

THE VIEW

LIFE AT TREEVIEW ESTATES

HELPING HANDS

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Inside cover photo: *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*
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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from The View. As the summer wears on, take a morning or evening stroll to get some regular exercise, and enjoy plentiful seasonal fruits to maintain a healthy diet. According to Marathon Health Bathurst, the simple pleasures of good food and exercise can reward us by boosting happy brain chemicals. Read more about it in Intentional Communities.

Spotlight Q & A features Andrew Egan, Sales and Marketing at Treeview, and his passion for customer service. The Great Outdoors has many examples of magnificent Australian Christmas flowers that rival the more common European varieties that adorn Christmas cards.

Out and About features the Snowgum Cafe at Treeview, and the volunteers who run it. Read About It is a new section prompted by the 'Treeview Readers' group, and we're delighted to have some book reviews to publish.

Our feature story Helping Hands is about Treeview resident Kevin Morgan, his volunteering spirit, and his experiences in Vietnam as a "Tunnel Rat". Back In Time tells the story behind the defacing and later restoration of a plaque at historic Berghofer's Pass.

Enjoy our Christmas issue of The View.

Helen Swinton, Editor

The View.

Treeview Estates Magazine



Top Photo
Kevin Morgan with medals

Bottom Photo
The 2" and 4" of Glory ribbons

HELPING HANDS

KEVIN MORGAN ON
COMMUNITY AND CONTRIBUTION
BY HELEN SWINTON

"I'm 73 years old, and because I suffer from restless legs, I'm up early every morning to swim 30 laps at Lithgow pool. It's great for endurance and I enjoy it. I'm the President of Blackheath Probus Club, I drive the Treeview shopping bus on Fridays, I'm on the Residents' Committee and a Fire Warden, and I help out with the Treeview Cafe on Tuesday mornings.

"Sheryl and I both enjoy 'putting back' into our Village, the Probus, and the community. I'd like to think I can be an asset, and we both put up our hands to help out where we can, and we like to promote social activities.

"I grew up in North Parramatta with my two older brothers, and I studied at Marist Brothers Parramatta from infants through to secondary school. I had a wonderful, wonderful childhood but it was tough for my parents to afford the basics.

"Dad was a factory worker at Hardie Ferodo, and Mum was a domestic helper. My parents never owned a car, and I remember one Christmas when I was about 12 years old and my brother and I asked for push bikes. Mum and Dad said we couldn't afford those, but lo and behold on Christmas morning, they were under the tree.

"I'd like to think I can be an asset, and we both put up our hands to help out where we can."



Above Photo

Army basic training at Kapooka

“I was just an average student at school, but I loved Cadets on Friday afternoons. Over four years in secondary school, I reached the rank of Sergeant (three stripes). My favourite subjects at school were geography and history, especially modern history. Apart from Cadets, I played footy at nearby Cumberland Oval.

“As I’d been successful with Cadets, I left in Year 11 and joined the Army. That was 1967, and Mum and Dad had to sign the permission forms for me to join. Army training was at Kapooka, a boot camp near Wagga Wagga. From Kapooka, I went to the Engineering Corps. I wore glasses, and I was told that I wouldn’t be suited to the Infantry. I didn’t mind that. I did another three months of training at Liverpool, and then at Penrith in 1968. In those days there was a lot of land available for the Army for training.

“My mates had left to go to Vietnam and I hadn’t been placed. I requested duty from Major Clifton and as I was just short of the required age, he agreed to put me down knowing it would be

months before I got called and I would be at the right age. Several months passed, and in the meantime, I went to Rockhampton for a last bit of training. A few months after my 19th birthday I received a notification of the posting, and I was sent to Canungra, Queensland for jungle training.

“Canungra was created in World War Two, and my father trained there. It was a special training camp to get you used to the conditions on the battlefield, even if you weren’t going to see action. They psyched you up by forcing you to crawl through an obstacle course with barbed wire above your head, and live bullets flying over the top.

“Of all my training experiences it was probably the worst because the challenges were physical and mental. They “got into your head’ over three weeks that you’re going to a warzone, and to expect anything. Halfway through we had a day off, and they shipped us to Surfers Paradise. We all got on the grog and had some fun before returning to camp with PT the next day. That shook us after being so hung over.

“A few weeks later, I was given a date for duty: June ‘70 to June ‘71. I had one week to make a will and say goodbye to my family, friends, and my girlfriend at the time. Imagine what that was like for a 19-year-old. In my will, I left my car, still on hire purchase, to my parents. It was my only ‘asset’.

“I joined the 1st Field Squadron Engineers (Tunnel Rats) who were supporting the Australian Task Force at Nui Dat. I was a ‘sapper’ or regular soldier, but a lot of men were ‘nashos’. Our job was bunker and tunnel clearance, and demolition operations. The “Tunnel Rats” went into enemy tunnel systems with a flashlight and a pistol.



Above Photo
Kapooka Camp at Wagga NSW, aged 17 years

“The tunnels were very often active with Viet Cong, and there were booby traps awaiting us around every corner, and the risk of asphyxiation. You had to be courageous and focused and it was one of the most dangerous and nerve-wracking jobs imaginable.

“Anti-war protests were horrendous, so the Army moved troops to Vietnam around midnight once a week. I often think of how hard it was for Mum, losing her mother a week before I left, and now her son going to war. Dad was very quiet as he knew what I was getting myself into. He’d been to New Guinea in World War Two and I was headed for Nui Dat, which was at the ‘pointy end’ of the whole conflict.

“The camaraderie was special. We lived together, played together, and got drunk together in tents for twelve months with our only entertainment being a reel-to-reel music player, the footy, and recording messages to send home. We worked six-and-a-half days a week, with Sunday afternoons off. We’d enjoy some hidden Bacardi, against Army regulations. At ‘the boozier’ we would get two cans of beer a night through a ticket system, and they were opened to prevent any parties or hoarding back at camp. We ate three hot “all-American” meals a day and turkey three or four times a week.

