

The Manning Community News

MAY 2018

SHARING COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS

FREE

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. PO Box 62, Tinonee, 2430 editor@manningcommunitynews.com

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MidCoast budget blunder of, oops, \$13 million

While the rest of the country was digesting Scott Morrison's self-congratulatory Federal Government's Budget, sparks were flying in Gloucester, as our dear MidCoast Council presented its fiscal budget for the year.

This so-called budget had been put up on Council's website days before but, when Councillors received their 100 pages plus budget papers, only TWO pages had actual financials on it – ie, figures.

Some smart locals had already picked up the glaring error of an over-estimation of MidCoast Water staff costs; rocketing from an average over the last couple of years of \$18 Million to suddenly now over \$33 million.

Huh? Wasn't the whole idea of the new MidCoast Council swallowing Midcoast Water into their embrace supposed to *save* us money??

Incomplete

So, oh, oops sorry, a small blunder. Two days later, as the Council convened at Gloucester, the mistake had been picked up... including by sharp eyed locals, Councillor Epov, a tipped-off staff member, and the former Mayor Paul Hogan, and was reduced to \$13 million.

Former GTCC Mayor Paul Hogan, is appalled.

"What I have sighted is a Statement of Revenue Policy including a 2018 -2019 Income Statement and Capital Budget Statement. This information is incomplete."

Where is the three year document? The frightening thing is the information that is not being provided. Did the Staff prepare this document, or a consultant? The Community / Councillors should be provided with all the information, in other words, a document with all the figures relating to what is mentioned in the Statement of Revenue and Capital Expenditure, not just two pages."

The big question is, what is this vague, shifty, evasive mess of a budget covering up? Where is the transparency, the thought-through future plans, the directives, the accountability? Where does the buck stop?

More Than A Simple Error

Whilst it can be dismissed by Council as a simple accounting mistake, and a reprinting of corrected papers handed out on the morning of the Council meeting, that is not good enough.

The previous Greater Taree City Council spent at least three months preparing and detailing and scrutinising budgets.

So it makes we ratepayers feel a bit hard done by, and also feel that something is being glossed over and covered up, when figures are rubbery, and paperwork so superficial.

Forget the highly sophisticated, accurate and honest council budgets from neighbours Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. We have the greatest mess of a presentation that is full of pages and pages of pretty pictures, council-speak bull-dust, and TWO pages of what is referred to as the actual

budget in figures. This is depressingly illuminating, in that it gives us bad news and no news.

Rates Going Up

The other thrilling news is that, due to then GM Glenn Handford's Special Rate Variation (SRV), (that was the rate hike that we had to have), our Council rates will again increase this year by a further 5% (whereas IPART approved a Rate Peg

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Wingham revisted... A year on

Oh dear, Winghamites are still wondering where the grant money of \$50,000 went, that was meant to beautify the town.



Well, this was all explained in this newspaper in June 2017 so, if you haven't noticed the planter boxes (now thankfully being used for their intended purpose, and not as trash

bins), you haven't been paying attention.

As we wrote here in June a year ago... "Wingham has been tossed some crumbs to remake itself. A \$50,000 grant to the Chamber of Commerce to beautify

the town won't go far, especially after the inevitable consultants were brought (presumably expense free) from Sydney, and paid thirty thousand dollars out of the pot of fifty thousand, to come up

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Kiss the brush goodbye

Following feedback from our concerned community over unauthorised plans by the self-appointed WAG (Wingham Advancement Group) to turn the iconic Wingham Brush Nature Reserve into a defacto congested camping ground, Mike Thomas, a representative of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is responsible for the Brush, and a Midcoast Council Representative, Daniel Aldridge, met informally with some local citizens and some members of WAG.

This sensitive area of protected flora and fauna, and a recreational area for the local townsfolk, has been hijacked by members of WAG who, they tell us, have good intentions of raising money for the town by allowing free camping.

Originally WAG's plan was one night only stop-overs for RV's. WAG collected receipts from visitors to show they had spent money in town.

WAG wrote and advertised on camping and grey nomad internet sites and, naturally, the word soon spread about the tranquil, attractive, free spot at Wingham.

The site is now jammed with vehicles, tents and itinerants. Locals can't park, have trouble unloading their boats, or enjoy a peaceful picnic.

The view of the river is obstructed by vehicles who stay for extended periods as do campers in tents, their dogs and kids run free in the Brush, uncontained campfires are being lit with wood dragged from the brush and despite the proximity of a solid, toilet bunker block, built to withstand floods, at the Brush riverside, some campers were squatting in the Brush to defecate etc.

Camping Not Part of The Plan

WAG had an original agreement with the then Greater Taree City Council in 2006 for plans for the Wingham Foreshore Reserve and Mick Tuck Reserve but there was no mention of camping.

Little seemed to eventuate until recently when Council amalgamated and WAG, led by President Alan Valentine (who has held the position for the past 11 years) made their move to promote RV stays at what they renamed the Wingham Riverside Reserve.

However last year a joint proposal between WAG and MidCoast Council was applied for under the Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) which, in the 2018 Guidelines states is "to provide the kind of infrastructure that improves the lives of local residents."

