the jolly thing

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY NOTES - NO. 150 April - May

'FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VALLEY' www.steelscreek.vic.au

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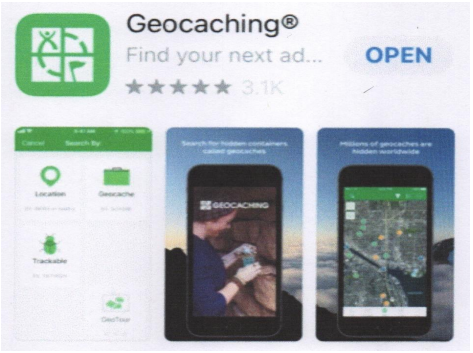
GET OUT THERE! *Exploring our local environment and nearby places with Peta Whitford.*

Edition #15 Getting Started in GEOCACHING

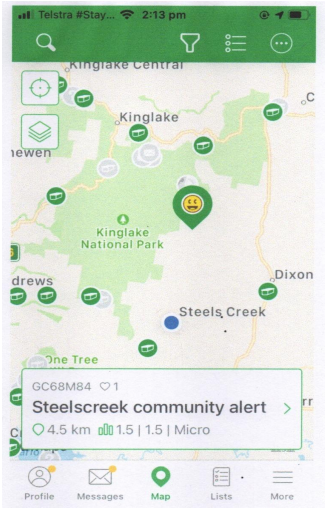


What is Geocaching?
It's an anytime, anywhere, anyday adventure that can take you to nearby or faraway interesting locations - there are 2 million locations World Wide…. you can walk, cycle, horse ride, drive by car.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- You need a Smartphone or GPS.
- Download the FREE Geocaching App (if you want you can upgrade to PREMIUM APP for $9.99/mth or $46.99/yr (i.e $3,92/mth)
- Create your free account.
- Go to Settings and click on the 'metric' system for kilometres.

Screenshots of local area showing with green and white icons each location



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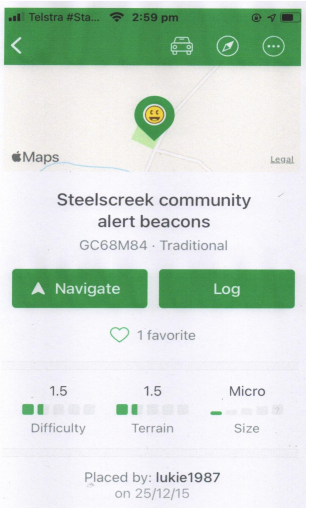


This cache is in a very small capsule, near the road, protected by the high fence and branches.

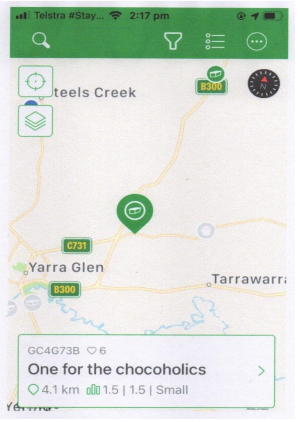
Once you find the cache.

Open it - take out the slip of paper and with your own pen/pencil, insert your name and date (you can choose nickname)

Return capsule to its hidden place.

Left: Screenshot showing Steels Creek
Right: Screenshot showing details to help you to locate the cache

NEXT
Choose a geocache location from the map on the screen, the sample shows one to be close to the Steels Creek Tennis Courts and near the Chocolaterie.



…the cache is located on the road to Healesville, bear in mind this road can get quite busy so be wary when parking and locating this cache (esp with little kids)… enjoy the views this area has to offer…..

Some caches are hard to locate - you can message the person who 'owns' it and get some more hints or report it missing. All caches are provided by volunteers, who maintain their caches. I've found many of the local caches and have travelled into Regional Victoria, Interstate and to New Zealand. Often finding them to fill in time while having a picnic or an evening wander.