Everything had a liberal dose of sugar in it. Despite eating well, we were all pretty skinny.

“The camp held 5,000 soldiers, 99.9% males, and a few female nurses. The shower block was hessian and concrete and we camped on a rubber plantation. There wasn’t time for any boredom.

“Every day you’d hear about injuries. One of the soldiers was trapped and badly injured, changing his personality. You wouldn’t sit with him once he had a few beers because he became so angry and aggressive. He just wanted to go out and kill. The Infantry had the worst stories.

“My 20th birthday was spent in Vietnam. I didn’t press a trigger against the VC although a couple of times we got mortared. That’s how the whole 12 months panned out, and I went there as a kid and came back as a man as the saying goes.

“I thought I would be a ‘lifer’, which is 20 years of service and then a pension. I returned with my experiences and my ribbon, the ‘2 inches of glory’ in 1971, and the following year I married my girlfriend and started a family. I did another three or four years in the Army back at Penrith, and we built a house and had three boys. After six years, I decided not to extend my time because that would mean possible relocation anywhere in Australia. I had no regrets and I’d enjoyed the experience.

“I’ve always had a job, but I haven’t any formal qualifications. I joined the Commonwealth Public Service as a clerk, working in Liverpool, and then I became an insurance investigator on worker’s compensation claims in the early ‘80s. That was an experience!

“I moved into security work for about 14 years in mobile overnight patrolling.

“After 11 years, my marriage dissolved, and I met Sheryl who had two sons. We married in 1989, and we’ve been married for 34 years. Between us, we have 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Our eldest sons have the same name (Scott), and our family is mainly located in the Penrith area, so we catch up with them regularly.

“My last job was shared with Sheryl. It was a Mr Whippy franchise. We were living in Hazelbrook, and we spent 25 years living there. The Mr Whippy ice cream shop was in Nepean Square, Penrith.

“After seven days a week of travel there for six years, we sold that for a profit and retired. That was in 2003, and my brother and his wife convinced us to move to Tasmania. We bought a house on a large block in a rural setting, 50 kilometres south of Hobart.



Above Photos

Nui Dat 1970 with Peter, my closest mate and 50 years later on Anzac day in Sydney 2023

“I became a volunteer community and patient transport driver once a fortnight. I really enjoyed the job, and it was rewarding, but I had to spend hours driving into Hobart and back just to pick up the car. After six years I got tired of that. It was a hobby to read the Australian newspaper cover to cover, and I’d spend three to four hours during the week, and eight hours on the weekend.

“The property was five times bigger than the Hazelbrook house, overlooking the Huon Valley and the River, which is ten times wider than the Nepean. It was beautiful, and there were snow-capped mountains in the distance, but the garden work was getting me down, and some of our kids were finding it difficult with us living so far away. That was despite us making 49 times back on the Tassie ferry!

“After 13 years we came back to NSW and the mountains, and we found Treeview Estates. That was in 2016, and although we thought Lithgow was a bit far from our families, we haven’t found that to be the case. We love the villa, and when we bought it we thought it was very good value for money.

“We’ve been here seven years and we’ve made good friendships, our neighbours are fantastic, and the staff are wonderful. We followed advice from a resident about balancing activities inside the Village with activities outside. We’re both Probus members at Blackheath; I’ve been the President for three years and a member for five. Many residents have joined, and it’s a wonderful social club.



Above Photo

Farewelling two soldiers at the end of their tour of duty

“Every Friday when I drive the shopping bus, I enjoy a coffee and a walk, and I switch off for those hours. We’re both volunteers in the Snowgum Cafe on Tuesday mornings, and we hope more residents can join us for a coffee there and keep it going.

“In the past, we’ve done many camping and caravanning trips but we’ve seen so much of Australia over the last 20 years that we’ve probably done our last big trip. Last year it was Cape York on a 4WD bus, and in September, we did a road trip to Western Australia over three months.

“Our favourite places have been Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm staying in the Pearler’s Cottage, Cable Beach in Broome, and Cairns.

“I still enjoy modern history and politics, current affairs, and reading. My special interest is in war history. Anzac Day is still a very special day for me and my Vietnam veteran mates. There were seven of us, and now we’re five. We meet a couple of times a year with our wives, and it’s become a good social group.

OUT AND ABOUT

SOME LIKE IT HOT.....

SNOWGUM CAFE SERVES UP A TREAT BY HELEN SWINTON

Espresso coffee offers health benefits. Regular coffee can decrease your risk of type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and dementia, and the antioxidants and caffeine in coffee can boost your metabolism and mood. The volunteers and patrons at Treeview's Snowgum Cafe enjoy their hot cup of beneficial coffee, and a lot more, every Tuesday morning at the Lifestyle Centre.

Robyn Romans is a volunteer along with Kevin and Sheryl Morgan, Glenda King, Karen and Les Handicott, David and Ruth Chapman, Kerrie Knopov, and Christine Corcoran. Since opening in October 2022, the volunteers have developed a strong commitment to coming in before and after closing time and for some of them, learning how to make barista coffee to provide a great cafe experience for Treeview residents.

Some volunteers make the coffee, and others serve or take orders and clear away dishes. None of the volunteers have operated a cafe before, so it's been a learning curve. According to Robyn, it's very rewarding



Above Photo

Snowgum Cafe Volunteers

"Some of us have learned a new skill, and there's a boost in everyone's self-pride when customers tell us they enjoyed their coffee. All of the volunteers are wonderful, and they have a lot of fun and a social catch-up. They make it easy to run the roster because they're so well organised and they let everyone know changes in advance, and they've been there since it opened which we appreciate. We could always do with a few more, just to cover absences, and no experience is necessary.

