



## *The Avoca Beach Community Association has a new President, Carol Fortey, and she's the right stuff.*



Twenty years ago Carol was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. "If you have to have MS," she says, "have my type because it is manageable, though there is intermittent pain."

MS meant giving up her hospital job in radiography and ultrasound. But instead of sitting around moping, Carol threw herself into caring. These days she serves at the Woy Woy soup kitchen, Mary Mac's Place, once a week. Not only serves, but her job is to do the food rescue program. She drives to Woolies at Woy Woy and Coles at Umina and picks up all they have to give: day-old bread, frozen meat approaching use-by-date, and veggies. It's a real abundance. With this rescued food, the homeless, the lonely and those who are not quite making ends meet, they all get a great hot meal five days of the week.

Carol finds the experience uplifting. "They're my friends," she says. So compelling and wrenching are some of the stories that she and her best friend, they do it together and have to debrief afterwards over a coffee. This has led to Carol taking on another caring role. Right now she is doing an intensive course with Lifeline and soon will be on the phone counselling people in trouble.

Carol can laugh about her compulsion to care, like the day she tried to evacuate Avoca. She was driving her kids to school when her husband's father rang to say that there were reports on the radio of a tsunami heading for Avoca. Husband, Scott, an anaesthetist, does a lot of volunteer work overseas with a Melbourne outfit called InterPlast. That work had taken him to Aceh after the tsunami and when he returned, Carol saw some shocking tsunami photographs.

Those were in mind when came the disturbing news. She dashed to the school, telling the Principal that he had to evacuate everyone, and if he couldn't do that, to get the kids on the roof. It was not until she and her own kids were on top of Kincumber Mountain that she heard the second ABC report that the tsunami was a non event. "I'll never live down my attempts to evacuate Avoca," she laughs. We think this sort of caring is just what we need for our community.

By the way, Carol being the modest type, wanted no profile, but the committee overruled the new President  
*M.R.*



## Invite to our next ABCA meeting...

The next Avoca Beach Community Association meeting is on **Mon. 7th December at 7.30 pm at the Avoca Beach Surf Club**. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there will be Christmas Drinks after the meeting. The new committee are keen for suggestions to add to our next meeting's agenda and newsletter. We would also like to know about local community events in the New Year as we can support these too.

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## Breaking News...

- The planned conversion of the Avoca Picture Theatre to five screens suffered a setback this year. In June, Gosford Council turned down the DA for being non-compliant with the regulations on seven counts. The owners now have an option to resubmit on a smaller scale. This resubmission will necessarily take heritage into account, because an Interim Heritage Order was placed on the theatre in March 2015, meaning the theatre is being considered for permanent listing.

This will possibly happen at the local level since both the National Trust, (the theatre was listed with the trust in 2001), and the NSW State Heritage Office find the theatre is historically significant and worth protecting. This does not make expansion impossible. Several small NSW cinemas, which are heritage listed, have added extra screens e.g. the Sawtell Theatre. Gosford Council will make its decision as to whether to list very soon. Stay tuned...

- The multi-storey development on Cape Three Points (previously E & H Car Care) has been rejected by Gosford Council for a third time. An amendment was lodged to defer approval and further discussion with the developer was adopted. C.F.

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## Come for a Paddle?

Mick and Jenny sit back in their deck chairs surveying the tranquil scene. Paddle boats come and go as regularly as ferries on Sydney Harbour. "Here's a funny story," says Mick. "An older woman paddled back one day before her time was up, very agitated. Can I borrow your mobile? she asked breathlessly. Why? Because I dropped mine in the water out there. I need to go back and ring it so I can find it"

I laughed, Mick, that's one of the best stories the newsletter's ever got. How long have you been going, by the way? "It's our 17th season and what I'm most proud of is that now we have four generations in the kayak business.

My grandad rented kayaks at Manly in the 30s where the ferry terminal now is. My dad, Don, as a youngster used to have to go out to roundup the stragglers." Like a sort of sheepdog, was he? "Yeah, and then my Dad went off to the war and took his paddling skills with him. He would kayak in to collect information behind enemy lines."

