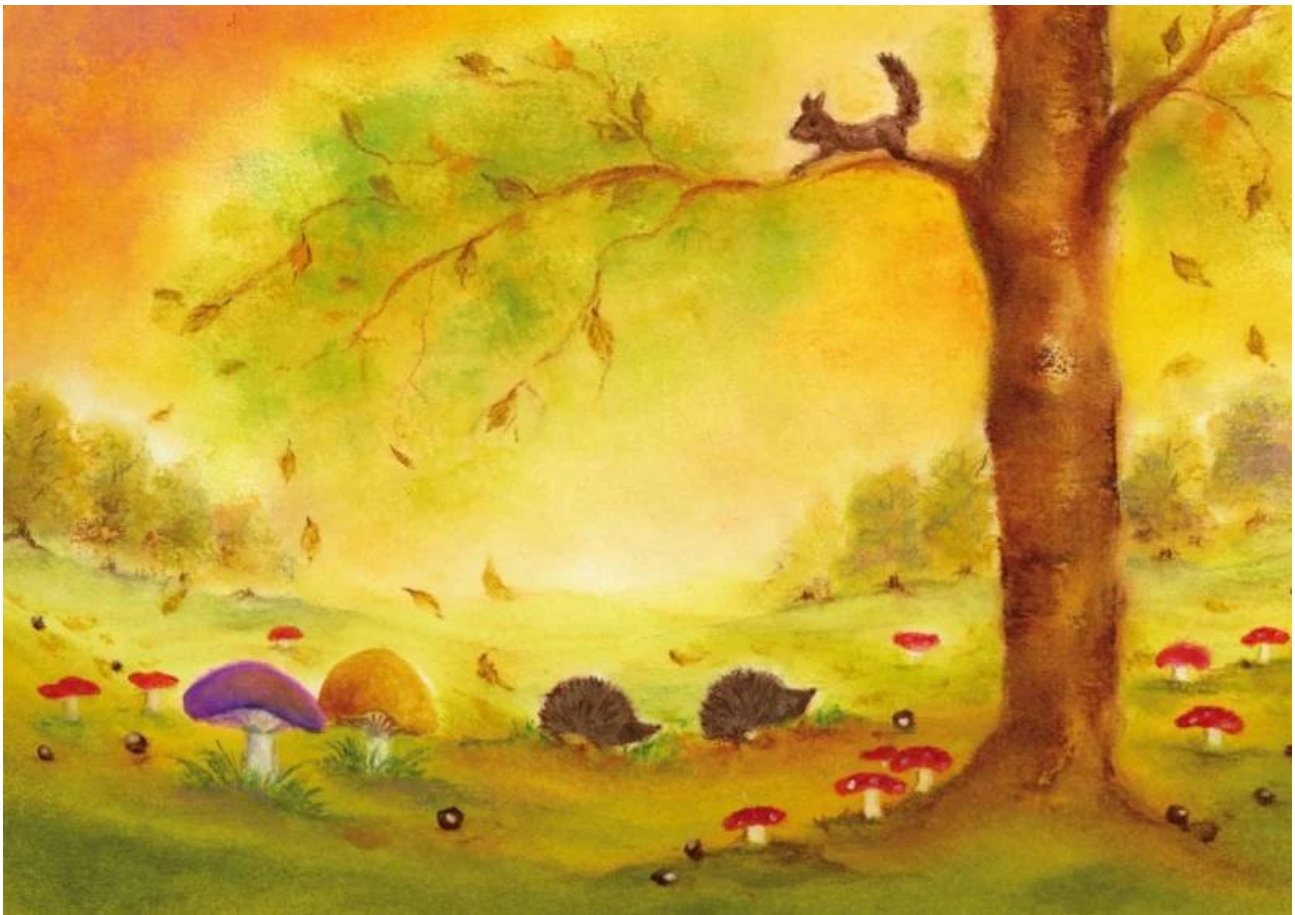


# Sweet Porridge



21/04/2026



*Little Yarra Steiner School is situated on Wurundjeri Country. We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, learn, and play, and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.*

