

The Manning Community News

MONTHLY

SHARING COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS

JULY 2015

This paper is being published as a community service to provide readers with factual and independent coverage of news, people and events in our district. If you have a story idea please contact us.

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FREE

THOSE WERE THE DANCING DAYS!



We hope Manning Valley readers with long memories can help us identify some of the young women in this striking photo from Wingham in the 1920s.

The picture belongs to Sue Milliken and her brother Robert Milliken, who grew up in Wingham when their parents, Thelma and David Milliken, owned the Wingham Hotel up to the mid-1950s.

The Millikens can identify four of the performers: Gwen Carpenter: (married name, single name unknown): third from left. Thelma Cross (later Milliken): fourth from left. Beth Abbott (later Summerville): fourth from right. Lillian Gibson (believed nee Easton): first right.

Continued on page 3

WHAT IS THE TPP AND HOW IT AFFECTS US

We hear a lot about the Trans Pacific Partnership (the TPP) but what is it? And why do we not know much about this “free trade agreement” when it’s going to have massive effects on Australia’s future.

The big question is – why the secrecy? When the government obfuscates, waffles and spins, we are right to smell a rat.

The TPP is a trade agreement being negotiated – in secrecy – between Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and the USA.

The ultimate goal seems to be to make life easier for corporate Big Business to act without input or interference from our states or anyone else. It covers matters as diverse as workers’ rights, food security, internet freedom, banking regulations, the cost of medicines and draconian attacks on copyright laws and intellectual property rights.

President Obama is all for it despite vociferous opposition from the likes of

the impressive Elizabeth Warren, Senator from Massachusetts. Tony Abbott is all for it, but opposing voices here are more muted. Elizabeth Warren doesn’t know what’s in the TPP and is calling for the lifting of the secrecy provisions. As are many people and organisations here. The few clues we have about what’s in the TPP are alarming at best.

We do know that the most contentious inclusion is that of the ISDS clause “investor-state dispute settlement” where multi nationals can sue a government if they feel their business has been adversely affected, as in Philip Morris is suing the Australian Government because our plain packing on cigarette packs adversely affects their business.

A well heeled corporation can sue a government or company and if they object the multi national can skip the country’s courts and go before an international panel of arbitrators. If the company suing wins the case they can’t be challenged in that country’s courts which means taxpayers can be hit to pay billions of dollars in damages.

And in many cases the dispute arises in under developed countries with a weak justice system.

The bigger issue under ISDS is that these decisions are not made by independent judges, but by corporate lawyers shuttling between representing corporations one day and sitting in judgement the next, everyone influenced by “cleared advisors”. In other words, lobbyists.

The few with any knowledge of what’s in the TPP are not allowed to reveal what they know to Parliament or the Australian public.

Yet the TPP threatens so many aspects of our economy and national sovereignty. For example, food labelling will go backwards even further with reports that Malaysia is pushing for the elimination of trade barriers such as laws and regulations which they see as affecting their business, that is, removing the mention of palm oil on labels.

Pharmaceutical monopolies will have extended protection of patents and

products so excluding cheaper generic versions being sold.

Australia has some of the toughest regulations in the world to maintain our standards of protection, safety and fairness, but that will go if what is suspected in the TPP comes to pass. The Howard and Gillard governments refused to support ISDS clauses. Now we are told that it seems if there’s no ISDS clause included, then there’s no deal.

This TPP has been described as undermining democracy as a whole in favour of an agenda being set by international corporations to further their own interests.

The devil may be in the detail but how are we to know? Conspiracy theorists may be howling “I told you so”, but it seems likely our grandchildren and great grandchildren will say this generation has a lot to answer for.

The use of the ISDS clause has ballooned, there are hundreds of cases being enacted at present. And while we are told there are adequate precautions and safeguards included in the TPP, who has actually seen the full details and spotted the pitfalls and loopholes?

ESCAPE WITH A BOOK

Old news

Australian Farming Families, Inspiring True Stories of life on the land.

By Deb Hunt. Macmillan.
330 pp.
\$29.99

As a teenager, my summer holidays were spent jillarooing on a huge property on the Queensland border, where I learned both the enchantment and brutality of large scale pastoral life. The heat, the flies, the endless plains, dust, and how to outrun a big angry goanna.

Then I was just an observer, later on I became a Failed Farmer's Wife.

Worse, a Failed Pitt Street Farmer's Wife. Twice!

The second farming experience was with a city husband and a couple of kids. He set out to make a fortune growing poplars for matchsticks, a tax break encouraged by the government. We also had cattle. The poplars grew well on good river flats, then were ruined by rust fungus. The cattle developed blackleg, a blood poisoning, never known in the area before.

Twenty years and another husband later it was 2000 goats on marginal land nine hours out of Sydney. We were going to breed them up and make a fortune selling their cashmere wool. Goats get over any fence, but the problem wasn't ours getting out. It was the feral rams getting in and having their wicked, wild brown ways with our precious white nannies. I learned to be a good shot. Our barley crop died for lack of water. And we couldn't compete with Chinese cashmere anyway.

We learned the truth of the saying "Live as if you're going to die tomorrow, farm as if you're going to live forever." And it's frighteningly hard work, often with little sleep.