"In 2023, the barista volunteers completed a much-anticipated course with Art of Espresso. Jen Youmans taught another group, as she is a former barista. Robyn says, there's an opportunity for more volunteers to become baristas if there is enough interest."



Above Photo
Some of the Cafe regulars

Currently, the Snowgum Cafe opens on Tuesday mornings between 9:30 am and 11 am. A coffee card is required to buy an espresso coffee and a biscuit. The coffee cards are available to buy from the office, and they cost \$30. The 10th coffee is free with the card. Great value considering the cost of a barista coffee and sweet treat downtown.

“We offer good value at \$2.70 per cup, and we can do any of the popular coffee styles. The biscuit is included for free and we have a gluten free option. Volunteers don’t accept cash sales at the Cafe, so the office looks after that by selling the Coffee Card for us. If you have a dairy intolerance please bring your own milk.”

Robyn says there is an unexpected benefit from the Cafe, and that’s the appearance of regular groups of people socialising. “I’ve noticed a group of men sitting together, and of course we see women doing the same, but it’s rare to see men going out for a coffee and catching up.

“I think it’s terrific to see that, and a big boost for men socialising in the Village, and for mental health. We’d love to see more of that, and more patrons generally. Our numbers are steady, but we would like to see the Cafe become more popular among residents. We want it to be sustainable, and provide an easy and cheap way to catch up with other people and enjoy a treat close to home.”



Above Photo
Some more regulars

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

THE FLOWERS OF CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA

BY MERLE THOMPSON OAM

If you look at a lot of decorations and Christmas cards you could be excused for thinking that we are in the Northern Hemisphere with snow, and the trees of that hemisphere such as pines and firs. Holly berries tend to be the only flowers or fruit depicted.

Yet Australia has its own very beautiful plants which have Christmas in their common name. In New South Wales we have Christmas Bush and Christmas Bells.

Christmas Bush has the botanical name of *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*. This is a small tree known for its brilliant red display. People think red is a flower, but actually it has small white flowers with petals that are only about 3 mm long. After flowering, the sepals, the outer ring of the flower, enlarge from about 2 mm to 12 mm and turn bright pink to red. In the Sydney area, it's quite common and occurs from the coast to the mountains. A close relative, Coachwood, *Ceratopetalum apetalum*, has much the same type of flower. It's common in Blue Mountains rainforests.

I have a small dwarf cultivar in a pot in my courtyard but it doesn't quite know that it's meant to be red for Christmas. In the Lithgow climate it tends to flower on or after Christmas, and this year it was red for Easter. We'll see what happens this coming Christmas. Buds started developing in early October.



Top Photo
Calanthe triplicata (Christmas Orchid)

Bottom Photo
Blandfordia Grandiflora (Christmas Bells)



Above Photo

Bursaria spinosa subsp. lasiophylla, our local Bursaria at Mt David

Our other special plants are Christmas Bells. There are only four species, three in NSW. Two species are found within the Sydney coastal area with one, *Blandfordia nobilis*, extending south down the coast and inland to Braidwood, and the other, *Blandfordia grandiflora*, to the north and some inland areas plus Fraser Island in Queensland. In developed areas, they are less common than they used to be because of people picking the flowers.

Closer to home we have a much rarer species which is a protected plant. *Blandfordia cunninghamii* only grows in the Blue Mountains and Illawarra areas. In the Mountains, it is recorded from places such as Wentworth Falls, Blackheath, and Mt Tomah.

The fourth species is *Blandfordia punicea*, the Tasmanian Christmas Bell. Its natural area is restricted to western Tasmania.

The Victorian Christmas Bush also grows in the Blue Mountains. This is a mint bush, *Prostanthera lasianthos*. It prefers a sheltered location especially the basalt caps and surrounding valleys such as around Mt Tomah and Bowen Creek. I recall a beautiful display in the Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine area many years ago.

In both South Australia and Tasmania *Bursaria spinosa*, the Native Blackthorn, is known as Christmas Bush. It doesn't only occur in those states but is common and widespread across much of New South Wales and in all other states except Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This is a shrub which many people don't like because it is prickly and can be straggly. However, in our area a sub-species, *Bursaria spinosa subsp. lasiophylla*, plays a very important role.

- THE GREAT OUTDOORS -

The endangered Purple Copper Butterfly is a very choosy insect and will only eat the leaves of this one subspecies. This means we must protect and encourage this plant.

Queensland has an orchid, *Calanthe triplicata*, which is called Christmas Orchid. It also occurs in New South Wales along the coast and coastal ranges north of the Illawarra. It has white sprays of flowers up to 1.5 m long.

In Western Australia, a tree, *Nuytsia floribunda*, which is semi-parasitic and needs grass as a host, is known as Christmas Bush. It has vibrant orange flowers.

All these plants except the orchid are endemic to Australia, that is, they do not occur anywhere else in the world.



Top Photo

Prostanthera lasianthos (Victorian Christmas Bush)

Bottom Photo

Nuytsia floribunda

RECIPE

BERRY BUTTER CAKE

A RECIPE BY TREEVIEW RESIDENT,
SUZANNE LONG

Here is a recipe that takes advantage of fresh seasonal berries and simple ingredients.

Ingredients

125g butter
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
1/3 cup caster sugar
2 eggs
1 1/2 cups plain flour, sifted
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 cup milk
1 cup mixed berries (e.g. raspberries, blackberries, youngberries)



METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 180 Degrees centigrade. Grease and flour/line the cake tin.
- Mix butter and vanilla essence in a bowl and beat until light and fluffy. Gradually add sugar. Continue beating until creamy.
- Add eggs to the mixture and beat the mixture well. Sift flour and combine with baking powder. Fold flour mixture and milk into the butter mixture to form a batter.
- Fold berries into the batter. Bake according to the size of the cake tin you are using. e.g. 20cm round tin for 30 – 40 minutes.