Give it a go! From the intrepid local explorer! Peta Whitford

Stories of Old Steels Creek – *On Our Selection*

Family names such as Hubbard, Hunt, and Morris are still well known in Steels Creek, but there are other names seldom heard these days. One of these is Fletcher, a family who were well known in the district during the first century of European settlement. A young man from Herefordshire named George Fletcher arrived in Adelaide in 1851 aged 21. The following year he joined the gold rush to Bendigo but then returned to Adelaide for several years. By 1859 he had moved to Victoria and was employed at *View Hill* Tarrawarra until 1863. In February 1859 he had married Margaret Connors in Fitzroy. George and Margaret's first child, Mary Ann, was born 12 December 1859 and during the next fifteen years another eight children were born. Margaret's younger sister Ellen Connors married William Hunt in October 1869 and they had eight children. The two sisters, originally from Ireland, did much to boost the population of Steels Creek.

In 1867 at the age of 37 George Fletcher was able to purchase his first 80 acres at Steels Creek (middle section on map)– he soon added two more blocks (one of 97 acres to the east, and another 142 acres to the west on the other side of Steels Creek Road) making a total of 320 acres.

George & Margaret Fletcher's Golden Wedding celebration in February 1909, including their seven surviving sons and daughters and 28 of their 36 grandchildren

By January 1869 George Fletcher was well established. It is said that his was the first house built in the area 'just up from the Pinnacle Lane turn off'.[1] Sadly it was destroyed by fire nearly a century later, during the early hours of Monday 18 February 1963.

Within a couple of years Fletcher operated a store and employed men to help with his harvests. This information is based on newspaper reports relating to a fracas that occurred between two of his employees early in 1869 which resulted in the death of one of them.

The first and most colourful version of this story appeared in the *South Bourke Standard* with a report that announced that Constable Elliott had accompanied a man with a fractured skull to the Melbourne Hospital.[2] This man was known at the Steels Creek diggings as 'Peeping Tom'. Tom Mountford, 47, had been a mate of Jonathon Schofield for about three years and had been boarding at Schofield's home at Yarra Flats for some time: Constable Elliott described it to the reporter as a hut. The article goes on to say that the two men were at a store or shanty 'near the creek' at a drunken orgy but that Schofield left early to go home to his wife and children. The men at the shanty thought otherwise and sent his mate 'Peeping Tom' after him to bring him back. Catching up to Schofield, Tom pulled him off his horse but Schofield remounted and threatened to hit Tom with his rifle if he touched him again. Tom tried again and Schofield struck him with the rifle butt, cracking his skull. During the following week, Tom's condition deteriorated and Constable Elliott was advised of the incident. Elliott, stationed at Queenstown, rode over to check and found Mountford in a bad state but refusing to seek medical assistance. Elliott returned five days later and found him so ill that he obtained a horse and cart and drove Tom to the Melbourne Hospital. Tom died on 31st January and an inquest was held a week later.

On several occasions before his death Mountford affirmed that they had been good friends and that it had been his own fault, that he had provoked Schofield. Nevertheless, Schofield was committed to trial on a charge of manslaughter. At Court on 3rd March he pleaded not guilty. Witnesses at the trial, including George Fletcher, gave a more measured account of the events than those first reported in the *South Bourke Standard.* Several witnesses said that the two men drank beer at Fletcher's store, but all claimed that the men were sober. Mountford went into a paddock to cut some oats and a short time later Schofield followed him on horseback. The two then left the field with Mountford walking beside Schofield who was still mounted. Witnesses next heard them quarrelling on the road in the vicinity of the store and saw the physical blows that followed. Medical evidence showed that Mountford's death resulted from the cock of Schofield's gun hitting his skull which caused the fracture and an abscess on the brain. The jury found Schofield guilty, but due to the

[1] Hansen, Christine & Tom Griffiths, *Living with fire,* 2012. p.112

[2] *South Bourke Standard* 22 Jan 1869

provocation from Mountford the Court sentenced him to only three months imprisonment, including the seven weeks he had already been detained in custody.

George Fletcher continued to work hard establishing his farm and orchard. He and his sons won prizes in local agricultural shows for apples and vegetables, competing with others in the district. George also had a share in the Napoleon Gold Mining Company which was established in October 1869 at Pinchgut Creek.

George took his responsibility to the community seriously. He often took the floor at community events to propose a vote of thanks or to acknowledge someone else's contribution to the community. He was a Councillor for the East Riding of the Eltham Shire Council for one term and for several years he was on the Board of Advice to the Eltham Shire Council. He was active in requesting the Education Department to build a school at Steels Creek. The older Fletcher children initially attended the Yarra Flats school, 4 miles (6.5 kms) from their home, until the Dixons Creek school opened in 1875: only about 5.5 kms away 😉. The Steels Creek school was opened in June 1886 – too late for his own children, but several of his grandchildren benefited.