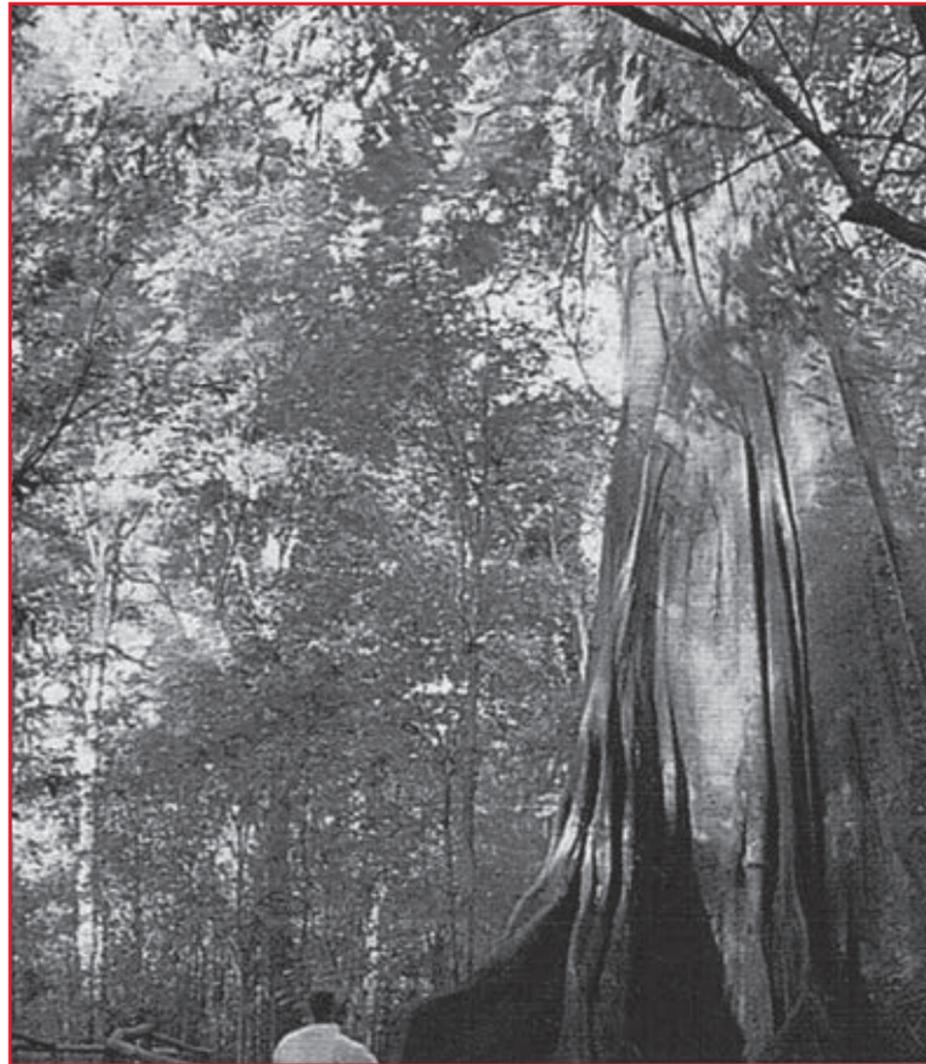
Those guidelines further state: "The Stronger Country Communities Fund supports projects that deliver local community infrastructure or sporting facilities."

However given the plans in the proposal from WAG for the Wingham Brush Reserve, they've drawn a pretty long and questionable bow in meeting these guidelines.

New Proposal

In their proposal for the Wingham Brush Reserve, are included -

A proposed \$50,000 worth of earthworks without any regard to landforms in a floodway, directly adjacent to the Threatened Ecological Community, removing a raised area and then sticking it into a



low spot (carrying high velocity current in flood times). Local knowledge questions if this could be stable or not and result in erosion of the TEC. There seems to have been neither expert advice nor common sense applied.

TEC trees are to be "pruned" which is interpreted by locals to mean "removed" to make way for more vehicles, setting these back into the Threatened Ecological Community.

There was a preposterous proposal for a "black water dump point" (in a floodway???) but apparently this has already been knocked on the head. (As apparently is the intrusion into the TEC to make room for more "self-contained" RV's.)

WAG want to knock down the existing toilet block and build another, presumably with hot showers. Quotes have already been obtained and

sent to Rotary stalwart Ken Patterson in Taree, though there is no mention of Rotary being involved in any way. The WAG project person is Bill Kneipp.

Speaking to sophisticated builders I am told the standard practice is to obtain the grant money but pay *less* for the service or item and "use" the remainder. Or, the residual funds can be applied to another project where a complex project is simplified or cut short and the funds redirected.

Clearly this is the development of a campground when we already have a good facility at the Wingham Showground. There is no DA for a campground at Wingham Brush Reserve in WAG's proposal nor any support for it in the Plan of Management.

WAG harp on about the economic benefit to the community, when most of us can only see the destruction of a precious, loved local nature spot.

Visitors Spend Anyway

Visitors, RV owners and campers at Wingham Showground will spend the same money in town wherever they stay.

WAG had the original backing of leading Wingham businesses... one has to ask did these businesses know of the extent of WAG's plans to take over our riverbank picnic area and turn it into a congested camping ground?

Combined with local homeless and squatters staying at the Brush Reserve, campers are now staying for weeks at a time, with no limit now on how long vehicles can stay, so the whole place is a mess with plans to make it even more so.

And it will end up costing the community the bucks to maintain it all.

The wider community was NOT consulted by the 22 member strong WAG group.

Stop It Now

It's time to call the whole thing off, well intentioned as WAG may have been. Mr Bromhead must step up. The Minister for the Environment has also been contacted to bring a halt to this desecration.

Perhaps WAG never saw the consequences of their plans but if it is not stopped now we can kiss the rare and (supposedly) protected Wingham Brush and our peaceful pretty riverfront reserve goodbye.

DM



THE GLAMOUR GIRLS



Figure 1 Button and Bows



Figure 2 Kramer's supreme



Figure 3



Figure 4

The Camellia is the icon of winter, unrivalled for glamour; it is the shining star of the sleepy winter garden.

Camellia are largely known for their lush, evergreen foliage, array of colour and variety, and their stunning flowers. But I simply love them for the warm welcome they provide, as I arrive home on a chilly winter's afternoon.

The Camellia originated, and grows naturally, in Asia, particularly China and Japan. It has been made famous not only for its gorgeous flowers, but also for its many uses, including making tea, oil and in cosmetics.

The Camellia has a long history, and has had a fascinating journey around the world, travelling to England and America. It wasn't long before it was introduced here in Australia, too. It was commonly thought that the first importation of Camellia plants occurred in February 1831, when a shipment arrived for William Macarthur. These were planted at Camden Park, NSW. However, it has now been established that a consignment (sent to Alexander Macleay of Sydney) arrived somewhat earlier (in 1826) and were planted in Sydney, at Elizabeth Bay House.

Since exportation from its home in Asia, there are approx. 300 different Camellia species and many (many) more cultivars. However, there are really only three main groups which are commonly grown in Australian gardens:

**The Glamour girls:
Sasanqua**

Sasanquas are audacious princesses, and are the first to

flower, from mid-autumn and into mid-winter. They generally have smaller leaves, and small- to mid-sized flowers. Flowering is still very impressive, so don't be put off by that description. Sasanquas are the most versatile of the Camellias, as they are the fastest growing, and make great hedges as well as specimen shrubs. They are also the most heat and sun tolerant.

Japonica

Japonicas are the stately queens of winter, and flower later from early winter and into early spring. They tend to be slower growers, and need protection from hot summer weather. However, they're worth the extra care, as their flowers are larger and more decadent than sasanquas.