TIDBITS

FROM AROUND THE VILLAGE

BRIAN THE POSTIE

BY PETER WHITE



Brian was a postie. He delivered the mail, and the locals called him Brian the snail. He sorted the letters for his round each morn and set out on his route through sun and storm. Though fit from walking his round each day, his gait was short which furthered delays.

His boss said to Brian "Is there a way to quicken the pace, and reduce delays?" To which he replied, "I will try to find a solution to the problem of this gait of mine."

One day while walking his beat, he spied a trike abandoned near a creek. His mind did wonder if this little trike could reduce the source of his plight?

So down to the local tip did Brian go, and find a motor not bent, or warped. Luck found him on that very day, when Brian did spy a little motor - just resprayed!

That night, Brian was found to be tinkering around with a little trike, and a motor to better his round.

Two days passed and on the third we heard the sound of trike motoring, around a curve. It spluttered and sprayed white smoke around the local surroundings, and also the sound of a motor struggling to keep apace, with Brian at full throttle, as if in a race. The basket on the back bent and swayed, as one of the rear wheels wobbled and wavered, a bearing overheated from the weight of a load, designed for a kid and and a pet little toad,

Then all of a sudden, an unusual sight, to see the wheel of a trike fall off in full flight. It bounded towards the creek from whence it was found, and landed in the mud not safe nor sound. At an odd angle Brian did slow, as his trike now a bike began to show the signs of some dysfunction of an idea he spawned, at this very location a previous morn.

.... And the moral of the story is of course the shorter the legs the faster the walk!

TIDBITS



CHRISTMAS MAGIC

A SHORT STORY BY WINSOME SMITH

“Baloney!” shouted the little girl, storming out of the kitchen and banging the door. Helen paused in her peeling of vegetables. There had been a lot of storming and shouting of “baloney” since Mandy had come to them. With the family grown, a comfortable home, and a good income she and Bob had felt they could do something they could now afford – take in a foster child. So six-year-old Mandy had come to them, small curly-haired, and pretty, but not quite the charming child they had in mind.

Mandy appeared again. “Kids at school say there’s no Santa Claus, only your parents. Well, I don’t have a Mum and Dad and Santa has never been to me, so it’s all rubbish.” Helen sighed; at least the language had been mild this time. She had never seen Mandy smile and she had certainly never laughed. “You’ll need the patience of a saint,” the Social Worker had told them. “She’s been through a lot – too much for a six-year-old.” Helen and Bob were not saints; they were just a well-to-do middle-aged couple willing to do their best.

Helen had almost lost patience when Mandy had climbed up on a chair, unpegged all the clean washing, and let it fall into the dirt. When Mandy got a stick and knocked all the blooms off Bob’s prized dahlias, Bob muttered something about them having made a mistake.

The current outburst happened when Helen asked Mandy again what she would like Santa Claus to bring, but Mandy answered with a temper tantrum.

When Helen told Bob about Mandy not believing in Santa Claus, Bob said, “We won’t let that worry us. Lots of kids don’t believe in Santa Claus. Doing something about her behavior is the first consideration.”

“You’re not as hard-hearted as you sound,” his wife told him. “She almost smiles when you play tennis with her in the backyard, and the other day she nearly smiled when I bought her a new dress.”

“Yes, nearly, sometimes she’s nearly nice.”

“I think she needs some magic – you know some childish kind of magic. She needs magic now and I’ve thought of an idea.” Helen outlined her plan to her husband. He nodded with approval. “I’ll help all I can,” he said, “but don’t get your hopes up. She’s a little imp – and I don’t want to see you disappointed.”

The next day Helen contacted her son, Matt, who had a couple of horses. He said almost the same thing as his father. “I’ll do all I can, Mum, but don’t expect too much. Anyway, doing it is no trouble.”

Christmas was, as usual, to be a big family day. Bob and Helen’s daughter, son-in-law and the grandchildren were coming and there would be presents for everyone. Helen just hoped that Mandy would not spoil the day with her usual regular outbursts.



The next time she saw Matt they discussed the plan. "You've got Paddy, he's such a patient horse, and I can borrow bells from the local Theatrical Group."

"No problem, Mum," agreed Matt. "I'll ride Paddy at about 6.30am on Christmas morning. I'll do what you want. That'll be easy. All good."

Mandy's tight little face almost softened as she helped Helen decorate the tree. Bob hung up streamers and balloons. When it was bed-time Helen said to Mandy, "We'll leave out a piece of Christmas cake for Santa, and of course, a carrot for the reindeer." "Bollocks!" shouted Mandy and charged off to her bedroom.

Promptly at 6:30am on Christmas Day, Helen entered Mandy's bedroom. "Merry Christmas, darling," she said cheerily. Mandy glared at her and Helen sat on the bed. Then they both heard the sound. In the distance they heard hooves and jingle bells. Helen put her arm around Mandy's stiff little body. "Listen to that. Could it be reindeer?"

The hooves galloped closer, getting louder. The jingle bells tinkled as, whatever it was, passed the window. The loud rhythmic clatter came closer to the house then began to get softer. At last the hooves and bells faded away. Helen looked at Mandy. The little girl was trying hard not to smile. "Do you think it could have been Santa Clause and his reindeer? Let's go and see if he's left any presents."

When Mandy saw the packages under the tree her face lit up. Bob helped undo the wrappings, and she actually let out cries of delight when she saw the presents the packages contained.

When Matt arrived Helen ran to meet him. "Thank you so much!" she cried with her arms around her son. "It made such a difference. Mandy believes she actually heard Santa Claus. You brought some magic into her life."

"Mum, I've got to apologise," said Matt. "I'm sorry, I didn't do it. I slept right through the alarm. Paddy's still in the stable and the bells are on my kitchen bench. I let you down. Sorry."

