



# THE RAILWAY EXPRESS #7

A SPECIAL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER TO HELP US STAY CONNECTED

## AROUND THE HOUSE

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Although Railway House is still officially closed we have had a busy week, with lots of people dropping by!

Construction of the long-awaited community garden started on Monday and, naturally, the people who have been involved with this project weren't going to miss it! Some of them have worked very hard over several years to make this project a reality and it was great to see ground finally being broken. The garden build should be completed within 3-4 weeks, so please feel free to drop by to see it taking shape.



Pictured here are happy gardeners Eileen, Helena, Dianna, Teresa, Jane, Bruce, Jenny, Craig and Monica.





It was great also to see eight members of our bike riding group meet up again this week on Wednesday. They rode up St. George's Road to Reservoir where they stopped for



thermoses of coffee and tea. A couple of members of the group ducked into Preston Market for a takeaway!

On Tuesday and Thursday we had the pleasure of welcoming an Italian Dance group at the House, including our very own **Maria!** The group will be meeting at the House twice a week to dance outside on the veranda area until restrictions are lifted and they can meet in the Church Hall.

Others have dropped in to use the computer room, collect fresh fruit and vegetables or bread, borrow books and drop off donations or recycling, or just have a chat - some of whom we haven't seen in quite a while including **Pat, Seham, Ros, Simon, Richard, Emma, Ubah, Helena and Nick.** Lovely to see you!



**Send us your stories about what you have been up to during lockdown, good recipes, recommendations for books and movies, and anything else that could be included in this newsletter. We don't want the Railway Express to run out of puff!**

Stay well and we look forward to seeing more of you over the coming weeks.

*Alison, Lisa C, Lisa G and Jeff*





## VOLUNTEER WEEK (18 – 24 MAY)

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This week is National Volunteer Week and we would like to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt **thank you** to all our volunteers. Railway House is very fortunate to have a fantastic group of approximately 30 people who dedicate their time to support the community through volunteer work at the House. Our volunteers run programs, help us out at events, do one-on-one English tutoring, help with policy and governance, do odd jobs around the House, drive the bus for our monthly bus trips and so on. We are extremely grateful for your contributions and we hope you know how much we appreciate you!



Pat reading with Cianna



Geoff and Richard assembling the new cupboard in the Pavilion



Beautiful gift cards for our volunteers created by Lisa G. These will be delivered along with a gift!

**NATIONAL** 18-24 MAY 2020  
**VOLUNTEER**  
CHANGING COMMUNITIES.  
CHANGING LIVES. **WEEK**



## YOUR LOCKDOWN NEWS: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

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**Mary Egan**, a teacher who has volunteered her time to run our Learning Club for over 10 years, has sent us this wonderful update on what she's been doing over the past few months.

"I am grateful that this period in isolation has been very manageable for me and it has even had some beneficial aspects. There are many others in Australia and the world over who have suffered greatly and whose lives will never be quite the same.

It has been reassuring to be able to maintain the routine of a 5pm walk around Princes Park with a neighbour. However, with so many others doing the same, on occasions we have detoured to the cemetery and lanes of North Carlton. Some, it seems are just fair-weather walkers and joggers!

For years I have ridden a bike for commuting purposes but this phase has encouraged me out with a friend to explore the many bike paths of the Merri Creek and the Yarra with the odd takeaway coffee on a log. I am a thermos rather than a takeaway person but this is a chance to support the local cafes. It has been such a bonus to be able to enjoy nature and fresh air. Until this week my son in Paris has had to carry written permission to leave his apartment for food or exercise all within 1 km or to go to work which he does on occasions.

My Spanish teacher who got stuck in Colombia after returning for a funeral has spent about 9 weeks unable to go outside at all with a toddler.



Creative thinking gave me a legitimate opportunity to have a coffee with an old school pal. We booked our blood bank donations at the same time and enjoyed the provided snacks and coffee together during the rest time in the lounge area. The bonus part was the first-floor view through the trees to the stunning gothic architecture of the ANZ bank on Collins street.



The summer challenging times with the fires prompted me to set up a family WhatsApp. My three siblings live in Melbourne, Darwin and the NSW coast where my brother was unable to save his house. This, combined with our extra time at home to sort photos lead to some family reminiscing of shared pics on our WhatsApp.