Reticulata

Reticulatas are the cheer girls that dance us into spring, with buds bursting from late winter into spring. They produce more upright growth, with larger leaves and an open habit. Flowers can be up to 15cm wide (in some varieties), and look just like big ruffled skirts! As befits something so lovely, *reticulatas* do require a little more care in planting and placement than their smaller sisters.

Some of our favourites include:

Sasanqua- Setsugekka (white), Jennifer Susan (pink), Bonanza (red)

Japonica- Kramer's Supreme (red), Buttons + Bows (small pink), Desire (pink)

Reticulata- Dr Clifford Parks (deep red), Red Crystal (red), Howard Asper (salmon pink)

Growing tips

- Camellias are acid lov-

ers, so if plants aren't performing, check the PH level (we can check this at the nursery with a small soil sample).

- Protect the shallow root zone with a thick mulch of organic matter, such as cow manure and mulch.
- Encourage larger flowers by liquid feeding in autumn.
- Never let Camellias dry out, especially during summer - a drip irrigation system or regular deep watering during hot, dry periods will keep them happy.
- Keep a close eye on them for scale and any insects that may damage or inhibit flowering and the fresh growth come spring time. Malathion and White oil are good products to control both.

There is a Camellia for every position in every garden for every purpose. They are not difficult to grow, and are generally hardy and trouble free. With a little care, they will give many years of pleasure with their attractive evergreen foliage and beautiful floral displays.

So come in to Wingham Nursery; we have a large range of Camellias bursting with buds and flowers. Our staff can help guide you towards the right Camellia for the right area, and check your soil PH to get things growing and off to a great start.

**Caitlin Sawyer
Wingham Nursery
& Florist
02 6553 4570**

**Bees Wax Wraps
keep food fresh and
saves using plastic!**



Above the land of the



Lake Wakatipu



Wendy Borchers in the cockpit

Wendy Borchers

‘Spend 11 days exploring the South Island of New Zealand by vintage DC3 aircraft,’ was an invitation dropped in my mailbox from Bill Peach Journeys’.

How to refuse?

My dad always referred to these World War II aircraft as ‘Gooney Birds,’ and talked about them in such glowing terms, so how could I re-

sist the opportunity to travel from Tuncurry to spend 11 days travelling about the South Island in such an iconic aeroplane?

When I was working as a film researcher in ABC television at Gore Hill, Sydney in 1972, one of the programs to which I was assigned was ‘*This Day Tonight*’, compered by (the late) Bill Peach.

Bill left TDT in 1974 and followed his dream of producing and presenting documentaries such as ‘Peach’s Australia’, ‘Peach’s Australian Cities’, ‘Peach’s Explorers’ and ‘Peach on the Mississippi’, which led to the creation of his travel agency, ‘Bill Peach Journeys’ in 1984.

In 1991, I had the privilege of cataloguing all these programs as part of a research/preservation project, the aim of which was to locate and identify the physical items of film and videotape material in ABC Archives on the subject of Aboriginal culture and history. Many of Bill’s programs fell into this category, and it was this work which led to my interest in exploring some of the fascinating

regions of Australia depicted in the documentaries I was seeing on the small screen of my ‘Steenbeck’ film editing machine.

I finally met Bill Peach at an ABC reunion lunch in 2005, after which he agreed to launch a book I had co-authored with Tim Bowden, called ‘Aunty’s Jubilee – 50 Years of ABC Television’ in 2006.

We Set Off

First stop was Christchurch, where we were booked into a new hotel in the city centre, directly opposite the Anglican Cathedral, which had been damaged so badly during the violent earthquake in February, 2011. The New Zealand government, led by Jacinta Ardern, has recently committed \$NZ10 million towards its restoration.

We enjoyed a delicious meal with fellow travellers and met, for the first time, our journey director, Amanda Highfield, who was to be our esteemed leader, psychologist, nurse, den-mother and salon-keeper for our journey.

Meeting The Bird

We first clapped eyes on our DC-3 on the tarmac outside the New Zealand Flying Doctor Service terminal at Christchurch airport. There she was, our very own transport for 11 days, our Air Chathams’ Gooney Bird with a crew of three, captain – Keith Mitchell, first officer – Daryl Pettit and our flight attendant – Violet Gordon-Glassford, resplendent in their smart uniforms.

Our beautiful Douglas DC-3 arrived in New Zealand in April 1945 from the USA, and was assigned to a RNZAF Squadron, after which she was gainfully employed dropping supplies in remote outposts of the War. The name ‘Lucille’ was bestowed upon her in 2002, and she had a long and varied career as a crop duster, courier, freighter and in other ventures. She was sold to Chathams Pacific Air in 2009, after which she was completely rebuilt, and received the new name of Powhaitere.

Our flight attendant, Violet, arranged for music of

the ‘Fifties and Sixties’ to be fed into the cabin, which greatly enhanced the atmosphere, as well as our excitement. We all sang along wholeheartedly.

As there were only ten of us on our journey, (all Australians except for Myrtle McKenzie, who lives in Christchurch), we were encouraged to spread out so that we each had a window and, on this first day, an unrestricted view of the Canterbury Plains, as we flew to Ashburton, home of a fascinating Aviation Museum, used as a training airfield for pilots during World War II. Here you can still see the ‘tie-down rings’ on the tarmac, which secured the planes against the fierce prevailing winds of the Canterbury Plains. The Museum has some magnificent aircraft on display, from biplanes to a RNZAF Skyhawk and a Macchi Jet, once used by the famous RAAF aerobatic team, ‘The Roulettes’, based at Sale in Victoria.

Dunedin

Later, our DC-3 headed

he long white cloud

for Dunedin, a city renowned for late Victorian architecture, which sprang up after the gold rush of the 1860's. Once again, our journey was accompanied by the tape of Music of the 'Fifties & Sixties', to which we sang along, a little less enthusiastically.

We enjoyed a lavish lunch at Larnach Castle, which has been magnificently restored by master craftsmen during the last 30 years, enabling us to wallow in the Scottish heritage of the region, visiting the Olverston Historic Home, en route to our hotel.

Southernmost Point

After breakfast, we re-boarded our aircraft to Invercargill where, for the first time, we encountered rain and enjoyed a town tour with a local-well-informed guide, before heading down to Bluff, the southernmost point on the South Island. Here we enjoyed a magnificent lunch of famous Bluff oysters at a restaurant overlooking the Foveaux Strait, and the famous signpost indicating that we were a long way from anywhere.