Just then Bob came to the back door and said, "Hey, come outside, Helen, Matt, you'll want to see this." They followed Bob outside and he pointed to the ground. "Look at these tracks in the dirt. Some animals have been here. What do you think they are?"

They were certainly not the prints of horse shoes and they were not the tracks of the occasional kangaroo. They were the sharp tracks of some cloven hoofed animals. Helen looked at Bob. Could they be? No, of course not, they couldn't be.

Helen felt a small hand slip into hers. She looked down and saw Mandy holding her new doll and smiling. "It's reindeer! I heard them!" cried Mandy, "It's reindeer. Santa did come. He really did come."

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

NEUROCHEMISTRY AND THE POWER OF SOCIAL CONNECTION

BY HELEN SWINTON

At a recent talk by Marathon Health Bathurst, residents heard about the power of “joining in” or connecting with at least one other person to not only change our brain’s wiring but to make us feel good. So how can a smile, a quick chat, or joining a group activity help our brains perform better and make us happier? The answer lies in our brain chemistry and the creation of neural connections and pathways that produce chemicals that can reward us and boost our mood.

The idea behind creating positive communities has been touched on over the last few issues. We can feel value and commitment when we act alone, but when we join with others in a community the effects are amplified. Working together and pulling together as a group can get us through difficult times during the year, especially during the festive season or on anniversaries when we remember grief and loss, or in periods of illness.

Marathon Health psychologist, James Holder, spoke about the fulfillment humans can enjoy when they connect with at least one other human being. Approximately 52% of aged care residents have symptoms of depression, leading to lower physical health, more pain, and less fulfilling relationships. Many feel isolated and don’t enjoy life.



Individuals who interact with another person, or join a group, can feel they are seen and heard and this improves their mental and physical health, their feeling of fulfillment, cognitive functioning, and relationships. A feeling of “belonging” is fostered, and interpersonal bonding is strengthened. People can feel valued, and connections develop with others.

According to James, historically humans were wired to work together, interact, and share resources and this helped everyone stay alive. The brain is hardwired to produce neurochemicals that reward us for our social efforts. We can feel dopamine (a reward chemical), and oxytocin (a bonding chemical), and that helps us repeat the action of connecting with others.

Endorphins and serotonin are also released into our brains, making us feel happier. Our brains have approximately 86 billion neurons to use for building beneficial neural pathways that help us learn new things and repeat them more easily over time.

They're also used to help us connect with others, and for cognition (thinking). We can selectively strengthen the pathways we want to retain by repeating the actions that created them. If we avoid certain behaviours, the connections in our brains weaken, and we lose the tendency to repeat those behaviours. Through practising behaviours we want to keep, we strengthen those connections and they become stronger and instinctive.

Connecting with others through saying "hello", or simply smiling, develops neural pathways that produce good feelings and lift our mood. Over 40 neurotransmitters can make us feel good and they are produced when we laugh, or we're curious, or when we hug another person.

If we avoid human contact, we can experience sleep problems and more stress as cortisol is released in our brains. Our immunity is lowered and healing is impaired. Inflammation and pain can increase from lower endorphin levels, and mental health challenges can be greater.

Individuals who connect with others are more resilient to face new challenges, experience lower pain levels, improve their self esteem, and enjoy better cognitive function.

Physical exercise and being exposed to nature also helps release positive brain chemicals. Through exercise or being outdoors, or appreciating food, the brain releases dopamine, the reward chemical, and endorphins that are powerful natural pain-blockers. Reflecting on kindness and beautiful moments will also encourage dopamine release.

Try a dose of kindness, and be rewarded with your brain's release of dopamine. Step up your walking, and feel the benefits of less stiffness and less pain in your joints.

We can boost our mood by simply reflecting on something positive, and receive more serotonin which will help us get a good night's sleep.

Start a conversation with someone new, join a group, or start a new activity to boost feel-good chemicals. Volunteering, or attending church, actively listening to another person, or just hugging each other will make you feel good, and build neural "superhighway" pathways that strengthen with use, and make those interactions a lot easier to do each time.

Try actively listening to another person, be positive, and you will receive the same back in spades.

James closed the talk with recommendations for maximising social connections. Actively listen, focus on one thing at a time, be aware, and enjoy gratitude to release dopamine and elevate mood. Our attitude towards others can also release other "feel-good" chemicals.

His final suggestion was to "fake it 'till you make it". If you can't feel happy, or grateful, pretend! Smile at someone, and they will smile back. Over time, the fake becomes real.

Some self-care "mood-lifting" tips to try out include reading, hot showers, exercise, meditation, eating well and savouring food, finding a hobby, listening to music, noticing smells and beauty in nature, chair yoga, practicing good sleep hygiene, and getting creative. He also recommends a 'self-hug', and it surprisingly works!



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT, HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL CONTACTS:

- Open Arms, <https://www.openarms.gov.au>, for veterans, ADF personnel and their family members
- Head to Health, advice for local mental health services, 1800 595 212.
- Beyond Blue, for people feeling depressed or anxious, 1300 22 4636
- SANE Australia, people living with a mental illness, 1800 187 263
- Black Dog Institute, <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>, for people affected by mood disorders
- Lifeline, for anyone having a personal crisis, 13 11 14

Older Person's Mental Health Line, call the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 for information