I got my start in the paddle boat rental business on the lake at Terrigal, a school summer job. Then I became a professional deep sea lobster fisherman for 18 years. An accident put an end to that and so looking for something a bit easier on the body, Jenny and I bought this business in 1999. Our son, Nick, is the fourth generation, to become part of the Aquafun team after leaving school in 2011.

What are some of the changes? "The big changes are the paddle boards on which you stand. They've really taken off. You know Janet Cobb the artist?" Sure do, she's in these pages. "Well, Janet started out renting a paddle board here and now she's bought her own, she finds it's the best exercise."

I guess worries about sharks are going to see more people in the lagoon this summer? "That's right!



Mick and Jenny Kilp

People feel safer here and of course there's the added attraction that you won't run into too many bluebottles in the lake."

What about when the lake is open? Is that bad for you? "Oh, only for a day or two. We are lucky we have one of the best lakes on the coast, in terms of depth, and one of the cleanest too. Few people realize that."

You folks do the Clean Up Australia Day, don't you? "Yes, we started our first clean up in 1999. The stuff we collected that year you wouldn't believe: sodden mattresses, dozens of old tyres, bicycles, and thousands of plastic bottles. It had never been done. Now, year after year, it's getting better."

Your business is seasonal, isn't it, Mick? "Yes we're open from September to April and the great thing about what we do is that it's for everyone, for the whole family. Lots of fun!"

M.R.

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I'm sitting in Rob Carlton's Avoca Kitchen. Rob, You started acting at 14? "Yes, my first role was in *A Country Practice*. My first film role was in *The Year My Voice Broke* a very famous Australian film. I've had a good run". Your most famous recent role is playing Kerry Packer in the ABC's, *Paper Giants*. What's it like playing a very powerful person like that? Was there any danger of feeling intoxicated by wielding such power on the screen?

"No. For me there wasn't because I was so aware of the cost it had on the real Kerry. He was a person who could buy whatever he wanted, could make almost anyone do what he wanted. So, I was constantly aware of the toll all of that took on him."

"That was a very difficult role to play. I couldn't go in and out of the character during the day. Once I was in the fat suit, if not on camera, I'd sit quietly in a corner which is not at all my normal behaviour on set. I'm usually up and chatting to everyone, an extrovert. I gather energy from other people. But in this case, I had to stay alone."

But it's so much about chemistry isn't it? I ask. Not you alone but you and others that makes for the magic. "Yeah, You can do all the homework you want, but if the other actor has a different take on it, it can go really weird." But, Rob, what's it like to



ABC Publicity for Paper Giants

come on set and realise that the person you are playing opposite has absolutely got it? Like with Asher.

"Asher Keddie, who played Ita Buttrose, she's astonishing. We hadn't heard her voice, her lisp, until she stepped on the set." Was it a big surprise? "To tell the truth I just got terrified. I thought, how good is she?"

"With a woman like Asher, you better be ready to hold on because she'll leave you for dust. You're watching her eyes. You're in this zone. It's a blast, Mate. You get to the scene's end and you've no idea what's happened."

Rob, you spoke about wearing a fat suit? "Yeah, as well as that, I put on

15 kg of weight. For the role I was up late at night eating hamburgers, drinking thick shakes, and on top of that I had this fat suit on." Weren't you worried about your health? "I was 40. I took it off."

You must have studied film of Kerry, did you? "I had the footage from the Senate hearings where he testified. I stripped the sound off, put it on my iPhone and walked around all day with Kerry in my ear so I could get his voice right."

"There was very little footage of him walking, just one shot of him coming downstairs to a Parkinson interview. I noticed he hoisted his leg, something wrong with his knee. I managed that by walking on the

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## Personality corner. Rob Carlton

outside of my right foot. That nailed the walk."

I throw him a quote from the actor, Spencer Tracy. Tracy said, speaking of an actor's poverty, "At times, my pants have been so thin that I could sit on a dime and know whether it was heads or tails." Rob laughs. Acting's a risky profession, he agrees. "Mate, there's nothing worse than being at the mercy of the audition process. That's a really scary place to be! That's why I do other things. I'm a producer, a director and a writer. On top of that, I host events. You can't ask your wife and kids to believe in you if they're hungry."