The Fletcher children grew and the family prospered despite the hardships of pioneering. The hardest burdens to bear, as in most families, would have been premature deaths. On the 18th September 1885 George and Margaret's second son John, an orchardist, was admitted to the Melbourne Hospital for a minor operation. Septicaemia set in and he died on 10th October 1885, aged only 21 years.

George and Margaret Fletcher's eldest daughter Mary Ann married George Jell in 1887 when she was 27. Their third child, John, was born in June 1894: six months later in January 1895 Mary Ann passed away. In 1915 this same son, John Jell, enlisted and spent two years fighting in Europe. He was killed in action in Belgium at the age of 21, the same age as his uncle John Fletcher, after whom he may have been named. John Jell's cousin Thomas Goodall also died on active service in Belgium, only three weeks later. He was 27 years old. At least seven of George and Margaret Fletcher's grandsons enlisted for the First World War

In 1902 a grandson, George Cook aged 14 drowned in the Yarra River. He was the eldest of Ellen and Charles Cook's nine children. His brother Frederick died in 1910 aged 13. Several other grandchildren died as infants or as very young children.

George and Margaret's surviving children lived in the district and generally made their living as farmers, miners, and labourers. The exception was Charles who became a carpenter. He has left a lasting memorial to his skills in Saint Aloysius, the Roman Catholic Church in Sayle Street Yarra Glen. It was officially opened in July 1890.

Queries raised during preparation of this article which someone may have answers to –

1. Did George meet Margaret during his first visit to Victoria and return to marry her? – *a long persistent courtship*?? Or did he meet her after coming to *View Hill – a brief courtship?*
2. Where exactly was the house that George built? Brian Mills and his family were living in it when it burnt down in 18 February 1963.

If you can assist with the answers or have any feedback, please email helenmann02@gmail.com

Steels Creek Book Group Review

Julie Riddell

February **- La Rose** by Louise Erdrich

The main character is an experienced hunter who lives on a native American reservation. After a wayward youth he found enlightenment by making spiritual connections with land and culture. Unfortunately, when out hunting he accidently shoots his neighbour's son who was hiding in a very leafy tree. Native American ancestors gave back whatever they took. Exactly how connected is the hunter to ancestry? Should he give his own son to his neighbour?

March **- Anything Is Possible** by Elizabeth Strout

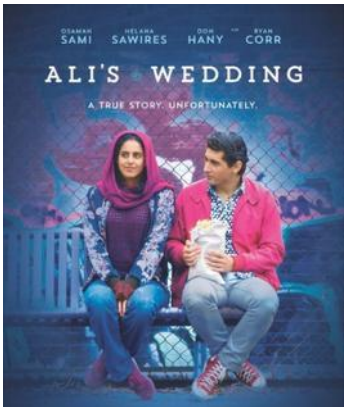
This book has a simple construction. Every chapter tells a different person's story, but connections are made in that they all grew up in the same rural run-down town and still live there now as adults. Individually they have differing quirky character traits, perhaps as a result of their childhoods. The author hints that there is always hope, hence the title Anything Is Possible. The writer has won a Pulitzer prize for another book, Olive Kitteridge, which is a lot more humorous than this book.

Eastern regional Library has been very helpful and found ways of supplying us with bookgroup sets, despite the difficulties lately! **SCCC bookgroup currently has no vacancies**, please contact Julie - 0422 424 694 if you're interested in joining. In the meantime, all our books are available to borrow from Eastern Regional Library.

SCCC Film Night is BACK

DINNER FROM 6pm – FILM STARTS 7.30pm

We look forward to you joining us for guaranteed laughs; suspense; and drama together with fine food; good company and a movie in our Gold Class venue.