BACK IN TIME

NAME ERASED

THE STORY OF JOHN BERGHOFER
BY TREEVIEW RESIDENT,
ALLAN CUPITT

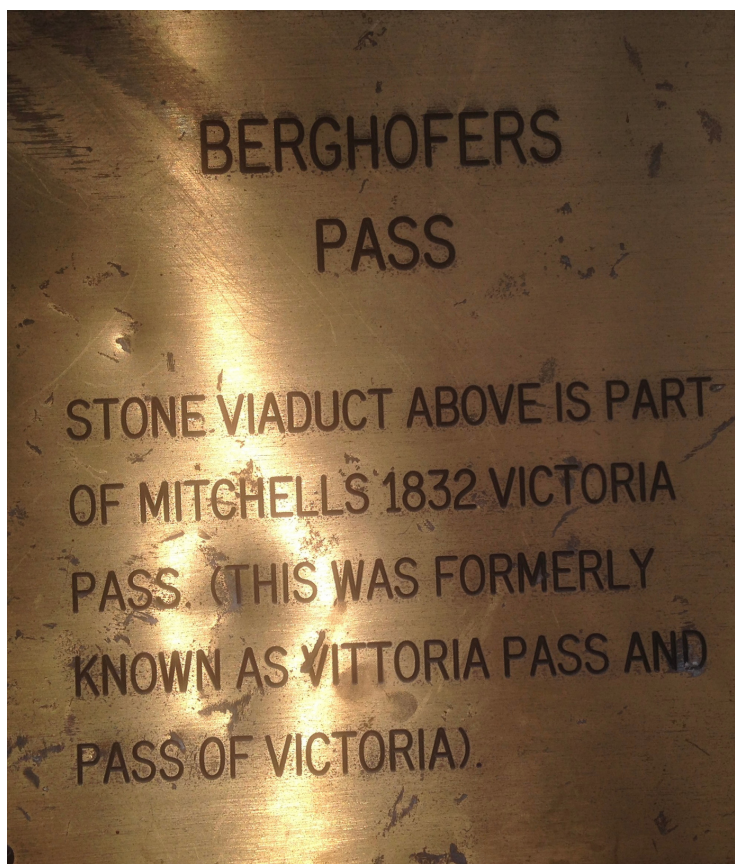
Most of us have been up and down Mt Victoria pass more times than we care to remember. However, most travellers will miss seeing a road, just below the pass on the western side, that was the access to the west for over 20 years.

Mitchell's Victoria Pass was opened in 1832, taking the place of Cox's Road, off the end of Mount York. It has been in use since 1914. However, with the arrival of the "horseless carriage", Victoria Pass proved too steep, and an alternate route was needed.

It was John Berghofer who quickly realised the urgent need for an alternate road. He rediscovered a 20-year-old survey following an easier grade, and personally located the old Surveyor's marks, 'crawling on hands and knees along the edge of the escarpment'. He then convinced the Minister for Works to build the road.

The construction of Berghofer's Pass commenced in 1907 and it opened in 1912. It was closed after upgrades to Victoria Pass in 1934. The top of the pass starts about 1km down Mount York Road on the left, opposite Lawson's Long Alley Track Head, and it finishes near the bottom sharp corner of Victoria Pass.

The gradient of Victoria Pass remained a major challenge for many older and smaller vehicles right through until the late 1950s and early 1960s. It wasn't uncommon to see many vehicles parked on the side of the road with their bonnets up, and steam coming out of a boiling radiator.



Above Photo
Berghofer's Pass

Also, you would see passengers walking behind a vehicle, or even a car going up backwards because the reverse gear was stronger!

J.W. Berghofer was born in Germany and came to Australia in 1855. He initially lived and worked in Sydney before moving to the Hartley region in the 1870s where he purchased a property known as 'The Foot of the Hill' in the Hartley Valley, on which the Mount Victoria Inn stood. Major renovations were completed, and the property was renamed 'Rosenthal', but it was later changed to Rosedale to avoid further persecution due to anti-German feeling at that time.

Berghofer had many different roles and business interests, and he became very influential in the Mt Victoria area. In later years, he was referred to as the 'Father of Mount Victoria'.



Above Photo
an engraving along the Berghofer's Pass walk

He was the first President of the Blaxland Shire (now Greater Lithgow City Council) and developed a great interest in local history. He was the driving force behind the construction of the Macquarie Obelisk and the Memorial Pavilion at Mount York.

During World War I, life was very difficult because of bad feelings towards people of German descent. Various laws were passed, and he was removed from the Council, and his activities restricted. He always maintained that he was naturalised in 1878, and was always a loyal and patriotic Australian.

Berghofer was vindicated when shortly before he died in 1927, his name was restored on the Pass, and he was presented to the Duke and Duchess of York, (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth) when they visited Mount York. He is buried in Mt Victoria cemetery.

After the track was closed, it fell into disrepair, but fortunately, some years later Blue Mountains Council cleaned it up and reopened it as a wonderful walking/horseriding/bicycling track. Various signs erected explain points of interest, including several markings on the sandstone.

One of these markings shows the dividing line between Blue Mountains Shire on the left, (now the Blue Mountains City Council), and Blaxland Shire on the right (now Lithgow Council).

The sign with the name 'Berghofers Pass' was extensively defaced during World War 1 because of anti-German sentiment. It's generally believed that over-eager war recruits passed through in 1915 as part of the Coo-ee March from Gilgandra to Sydney and defaced the sign.

There are excellent views of the convict-built buttresses and stone walls that support Victoria Pass, and the stone viaduct we know as Mitchell's Bridge. It's easy to feel a great sense of history when walking the track, and as a bonus, looking to the other side of the track a walker can see wonderful panoramic views into the valley.

Unfortunately, in May 2022, the Blue Mountains Council closed the track due to rockfall and subsidence, and numerous requests as to when it may reopen have gone unanswered. I will keep pushing for an answer, and hopefully, I will be able to pass on good news sometime in the future and lead (if still able at that time!) a walk on the track.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW EGAN,
SALES & MARKETING AT TREEVIEW

BY HELEN SWINTON

Q. Andrew, over the six years you've been here, what have been some favourite experiences?

A. I've enjoyed sharing the journey from an initial reservation through to moving into Treeview Estates. People contemplating this life-changing decision are at a seminal moment in their lives, preparing for this next season

Q. Is it mostly a straightforward decision to move into a retirement village?

A. In some cases, no, it's not an easy decision and it requires some determination to get from where they are to here. It's a privilege to work with people during this process and help where I can.