In Invercargill we swung by the 'E. Hayes & Sons' Museum, which houses a replica of Burt Munro's famous Indian Scout motorbike. This motorbike claimed the World Record Class S-A 1000cc in Utah, USA, and was featured in the Hollywood feature film, 'The Fastest Indian,' starring Anthony Hopkins as Burt Munro of Invercargill, who spent years rebuilding a 1920 Indian motorcycle, which helped him set the land-speed record at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats in 1967.

Aviation History

The next day we inspected the Croydon Aviation Heritage Centre at Gore, which is another spectacular museum preserving New Zealand's rich aviation history, and houses the largest collection of de Havilland aircraft in the 'southern hemisphere'. I was particularly enamoured of the stories of pioneer aviators 'those magnificent men (and women) in their flying machines', before we boarded our very own historic aircraft

once again, and set course for Queenstown. Along the way, I was invited into the cockpit just as we caught our first breathtaking sight of Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables, the spectacular mountain range.

I first visited Queenstown in 1966 when I hired a Holden Station Wagon with a group of five other Australian girls, all of us having worked as waitresses at the Chateau Tongariro, in the North Island, and who left on a journey of exploration when the ski season ended in October.

Queenstown in 2018 is unrecognisable since I was there in 1980. It's a bustling place, still beautiful, but crowded with tourists of all nationalities. I feared that the historic Eichardts Hotel might have been demolished but, happily, it still nestles on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, presiding over unfettered views of the mountains and the lake.

Our accommodation at the Millthorpe Resort, on the outskirts of town, en route

the Lake, which could have been the location for TV series, 'The Top of the Lake.'

A coach journey was on the agenda for the following day, through the Mount Aspiring National Park to Haast on the West Coast. The road skirts the beautiful Lake Wanaka, now a source of hydro-electricity as its waters are dammed, and we pulled into the Warbirds and Wheels Museum at Wanaka, which houses beautifully restored aircraft from World War I until the present day. We were also treated to a collection of classic cars and motorcycles, my favourite being a French classic de Dion Bouton, 1903, a 2-seater automobile, all gleaming chrome and leather.

An interlude of a jet-boat ride on the isolated Haast River, in an extraordinary glacial valley, was enjoyed during our bus ride to Franz Josef, thanks to the river level having dropped considerably overnight, which made for more thrills than anticipated.

Nelson.

At the mini-town of Franz-Josef, named for the receding glacier nearby, we awoke to clear blue skies, for our 'Grand Traverse', an air safari over the highest mountain in New Zealand, Aoraki, the Cloud Piercer/Mount Cook and its neighbour, Mt Tasman and the surrounding Franz Josef and Fox glaciers. For me, few experiences can compare to our flight in a small aeroplane, encompassing two World Heritage National Parks, for almost one hour, in idyllic weather.

Gold Rush Town

Hokitika was a bustling town in the mid-1860's, after gold was discovered nearby, and fortune-seekers flocked there from all over the world.

Maoris were in the region before the arrival of the Europeans in their quest to find pounamu, also known as jade or New Zealand greenstone, critical to their hunting tools,

vineyards of the Marlborough region, sampling the juice of the grape in particularly amiable surroundings. The prosperous vineyards, all planted in recent times, have transformed the region from cattle stations and dairy farms into a thriving wine industry.

In the afternoon it was a short flight to Hanmer Springs in our trusty DC-3. (Accompanied by Frank Sinatra singing – alone this time - 'Come Fly With Me.')

Hanmer Springs is a beautiful alpine town of the north Canterbury region, renowned for its thermal pools. I did 'take the waters,' and had a particular feeling of well-being afterwards.

We boarded our little plane for the last leg of our journey, over the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch, where we embarked on a walking tour to learn about the 2011 earthquake.

Family History

In my quest to find more information about my great-grandfather's younger brother, John Willis, I'd found a document called 'Summer Holiday in Victoria and New Zealand, 1882', which he'd written, and it was serialised in the Singleton newspaper, 'The Argus' which he'd founded. As I was sifting through its pages I read; *"The crowning glory of Christchurch is its Cathedral, whose lofty spire recalls the proverb about pride having a fall. It was one of the sights of the time to go and see the indentation the top of the spire had made when falling on the asphalt pavement"*.

Our last night together was magnificent gourmet 7-course seafood feast, and we learned that 'Bill Peach Journeys' is working on another DC-3 Aircruise, this time exploring the North Island of the 'shaky isles'.

I hope there will be room for us in that magnificent flying Gooney Bird.

Wendy Borchers retired from ABC television in Sydney and now lives in Tuncurry with her husband Max.



Gooney bird group ready to fly

Grand Traverse

Our journey north took us along the coastline, the road meandering past isolated dairy farms, over many one-way bridges. Our driver pointed out an elaborate stone house that a farmer had built on a ridge, which, he said, just happened to be on a fault line! I later learned that the Alpine Fault Line runs along the West Coast, from Milford Sound to Hokitika, then inland to where it enters Cook Strait, north of

like fish-hooks and knives and found only on the West Coast of the South Island.

Back in our Gooney Bird, we flew over the Nelson Lakes National Park and the Wairau Valleys and, on landing, we visited Sir Peter Jackson's Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, which houses a collection of WWI aircraft and artefacts, including some rare memorabilia.

Wine Country

We enjoyed a tour of the

THE FIRST CASUALTY



Peter Greste
Penguin Random House. RRP \$35.00

Al Jazeera is an international news and current affairs TV network, owned by Al Jazeera Media Network, a state-owned organisation, based in Qatar, established in 1996. Al Jazeera's spread, geographically and nation-based, is broad. It covers all of the Middle-East and, more recently, also Croatia, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina. In 2003, it engaged English-speaking journalists, due to the popularity of its reports in Western countries. The rise of the network coincided with the growth of discontent of the above-named regions and, during the early part of the 21st Century, the increasing volatility within its geographical oversight provided significant material with which to fill its headlines.