This book – Farming Families in Australia - travels across the proverbial wide brown land and talks to eight families who are more than heroic as they deal with the cruel realities of drought, distance, flooding rains and simultaneously all the complexities of any family life. Serious illness, death, money, marriage, intergenerational tensions, deep disappointments, accidents, high hopes and achievements.

These eight families are tenacious, brave, tough as boots, kind and tireless. Without taking that away from them, sometimes a reader might feel their lives are a bit too extraordinary, their resilience too remarkable, to be the whole story. Perhaps that's churlish, and a result of reading too many reports of farmers being forced off their land, or living in dire and meagre circumstances. The figures are rubbery, but there are many farmers leaving the land, big corporations industrialising agriculture, cattle in huge feedlots, mining giants at the gate.

The book deliberately sets out to be inspiring as the author, Deb Hunt, gives each of eight families a chapter on "the Australian spirit at its best" as the blurb says. It delivers.

For instance, just in bare bones: Ian and Merry Jackson take on a huge

property, and have three kids in six years, and in shearing time might get four hours sleep a night. A flood destroys their home. Later a 10 year drought is followed by 10 inches of rain in half a day, and paddocks are inundated. At one stage, hugely in debt, interest rates rise to 18%. Sheep were 20cents each in the 1970s years later they sell for \$50 a head.

The eight families have lived through dramatic changes; new marketing, new technologies, new crops, new genetics, new ways of trading. But they struggle, work, survive.

And always, always there's the weather, the animals, human nature and human tenacity. Unless you're born into it, you'd have to have rocks.

Kirsten Marcussen.

Hair of the Dog – One day last week two individuals had been indulging freely at one of the hotels in Tinonee and on the supply of more drink being refused by the landlord, their thirst became intolerable. On seeing a pale brandy bottle in a bedroom, placed there (they thought) for the purpose of a draught for the thirsty, one of them took the bottle and retired to relish its contents. Neither of the two men could imagine what kind of spirits the bottle contained, but considered it passable and emptied the vessel. How did each feel when they heard the bottle in question contained a preparation for the hair, the effects of which can be better imagined than described! Some men have peculiar tastes.

(Manning River News 29 Dec. 1873)
from Rod and Wendy Gow's "News from the Manning"



Australian playwright Hannie Rayson describes herself as a writer, mother, daughter, sister, wife, romantic, adventuress, parking-spot optimist, and a "good and dull girl from an ordinary family". Rayson's recently released memoir, "Hello Beautiful!: Scenes from a life", reveals that while her family might indeed be ordinary, she is anything but dull.

The book is presented as a series of chapters which are more like vignettes than a chronological series of events in a traditional autobiography. With subjects ranging from graffiti to soup, leakage to blended families, a dead body under the house and urinary tract infections in Spain, Rayson delights the reader with dry wit and many laugh-out-loud moments. She also manages to break your heart at times, very gently and tenderly, and none more so than when she talks about miscarrying while interviewing Arthur Boyd in his studio, in a scene of sparkling clarity.

She is a deft painter with words, as befits her profession, and her scenes display vivid pictures and character sketches. Her family comes alive in their human ordinariness despite the sometimes frustrating foibles. It is the very ordinariness of her family and upbringing that make Rayson's book relatable, even though she herself is anything but ordinary. Crumbed lamb cutlets for dinner, endlessly long days at public baths, hiking tunic uniforms up over belts to shorten the skirts, World Championship Wrestling with Killer Kowalski on the TV screen on Sunday afternoons ... mentions of which all bought back memories to this reader.

This was a comfortable, warm and funny read, and leaves you thinking Hannie Rayson is the sort of person you really want as a friend, to chat, chortle and drink a glass of wine with. Highly recommended.
MF



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"Hello Beautiful!: Scenes from a life" by Hannie Rayson is published by Text Publishing and is available for \$29.99.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Dr Geoff Hudson is a computer expert, inventor, and physicist from Melbourne. Here he offers some visionary thoughts on Australia's declining employment opportunities.

China has achieved great employment increases by managing its exchange rate so its manufacturing could out-compete everyone else. Germany has done a similar thing by using the other weaker economies in the EU to hold the euro down. But our Australian politicians dropped the ball on the Dutch disease. Most of them don't even know that the phrase refers to the reduction in employment when raw material exports raise your currency to the point where manufacturing dies. And it has - manufacturing has been sacrificed on the altar of coal and iron exports.

We must accept that we will never get sustained employment at the hourly rates of many Asian countries. Australia will not tolerate that level of poverty. Therefore, there are many jobs done overseas that we cannot do competitively. This means that we must have an educated population, so fixing the education system is top priority. In some areas in China, students are on average two years ahead of Australian students in science and maths, so alarm bells should be ringing. We need internet based products for science and maths, especially for secondary school students, while we crank up support for teachers to the level where people with research degrees are attracted to teaching in schools.

Australia is close to bottom of the OECD when it comes to producing the fruit of cooperation between industry and academia. While this persists we are badly uncompetitive.

Another principle is that of fairness. It is simply not fair for some senior executives to get paid more than 100 times other fully employed people in the same company. Company tax and government assistance should strongly encourage pay ratios closer to 20 to one or less.