Screening on Friday 14th May: Ali's Wedding (2018)
Ali, the charming and musically-talented son of a Muslim cleric (Don Hany), struggles to make the right life choices despite the best of intentions. He wants to be with the girl, Dianne, he loves, but he's been promised to another girl at his father's mosque. He wants to be the great doctor that the community expects him to be, but he doesn't get the marks. Above all, he wants to make his father proud. To live up to these impossible expectations, he lies about his academic achievements, and then his quest to please his father spirals out of control, with amusing and poignant consequences.[5]

Cost is $10 per person plus $4 for the Centre. For those able to provide food it's just $4 donation for the Centre. Please let me know if you are able to supply a main course, salad or dessert. (Lindy - 5965 2202). **PLEASE RSVP**

Steels Creek Art Group

Ivan Filsell

On the last Thursday in March ten of us from the Art Group drove over to Marysville to see the current exhibition at the MIRA gallery. The works of two artists, Ivan Filsell (one of us) and Cecilia Sharpley are contrasting in technique and effect and make for a delightful display. Congratulations to you both.

This gallery is part of the Marysville Information Centre, it's not huge - almost intimate- but very well lit and the works are well displayed. Several works have been sold. Both the Gallery and the artists have done a great job and we can recommend a visit.

Marysville has been quite transformed since the fires of 2009. We gathered in the information car park around 12.30 pm and went to the Bakery for lunch. After lunch we went to the exhibition and spent nearly two hours there and the adjacent shop. The town has much to offer and is well worth a visit.

Steels Creek Observer - *Autumn Colour*

Gosh!! Those trees we plant in the hope of having a spectacular autumn display of colour are putting on a fantastic show this year. Nothing like the mass display they get in Canada, or even in Bright, but there are individual trees that match any Canadian Sugar Maple. Yellows of the Ash, gold of the Poplars, reds of the scarlet oak and burgundy of the Claret ash and there are many others.

Why are the autumn colours so good this year? Well,as you might expect, it's a combination of the nature of the particular plant (genetics)and the climate. These plants are responding to this summer's La Niña. Up until February we have had good rainfall and few stinking hot days with strong north winds. The trees have maintained good healthy green leaves all summer and the cool nights and shorter days are now triggering their natural autumn responses. Shorter days and colder nights signal the onset of winter and the trees are taking nutrients from the leaves to store in the roots and branches ready for the new crop of leaves next spring. The bright colours are what is left in the leaf or waste products after the plant has taken what it needs. All good mulch for the garden!

It's interesting to know that many trees have developed ways of measuring length of day as a way of responding to the seasons. Some flowers have the same ability. Probably the best example of this ability can be seen in street trees growing close to a street light. For instance, keep an eye on the Plane trees in Yarra Glen later this autumn and those close to a street light will keep many green leaves well into the winter. The tree is recording the light as if I was still summer.

Under natural conditions the annual cycle of day length does not vary from year to year. It's been a reliable signal for millions of years where's climates vary greatly. This year the climate has been good for our trees and we are now enjoying the effects.

Steels Creek Garden Club

Jill Hess

The garden club usually gets together for outings, planning and to propagate each month. The 4th Monday of each month is dedicated to propagating plants for our community events and local fundraisers. The 2nd Tuesday is dedicated to outings and flower show planning. Please call Jill for more details - 0430108672

Steels Creek Tennis Club

Please contact club Secretary, Graham Lloyd for updates and detailed information about Tennis Club activity or Lindy Montell for Ladies Tennis information: Graham Lloyd 0430 243 442, Lindy Montell 5965 2202. Most membership fees are being reduced for the coming membership year starting 1 July 2020. Family memberships will be $90, Senior memberships will be $35, Junior memberships $20 and Social memberships still $10. The membership year runs through to June 30. To play on the courts, you must be a Family, Senior, or Junior member, except for Open Days. To have a court key, you must be a Family or Senior member. Keep up to date with the club news on:
Web site: steelscreek.vic.au/community-groups/tennis-club/ Facebook: www.facebook.com/SteelsCreekTennisClub

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COVID-19 Update *Facts and statistics for posterity*

As of 3 April 2021, one new case has been acquired locally with the total number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Victoria at 20,484. From 6:00pm Friday 26 March 2021 face masks are only mandatory on public transport and hospital/care facilities.