*We are honoured to share in the continued care of this land, with its wetlands and river, its stones that sleep in the depths of the Earth, its plants and trees that reach for the Sun, and all the creatures that know it as home. We respectfully acknowledge the ancient and enduring culture of those who have walked this land in the past, which will continue to enrich the lives of our community into the future.*

*Dear LYSS Community,*

*Since its inception some 30 years ago, Sweet Porridge has played a continuing, important part of communicating information and inspirations; a place for the community to contribute stories, events, advertisements, buy/sell music instruments on the instrument register and so much more.*

*Some editions have included a story for younger children, poetry, songs, craft activities, much loved family recipes and handy gardening hints.*

*Sweet Porridge is still looking for new editors to take on the very valuable volunteer role of creating our Parent and Community newsletter each month. This role is not confined to one 'cook' alone, many hands make tasks easier and creating this newsletter has been done in a variety of ways over the years.*

*Some years it has been compiled by a single or joint editors; in other years a group of parents got together - all creating wonderful, sweet porridge for all to enjoy.*

*A publication from the community for the community.*

*Hopefully you may feel inspired to get stirring and create some fresh porridge. Anyone willing to give it a go (some basic computer skills may be required) please drop into or email the office to express your interest.*

*Remember, porridge needs to be stirred regularly, or it sticks to the bottom!*

*Thank you*

*Sonja (temporary stirrer of the porridge)*

*It takes a  
village to  
create Sweet Porridge*



## ***Mother Earth's Children - An Autumn Tale for Young Children***

*One morning Mother Earth got up and looked out her window. Something was different! The trees were covered with golden and red and orange. Mother Earth went outside to have a better look. Ohhhh, it was colder! Then Mother Earth knew.*

*'Why it's autumn, it's autumn! Goodness me, I have so much work to do. The harvesting must be done, and I must make nice warm earth beds for all the seed babies to sleep in through the cold winter. Oh my, I will go and prepare everything, then send for my children.'*

*In the garden lived the flower fairies. They did not yet know it was autumn. They were still happy to play in the garden. They danced and sang and practiced their somersaults in the soft grasses. While they played, one little fairy wandered off quite far. She came upon a cave that was glowing with golden light. Inside were baskets of shining seeds for Mother Earth.*

*'Oh, Autumn is here,' said the little fairy and she ran to tell the others.*

*'Autumn is here, Autumn is here,' called out the little fairy to her fairy friends. 'Mother Earth needs our help. Come see, come see, quickly, quickly!'*

*All the flower fairies went with her to the cave and looked in. What a wonderful sight, shining golden seeds. 'We must take them to Mother Earth, quickly, Autumn is here, the little fairy told the others. The fairies gently gathered the gifts of seeds and carried them to Mother Earth's home.*

*Mother Earth was just finishing her work. The beds for all her children were ready. Just then, she heard the flower fairies calling to her, Mother Earth, Mother Earth, we have something special for you! Look, golden seeds that need to sleep.'*

*"Oh how beautiful they are,' Mother Earth said gently. 'Come little fairies and bring your seeds, put them in my warm mantle, I have earth cradles ready for all.' Mother Earth showed the fairies where to tuck the seeds in for their long sleep. 'I will watch over them and keep them warm and safe until they awaken with the warm spring sun. You come too little fairies, find your beds and rest through the winter so deep.*

*The fairies carefully placed the seeds in their cozy earth cradles, and then they too nestled down in Mother Earth's blanket to sleep. Outside the air was crisp and clear, and the cold winds began to blow.*

*Just in time,' said Mother Earth. She rocked her children to sleep and sang a sweet lullaby.*

*'Seeds and flowers have gone to sleep,*

*Loving care I will keep,*

*To watch over all through winter's night,*

*Till they will rise to see the Light.'*

*The seed babies and flower fairies were warm and safe, and very soon they fell fast asleep. Mother Earth made a cup of tea, sat in her rocking chair and smiled. All was well. Outside the first soft flakes of snow began to fall and covered the earth twinkling with the starlight.*



# MUSIC REGISTER

## Instruments for Sale

Term 2 – 2026

If you wish to add an instrument for sale, please email details to [sweetporridge@lyss.vic.edu.au](mailto:sweetporridge@lyss.vic.edu.au). Once you have **sold** or **bought** an instrument through the Music Register please advise us via email and we will remove the item from this list.