The government names food and agribusiness, mining equipment and technology services, medical technologies and pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing with things like carbon fibre and finally oil, gas and energy resources as the activities to promote. It makes sense to grow these activities, but you wonder how many jobs they will create, especially for those without university degrees. We should pursue things we should become good at because we need the outcomes more than anyone else. Our physical characteristics show us where we ought to be the best, even if we are not there yet. Australia has the lowest population density in the

top 100 countries by population - three people per square kilometre. Only Namibia and Mongolia have populations exceeding one million people and lower population density. And Australia is the driest populated continent on earth.

The low population density means we have a travel problem. It costs us more in time and jet fuel to get from one capital to another. So we should be the world leaders in video conferencing. Australia should develop it. We need it more than anyone else on earth. How many Australian jobs could be done from home using eye-to-eye? Imagine parliament done with eye-to-eye where the speaker selects the person being broadcast to everyone else. Doctors could interview remote patients. Legal and government interactions could span hundreds of kilometres. This product would re-invigorate regional Australia, and save billions of dollars in road construction.

If travel can't be avoided then we should make it better. We need trains which can travel on existing rail lines at 300 kilometres per hour. To get high speed we might have to add a communication network to manage level crossings, and straighten out some corners, but relaying the tracks laser straight over hundreds of kilometres is just too expensive. We need a radically different vehicle to run on the existing rails, like a high pressure hovercraft, or a train with active suspension which anticipates bumps. Imagine a three hour Melbourne to Sydney rail trip on existing tracks. Cancel Badgerys Creek and save at least six billion dollars. Get the airlines to participate because they are in the high speed transport business, and government expenditure could be much less than the cost of an airport.

We can't leave sources of employment without considering manufacturing. This is the hardest problem. To start with, we want to save some automotive manufacturing. There will never be a cheaper time to start a new car manufacturing operation in Australia than in the last half of this decade because that is when the multinationals will be selling up. We want an electric car which includes a recharger powered by a small petrol engine. It can be a bit more expensive than imports of the same size because of the potential reduction in running cost. We want to be able to charge the battery at home to be purely electric for commuting, but drive around Australia using the recharger when we are on holiday.

Thanks for permission to reproduce this extract from ABC Radio National's "Ockham's Razor" and Dr Geoff Hudson.

Continued from page 1

They believe it was taken in the Wingham Town Hall, a few years after the town hall was built in 1923.

In a pre-television era, and when movies as a form of mass entertainment were still in their infancy, the picture captures a time when country towns created their own theatrical shows.

The man with the eight young women was brought from Sydney by the group to choreograph and direct the Wingham performance.

The Millikens are donating this and companion photos to the State Library of New South Wales.

They would welcome help from readers in identifying the remaining four women.

Judging by the meticulous work in their costumes, the local Dancing Girls must have turned on a polished performance for their Wingham audience. This was a time in the 1920s when Wingham was probably at the height of its economic fortunes as a farming and timber town. Radio broadcasts only started in Australia in 1923, so much imagination and resources went into staging local entertainment shows like this.

(Do contact us if you recognise any of the dancing beauties! ed.)

And in Reply...

Thanks to those who wrote and corrected our story on "Buy Australian."

Sadly the 903 at the start of barcodes on products does not guarantee that it is all Australian grown, made and packaged. While the first three digits do not signify what country the product was manufactured in or origin of its contents, they do indicate the country in which the company is based. This means, the company is headquartered, or has an office in that location, but the product could have been made in another country.

Since a company has to apply for a GS1 prefix, they simply state where they are located to receive their prefix, and can choose to manufacture their product anywhere in the world.

The 903 story has spread everywhere, even the CWA passed a resolution to look for 903 on products!

It just shows the public are keen to support our Aussie growers and manufacturers. What we need is proper clear and honest labeling on all items!



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DOING DINNER

Three friends remember...

The Dinner Party

Trish Rollins

My first dinner party was a total disaster. Newly married, never having cooked much - my mother and grandmother were disinterested in food, their heads either buried in books or out in the garden pruning roses - but full of misplaced confidence in my ability to read a recipe and actually produce a dish that might be even vaguely edible.

I decided on a tuna and bean casserole followed by a pavlova, both very 'in' in those days. These dishes would be preceded by squares of cheese and nuts served in crystal bowls (a wedding present).

I draw a veil over that night. The tuna and bean number was more a catastrophe than a casserole- the beans almost raw, the white sauce lumpy and tasting of flour and not nearly enough tinned tuna. The pavlova was a flat, brownish disc, on to which I piled strawberries, most of which not quite ripe.

The whole meal was many hours late, because I forgot to turn on the oven for a while. However, all was not lost because the whole group got roaring drunk - except me. I spent a lot of time in the bathroom, sobbing.

Then there was the night of the flaming fondue, when a pile of paper napkins burst into flames and someone's sleeve got in the way...

The dinner party story has changed quite a bit. Instead of formal, four course dinners with matching wines and everything on the table tickety-boo, things are way more casual. Good friends or family often supply some chocolates or a small gift of homemade jam or chutney for the hostess. And everyone, always, brings a bottle of wine, or some beer.