The Weather Report by Barry Sheffield

We had a very dry February with our rainfall being 36mm below average. Coldstream only recorded 3.8mm which was on the 12th & was the only day that rainfall was recorded for the month (this was only 7% of the average for February). March has, however, been slightly above average (0.9mm above average), & it is good to see a bit of green grass around the place. Mean maximum temperatures for February were 1.8° below average for Coldstream & 1.3° below average for Melbourne. Mean minimum temperatures for February were 1.6° below average for Coldstream & 0.3° below average for Melbourne. None of the BOM stations within the greater Melbourne area had a maximum daily temperature of 35° or above during February. Mean maximum temperatures for March were 2.2° below average for Coldstream & 1.9° above average for Melbourne. Mean minimum temperatures for March were 0.1° above average for Coldstream & 0.4° above for Melbourne. Warmest days on average for March for the Greater Melbourne area, with 23.1°, were Coldstream & Viewbank – the two BOM stations closest to our Steels Creek valley. Rainfall for the Summer period for Yarra Glen was 144.8mm (average 159mm), Coldstream 183.8mm (average 159.1mm), Melbourne 139mm (average 154mm), Viewbank 156.6mm (average 159.2mm). Mean maximum temperature for Summer for Coldstream was 1.4° below average. Mean maximum temperature for Summer for Viewbank was 1.3° below average. Melbourne only had 3 days of 35° or above for Summer with the average being 8 days, & with no days of 40° or above.

RAINFALL – February - March 2021

Station	February 2021 (mm)	March 2021 (mm)	Year to date to end of March 2021 (mm)	Year to date to end of March 2020 (mm)
'Blackwood Hill' **Pinnacle Lane Steels Creek**	20	52.4	177.8	308.9
'Highlea' **Dixons Creek**	25.8	67.8	212.2	282.2
Melbourne Water Melba Hwy, Dixons Creek	14	52.6	163.6	273
'Wandearah' **Japonica Drive Yarra Glen**	13.6	52.9	152	315.6

The Steels Creek Calendar is also available to view at www.steelscreek.vic.au

April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1 Art Group	**2** *Good Friday*	**3**
4 *Easter Sunday*	**5** *Easter Monday*	**6** Stitchers	**7**	**8** Art Group	**12**	**10** Market
11	**12 R**	**13** Stitchers Garden Club Outing	**14**	**15** Art Group	**16**	**17**
18	**19** *Term 2*	**20** Book Group Stitchers	**21**	**22** Art Group	**23**	**24** Market
25 *ANZAC Day*	**26 R**	**27** Stitchers Growing Group	**28**	**29** Art Group	**30**	

**** PLEASE REFER TO THE GRAPEVINE FOR GROUP UPDATES ****

ART Ivan Filsell 0458 507 181
Thursdays 1:30 PM – 4.30 PM SCCC - Bring your paints; discuss your art and share skills.

BOOK GROUP Julie Riddell 0422 424 694
3rd Tuesday – 7.30 PM; 10 members – limited by library book resources. Lively discussions at SCCC.

GARDEN CLUB at SCCC Jill Hess 9730 1960
Newsletter, outings 2nd Tuesdays, 60 members. Fourth Tuesday Growing Group, 9.30 am at SCCC– all welcome.

HEWI (Healesville Environment Watch Inc) admin@hewi.org.au
Environmental issues at Healesville Living and Learning Centre, P.O. Box 444 Healesville, 3777

LANDCARE GROUP Angie Lloyd 0412 343 242, steelscreeklandcare@gmail.com
Ongoing projects and a great opportunity to obtain information and advice about tackling Landcare issues of significance to YOU! ‘

STEELS CREEK COMMUNITY CENTRE ONLINE BOOKINGS Or call Maree Rothwell 0414 278 649
It’s easy to check availability, fees, booking the Centre.

- Open the Steels Creek Community website www.steelscreek.vic.au
- Select the **SCCC** tab.
- Scroll down the page to find, **‘Do you want to book the Centre for a function/event?’**
- Click on, **‘Check availability and make an online booking enquiry here.’**
- Follow prompts for information, charges and to make a booking request.

May 2021						
Sun	**Mon**	**Tues**	**Wed**	**Thurs**	**Fri**	**Sat**
30	**31**					**1**
2	**3**	**4** Stitchers	**5**	**6** Art Group	**7**	**8** Market
9 *Mother's Day*	**10 R**	**11** Stitchers Garden Club Outing	**12**	**13** Art Group	**14**	**15**
16	**17**	**18** Book Group Stitchers	**19**	**20** Art Group	**21**	**22** Market
23	**24 R**	**25** Stitchers Growing Group	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29**

**** PLEASE REFER TO THE GRAPEVINE FOR GROUP UPDATES ****

MARKET Malcolm Calder 5965 2372
2nd and 4th Saturdays at SCCC, 10.00 AM Sharp! Community announcements, local fresh produce, preserves, baked goods.