Please note that music teachers are happy to assess if the instrument is the correct size for your child and advise if there are any repairs required prior to purchase. When discussing this with the seller please explain this may take a week as the teacher will need to fit time in for this around their busy schedule. If you require a valuation, it is best to take the instrument to a valuer for a valuation none or our staff are qualified to value. Please make sure that any instruments are clearly labelled with a

“Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart.” – *Pablo Casals*

### Advertising Rates for Sweet Porridge

Small ad – 25 words	\$ 3
Business card size or 100 words	\$ 6
Quarter page	\$ 10
Half page	\$17
Full page	\$30
Community Notices	Free of Charge
All year arrangement	by

Advertising payments can be made via EFT  
BSB 633 000 A/C 14 284 4166 LYSS  
P & F

or at the School Office. Please email all  
content to

[sweetporridge@lyss.vic.edu.au](mailto:sweetporridge@lyss.vic.edu.au)

Some years ago, Peter Thurlow, one of the foundation fathers of Little Yarra, wrote "My Little Yarra Story." He wished to capture the history and acknowledge the process and people that were a part of creating the Little Yarra Steiner School. Peter's story has been previously printed in Sweet Porridge many years ago and with the arrival of many new families it seems timely to share his story again. I hope you enjoy. Thank you Peter and all involved.

## **My Little Yarra Story                      by Peter Thurlow**

### **Chapter 1 - WHAT A JOURNEY.....**

It was the valley, which inspired me, and made me want to live here.

The people were somehow different; special, enjoying the simple pleasures of life, unencumbered, free of spirit, interesting. Full of life. There was something I couldn't put my finger on.

The beauty, the misty mountains, crisp air, the smell of the bush, the sound of the birds, the hot and dry, the wet and cold... all just beautiful.

When I first met the Steiner community I was growing veggies with my mum Bette [ thank you, thank you, thank you] for our shed stall in Croydon, not far from the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School. At that time I did not even know Steiner was into anything other than Biodynamics. I was 24 years old, had travelled, met many people, shared many crazy experiences... I met my tribe.. and to think they were just around the corner all the time.. amazing!

Corinne and I met... got married... had kids... Lara, Nathy and Nicky. We found a place to live just up the road in Three Bridges.. paradise.

Having friends like Sue and Johannes, Craig and Helen, Rani and Adrian, Bob and Jenny, Ric and Jo.... all living up here in the Valley... many with small children, a seed was planted... Could we?.... Would we?... Dare we?

A moment of madness/destiny occurred when one night Sandra Busch rang, out of the blue. She was asked if she would like to pioneer a new school and almost immediately became excited.... we weren't to know that it was her birthday, and she was on her way out to a meeting with friends, who, as we learned later, were planning to ask her that very evening to be the class one teacher at Warranwood... of course upon hearing Sandra's news, the question was never asked... Little Yarra was calling.

We asked Alan Earle if we could lease part of his land in Yarra Junction for the new school.. He wholeheartedly agreed and there was no going back from here.

This was September 1984. We met weekly during the last months of '84 and all of '85 to start kinder/prep in 1986 with a handful of children in the Wesburn Public Hall. [Thankyou to the then Upper Yarra Shire]

Our meetings were special.... there was always a candle in the centre... we had a short verse, closing our eyes and picturing all those in the circle... we shared news or challenges into the circle and then we started our meetings... it was amazing how well we worked together...

## Chapter 2 - THE WESBURN HALL

The Wesburn Public Hall was the first building to house the Little Yarra Steiner School Kinder and Prep. Whilst we were trying to get permits to build on Alan Earle's land and registration for a school from the Schools Commission, we started the kinder/prep class. This was 1986.

During 1985 the hall was discovered, and the local council generously allowed us to use it rent free, as long as we adapted to other organizations using it as well... this provided us with a few problems as well as laugh or two.... We accepted these conditions and set about painting the place pink, adding a window and a fireplace.... the karate club didn't think much of the colour... the masons didn't seem to notice. The site was idyllic... quiet, private, and the most beautiful mountain views and bush walks. There are still reminders of us being there today.