I guess I'm an old-fashioned girl, because I still like to cook three courses usually, or maybe substantial nibbles with drinks, followed by a main dish and a dessert or cheese. My table is now much less formal than it used to be, and I do a heck of a lot of preparation beforehand and make endless lists so I'm not tearing my hair out in the kitchen and missing all the gossip.

Now I only buy sturdy glasses that can take a lot of punishment and can fit into the dishwasher.

And I never, EVER, serve fondue.

Liz Adams

When my children were small we

parties, because it's what everybody did. I mean in the 'burbs or small country towns, guests turned up in black tie and long frocks. It was fun to dress up. (And useful. When the local copper turned up at the door as the cranky neighbour next door had complained about loud laughter, he was taken aback at being greeted by a tuxedoed gentleman, and delicately enquired if we could tone it down.)

Those were the days of the prawn cocktail, steak Diane, carpetbag steak, apricot or marengo chicken, beef stroganoff, chicken a la king, served on Arabia ware plates. Some people made cocktails, Brandy Alexander was a fave of mine, and the wine list included, palfrey pearl, blue nun, mateus rose, something red in a bottle bound in raffia and like Ben Ean moselle, later used with a candle in it. The more wax dribbled down it the better.

There might be music on the stereogram, but generally conversation was about politics and sport, which could get quite (good naturedly) heated. People drank more than they should using commonsense (ie the wife drove the Holden home) as there was no such thing as a RBT.

But the party I recall most was when one of the children stirred as the horses doovers were being passed (bacon wrapped prunes, cheese straws, devilled eggs, toothpicks speared with coloured cocktail onions and cheese and cabanossi). The three children, all under six, were always packed off to bed at 7.30 and never were seen or heard till morn. Mothers ruled in those days. But he'd been sick so I (carefully) lay beside him in my little black taffeta cocktail dress to comfort him.

The next thing I opened my eyes and sunlight was streaming in the window. I'd slept through the party. The food had all been prepared and so the guests helped themselves and my husband poured them out the door in the wee hours. I'm told they had a grand time.

Mothers being time poor and juggling housework, kids and a part time job... well, what's changed?

What's changed, I observe, is that we entertain more casually, sharing the food and letting the kids and dogs run riot, a football game or DVD blaring, generally unwatched, the men in one group and the gals in another. There's not a lot of meaningful talk or political debate, perhaps that is more to do with age.

But so long as I never have to sit at a table with everyone on their damn iPads and smart phones, I'll enjoy the company and keep my old time dinners in the memory bank.

Joan Frare

Holding a dinner party for me is a wonderful and special opportunity to share my love of food and beauty. One such dinner party springs to mind.

It was late summer so my favourite flower, the old fashioned white marguerite daisy, set my theme.

Once the invitation was extended, six to eight guests, I spent days writing my menu, sourcing the best and freshest food in season. It could all be done on a modest budget.

The table took hours to get "just right" - flowers, candles, crystal glasses sparkling, beautiful linen napkins tied with a yellow chiffon bow to match the centre of my favourite daisy. Elegant salt and pepper shakers, condiment bowls - everything spoke of the promise of the meal to come, with wine and champagne chilling to perfection.

I spent the full day preparing, always a minimum of three courses, keeping the food simple but full of flavor, preparing as much as possible beforehand, as I did not want to miss the party.

We always enjoyed a beautifully chilled glass of champagne on the guests' arrival. People dressed elegantly if not formally.

Have we forgotten how much pleasure wonderful and simple occasions can bring? A picnic in the park with lovely rugs and fluffy pillows, baskets filled to overflowing with simple but yummy food, sun and friendship warming your heart. A Father's Day meal of homemade roasted pumpkin soup, roast lamb and a yummy big warm apple pie with double cream, the table dressed with lovely linen and covered with vases of bright yellow daffodils. It's all about love.

Dining out these days, one is normally seated at a table with no tablecloth, no welcome such as a small vase of flowers, salt and pepper comes in paper packets, as does sugar, people sitting waiting for their meal using mobile phones, not communicating with each other. Why bother going out?

We are cheating ourselves of all the wonderful emotions that food and friends can bring into our lives. How many families eat the evening meal together, no TV, no mobile phones?

I try to teach the next generation that the simple things in life, like sitting around a festive table can bring the greatest and most fulfilling rewards and memories.

A WORD FROM OUR FRIENDS...

"At last! A newspaper that doesn't underestimate our intelligence!"
Catherine, Darawank

"About time someone told us what's really going on!"
Darren, Tinonee

"...The Manning deserves the passion and commitment you bring to the recognition and preservation of its beauty and its history..."
Murray Gleeson

"Now, more than ever, communities like the Manning need independent papers like yours to help live debate and forge positive futures. Long may you publish."
Robert, Nabitac

"Thank you for the breath of fresh air in this new publication. It is heartening to read an honest and encouraging approach to improving the profile of our wonderful location."
Louise, Caparra

"Congratulations. A refreshing change from dumbed down pappy articles! I will be a regular reader."
Frances, Marlee

"You are an ongoing phenomenon. Passion and political savvy in a pulchritudinous package. If you get a chance could you send me a copy of the Manning Community News please?"
Phillip Adams.

WE ALSO LOVE OUR TOWN

Very impressed by the first addition of The Manning Community News. We live in Harrington and also love our town. At Harrington we not only have the beautiful Manning River but also the ocean with its ever rolling waves, sand dunes, dolphins, whales and excellent recreational fishing opportunities.