"We actually discovered how much we loved this area while being pretty broke. We were on our money-saving honeymoon at Copacabana, in a rental. During those three months my wife, Adrienne (Ferreira) was writing a novel. I wrote too and surfed. The beauty of this area was such that I thought, we're not going back to Sydney. I have to figure out how to make a living for all of us from here."

I throw another quote at Rob. Meryl Streep said, "I'm curious about other people. That's the essence of my acting, I'm interested in what it would be like to be you." "Yeah, that's good. My job as an actor is to observe human behaviour and recreate that in front of the cameras when someone yells, Action! You

do all your research, you know your lines and then step out on stage and forget everything. You just have to trust that it's all going to be there."

Another Spencer Tracy quote for you, Rob. "Acting is not an important job in the scheme of things. Being a plumber is." "Yeah, It's strange. The public makes a fuss of you, they take your photo, but down in Avoca Public School there's teachers there, doing the most amazing job, helping raise so many children...and nobody takes their photo".

"Dennis Jarman and Donna Ayton, nobody's taken their photo. Amazing people... And then there's the Ambos, the Fieries, and the nurses."



Donna Ayton and Dennis Jarman.  
Teachers at Avoca Beach Public School

"What we actors can do is satisfy the craving we all have for stories. I'm a passionate believer that stories make the world a less lonely place. They give us a context for all that we don't understand."

"Here's a story for you. We were shooting the last scene on *Paper Giants*. Kerry's father has just died and he's asking Ita Buttrose if it's possible to love and hate at the same time. It's a touching moment and in the middle of the scene, there's an interruption, a character comes in who's the cleaner, someone who knew the old man. That cleaner was played by Ian McGuire, Mouse, our local actor. I know Mouse quite well and to have a local fella share that last scene with me, that was a beautiful thing." M.R.

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## Seachange at the Surf Club.

At the Avoca Beach Surf Club this morning, Jill Duggan is bringing out her models with a range of costumes for the older woman. The goal is to raise money for the Red Cross and by the look of the room, packed for the luncheon, that might be working a treat. Jill has a clothing store called, Seachange, right in the centre of our little town, and often does such charity gigs.

She's had her shop eleven years. It's going well though this winter was hard. Online shopping is having a huge impact, she explains. "I can't understand how women can buy clothes without feeling the fabric," she says "Truly, it's beyond me. Lots of stuff gets sent back," she adds.

By contrast, in her friendly boutique you can run cloth through your fingers, and try things on to your heart's content, no pressure to buy. Jill can accommodate the mother of the bride, the after-five cocktail dress buyer, casual or evening wear, she's got a bit of everything.

Probably most frequently women are looking for cotton pop-overs. As a man, I have no idea what a pop-over is, cotton or not. Turns out it's a garment which goes over a cozzie, clothes in high demand in a beach town.

Can she predict a sale when someone comes through to door? "I never judge a book by it's cover," says Jill. "I've been surprised too often. Nor do I offer too strong an opinion. I like everything I have, but she, the customer, has to wear it, not me."

When I visited, quite a few things were marked down 50%. "I have to get rid of the winter stock," she explains. Are you losing money on such items, I ask? "On some", she says, "but I need the space." What's your mark up, generally? I ask. "I'm not telling you that," she laughs. "You don't ask that!" Oh.

Perhaps to make me feel less stupid, (I am really out of my depth here) Jill tells me an amusing anecdote about two ladies who came in, one after a pair of tight jeans. Jill warned her that the pair she had her eye on were in the fantasy department in terms of fitting.

Still, the lady ended up on the floor, a coat hanger hooked through the eyelet on the zipper and everyone pulling. "One, Two, Three, Pull!" It's an image which will stay with me for some time. Jill's husband came in during the trial. "Looks like I better come back later." Secret women's business. M.R.

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## What's the news with those Tuckeroos?

Bill Rose sweeps his arm across the scene. "See that there? That tree's been wind pruned. First, vandals got to it and pulled off some branches, then the wind comes in from the sea and that's what you get." Bill used to be a supervisor of open spaces and recreation for Wyong Council. We were standing next to the sickly Tuckeroos at Avoca shops, along with The Public Tree Assessment Officer from Gosford Council who, for some reason, did not want to be named.