We had to adapt to many challenges... the toilets... the public being 40 metres away... Sandra made it part of the program to take the whole class for a little walk!

We also received a lot of help from government departments [thank you Wendy Lundt], council [thank you Mike Weisbicki], other Steiner Schools [M.R.S.S.], local schools and the local community... somehow everyone was willing to embrace the possibility... it was great!

Money was always short.. to become a school you have to give 2 years notice and that meant no funding. The kinder attracted some funding but that didn't cover the prep aged kids.... our fund-raising exploits were outrageous for the size of the school... school? It wasn't even fully registered yet! We did a lot of catering all over Melbourne. Rani Nixon sold a lot of candles. Our raffles were huge and special thanks to Carol McCliesh. Our fairs, amazing and they still are! 1987 was nearing and we needed a classroom for Class 1. Solution; the halls' kitchen... tiny, but with the usual care and a Don Willis blackboard, it became an obvious Steiner space. Johannes Schuster was the first teacher and because funding still hadn't come through, he would take the main lesson in the morning and go off to Warranwood [MRSS] in the afternoons to teach German.

1988.. numbers small enthusiasm high... the new Class 1 squeezed into the kitchen and away we went. During the year we purchased a second-hand portable classroom, and the council allowed us to locate it near the hall. We renovated it and again thanks to Don Willis and his craftsmanship had another beautiful [low cost] classroom... with sooo much space!

1989.. Frank Stanley became the Class 1 teacher, in the kitchen, with class 2/3 in the portable... by now the school probably had about 30 children... still small but oh so strong.

It was also about to have some challenging news.

Firstly; the property the school was hoping to build on was deemed unsuitable as it was too flat and flood prone.

Secondly; to continue the funding we desperately needed; the School had to find a new location within the same postcode. We must not forget at this stage we were only leasing Alan Earles land and there are not many people who would be so generous as to allow a school to be built on their property.

What were we to do? How can we avoid letting down our children and parents ????

## Chapter 3 - THE LAND

The year 1989... Kinder and Prep in the Wesburn Hall. Class 1/2 in the tiny kitchen and Class 2/3 in the portable. What about Class 1 of 1990? If we couldn't start building on 'our land' where and how and what are we going to do? We had used up all our options here!

More meetings, brainstorming, or was it meditating, or vision building...? Whatever it was, it was the start of an amazing string of events that, once started, just could not / would not stop.... What a ride!!

Alan came to a meeting and matter-of-factly announces, 'that if we can't have the school on his land we should sell it, and with the proceeds buy a more suitable site'... whoa has this school got something special!

We spent a lot of time looking here and there [all in the same postcode, so as not to lose our registration/funding]. Enter Johannes Schuster. He had been driving past this farmland for quite a while now and decided to make a few enquiries. He discovered the farmer was about to put it on the market and, if the neighbouring farmer didn't want it, we could buy it.. Shudder, shudder.. this meant a major commitment... debt at 17% interest... it was a stunning property... magnificent... and just going there every day would be so good for the children and all of us... we had to go for it! Thanks must go to a few people here.. Alan Earle, the Directors of the school [who had to put their own homes in as security], a special acknowledgement to the teachers at LYSS who sacrificed part of their salaries to make all this possible.. [thanks.. love PT] and a special thanks to Win and Claude Wilson, who also put their home in, as we still needed more security.... and that was just the beginning!

Around this time Gail and Geoff De'Ath arrived at the school as parents. Geoff had a drott [bulldozer with bucket], and a tip-truck. Gail was a fundraising dynamo. Special thanks to the fundraisers: Louise Irving, Emma James, Rani Nixon, Shane Hollingworth, Jerry Camilleri, all the people who contributed to an appeal, and so many more.

I can still remember cutting the fence for the schools entrance and Geoff's beaming smile as the first scoop full of dirt was tipped in the truck. Is it still 1989?... I'm not sure, but it was around then... we were just so busy. There were all sorts of permits to be got.. council were getting worried...was it going to be a lot of portable classrooms, spoiling the vista?.. We had purchased a second-hand toilet block and needed to move the portable onto the land from Wesburn! Trying to convince council was made easier because Johannes had designed, what is now the admin building... which also needed permits.

