of the dozens of social and sporting events that have raised funds for Vicki's cause, [Peter's Project](#).

Vicki, who used to be Vicki Grayson and grew up in the heart of Warrnambool, has worked for **more than five years** on Peter's

Project, which – for our out-of-town readers – is named in memory of her late husband, Peter, and aims to raise \$5 million toward a cancer treatment centre in South-West Victoria.

Since it began in 2009, Peter's Project has slowly and steadily built its public profile to become a tour de force.

Last year's federal election included a defining moment, at a local level, when the Coalition pledged \$10 million toward building the centre and left the ALP stranded: such is the pulling power of Peter's Project.

And you need only visit its [Facebook page](#) to see the number of events by business, schools, groups, clubs and individuals that are all raising money for Peter's Project.

When we last spoke to Vicki, she was preparing to take a year's leave from her paid job so that she could focus on Peter's Project full-time. She, and her campaign team, are doing a magnificent job and as of December, had raised \$4 million of the \$5 million needed.

With such a high profile, we thought it would be a fait accompli that Vicki Jellie would be included in the [Warrnambool City Council Australia Day Awards](#), and possibly odds-on favourite for Citizen of the Year. To see her missing altogether was a shock.

We can't give Vicki an Australia Day award, but she is our [Quiet Hero](#) for being one of the most inspiring women in Warrnambool.

Vicki will receive a \$20 lunch voucher donated by [Lozzar's Lounge Cafe, Kepler St, Warrnambool](#). Thankyou to Loretta and Phil for your support. Bluestone editors Carol and Louise will also make a \$50 donation to Peter's Project.

(*Sixteen-year-old Olivia Niddrie was named Young Citizen of

the Year. The council has since told *Bluestone* it received only two nominations for women across all categories.)



Meet our other Quiet Heroes...

[Saving our wildlife from the heat: Nalini Scarfe](#)

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

[On the road with the Schoolies](#)

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

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

For the love of horses



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] H
[/dropcap]elping animals in distress is one of the noblest things us flawed humans can do.

While most of us are familiar with the good work of the [RSPCA](#), [Animals Australia](#) and [Wildlife Victoria](#), there is also a large number of individuals doing their bit by rescuing injured or neglected animals, saving broken birds, fighting to protect native habitat, or rehoming a former family pet.

Bluestone Magazine has found two such people in **Emma McLean** and **Matt Hee**, both of Allansford, who save unwanted or neglected horses.

Emma, followed more recently by Matt, is the south-west Victorian representative for **Second Venture Horse Rescue**, a new and still relatively unknown not-for-profit group that covers most of Victoria and into NSW.

Second Venture, as it sounds, aims to give old, injured, neglected or surrendered horses a second chance at life.



Happy horse in a new home: Floss tries out the territory at Emma's property.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] A
[/dropcap]s Emma explains, the horses are usually surrendered by owners who are no longer willing or able to care for them, although others are referred to Second Venture because of concerns about neglect.

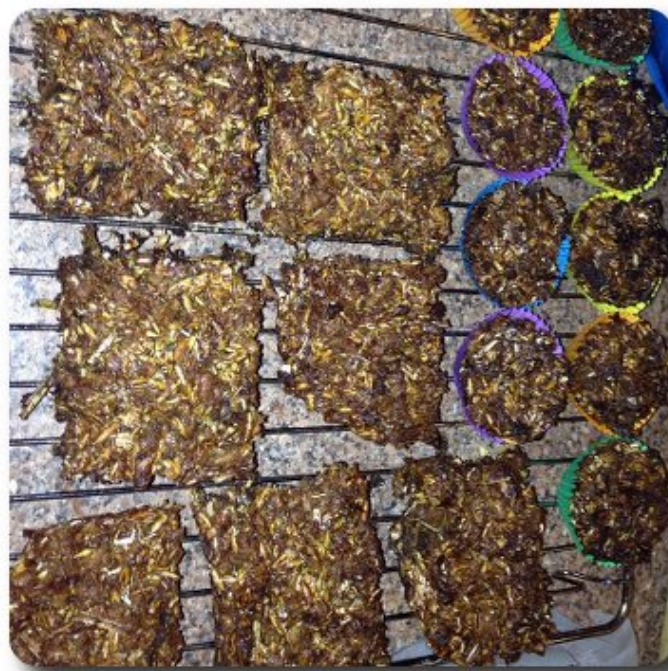
The rescued horses are picked up by the Second Venture rep, vet checked and, if required, have a visit by the dentist and farrier, all at the rep's expense. The rep also covers the floating costs to collect the horses and provides feed, blankets and all the other necessities, including retraining and resocialisation.

When they are happy and healthy again, each horse is rehomed with a new owner who doesn't pay for the horse, other than a \$35 a year "leasing" fee. Second Venture then checks on the

horse after a month, six months and a year to see that it is in good hands.

“The only horses we don’t rehouse are stallions, for obvious reasons, and we won’t let a horse go until it is safe to be around,” Emma says.

Emma has been the south-west Victorian rep for about a month and had her first surrender last week, Floss, an 18-year-old thoroughbred chestnut that she intends to keep as one of five horses she cares for.



Now that’s roughage! Home-made horse treats are one way of raising funds.

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[/dropcap]econd Venture relies entirely on donations and the goodwill of supporters who are prepared to loan a float, for example, or offer equine services at a discount rate and so it’s not surprising that much of Emma’s time is taken up with finding ways of raising funds.

When *Bluestone* visited, Emma was preparing horse treats made

of molasses, oats and other horsey ingredients to sell to raise money for the horse sales, where Second Venture tries to buy horses that are otherwise destined for the knackery. The horse treats, thankfully, have been selling like hotcakes through orders on her Facebook page.

Shari Henderson, from Cherwood Park Equine Supplies in Warrnambool, has been one of Emma's biggest supporters and continues to admire her dedication.

"We need more like her," she says.

We happen to agree: Emma is our first quiet hero for 2014. You can contact Emma via her [Facebook page](#) or on 0432 625 880. Find out more about Second Venture Horse Rescue [here](#).

[box] Emma will receive a coffee and cake voucher from [The Pavilion Café](#) in Warrnambool. Thankyou to owners Mary-Ellen and Jon Watson for supporting this week's Quiet Hero.[/box]



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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.

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[/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...

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Kylie Thulborn – pushing boundaries