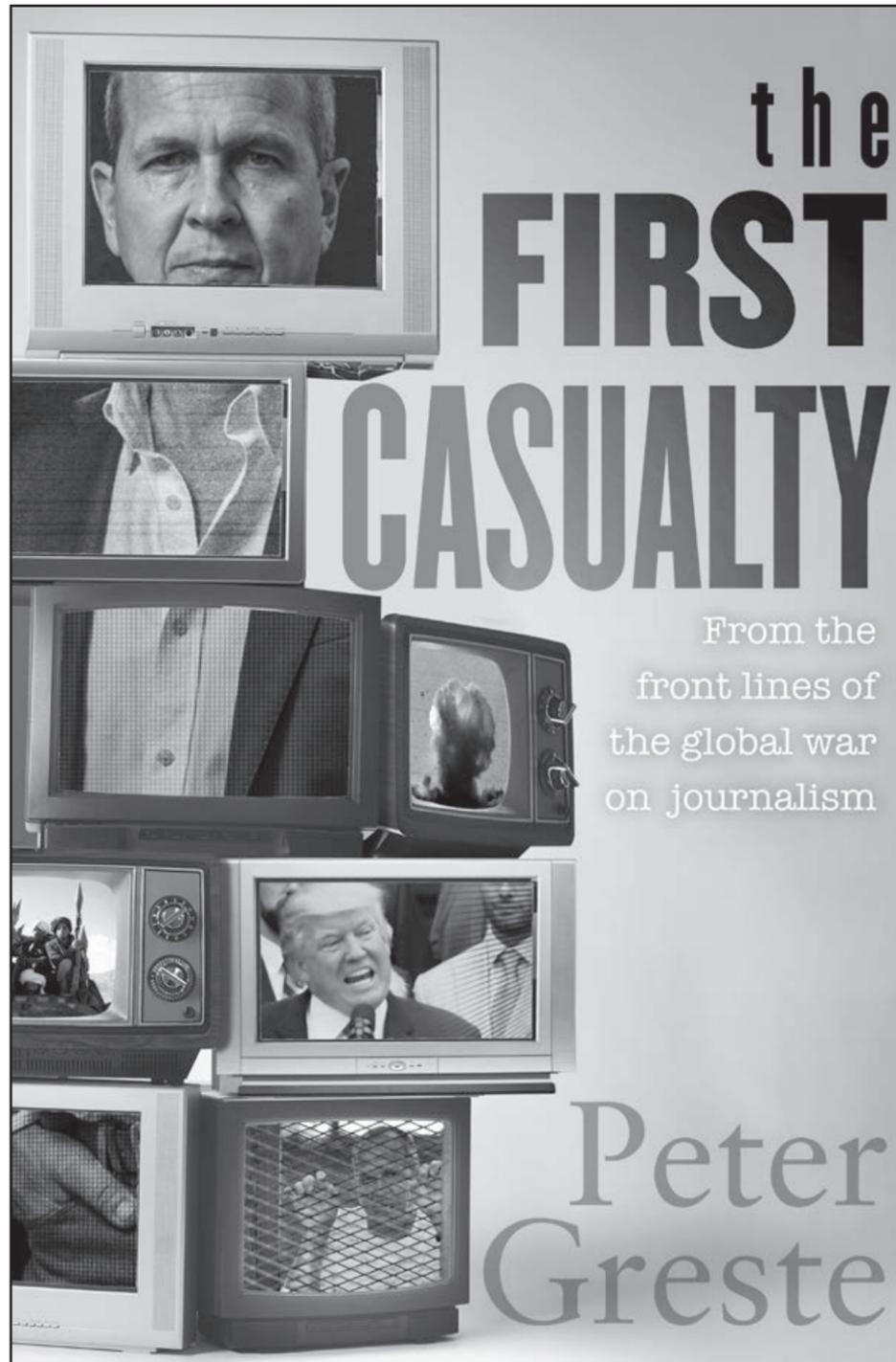
The increasing unrest throughout these regions, provides constant grist for the publicity mill, and guarantees a ready audience.

Australian journalist, Peter Greste, had spent a significant period, reporting for the BBC, and travelled extensively throughout the Middle East. At the time, the BBC was highly respected, even by the various combatant groups that fought with each other, and with all non-Islamic individuals and Governments. This resulted in a relatively safe environment for journalists. However, there were attacks, from time-to-time, on journalists and their bases, and some journalists were killed in the line of their work. A dangerous occupation!

Al Jazeera, from late 2006, went 'live', in both English and Arabic, and so its coverage became much more impressive. From this time, the network made commitments to fund its operation generously, in both coverage and remuneration to its staff. As a consequence, many journalists, who were with BBC, CNN, NBC and Reuters, switched to AJ.

Greste joined AJ in 2011, covering East Africa. The Arab Spring became a spirited event, and attracted a great deal of journalistic interest, at this time.

In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak had ruled for thirty years, until he was toppled from power in January 2011, and this was a part of the Arab Spring upheaval. Following Mubarak's overthrow, Egypt was ruled by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, as an interim government, until dem-



ocratic elections were held, in 2012. The outcome was a majority vote for the Muslim Brotherhood, with Mohamed Morsi as the leader. In July of the following year, the military had ordered troops onto the streets, and declared the constitution suspended.

It was into this highly dysfunctional crisis-situation that Peter Greste arrived. Upon his arrival, a new military-backed interim government was attempting to draft a new constitution with, hopefully, new elections. Al Jazeera was not well regarded by this administration. Journalism generally had become much less popular in the Middle East, as it was regarded as reporting unfavourable news throughout the free world. It might be fair to agree that, to some extent, this was true.

In late December, 2013, Peter

Greste was arrested, and imprisoned in Cairo, Egypt.

This imprisonment, in various prisons, was to last for a considerable time, Greste only being released on 1st February, 2015. Greste was, for part of the time, held together with two of his colleagues, Baher Mohamed and Mohamed Fahmy.

The book canvasses the different behaviours and attitudes of the three, as a consequence of different national backgrounds. Great confusion surrounded the arrests, and Greste and his colleagues were unable to determine what the charges were. This ridiculous situation illustrated the difficulties that the defendants faced, being unaware of how to deal with their incarcerations.

His two colleagues were eventual-

ly acquitted but, when Greste was released, it was not a pardon and, after he had been deported from Cairo, he was sentenced (in absentia) on terror charges. Late in 2015, Greste was pardoned, after representation by Julie Bishop to her counterpart in Egypt.

No doubt, Peter Greste is pleased to be out of the cauldron that is the Middle East. Al Qaeda, the Taliban, the Muslim Brotherhood and Isis are all growing in belligerence, and some recent reports (from the Middle East) suggest that all such organisations are becoming better armed, and more aggressive. This does not auger well for the future!

Much of the book details the appalling court system of Egypt, and the difficulties of obtaining adequate representation, due to poor judicial quality, and language differences. Furthermore, as the political situation is so volatile, the judiciary is influenced by the vagaries of the day and, no doubt, many of the judges and magistrates will be uncertain as to the line that they should adopt, particularly with regard to international reportage and journalism.