MOVIES Keith Montell 5965 2202
2nd or 3rd Friday - March to November – 6.00 PM classy food followed by classic movies at SCCC.

SMB (really just a coffee and a chat, football and opera and anything in between!) Gordon Brown 9730 1937
Last Thursday 10.30 AM – 11.30 AM. Men's morning tea at Yarra Glen.

STITCHERS Jane Calder 0428279577, Nola Matthews 0412 199 129
Every Tuesday, 1.30 PM - 4.00 PM at SCCC, since 1993. Bring your own work – knit, patch, embroider, chat and friendship.

TENNIS Mark Newell 0411 111 839, Graham Lloyd 0430 243 442, Lindy Montell 5965 2202
Since 1911. Newsletter, competitions, 40 active and social members. Monday 9am, ladies social tennis - contact Lindy. Friday Locals Tennis for adults and kids - 5pm last Friday of the month (Unless noted in calendar). Saturdays 1-5 PM regular competitions. Sunday afternoon social tennis 2-5pm - contact Graham Lloyd
Website: www.steelscreek.vic.au/community-groups/tennis-club

WOMEN'S GROUP - Evening Friendship Group Lindy Montell 5965 2202
1st Wednesday, 6.30 PM. Come for company, conversation, food and coffee. You'll be made most welcome for a pleasant evening of food and chat. Note: For current venue location, contact Lindy (5965 2202).

R – Put out your recycle bin Government School Holidays / Public Holiday

THE STEELS CREEK GRAPEVINE

Want to be kept up to date on local Steels Creek events and offerings? *The Grapevine* is an email only update on news and events that have missed the recent edition of The Jolly Thing. Please continue to send any content, notifications, and/or reminders to thegrapevine@steelscreek.vic.au.
Go to www.steelscreek.vic.au/publications/the-steels-creek-grapevine/ to sign up.

We'd love to hear from you

The Jolly Thing is a newsletter that captures the spirit of Steels Creeks community, it's got a long history of collecting and sharing every facet of what goes on in the valley.

Entertaining stories are always welcomed whether true or fictional as are **photos** of the area (preferably, together with a story) or to be used if they happen to suit the articles submitted.

Local groups' submissions are the backbone of The Jolly Thing and are very welcome.

Personal stories must be submitted by the person involved.

Promotion material will be considered for local businesses if there is value to the community.

Please email all pieces to scjollything@gmail.com
Thank you

The Jolly Thing Delivery

1. **Free e-mail subscription**. If you'd like to subscribe, **please visit** www.steelscreek.vic.au **to register your details**, or **use the link at the bottom of the email** and it will be included on the e-mail distribution list.
2. **Pick up a free copy** in the first week of the month of publication - (February; April; June; August; October; December). Available in Yarra Glen - Post Office, IGA, Newsagent, selected cafes and elsewhere and always at the Steels Creek Community Centre.
3. **By Post**. For an annual subscription of $6 we will post to you a copy in the week of publication. For this option please forward a $6 cheque and your full postal address to the following address:- Malcolm Calder, c/o the Steels Creek Community Centre, P.O. Box 72, Yarra Glen, VIC 3775.
4. By the **World Wide Web**. You can download T.J.T. from the web soon after the start of the month of publication. All editions from August 2003 are available. www.steelscreek.vic.au

200 Print / 270 Email / 13 Nations

DEADLINE for the next *Jolly Thing* is 27 May 2021

The Jolly Thing is published by and for the Steels Creek Community Centre Inc. (SCCC), 699 Steels Creek Road, Steels Creek. Postal address: PO Box 72, Yarra Glen, Victoria 3775.
Management Committee: President – Maree Rothwell Treasurer – Keith Montell Secretary – Christine Tomlins Committee Members – Geoff Townsend, John Brand, Morgan Calder, Mark Newell

We gratefully acknowledge **Peter England (Hoogies)** and **Ashleigh Skillern (Yarra Glen Auto)** for their support to the Steels Creek Community and *The Jolly Thing.*

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