Notwithstanding that, this Council gentleman promised us that his tree people were on the case, that they would be monitoring and fertilising the struggling trees. They'd watch them for two years and then take stock.

He did point out that the trees were not doing as poorly as we'd been

saying. The leaves were in good shape, with no burn off visible. "Yes," we replied, "but it's comparative. If you look at the trees on the other side of the road, also Tuckeroos, they're doing so much better."

Bill had some thoughts on that. "This tree here, he said, pointing at our wind pruned specimen, has been planted over what was once roadway. Just before it

was planted, the sidewalk was narrower and there was bitumen here. Maybe some bitumen got left underneath and the tree, as a result, isn't accessing water that well. Over the road the footpath is much narrower. The nearby water penetration is much better. Those trees are having a yummy time by the look of them."

"Tell you what could help," added Bill, "if we could get the shopkeepers here to dump a bucket of water on them from time to time, that could make a difference."

Good idea and so when we were done, I went to speak to Dessa at the Welcome Mart. You met Dessa in the last issue. Now, she's promised to give the ailing trees a bucket of water every morning, first thing. So if you see her pouring, please say, "Good on Ya, Dessa!" *M.R.*



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## Looking over the fence and back in Time

You have probably stood at the fence on Avoca Drive and looked at the black cabin with the yellow trim under the spreading Norfolk Island pine. The first thought is, what's a Canadian log cabin doing here on this beach property? That's the question I put to Dennis Whitnall, the keen fisherman who owns the place.

Why a Canadian cabin as a fishing shack? Dennis doesn't know, but it's the real deal, chinked as in Canada, and the floor cambered to shed snow melt. He takes me inside. A tiny window lets filtered light in on the jumble. Dennis is apologetic. "The kids put all their junk in here. Uni stuff, etc. I clean it out and they put in more."

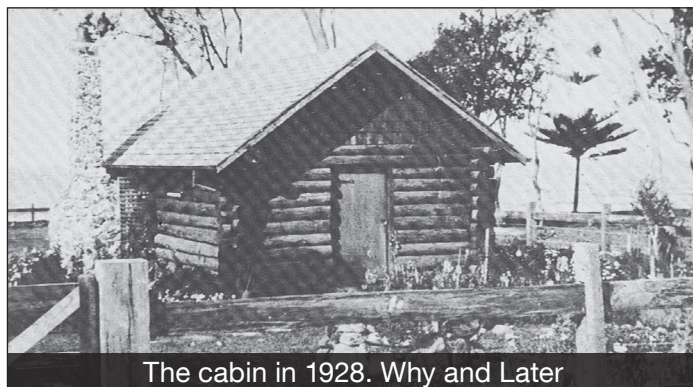
Dennis does know something about the cabin's age. A photo in the 1979 local publication "Why and later" 50 years reviewed in pictures by the Avoca Beach Surf Lifesaving club, has a 1928 picture of the cabin. This has led to the idea that it dates from then.

But a chance encounter in 1967 established that it's much older. At the time, the metal fence you're leaning on now was wooden. Dennis and wife Carmel had been fishing and came back to find an old bloke leaning on that fence. He looked like he might be crook and so they said to him. "Are you OK?" To this, the old man replied. "Yes, I'm just reminiscing. My name is Mark Harris. I'm the uncle of the singer, Rolf Harris. I helped build this place when I was 16. You don't believe me? I can show you marks I put on the two steel beams supporting the chimney," and he showed them the marks.



Later, working out the bloke's age, Dennis calculated that this Mark must have worked on the cabin in the 1890s. He also

established that it's a proper Canadian cabin built out of Turpentine logs which were brought on a bullock dray from Kincumber. The place has survived in large part because such logs don't rot and the white ants don't eat them. "I'd like to fix it up." Dennis says, wistfully. "I hope I get round to it."



The cabin in 1928. Why and Later

Whilest his local passion is fishing, Dennis worked for the CSIRO for many years, doing ultrasound research with applications for checking babies in the womb. He also helped to research light-weight composites for Boeing 777s as well as doing research for NASA.

The people we have in Avoca, eh? M.R.