Q. What does a typical workday look like?

A. I spend time following up with many families that I've come to know over the years and are in the process of deciding when and what to do about accommodation in the next phase of their lives. A sales role in a retirement village is very much about relationship building, and being top of mind when that day eventually arrives for a decision.

There are many process-related tasks in each stage of the journey before a person or couple moves into Treeview, and my job is to support them with a smooth and easy transition. The final and potentially most stressful part is moving day, and that's where we all get involved to help physically relocate new residents to the village. We help with moral support and advice for what can be a very arduous process, and our focus is to make it as seamless as possible and step in if it's really needed as a back up.



Photo

Andrew Egan at Treeview Estates

Q. What are some of the unexpected tasks in your week of work?

A. Chasing goats out of Treeview. That would be the number one. The goats really enjoy visiting, but I can't say that is reciprocated by management.

Q. What were you doing before you joined Treeview Estates?

A. I've been in the property market for some time, and for a decade I ran my own real estate agency serving Sydney's northern beaches. I had fun dealing with a wide range of buyers and properties ranging from multi-million dollar waterfronts to one-bed apartments.

Prior to that, I had been in a teaching or education role, so experience working with people, customers, and providing good service has always been my focus and interests.

Q. How many enquiries would you get from people outside of the more typical mountains and local retiree population?

A. Our main demographic for Treeview has been retirees living in the region from Springwood to Lithgow. However, I'm getting calls from city folk who are starting to perceive the value and security of a tree-change. Those Sydney people are outside our traditional demographic, but I can see there are many lifestyle and cost reasons for them to look at Treeview compared to other city options.

Q. What are buyers looking for these days? Are there any trends?

A. Security and community are two things that are driving the trend towards living in retirement villages. We live far more fractured lives with family and friends living a distance away and with infrequent contact. Communities like Treeview Estates are the antidote to isolated living. The village is a place where like-minded people with similar life experiences can engage with each other in support. I often hear the comment, "I have made so many new friends here".

The other primary motivator for retirement village living is the increasing cost and burden of house maintenance. As we age, previously simple tasks can become more draining and daunting to manage. For those wise enough to see the writing on the wall, getting into a low-maintenance environment before they become too frail can free them up to enjoy their retirement, follow their interests, and really enjoy life.

The big misconception with retirement living is that it's just for "old people". However, so many younger retirees are also seeing this type of accommodation as an exciting opportunity to reduce costs, and gain some freedom from maintenance chores to pursue the things they really want to.

Q. Has your work and life experience influenced how you approach your role at Treeview?

A. Definitely. Having lived the 'real-estate-world' experience as an agent, I have an acute empathy and understanding for potential residents and what they're experiencing with doing their research, managing the sale of their properties, and weighing up the options. I've often had the opportunity to put on my 'real estate hat' and offer my advice. In some cases it's helped those people deal more effectively with their agent selling their previous home, and in some cases, choosing a better agent.

Q. What happens when all the villas are sold? Will there be another role at Treeview?

A. The village has achieved a level of growth and maturity where there will always be a need for a sales role. Residents would understand that to achieve the best sales outcome for them and for us, we need to continue to band together and be laser focused in our marketing and sales presentation of properties, and keep achieving consistent sales results.

Q. What is the feedback from prospective buyers about the Village?

A. It's always encouraging to hear people comment on how surprised they are with the value and quality of our accommodation. Treeview is unique in the level of finishes and spaciousness of our villas. I often meet prospective buyers who have done the rounds and comment that there is nothing else like Treeview, and I agree with them!.

READ ABOUT IT

TREEVIEW READERS

CHALLENGING, SOCIAL, AND FUN

BY PENNY KEARNEY PHD

In July, a number of residents met to create "Treeview Readers", a book club. Seven happy readers now meet monthly and discuss a nominated book of the month. One attendee wasn't keen for all to read the same book each month, but agreed to try it out. An enthusiastic bloke attended and joined in the discussions, but he withdrew because as the lone male, he felt he would 'interfere with the dynamic'. We regretted the loss but understood his decision.

After a brief 'getting-to-know' each other conversation, it was clear that although we all love reading, there was little consensus regarding common interests! Some preferences included: courtroom dramas, literary fiction, history, crime, romance, and memoir. We figured that so many different favourites could be positive and challenging as we would be required to read genres and books that we might never consider.

Other outcomes of the meeting included:

- The group is called the 'Treeview Readers'
- Monthly meetings are held in the Library of the Lifestyle Centre
- Meetings are scheduled for two hours, 2.30-4.30, and include afternoon tea
- Whoever nominates the book-of-the-month will lead the ensuing discussion and bring along goodies for afternoon tea
- While the focus of each meeting is the 'book-of-the-month', with two-hour sessions there is scope to discuss any other readings and interests
- Guidelines for discussion were drawn up to ensure everyone gets a fair hearing
- Readings will be 'lightish' for the first few sessions.

To date, the group has met four times and chatted about the following books.

'The Lost Man' – Jane Harper, whose debut novel, 'The Dry', attracted national and international acclaim, evokes a stunning remote Australian landscape and culture in her third novel. The Lost Man reveals numerous puzzles and family secrets along with insight into life in the Outback where everyone knows everyone else despite the vast distances between them. Her writing is nuanced as she slowly unfolds the mysteries of the Bright family, with the story focusing on the characters of three brothers, one of whom is found dead at the legendary Stockman's Grave.