Greste, in chapter 14, 'The Fearful Country', illustrates that, since leaving Australia to become a foreign correspondent, some twenty five years earlier, upon his return he has discovered that this country has become quite different, particularly with regard to security, freedom of speech, privacy issues and the quality of reportage by the media in general.

As a consequence of the information revolution, huge amounts of information are generated, by individuals, by businesses, and by governments, and the Government of the day has instituted legislation entitled The Telecommunication (Interception and Access) Act 1979, (better known colloquially as the Data Retention Act), resulting in a more over-bearing approach by instrumentalities of the government. In concert with many other national governments of the day, Greste warns that freedom of speech is greatly impeded in Australia. The easy-going way of life that was his early days, sadly, no longer exists.

A most interesting book, well-written, and absorbing.

Keith Bedgood

Understanding your Will

Know the basics before it's too late



one has no capacity.

If you intend to make a Will, Power of Attorney or Enduring Guardianship, you must have capacity. If you do not have capacity, then you cannot sign the document. Don't wait until it's too late. Make your Will, Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship now, as life is short.

The importance of having a Will

I give advice to many people in relation to their Wills. In more than 30 years' experience, I understand and know the difficulties, cost, anxiety and unnecessary friction between family members when there is no Will, or the current Will has not been updated within the circumstances of the testators.

If there is change in financial circumstances, for example, a specific gift such as a farm, a house, a boat or shares are left to a particular child and, if that property or asset is sold and the Will is not changed, then that child will miss out on that part of their inheritance. It becomes even more complicated if the sale of the property or asset was transacted by

way of Power of Attorney, and not by the person, himself or herself.

The financial and emotional cost of not having a Will can far outweigh a properly considered and well thought out Will that covers changes in one's life circumstances.

Wills, to a non-legal person, can be full of 'jargon' that one does not understand. Set out below are a few legal terms that might be found in a Will, which may help you understand the document. More often than not, the best Will is a simple Will, unless your circumstances are complicated. Complications may occur if you have a second or third marriage, a blended family, disabled children, a black sheep in the family, a very large asset pool, family trusts, superannuation entitlements and the list can go on. The moral of the story is to get good advice about your Will now, and not leave it to others to try to fix the problem after your death. If not properly thought out and carefully crafted, your Will can be contested, or not have the outcome you wish.

James Paton

What is mental capacity, and how do you know whether it has been lost?

Sometimes you may be the person who has to decide whether another person has mental capacity to sign documents or make decisions for themselves. It may be your parents. Generally, when a person **has** capacity to make particular decisions they can:

1. Understand the facts and

choices involved.

2. Weigh up the consequences
3. Communicate that decision.

The legal test for capacity in simple terms is:

Capacity = understanding the nature and effect of the document at the time it is made.

Capacity can come and go, it can be better in the morning than at night. This does not mean that some-

CALM WINTER BLUES



Have you been feeling stressed, low on energy, unwell? Just not quite yourself?

We all seem to have a busy lifestyle, so we don't have time to be sick or unwell. Most of us go straight to the chemist to purchase some cold and flu tablets when our families are sick, but there is another more natural way to help the body fight off infection and disease, and restore our natural energy levels.

The primary structure in our body's immune sys-

tem is the lymphatic system. This system is responsible for removing excess fluid, bacteria, viruses and cell waste from the body. When the system is working well, the risk of illness or disease is lowered, and your energy levels are maintained. You are in balance.

Underneath the surface of the skin, there is a complex network of capillaries that removes waste from the body. Just like the roots of a tree, these vessels start off very small and become larger, until they hit a checkpoint that filters the fluid and kills the viruses and diseases that can make us sick.

The fluid inside this network is called lymph, and it only moves in one direction. Unlike other structures of the body, it has no engine to drive it. This system is reliant upon a person's movement to help fluid or lymph move to these checkpoints, which are called lymph-nodes. Therefore, people that have an active lifestyle will help the body move the lymph, reduce the impacts of disease and help maintain the natural balance in our bodies.

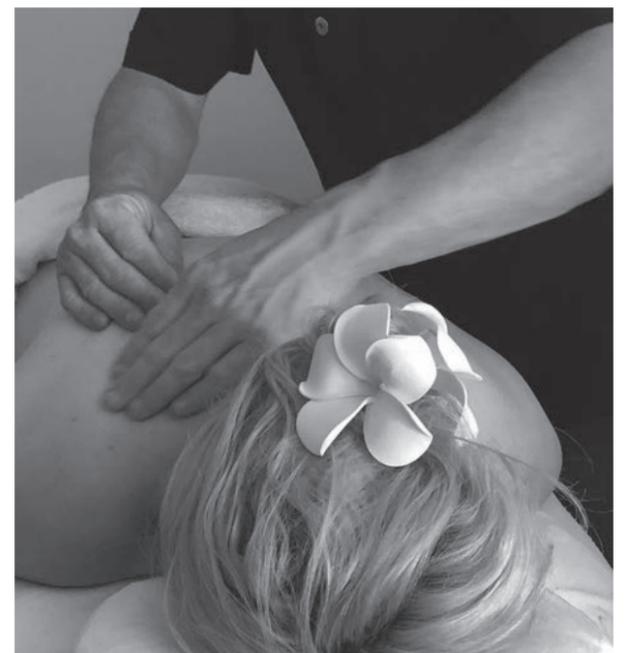
The SLM massage or (Superficial Lymphatic Drainage Massage) acts as the engine to push the lymph to the lymph-nodes. It can help lower toxins, reduce puffiness, aid in relaxation, lower blood pressure, increase muscle tone.

At Cherry's at Tinonee, it is now our most popular massage. We can also link the massage to specific body ailments with the use of essential oils, such as lavender in the massage oil, which

can help people with insomnia.

SLM massage can be done on just about everyone, if you have been feeling unwell, are recovering from an injury or surgery, have swelling or are just feeling off-colour. The SLM massage is a highly regarded method of naturally detoxifying the body, and restoring the body's balance. Working in conjunction with positive lifestyle factors, the SLM massage can help to improve your overall health.

It's also very relaxing, an ideal way to pamper yourself!



REMEMBER THE SNAKE MAN OF LA PEROUSE?

During much of my adult life, whilst living in Sydney, I have taken overseas visitors to two places. One is The Snake Man of La Perouse, and the other is the Reptile Park, near Gosford. People from Europe are fascinated by our dangerous snakes, and our marvelous lizards. The snake pit at La Pa, or The Loop, as it was called, was quite simple, with corrugated iron sides (or were they thick rubber?), some weirdly writhing sacks, and John Cann - the last snake man.