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## Our Local Garage

Dean Warby runs the garage next to our one remaining service station. He calls it a place for minor mechanical repairs meaning that if you want your engine taken out, you go to his partner, Gary, at South Kincumber. The garage used to be the local NRMA representative, but Dean got out of that when the NRMA dropped the boundaries system. Boundaries meant that if you made a local call, you got a local roadside helper. With boundaries dropped, Dean could find himself up near Newcastle and that wasn't much fun.

He tells me he does a lot of vehicle registration inspections. Also, quite a few people bring him cars that they're thinking of buying for an opinion. I had my heart set on a Subaru Outback a year ago, but Dean gave it the thumbs down and probably saved me a packet.

I asked what the trends are. "Well, cars are getting more and more complex," he says, but he does have the diagnostic equipment to service the new computerised cars. It's a constant challenge to keep up, he admits. "You have to stay on top of it."

I wondered why people are driving bigger and bulkier vehicles, especially young women, it seems to me. They really seem to have taken to these modern monsters in a big way, claiming they keep the kids safer, no doubt. "But there's really no need to be dragging around an extra gearbox and diff, when you're hardly ever off-road," says Dean.



Any funny things happen in your neck of the woods? I ask, recalling Mick of Aquafun and the mobile story. He tells me how in the bushy areas, rats like to get into cars in winter to enjoy the engine warmth. He had to pull a dead rat out from behind the dashboard of a vehicle up on Cullens Road. "Pooh, that was a real peg on the nose job," says Dean. He's also found rats on top of an engine block enjoying a picnic of snails they'd brought in

A more useful thing I didn't know is that as a licensed mechanic, he can do the book servicing on new cars. After the first servicing at the dealer, you can take your car to Dean and have the book stamped with the assurance that this will not void the warranty, thus saving yourself quite a lot of money. Of course you won't get the coffee and comfy chairs to wait in. Round Dean's garage, it's pretty basic. *M.R.*

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## *Mystery Amongst The Trees*

The Avoca Beach Hotel and Resort is a bit of mystery. As you drive past on Avoca Drive, you catch glimpses of low buildings up amongst the trees. Those who know the hotel are well acquainted with the feasts from the bistro, eating on the terrace is a nice family affair, but few know about the clusters of accommodation on both sides of the hotel. Nor about the convention centre facilities they have to offer, with several large rooms for weddings and meetings. Linked with that is the Treetops Restaurant.

The complex is nestled in 15 acres of bushland and native gardens and looks like a really nice place to stay. With a bit of poking around, I established that there are 40 villas, self contained with two bedrooms. and about

the same number of motel rooms as well. The latter range from \$110 to \$160, depending on the season. The hotel has free live music Friday and Saturday nights with local and interstate bands. Tuesday is open mike night, often with a country theme.

I asked manager, Stuart, what grub was the saltwater bistro best known for. "Salt and Chili Squid is a signature dish," he said. "Apart from that, you'll find modern Australian cuisine. Four kinds of steaks salads, schnitzel, etc." I said that I found the portions were a bit large for me. "If that's the only complaint I get, I'll be very happy," said Stuart.

M.R.