Of particular relevance to our present time were a few old black and white ones. These depicted my twenty-one-year-old father in his dressing gown mucking around with some other patients on the roof garden of St Vincent's hospital. (Pictured, left) He was nearing the end of an eighteen-month isolation with tuberculosis in 1947. This put our seven weeks or so in perspective and lead to some reflection on his life around St Vincent's. On leaving school he had wanted to be a historian but his father said that was like 'chasing butterflies' and strongly encouraged him to do something else. Many years later he ended up returning to St Vincent's to work while also studying history in his spare time. Shortly after he retired the call went out for applications to write the history of the hospital. He applied and was accepted. I am sure those years were the most satisfying of his life. He loved following his history passion through an organisation he had a strong connection to through his own health and work experiences. Next on my isolation list is to finally read the book!"



We also heard from **Maria Brandi**, who has a long history with the House and has been involved both as a volunteer and a participant in many of our programs. She brought in this knitting project to show us. She hopes to have this gorgeous jumper completed in the next week or so. We hope she will send us a photo of the finished product!

*Don't forget to send in photos and news about how you have been keeping busy during lockdown.*





## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

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This week we meet **Kath Purkiss**. Kath has been a regular at Railway House for 26 years and is our most longstanding volunteer. She has been involved in a variety of ways, both as a volunteer and a program participant.

Over the years Kath has attended a range of classes at Railway House, such as Cooking and Computer classes – and has volunteered in myriad ways, from making sandwiches, to serving on committees, to driving the bus for our Monday bus trips!



Kath served on the committee of management for 15 years and has been involved in many working groups. She is extremely generous with her time and is always prepared to “have a go”. Kath is the kind of volunteer that organisations cherish.

Currently Kath comes to our Cooking Class and Community Lunch and is a huge help in the kitchen on Wednesdays. She also collects bread when we have it and distributes it to her neighbours. Kath also volunteers at Railway House events such as our end of year party and AGM, helping with set up, clean up and catering - her sandwiches and slices are always a huge hit! Kath is looking forward to being involved in the new community garden.

In her spare time Kath enjoys spending time with her family (including travelling regularly to Gippsland to visit her niece), gardening and is a very keen traveller. She spends most winters in Darwin to escape the Melbourne cold and last year spent six weeks in Turkey. She especially loves going on cruises. Her last cruise was with her daughter from Sydney to Hawaii via New Zealand, Bora Bora, Tahiti, Tonga and Fiji. For her next cruise she would like to sail to New Guinea, which will have to wait for the time being.

Thank you **Kath** for all that you have done and continue to do for Railway House and your community!



## LET'S TALK FOOD

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Raspberries are plentiful and inexpensive at the moment, so why not try this easy and delicious brownie recipe from Donna Hay?

### RASPBERRY-SPIKED BROWNIES

#### INGREDIENTS

- 200 grams dark chocolate, chopped
- 250 grams butter
- 1 3/4 cups brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/3 cups plain flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/3 cup cocoa, sifted
- 1 1/2 cups raspberries, fresh or frozen\*



*\*If using frozen raspberries there is no need to defrost them first.*

#### METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C
2. Place the chocolate and butter in a small saucepan over low heat and stir until melted and smooth.
3. Place in a bowl with the sugar and eggs.
4. Sift over the flour, baking powder and cocoa and mix to combine.
5. Pour into a 23 cm (9 inch) greased square cake tin lined with non-stick baking paper.
6. Top the mixture with the raspberries and bake for 30–35 minutes or until set.





## WRITER'S CORNER

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### AFTERNOON TEA by Carolyn Ilsley

Mabel and younger sister Ruby are in for a treat! "A fair dinkum treat!" says Ruby, straightening the seams of her newly purchased nylon stockings and slipping into her good heels for a shopping trip and city outing. "Meet you at 3 o'clock, dahl" she says, and stoops to plant a kiss on Mabel's cheek. Mabel, ensconced in her bed, stretches luxuriously, murmuring "You bet, Ruby. That's what I love about my Saturday off... a lay-in, a nice little outing and no factory whistle. No clock on. No clock off. I'll see you at 3."

Soon enough, they do meet up. 3 PM on the dot. In front of the Hopetoun Tea Rooms, no less. To be found in the dazzling Block Arcade, a temple of luxury which has graced Collins Street since gold rush days.



"Scones, jam and cream and tea for two" croons the waitress as she ushers them to a tiny, marble-topped table right beside the window. They have booked. They are expected. They seat themselves and remove their gloves. Ruby noticing ("oh dear") that there's a tiny hole in her right-hand glove. She hides it from Mabel's critical gaze by plonking the left one over it. In an effort to distract her sister, she muses aloud, "What was the name of that Fred and Ginger musical we saw at the flicks last week, Mabel?"