My guess is, that around the middle of 1990 the move to the land was made [albeit in the mud ]... and for the start of 1991 we had purchased the now kinder/prep buildings and transformed them into suitable spaces. We had one group of K/P's with Sandra in Mother Holle... it's now toilet was Corinne's office, and the central admin space. Another K/P was still at Wesburn, with Maria Lerch... and Class 1 was again in the kitchen with John Elliot. Class2/3 with Frank, in Briar Rose, and Class3/4, with Johannes in the original portable.... the building process was well underway!

Around this time Alan made another amazing announcement. He was getting married to Mary and would not be needing the steel frame he was going to use in the house he was planning to build at the school... so became the Mudbrick shed... completely built by volunteers. Ken and Bridge [parents at Little Yarra] initiated the farm and built the farm shed [which has had many uses over the years]. They also purchased the first cows [thanks to a loan from Sandra]..... But what about the next Class 1... Where? How? With what?.. and so it went on... to be continued

## **Chapter 4 - THE MAIN BUILDING**

How is it, that when you are almost totally down, out and exhausted, someone comes along? [Enter Mike and Jan Gorman].... and they could not have come at a better time! We were about to attempt the nigh impossible and build the main building ourselves. Johannes had designed the building, got the permits, [no small task in itself] and the main curved beam was nestled against the mud brick shed.... which was to be the storeroom for the project. Even though it was full of hay [another fundraising thing]....

Oh I remember the day.... Jan brought Mike to the school for the first time....he was a bit apprehensive.... she was very keen.... I was just having a smoke [those were the days ] and in drives this station wagon....I wasn't to know, but by having a smoke [caught] it made Mike feel relaxed and felt he could be here..... was I indeed a happy man!

Mike was the builder of the Main Building...there is no way we parents could have done it... and also the builder of many of the subsequent buildings... a very big thank you to Mike....

Johannes Schuster needs a very special, special mention here. A trained Steiner teacher, he had a passion for architecture. He studied the gestures each classroom needed to support the child and the teacher...and how the building would nestle into the surroundings. From the very first day Johannes became involved at Little Yarra, he brought forward thinking and attention to detail. Whilst we were creating the present he would be preparing for the future. The design of the Main Building is a masterpiece. It has been used for 4 classrooms, an office and then opened up to become an auditorium. All at the same time! This gave us all a little breathing space. He also was instrumental in the design of the treatment plant... not the usual expensive way, but an environmentally friendly, low-cost way. and sooo much more...there is only one thing to say and that is... this school would not be as beautiful a place had it not been for Johannes Schuster...

Thank you, thank you, thank you! .....to be continued...

## **Chapter 5 - THE MUSIC ROOM**

Music has always been a huge part of our school. At our meetings we would almost always have an artistic component... singing was one. We sang St John's passion every Easter for at least the first 10 years of the school. Not for the religious reason, but for the sheer beauty of it... I loved it.

When Tim Blake came for his interview, he had a beard and shoulder [no longer] length hair. When he had his first day, he was completely shaven. This was the start of an amazing journey for our children [and us] into music. Tim, with sisters Celia and Rachel, brother-in law Damian, friend Jenny Rowlands and Win Wilson, have made The Little Yarra Steiner School's music program second to none.

The story behind the music room is; that it came from the shire at the time they amalgamated with Lilydale. Not to miss out on an opportunity, we moved it to the land and plonked it near where the main building was going to be built. It was used for storage, an office, for music lessons, a shop and a site office. When a suitable site was found, it was picked up again and that's where it is now. It is said to be the oldest remaining shire building in the shire. Over the years veranda's were added ... and filled in [as you do]! It is now a hub of activity.

Nearby is the very first classroom. We have moved this building some 4 times and now it can finally rest.. we can too! It has been widened and added on to, and still holds the memories of all that's happened over the years.

The Mudbrick Shed stands proudly next to it. She has housed so many plays, assemblies, meetings and classes. She was built on a shoe-string budget. The tin on the roof, for example, was bought second hand from Preston, and we only painted the side you could see from the road, so as to save money. The very same tin has now been used on the walls of the maintenance shed.