A visit to Wingham is always a pleasure because our eyes are opened to a much different scenario. There's the wonderfully preserved courthouse and town hall reminding us of days gone by, the main street with its excellent shopping and restaurant venues and, of course, the bats who love to come and feast on our mangoes when in season.

We also have our town at heart and spend many tireless hours trying to convince Council of improvements that could be made. Improvements are not just for us but the Manning Valley as a whole to encourage the tourism dollar.

Margaret Ward

WHY TAREE AVIATION PARK DIDN'T FLY

Not even aviation experts could persuade Greater Taree City Council to design a business park that was suitable for the general aviation industry. The council's design plan meant that commercial hangar sites were too small, there was no provision for helicopters, inadequate facilities for flying training colleges and unusable routes to the main runway. These are just some of the 22 faults identified when the plans were released by council in March 2013.

Within a week the council was sent a report by the local aviation industry explaining the unsuitability of the design. Following a rejection by council of the industry's plans, a request was made for a delegation from the aviation industry to meet with Mayor Paul Hogan. When the Mayor refused to meet with those of us from the aviation industry we figured this was a sign that the project was in trouble.

We then financed an independent report by Keith Tonkin, the Managing Director of the airfield design firm Aviation Projects. It not only endorsed our findings but added some additional technical aspects which confirmed the design was unfit for purpose. We sent a copy to every Councillor. Council wrote to us justifying its own design on the basis that proper processes had been followed.

The letter stated that all the relevant government departments were consulted, a cost benefit analysis had

been done and that the project had been outsourced. Council had also drawn information from expression of The letter stated that all the relevant government departments were consulted, a cost benefit analysis had been done and that the project had been outsourced. Council had also drawn information from expression of interest results associated with a design exercise that was conducted in 2009. We couldn't see the relevance of these results because the 2009 study was for a different layout. Significantly the Council reported that no submissions were received during the public exhibition period.

Brian Wood, Manager of Australian Aircraft Kits says that Council's claims are not correct. He recalls having face to face briefings with the Council's airport representative and adds that the report includes copies of email submissions from the same period. When asked what impact the Aviation Business Park plans by council had on Aircraft Kits, *Brian Wood* said: "We wrote to the council saying that if they persisted with their own design, we would not participate. However by coincidence there has since been a downturn so for the next couple of years at least, the expansion in capacity that we were seeking is not required".

Recreational flyers, hobbyists and private aircraft owners will be appreciative of the expense Taree Council went to, to provide them with their own hangar sites according to

our report. However it then goes on to say that by not constructing a facility suitable for commercial aviation the loss to the region was 18 new jobs and \$1,087,000 per year.

Taree Council was given two million dollars out of a twenty million dollar grant by the federal government to be used for the development of aviation on the Mid North Coast. Last year Port Macquarie completed its upgrade and extension works and this resulted in jet transport capability and the doubling of passenger movements to 450,000 per year.

The report by the aviation industry of Taree is in the form of an official request for an investigation into the Greater Taree City Council under section 430 of the Local Government Act of 1993.

The main section of the report can be downloaded from www.aircraftkits.com.au

Neville French
Managing Director, Aerotisan

Disclaimer:

Aerotisan is an aviation services provider based at Taree Airport. It has not expressed an interest in purchasing any of the Aviation Business Park sites.

A request was made by the Manning Community News for a comment from Mayor Paul Hogan. We received a response from Ms Lineve Dwyer,

Executive Assistant.

"Council acknowledges Mr French's enthusiasm for the local aviation industry and his views have been discussed in relation to this development on a number of occasions. Throughout the aviation business park project, council have engaged a number of aviation experts to assist in designing the outcome in place and this advice does not agree with Mr French's.

As the major funding body for this project, the Federal government has also considered Mr French's views, with Council's plans retaining approval. The funding was a tri Council allocation to Greater Taree City Council, Port Macquarie Hastings Council and Kempsey Shire Councils, each for a different element of a combined regional aviation strategy. The focus for Kempsey and Greater Taree leaning toward general aviation and services that support general aviation, while development of passenger movement opportunities is the target of Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

The Aviation Business Park is now complete in line with approved designs and marketing has commenced.

We are pleased with the response we are getting from the general aviation industry broadly, with interest coming largely from metropolitan areas."

WHAT OUR FRIENDS SAY...

My name is Tarnie Van Vliet. I was born in the Manning Base and have grown up in this beautiful part of the world and am proud to call the Manning Valley my home. I have chosen to raise my young family in Wingham "The Friendly town" and am also part of a committed team dedicated to providing quality childcare to the families that live in the area at Cuddlepier Early Childhood Learning Centre.

I am writing with reference to an article called "Wither Wingham?" that was published in the May 2015 edition of The Manning Community News. This article made mention of Cuddlepier and other "old" unaffordable buildings in Wingham including the courthouse and the Town Hall. The article suggested that there was a plan to sell off these buildings - something that I as the president of the committee was unaware of.

Cuddlepier is the longest running childcare centre in Wingham and was established in 1986. It is a not-for-profit community based centre and is run by a committee comprised of dedicated

parents and the director Tony. It is run by the community for the community.