Firstly, when the show started, came the lizards: Blue Tongues, Shinglebacks, Bearded Dragons, Skinks and always a Water Dragon for the kids to pat. John Cann has one of these still, which just sits in the sun all day, and is more than 40 years old.

After the lizards, out came the Goannas, so tame they would just lick a friendly person - but, one day, John Cann was bitten, and needed to have 22 stitches. Next came a Diamond snake, commonly called a Carpet snake.

Then came the venomous ones - maybe a Death Adder, Red-Bellied Blacks, Browns, Copperheads, and Tigers, all the while being displayed and described with a showman's banter and deep knowledge of his favourite creatures.

Then, the hat 'did the rounds' for coins.

John Cann closed the Snake Man pit in 2010. His father, George, had started it when he returned from WW2. The Canns had worked as "snakeys" for 100 years. George had met John's Mum in a travelling show in Tasmania, where, aged sixteen, she was billed as "Cleopatra, Queen of Snakes."

In the early days, another snakey friend of George Cann (who travelled widely to sell snake antidote) asked a friend, a wealthy Englishman, to take over the La Perouse pit for him while he travelled to India. This man was Garnett See, whose late Uncle had been Premier of NSW. It did not go well. Mr. See was bitten by a Brown snake on his first day, and died. Many snake handlers were to die, though a few (including George and John Cann), became more or less immune after surviving a few bites.

During the last Cann show, on

ALIVE! ALIVE! ALIVE! ALIVE!

SHOW GROUNDS.

GIANT PYTHONS



BIG MONSTER REPTILES

The largest ever captured.
Over 20 feet long.

Enormous weight of one hundred-weight each.

A Collection of all kinds of

SNAKES

handled by

CLEOPRATA

Barefooted in the Pit of Death

INTERESTING AND EDUCATIONAL

Novel and Thrilling

MISS CLEOPRATA, Charmer of Snakes

Look for the Giant Pythons

PIT FULL OF REPTILES.

ROBY, MCGREGOR & CO., PRINTERS, BRISBANE. TASMAN BRADLEY, Manager

April 18, 2010 John took his liveliest Tiger snake, one that even he treated with great caution. They were always lively snakes, for two reasons - one was to put on a good show, that had some action, the other was to show people to be very careful. A snake that was too easy to handle might lead some people to think they could do it themselves on a bush walk. This time the Tiger snake went for him, on his last day, and only his deft skill prevented the fangs from sinking into his wrist. There's a video of it.

Aussie snakes and human deaths

From January 2000 to December 2016, 35 deaths were recorded by the National Coronial Information

Service. Sixteen were the direct result of a bite, other causes listed as organ failure, brain haemorrhage, and heart attack. Most victims were male, from 18 months to 70. And, more than half were trying to pick up, or kill, a snake, close to home, more than half in urban areas. Approximately 550 people are bitten each year, reported **The Conversation**, mostly called "attacks", whilst usually the snake is being defensive, and trying to get away.

I killed one on one occasion, on a property we owned outside Sydney, at St. Albans. I was used to them being about, because some resident ones lived in the feed shed, which helped keep down the mice. It was hot, I was in a bra, jeans and sand shoes. We were building a small cab-

in, and a Brown snake suddenly slithered out. To this day I can remember the adrenalin kicking in fast, and something almost prehistoric took over. I got hold of a spade and took to "the evil thing". It was fast, trying to get away, but I finally smashed it to death, with repeated blows somewhere near the neck.

Poor thing. I was old enough to know just to let it slither away...but I guess having a baby asleep in a cot inside boiled up into some kind of deadly instinct. I still think about it. I am sorry, Snake. Later I was to find a few snake eggs in the kicked up sandy bush soil.

Years later, in Boggabri, the paddocks and long grass areas were full of brown snakes, and we only carried long sticks to bang and swish to scare them away. And we wore high boots.

The Inland Taipan, or Fierce snake is by far the most venomous snake in the world. Then comes the Coastal Taipan. Different snakes produce different venom and, even within a species, each snake may have its own "personality" or temperament. The most likely to attack are the Brown snake and the Coastal Taipan.

Some can become quite "tame", and so are only useful for some kinds of showmanship. In his book, John Cann tells the story of his father putting a particularly docile one into his mouth. Well, it bit his tongue, and it swelled so badly that George had to be fed soup and water, with a straw, for days.

There's an interesting story of a Mike Willesee documentary, in which a huge and very angry Brown snake was furiously striking at everything it could. It bit itself in the back and died! That must be on video too, perhaps.

The early days, Snake Pit Sydney

John Cann grew up when Sydney was a different town. There were lots of snakes around the harbour shores, and thousands near Long Bay Jail, not far from La Perouse. A bit nearer to the centre of Sydney, the Chinese market gardeners would pay him to get rid of some snakes from their vegetable paddocks. He caught hundreds, and kept them in a big, deep pit in his back yard.

In my suburb, old Manly up near North Head, and then rural St. Ives, there were sometimes stories of a dunny man being bitten or just frightened whilst doing his night-soil du-

ties. We got an indoor toilet very early, as my mother was a refugee from Europe, and terrified. The 50s were days of the rabbitohs, fishos, and people who came round selling long forked branches to prop your washing line up in the air.

Australia has the five deadliest snakes in the world, and still several people die each year. Many, however, are bitten, may even become sick, but survive. This is largely due to the work of Eric Worrell, at Gosford. He is the hero in the background of this book, a journalist who would later open the Australian Reptile Park near Gosford in 1959, which can still now can be spotted by the huge dinosaur looming out of the bush near Somersby. Eric Worrell came to the Cann home every fortnight to milk snakes for their venom, for use in his research.

He learned how to make an anti-venom, (and this changed the old methods of slash and suck), and this has become a standard treatment in hospitals. If you get there quickly, you may feel a bit sick, but you'll recover quickly. Eric Worrell was given an MBE for his work.

In earlier times, tourniquets were used, then came good strong pressure-bandages. Now, the recommendation is to stay very still, and have someone to drive you to meet the ambulance.

The biggest snake John Cann's father ever caught was a 2.4 metre Red-bellied Black snake. It lived in captivity for 18 years, but it might have been 40 years old when it was caught. No-one knows.

The shows at La Perouse were fascinating, as were the surroundings – Botany Bay, the Pacific Ocean, Bare Island, the National Parks, the oil boats heading for the big Caltex refineries. But we knew that the water in Botany Bay was dangerous, mostly because of industrial pollution sent down the river over the decades.