"You mean... The Barkleys of Broadway?"

"Ooh, that Fred Astaire's a dreamy dancer" says Ruby mooning at the window with its cavalcade of nattily-dressed passers-by flowing through the Block, reminiscent, she thinks, of the aura of those glamorous people she had seen in the Hollywood movie.

"Yeah, and Ginger's not a real bad hooper either." Mabel is watching Ruby intently. Has she spotted the offending glove?

"These scones are heavenly, Mabel"

"You'll be wearing that cream as a mo' if you don't watch what you're doing" a reproofing Mabel retorts.

Too soon, it's time to go. To surrender the delights of the tea-room; the hissing of the steamy emissions from the elaborate samovar gracing the reception counter, the clink-clink



of silver teaspoons against fine bone-china cups, the comforting buzz of womanly voices, the mingled deliciousness of warm, fragrant scones amid a multitude of eau de toilette worn by its patrons. A last glance of herself, for Ruby, in the gloriously etched mirror that graced an entire wall.

On the tram, hurtling back along Bridge Road to Richmond, the sisters are rudely rocked as it clatters along. No matter. They hardly noticed, wrapped in sweet somnolence and the satisfaction of... Afternoon Tea at the Hopetoun... Ah, the Hopetoun.



#### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

Ruby and Mabel are long gone. Though the tram still runs along Bridge Road, back and forth through Richmond, it's a smoother ride these days. The Hopetoun Tea Rooms are still the heart of the Block, the only original business remaining.

A Melbourne institution, Hopetoun Tea Rooms have crowned Block Arcade, Collins Street, since 1892. They were begun by the Victorian Ladies Work Association, named for their patron, Lady Hopetoun, wife of Victoria's first governor. The Association aimed to support "gentlewoman workers," often widows in straightened circumstances, to support themselves. These ladies met in the (then) modest tea room of the Hopetoun.



#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The *Wikipedia* entry for the Block Arcade is fascinating, highly recommended.



## CLASSIFIEDS

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Railway House has 8 donated houseplants to give away: 4 Never Never Plants and 4 Devil's Ivy. They are both tropical plants.

Never Nevers come from Brazil and Devil's Ivy from South East Asia. The Never Never likes bright indirect light and to be kept damp not wet. It needs to be inside in the winter although can survive on a sheltered veranda. The Devil's Ivy will grow outside all year round but really thrives indoors. It will climb up or cascade down. It's so hardy you can even grow cuttings in a glass of water.



Growing plants in your home helps to refresh the air which is especially good in winter. They were even used for astronauts to keep their air fresh! Please call into the office from Monday if you would like one of these plants. First in, best dressed. Thank you **Jane Miller** for the donated plants!

## LOCKDOWN LAUGHS

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Finally understood what zoom meetings remind me of.

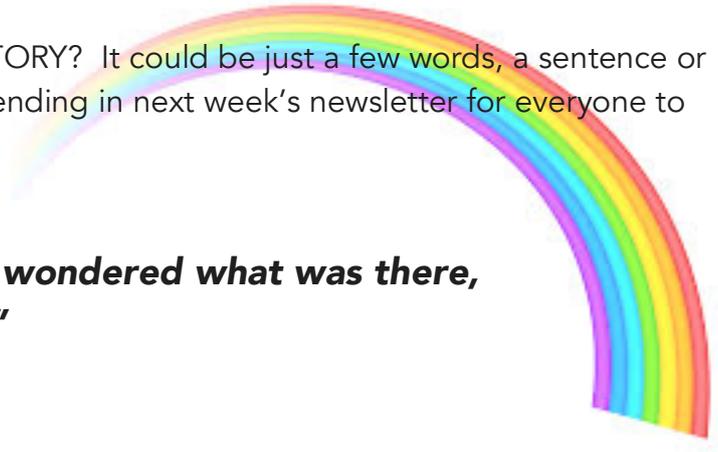




## SHORT, SHORT STORY COMPETITION

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Can you complete this SHORT, SHORT STORY? It could be just a few words, a sentence or two, or more! We will print our favourite ending in next week's newsletter for everyone to enjoy and award a prize, too.



***"Alice loved rainbows. She often wondered what was there, at the rainbow's end? Perhaps..."***

## AND FINALLY...

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We are excited to announce the winners of the all-ages colouring competition! Please come to the office next week to claim your prizes.

Children's Winner – Anya H.

Adult's Winner – Jess S.