Rather than being just a simple 'whodunit', Harper's writing broadens the genre with exceptional character development of the main players and the women they love, by including backstories that contribute to readers' understanding. We all enjoyed this book and felt it to be the best of Harper's five exceptional books to date.

'A Morbid Taste for Bones' by Ellis Peters is the first in a series of medieval whodunits that star a Benedictine monk as an amateur sleuth. The 'Brother Cadfael Chronicles' eventually comprised 21 novels that were interpreted in a popular TV series starring Derek Jacobi as Cadfael. This book tells the story of the ambitious Prior Robert of Shrewsbury who decides they need the bones of a Welsh saint to attract people to their Abbey because they don't have a saint of their own.

To achieve this, the Abbott approves of sending him with a group of monks that includes the worldly Brother Cadfael, to Wales to exhume and bring back the bones of Saint Winifred. Of course the locals object! The story presents clerical arrogance (not so different from today), ambition, deceit, superstition and murder, within 12th century monastic life. This book had a mixed reception from the Treeview Readers with some of us appreciating the context of Wales and Shrewsbury in 1137, whilst finding the narrative and character development a bit flimsy. However, it's a good example of differing tastes and how in a readers' group we come to read books we might never otherwise consider. The nominator loves the Cadfael Chronicles so much that she has collected the whole series along with books that expand the settings, time, places, and history of the era.

'The Spare Room' – Helen Garner, one of Australia's most esteemed writers, has written a short novel about a longstanding and complex friendship between two women. In her trademark simple but powerful prose, Garner tells the story of the narrator, Helen, and her friend Nicola who has come to stay in Helen's spare room whilst undergoing alternative therapy for advanced cancer. The 'therapy' costs \$2,000 a week and consists largely of huge infusions of Vitamin C that cause Nicola great pain and massive sweating, along with many other adverse symptoms. As the three weeks of the story unfold, Helen becomes increasingly disturbed and angry by her friend's denial of mortal illness even in the face of the terrible effects caused by the dodgy treatment. The crux of the story is not about cancer per se, nor the failure of alternative therapy, and nor is it about the huge workload imposed on Helen through days and long nights.

Rather it is about Helen dealing with anger that becomes rage in the face of Nicola's sanguine refusal to give up the obviously damaging treatment and her taken-for-granted expectation of Helen's commitment.

This book had a mixed reception from us, with a couple really impressed with Garner's diamond-sharp writing and her keen observations of relationships and friendship. Others read the book as being 'about cancer' and therefore were quite negative about it.

'The Ghosts of Paris' (A Billie Walker Mystery Book 2) – Tara Moss. Flamboyant and feisty Billie Walker is a female private investigator based in Potts Point, Sydney, in the postwar years (WW2). Her latest assignment is set in 1947 when she is hired by a wealthy woman to find her missing husband. This assignment suits Billie as it will take her and her trusty assistant, Sam (male), to London and Paris with all expenses paid. Billie was a wartime correspondent in Europe whose own husband, wartime photographer Jack, was among the millions who disappeared in Europe during the war; this assignment will give her an opportunity to also search for him. It is difficult to summarise this story as there are many stories within the main one, along with many themes. However, Moss handles the multiple storylines deftly and the book is absorbing with its many secrets and intrigues. She writes well (though sometimes overwrites) and is easy to read, but for a couple of us there was way too much veering off-piste into contextual descriptions and explanations. Although generally interesting, these were sometimes overdone and not necessary – others enjoyed them and didn't find them distracting! The writing certainly contrasts with Helen Garner's spare prose.



LOCAL EVENTS

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY DECEMBER 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024

ART, MUSIC AND ACTIVITIES

“Christmas In A Box” Art Market finishes on Christmas Eve at Gang Gang Gallery, 206 Main Street Lithgow. All works for sale are 20cm x 20cm and framed, and feature a variety of mediums and subjects by emerging through to established artists. Gang Gang is open Friday to Sunday 10:30am to 4:30pm.

Summer Art Tonic is a skills-based art workshop series on the theme of architecture on 19th and 25th January, and 2nd February 2024 from 10:30am to 12:30pm, \$25 p.p. Contact The Annexe Café, 30 Williwa Street, Portland to book a workshop place, or a spot at their monthly High Tea on the 3rd Sunday, monthly. Cost \$40 per person and includes hot and cold snacks, sandwiches, scone with jam and cream, sweets and drinks. T: 0429 001 918

11th to 14th of January 2024 Parkes Elvis Festival. Central West Tours are offering accommodation packages in Cowra with bus trips daily and entry to the Festival.
T: 0459155845 for more information and pricing.

Tom Curtain “Why we live out here” Concert featuring the Katherine Outback Experience will be held at Rydal Showgrounds, 6-8:30pm on Saturday 10th February 2024. Tom is a multiple Golden Guitar winner, and the show includes horsemanship displays, working dog demonstrations, and a live music show with Chris Matthews and special guests. BYO a chair and book online to grab the cheaper Seniors ticket price of \$35 p.p. https://events.humanitix.com/tom-curtain-tour-rydal_2024/tickets or tickets can be purchased at the door. Doors open at 5pm.

“One Life” is a movie at Mount Vic Flicks from 26th December 2024. It tells the inspiring true story of Sir Nicholas ‘Nicky’ Winton, whose unsung endeavours on the eve of World War II saved more than 600 children from their doom at the hands of the Nazis. For session times, T: 02 47871577

Mount Vic Flicks New Year’s Eve screening of “Poor Things” will include Sydney’s 9pm fireworks live on the big screen and a glass of bubbly. You can order dinner from the Victoria and Albert Guesthouse and have it delivered to the cinema too. Doors open at 5.35pm, and to buy a ticket visit [Trybooking.com](https://trybooking.com) and search for Poor Things in the event name. Tickets are \$25 p.p.



TREEVIEW ESTATES

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THE VIEW

LIFE AT TREEVIEW ESTATES