With this one building providing so much for the community especially the younger generation I am unsure how it can be possibly deemed as "unaffordable". Is it not more beneficial for the community to have this long standing quality childcare centre for its community members and their precious children? Cuddlepier embraces the unique characteristics of Wingham - it is a friendly environment.

I for one certainly hope that the thought bubble has been shot down in the corridors of the council.

Council replied:

Thank you for emailing me. From time to time Council undertakes reviews of its activities to ensure it is operating as effectively and efficiently as it can. One such recent review has been of all the buildings owned by Council. From these reviews there are often business cases presented to Council about the pros and cons of any action. The impact on the community is upmost in people's minds

when considering the outcome of the reviews.

While the buildings occupied by Cuddlepier and Wingham Town Hall were part of a recent review there has been no decision to sell or change the use of either of these buildings. Cuddlepier is a valuable facility for the Wingham community and I expect it to remain so for many years to come.

Regards, Ron Posselt. General Manager
Greater Taree City Council

ENCORE HARRINGTON

Although at opposite ends of the Manning Valley it's interesting that many people in Harrington have the same views about Greater Taree City Council as expressed in the first edition of the Manning Community News. The reason being that we have experienced the same indifferent attitude as the people of Wingham.

Once we both had our own Shire Councils with mayors and aldermen caring wholeheartedly for their local area. When the Shires were amalgamated to

form Greater Taree City Council the care was lost and bureaucracy took over.

Sure, we have the community consultations from time to time where we suggest improvements that could be made for the benefit of locals and to encourage tourism. In the past Council's response has usually been, "no money", as in the case of Wingham.

They will often assure us they will apply for grant funding when available for a "study, survey or assessment" to be undertaken. These are done mainly by consultants and are very costly. Unfortunately, NOTHING comes of them. What is the point?

Hopefully, Council will apply for their share of the recently announced State Government funding made available for regional areas and get on with the job of improving the towns of Wingham and Harrington for the benefit of all.

The Harrington Community Action Group

(These letters were edited due to space. Read full letters at www.manningcommunitynews.com)

REIMAGINING OUR TOWNS

To The Manning Community News: Thank you for the breath of fresh air in this new publication. It is heartening to have read an honest and encouraging approach to improving the profile of our wonderful location. There are so many tourism assets, such as breathtaking scenery, so many things to do and see. Alas, some of these joys are kept as secrets.

My partner and I moved permanently to the area in 2014, after seven years of preparation. We are thrilled with our change, however we are a little disappointed that the promotion of the Manning Valley, and Wingham particularly, seems lacking and doesn't compare with other locations.

Unfortunately in comparison to other rural towns the appearance of the township is drab, and a little unwelcoming. There is no softening streetscape, no shade from trees in hot weather, no foliage colour, and nowhere visitors can learn how and when Wingham operates. Sadly, the park seems under utilised.

In my opinion, tourism signage is extremely poor when entering Wingham from any direction and presumes visitors have prior knowledge of the area. For example, many visitors see the sign for Wingham Brush, but do not realise what it is, and why it would be a shame to pass through and not visit it.

The Museum is another example. If a tourist drove into Isabella Street directly, they would not be aware how close they are to the incredible display prepared by so many keen locals.

Ellenborough Falls is advertised on signs, but no suggestion of mileage, or the easily accessible road conditions, or that a loop road will guide tourists past other worthwhile spots en route to the Falls, and beyond.

What about advertising the access to the Oxley Highway through Tapin Tops? Or the day trips along the Bucketts Way via Tinonee, or to Nowendoc, or using back roads through villages like Killabakh, amongst so many other places?

Wingham's best asset is its people. Folks greet each other, whether long-time friend or unfamiliar face. Staff in shops go the extra mile to make customers feel they are the most important person in the world. New arrivals are invited to join in social functions, be part of activities and welfare groups, and are introduced to neighbours and made to feel part of the whole community. This is a rare treasure.

I would like to see the council administrators take a leaf from the hard working locals at some of the local villages. Killabakh is just one good example. The welcoming picnic table, the information box including leaflets on local activities and get-togethers, the unassuming gardens near the proudly maintained hall, the enthusiasm of the people to make their neighbourhood work for them and for passersby.

We, the people of Wingham and surrounds, like your publication has suggested, need to retake the interests of our town and localities in hand, and make them shine. We need to tell the world, not just about Beef Week, our Scottish Festival, or Akoostik. We need well-positioned advertising, which is clear and inviting. We owe it to those before us who established Wingham.

Finally, how do we become involved in such promotion? I would welcome your suggestions, and would be thrilled to join in with others who feel passionate about our home.

Louise Veale
Caparra

Dear Louise,
Thank you for writing to us. And welcome to the Manning, you are just the kind of enthusiastic and entrepreneurial thinking newcomers we need! Our area is indeed a too well kept secret. We need to spread the word. Which is not to denigrate those who are trying to promote the area, but it is quite surprising how little people know about the area if they know it at all. The new Team Manning Tourism is a good initiative. The Manning Naturally tourist magazine is excellent.

We need to reach far and wide to attract tourists and visitors who stay over, with suggestions and plans and ideas. There are people who google the area to see what's here and those who just stumble upon us. They need to fall in love with the Manning!