All the new buildings? I don't know much about. They are beautiful and very impressive and in time will have stories of their own. They are like the prize for all the hard times and struggles that preceded them.

So many people need to be acknowledged... I apologize for leaving anyone out: Sandra Busch, Alan and Mary Earle, Sue and Johannes Schuster, Rani Nixon and Adrian May, Corinne Willowson, Claude and Win Wilson, Bette Thurlow [mum], Craig and Helen Taylor, Bob and Jenny Sharples, Ric and Jo Butler, Doreen and Milton Mellor, Denis Parker, Peter Glasby, Robert and Janet Martin, Wendy Duff, Helen Cock, Bruce McLean, John Davidson, The Rudolf Steiner Schools Association of Australia, The Block Grant Authority, Don and Glenys Willis, Andy and Pam Jagger, Jurgen and Roswitha Malino, Gerry and Andrea Cammileri, Ishe Drew, Louise and Neil Irving, Jeff and Jan Dickinson, Jeff and Gail De'ath, Bruce and Carol McCliesh. Jan and Mike Gorman, Emma and Ignaz Amrein, Tyana and Stephan Friedrich, David and Shelley Moon, Mal and Annie Harvey, Ray and Jan Lester, Shane Hollingworth, The Blake Family, The Wadsworth/Snowden family, The Behre family... the Teachers of LYSS, and so many more...!

But most of all thanks must go to all the parents of our school...who have entrusted their most important asset.. their Children... to this most beautiful, love filled place we call The Little Yarra Steiner School..

I know it was all worthwhile, and all us pioneering families have shared in something very special.....to the start of a new beginning...

Thank you for making me the luckiest person in the world...

with love Peter Thurlow..

### **On Love and Compassion**

Wherever love and compassion are active in life, we can perceive the magic breath of the spirit blowing through the sense world. – *Rudolf Steiner*

# Community Creations

This page is a space for ideas and creations from the school community to be shared. Contributions welcome, email to [sweetporridge@lyss.vic.edu.au](mailto:sweetporridge@lyss.vic.edu.au)



## Autumn

*"I sit beside the fire and think of all that I have seen of meadow flowers and butterflies in summers that have been of yellow leaves and gossamer in autumns that there were with morning mist and silver sun and wind upon my hair"*

## JRR Tolkien

### EVENING PRAYER

(for the parent, to say it with the child after age three)

From my head to my feet,  
I'm the image of God  
From my heart to my hands,  
His own breath do I feel.  
When I speak with my mouth  
I shall follow God's will  
When I see and know God  
In Father and Mother  
In all loving people, in beats and flower,  
in trees, plants, and stones,  
Then no fear shall I feel,  
only love then fills me  
for all that is around me.

- by Rudolf Steiner



*Did you know...*

*...Ngahuru is the Māori term for autumn (typically March to May), representing a vital season of harvest, abundance, and preparation for winter. It is famously described as *kura kai, kura tangata* ("harvest-time, wealth of food, wealth of people"), emphasizing a time for gathering resources and strengthening community ties.*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Presented by Permaculture Yarra Valley  
& Singing Blackbird Enterprises

# STORYTELLING



## Paths to belonging...

*'exploring pathways to creatively respond to the deep wound of  
not belonging in the Australian landscape'*

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May

10am- 2pm, ECOSS, Wesburn

\$40 unwaged/\$50 underemployed/\$60 waged

Tickets: [humanitix.com/storytelling-belonging](https://humanitix.com/storytelling-belonging)



We have some great markets to enjoy in the Upper Yarra. Pop on down, support locals and connect with your community. Please check market websites for updates as market schedules may change due to weather

**When**

Third Saturday and Fifth Sunday of the month

**Time**

9:00 am to 2:00 pm



YARRA VALLEY **ecoss** Presents:

# ECOSS VALLEY MARKET

EVERY FRIDAY - 3.30PM - 6PM

*Produce ~ Tacos ~ Chocolate ~ Wine*

YARRA VALLEY ECOSS  
711 OLD WARBURTON RD WESBURN  
[WWW.ECOSS.ORG.AU](http://WWW.ECOSS.ORG.AU)