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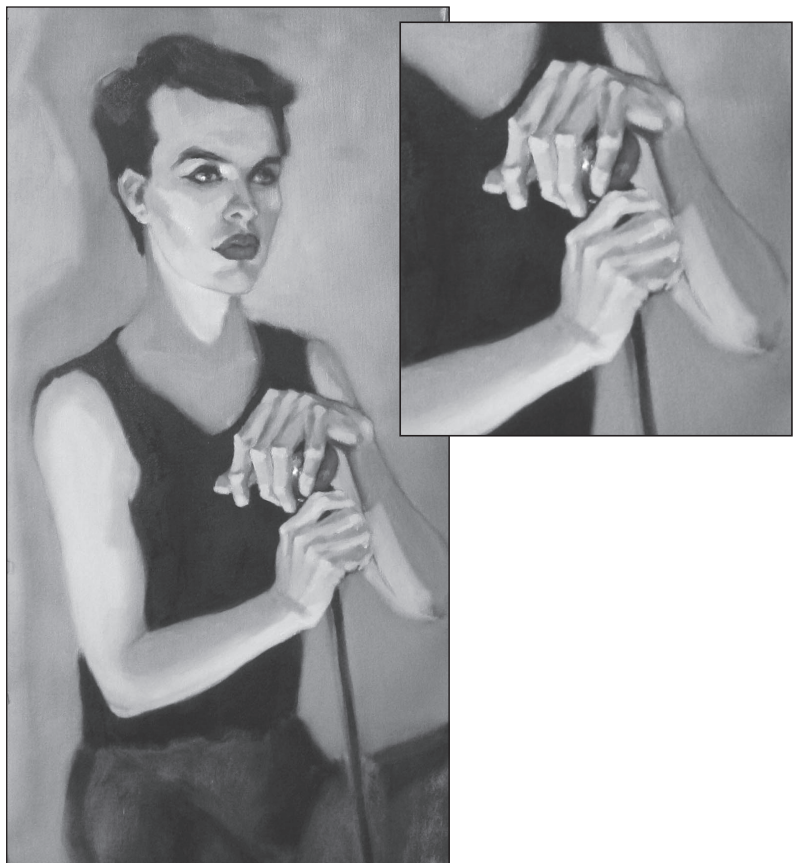
The first thing that strikes you is the beauty of Janet Cobb's studio. You come down the long drive, climb the stairs, and you're in a cathedral-like space, lit by soft Southern light from the floor-to-ceiling windows. Janet explains that those windows give her the feeling that she is always outside, working in the natural environment. She likes that.

She tells me that she's always painted. But in the early days, doing landscapes, there was constant frustration when she tried to put figures in the scene. They just didn't work. So, juggling four kids, she took herself off to the famous art school, Julian Ashton's in Sydney. There she learned to draw and now she teaches others, using the same props as a traditional art school; plaster busts for example

Janet is a popular teacher across a range of art mediums; drawing, watercolour and oils. "Art is visual theatre", she says. "Art is about teaching people to see the theatre of life, each in their own way."

When she does a portrait, is she hard on herself in terms of getting a likeness, I ask? Perhaps going back to her medical times when she was a nurse, Janet says that a portrait artist needs to understand, "the skeletal system under the soft wrapping paper of the skin." I see what she means as I look at the way she's rendered the hands in this portrait.

Janet is part of the 5 Lands Artist Trail which means that she opens her studio on occasions to the public. It's become a very popular event in this area, being able to go from studio to studio to see what local artists are doing. To find out when she and others are open, you should google the website. *M.R.*



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## That Certain Glow

Karen Tomic welcomes me to Glamazon. "I've been here just 18 months and it's going brilliantly. I love Avoca. To me, it's God's country." What are you offering, Karen? I ask. "A full beauty service, nails, waxing, tanning and a strong emphasis on skin health and so lots of facials. Skin education too. So if people are not sure about what they're using at home, they can bring their products in here and we'll go through them."

Because people have cupboards full of stuff, don't they? "Yeah, they look at it all and it's overwhelming. Bring it in and we'll sort it out and decide what's doing you some good. If you need replacements, everything we sell here is Australian or locally sourced, a lot of it is organic."

I guess people have to have realistic expectations, Karen. You can't walk in here with wrinkles and go out wrinkle-free, can you? "That's right! Claims in the media that wrinkles can be just creamed away are just not true. Some products will make the skin plumper so that there is some removal of visible wrinkles, but then later the skin reverts and the wrinkle is just as apparent. What you can do is keep your skin as healthy as possible and thus minimise the wrinkles and the ageing process. Skin care is the secret."




"Speaking of that, a big part of my work is getting my customers to protect themselves from the sun. I'm a real sunscreen Nazi, educating young and old, reminding them that skin cancer is the most preventable sort of cancer."



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"Most of my clientele is local. I do feel part of the community. I've got a little sign over my door which sums it up. 'Enter a stranger and leave as a friend.' Also, in the photo you see a string of hearts that I was given the day I opened. A customer hoped they would bring me luck and I think they have. I'm so busy but when I have a moment, I pop down for a coffee and a chat with Jessie at the Kahveh cafe. I like that place"

M.R.

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