Our natural beauty of the river and hills and rolling valleys speak for themselves. But we need more "set dressing" in some towns, and attractive places to sit, eat, drink and relax. Think of the tiny villages and towns in Europe and also Asia where there's always a table and umbrella, good inexpensive food and attractive scenery. We need to run imaginative tours with a knowledgeable and entertaining guide.

Imagine Isabella Street with a lot more outdoor tables and chairs, hanging baskets of flowers, lampposts and attractive street lighting. You can't beat fairy lights in trees! And trees are a must. The prettiest towns are those

with trees, especially in and around the main streets. Perhaps we could start a campaign like Centennial Park in Sydney where locals who have donated a tree have a discreet plaque with their name on it.

We need more events happening like Taree's Night Bazaar. The sadly closed Taree swimming pool on the river... (that should have been restored as a wonderful community asset) what a non-event that space is, yet look at where it is! Could we not have old fashioned punts and paddle boats for hire along the river with a café and verandah up the top overlooking the river?

And what about a good old style bandstand in the park by the river with events and picnics with free music? And again, more food and eating spots along the riverfront, with a license to serve a glass of wine with lunch!

Why was the old goods shed at Wingham station removed? Nothing has replaced it. Think what a stunning art gallery and creative space it would be!

There is a magnificent old house unchanged since the current family member's great grandmother lived there. It's filled with all the original family belongings even down to the walk-in oven space, scalloped newspaper lining on the pantry shelves, an incredible garden, even an ancient 1930s car moldering away on bricks in the shed. It's a treasure house that whisks you instantly back to the old days. It's a living museum of one family's life out on a farm in the valley. Tours by appointment would be stunning.

We have a great opal expert in the area with an amazing collection, not that he wants his whereabouts known. But an occasional special exhibition might be held somewhere. In fact there are probably all kinds of interesting local collections that would be of interest to visitors, especially those from overseas. We need our own Antiques Roadshow! There are probably pieces in sheds and cupboards and in old suitcases that are valuable as well as sentimental pieces. And if you find them and don't know what to do with a family piece, remember our wonderful Wingham Museum.

Reader Mieke from Wingham wrote to us to say she still dreams of seeing Wingham as a celebrated historical town:

"Sadly the grand stables and coach house went, though I did my bit to

others. I saw its position at the entrance of town a place to show photos and memorabilia telling of the stories of our beginning in the mid 1800s when Scottish settlers came on foot overland from Morpeth. I also saw the deserted ex-Hawkins car dealership opposite as a combined bookstore/café with outdoor tables. I'd like to see framed photos of the early days from the museum archives hung in the shops and businesses in Wingham. What about perhaps a mob of wood carved resting kangaroos on the roundabout at the end of Isabella Street? We have some fantastic wood carvers in the area.

I come from the Netherlands. My grandfather used to take me on historical walks of The Hague that went back to 1230. When I came to Wingham I delighted in its history... it certainly needs preserving and promoting!"

What ideas do you have?

We realise such ideas cost money, but if we want them we need to fund-raise and lobby those who can help with funding. We can't expect council to do everything. Or do things they might consider frivolous and unnecessary.

As you suggest, Louise, we need ideas and perhaps a committed group to start a campaign with enthusiasm and positive attitudes who think outside the square and who could be included or consulted by local authority groups. It's depressing to hear the Doctor No's - "It's too hard. Too expensive. Too many restrictive rules and regulations."

It's surprising what a committed group can achieve. More and more it seems we have to take control of our lives and surrounds or we get steam-rolled by corporations, big business and government policies which never seem to suit our needs or benefit or beautify our community. People power can be effective. But first we need ideas and plans and motivation that we can make a difference. And then, let's see what we can do and achieve!

We are always interested in readers' thoughts and opinions. Also story suggestions. While this is a local paper we also look to wider horizons for views and news. We wish to reflect how our community thinks and dreams of our future in the beautiful Manning Valley.

Warm wishes,
The Manning Community News.

JUST ONE DAY OF THE YEAR **One of life's dilemma's...**

In June we recognise World Refugee Day. A day with little to celebrate for many.

However, quietly living among us are those who have left their homeland to make a better life in Australia. And as Tin HtaNu states, 'I owe my life to Australia, so the work I have been doing is an appreciation of my adopted homeland.'

Tin and husband Ian Oxenford came to settle in Kendall in 2003, establishing a small scale organic farm. Tin is Burmese, and while she embraces her Buddhist beliefs she marries them with a healthy dose of Aussie pragmatism. She says she was fortunate to have parents who had foresight in investing in her education, giving her the chance to gain scholarship to Australia. She did her post graduate degrees at the University of New England in Armidale from 1982-84 and went back to Burma to apply what she had learned there.

There was a call for democratic change in Burma in 1988 against the military rule when Tin and many other academics and university students, together with monks and local people, came into the streets in peaceful

demonstrations. The ruling junta cracked down on dissidents and as the political climate was not favorable Tin left Burma in 1990 and worked as a lecturer in Bangkok Assumption Business University.

In 1991 she applied for a job as a lecturer at the University of New England and migrated to Australia. She met her husband Ian Oxenford at UNE.

Tin is a warm and friendly presence at the Camden Haven markets. She and her husband open their farm and home to travellers, refugees getting settled, and those willing to work in exchange for hospitality. She and her husband raise funds any way they can from making jam and chutney from their fruit to running fundraisers, to send donations to the school they support in Burma.

They are also a support network to many refugees and new arrivals in Australia from all parts of the world. They are especially proud of the several Burmese families who have settled in the Manning Valley several years ago and who have made successful lives for themselves and their children.

Says Tin, "I think village or community life is more or less the same world wide. Whether we are in a small village in Burma (now Myanmar,) or in Kendall, we have the same values of wanting to live in quiet and peaceful surroundings, limited wants, cooperation, preserving the nature and village culture, less rushing around, cohesion and harmony among the neighbourhood. We define a good community as the group of people living in the same area and having the same goals and values and working together.'

Tin also teaches at Camden Haven Adult and Community Education College, Port Macquarie Adult and Community Education College, Wauchop, Adult and Community Education College and Taree Adult and Community Education College. She teaches Buddhist living and meditation and Asian cooking.

Her wish is that she could subdivide her 12 acres and allow several refugee families to settle on the property and make a home for themselves. 'Burmese people tend to be rural people who work hard on the land and like to contribute to their community,' said Tin.

Does anyone have any tips/suggestions on moving on fat green frogs from the dunny? It's a septic in the garden away from the house and a frog family have taken up residence no matter how much the security has been reinforced.

Obviously they come up the drain and lurk in the porcelain. Flushing seems to only refresh them. As big as your palm they can squeeze under the lip of the toilet bowl giving you the (green) finger! We know frogs are good for the environment, but they're bringing snakes and they live around the house in rolled up blinds, pot plants, cushions, vases, in the outdoor table umbrellas and in the peg basket. They pooh heaps everywhere (occasionally thoughtfully in the toilet) and croak incessantly. Ideas???

Chinese Whispers

Conspiracy theories, rubbish or a grain of truth? You tell us

♦ The fees at the Bucketts Way tip are going up! This means uncaring locals might well be dumping their waste in the bush and out of the way places. Keep an eye out! Many tips make a very handsome profit from their Tip Shop if managed as a proper business.

♦ Support the campaign to get a police presence back in Wingham!

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IN THE GARDEN



Although few plants are suitable for sowing during June and July, there are plenty of things to do in the garden this month. It's time to set up a support frame and sow broad beans. 'Coles Dwarf' and 'Egyptian' are better varieties for milder or windy conditions. It is also time to prepare beds for July planting of potatoes with plenty of compost and some seaweed tea – but no lime, which encourages 'potato scab'.

Check soil pH where you are growing members of the cabbage family. Soil for these vegetables should be close to neutral (6.5–7). Soil that is too alkaline or acidic makes them very attractive to 'cabbage white butterfly' and 'cabbage moth'.

Cut down asparagus foliage after it has yellowed. Dust the bed with lime after adding compost and cover the bed with mulch.

Dig bindii plants out of lawns. Or, you can spot spray them with undiluted white vinegar when weather is dry and sunny. By the time this nasty weed forms prickly seed heads in late winter,

it will be too late to get rid of it this year.

Compost heaps need regular turning to keep them aerated and speed up decomposition so that they will be mature for spring planting.

The following gardening advice for June is suitable for most areas in the Manning Valley. Further advice on individual plants and tips on how to address gardening problems can be found on my blog, aussieorganicgardening.com

For gardeners who do not use moon planting: sow or plant out any of the following list at any time this month, although you may find germination rates are low when the Moon is in Last Quarter phase.

During First Quarter phase: [all day on 1st June to 2:20 pm on 2nd June]. Broad beans and peas can be sown directly into beds. If you have a spare bed or two, you could grow a green manure crop of broad bean (faba bean) or field pea for foliage only and dig it in later to enrich your soil for

spring planting. Or grow fenugreek as a green manure to break up heavy soil.

During Full Moon phase: [from 2:20 pm on 3rd June to 1:40 pm on 9th June]. Garlic can be sown directly into beds, and mid season onion seedlings, asparagus and rhubarb crowns, kiwifruit and pistachio can be planted. In frost-free areas, fig trees and daylilies can also be planted. Also protect young avocado, fig, mango and pawpaw trees and hibiscus from frost.

Last Quarter phase: [from 1:45 pm on 9th June to noon on 17th June]. This is not a good phase for seed germination but an excellent phase for weeding, preparing beds and general garden maintenance. It's also a good phase to prune grapes, pecans and other trees or vines that bleed heavily when pruned closer to spring. Prepare beds for July or August

planting of bare-rooted roses. Mulch prepared beds to prevent organic matter drying out. Set up a compost heap for growing pumpkins or melons. They love compost-rich soil.

Before the Full Moon: [from noon on 17th to 9:05 am on 24th and from 9:05 am on 25th to the end of June], English spinach and sweet peas can be sown directly into beds. Advanced seedlings of cold-hardy flowering annuals can also be planted into garden beds. In frost-free areas, lettuce, spring onions, calendula, dianthus, statice and annual lupins can also be sown or planted out.

During First Quarter phase: [from 9:00 am on 25th to the end of June]. Broad beans and peas can be sown directly into beds.

Lyn Bagnall



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