A final story from this book. At The Loop, most visitors were enthralled, if nervous, the children delighted. But, once there was a very drunk man making a nuisance of himself. Finally, Mr. Cann picked up a Blue Tongue lizard and walked over to the Drunk. Cann opened the lizard's mouth and closed it down on the mans hand. The intoxicated man started screaming and dancing about, convinced he was about to die. He did not.

Janis Balfour.

Much of the information here was taken from *The Last Snake Man*, by John Cann, with Jim Thomson. Other, from general reading and Life.

Thank you to publisher Allen and Unwin for the photographs. RRP: \$32.99



Magic of the Mullet

Meet John "Stinker" Clarke, our piscatorial correspondent! In other words, our Favourite Fisher!



Capt

Year after year, for as long as records have been kept, and long before, huge schools of mullet have travelled north along our coastline. Spawning in the ocean is part of their life cycle, which begins when fertilised eggs develop and mature in the bays, rivers and estuaries. Around this time of the year, Easter and Anzac Day, the three- to five-year-old, fully developed river mullet leave the enclosed waters, where they are called bully or hard gut mullet, to enter the open ocean, where they become known as sea mullet.

The sea mullet that arrive in Port Stephens have left estuary systems as far south as Lake Illawarra and the Shoal Haven River. The fish that have matured in the Port Stephens system, move north to Port Macquarie and North. Those that develop in rivers around Port Macquarie swim further North towards the Clarence. And so the cycle continues.

There is much mis-information accompanying this event, as little is understood by the public. Around the world there are 72 species of mullet, of which the sea mullet, which can grow to over 60cm, is but one. Carrying some 5 million eggs, the female is bigger than the male and, frustratingly for the recreational fisher, mature fish do not feed whilst migrating. They can't be caught.

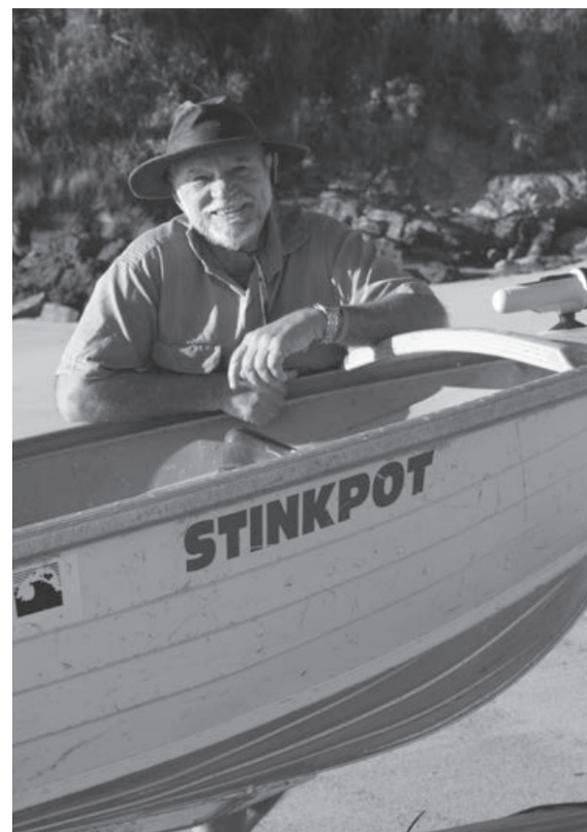
All records and research currently available suggest that the annual hauling of mullet, along the east coast by commercial fishermen, is a sustainable practice.

Give it a go. Introduce fresh sea mullet to your kitchen. Sea mullet are best smoked, or tossed fresh on the barbie. Squeeze of lemon,

black pepper and a pinch of salt.

You will be pleasantly surprised.

Fishing writer, author and radio presenter John "Stinker" Clarke will be a regular columnist for *The Manning Community News*. John can be heard weekly, throughout NSW, on popular ABC Regional Radio fishing program "The Big Fish". Check him out on www.stinker.com.au or send an email to editor@manningcommunitynews.com with your information and questions.



John "Stinker" Clarke

The Symbol of a Tree

To suddenly turn a corner and see the raw stumps of several trees, slashed by Council from the fence-line of a town parking lot, seems to symbolise the sad state of Taree township.



A tree is shade, shelter, beauty, an environmental asset. Aged or ill people who look onto trees, fare better and feel calmer. Trees also soak up carbon dioxide, which helps to clean up the air we breathe, and also helps to mitigate climate change and stabilise soil.

There was no notice or warning that these trees were presenting a problem, though no doubt someone on Council will produce a reason for their destruction.

But this slash and burn, rip it down, let's not pause and think of how we can make the town a more attractive place, or that a row of trees might have some benefit, is pretty typical of the non consultative, insensitive attitude towards a town that is dying on its feet.

Count the empty shops. Businesses are suffering, kids can't find jobs, there is a continuing ICE and drug epidemic. Domestic violence, homelessness and crime are on the rise, partly due to money being needed for drugs.

Lost Kids

Many of our children seem lost. There are too many third generations of families who are unemployed, have never held a job. Some kids, in such families, see government payouts as their right. A twenty-something young girl refers to buying something "on pay day". That is, the day she gets her Centrelink money. She has never held a job. The concept of having to show up for work, on time and prepared, day after day, week after week, where you try to save a little bit of your earnings where possible, seems an alien concept to many. Employers roll their eyes as they relate tales of young staff always late, who take sickies all the time and, on most Monday mornings, are so hung over they can't drive on their P plates, as they wouldn't pass a breath test.

Good apprenticeships are hard to land. Opportunities are getting fewer and fewer. TAFE courses, unless you're on Centrelink, are expensive. No wonder young people are leaving town.

Some old hands suggest that re-introducing National Service might be good idea to teach discipline, commitment, respect.

Meanwhile single mums, pensioners and "the older generation" struggle to make ends meet.

Around Town

The Base Hospital has no trauma or cath lab for emergency heart patients. And, it's ugly. No landscaping was budgeted for in the grandiose scheme put forward by our dear leader. Perhaps while our State Member is throwing fistfuls of dollars around like a drunken sailor, he could buy a few trees instead of aiming for votes.

Taree appears to be a town without a soul. And yet look at its location. It has the asset of the river and a river frontage that's under-utilised, a town pool that never should have been closed. Does that odd little bandstand and a few rows of seats ever get used?

Lovely Jacarandas mark the entrance from the south but, unlike Grafton, the theme is not carried through into the town.

Tamworth is re-inventing itself with a Council plan to transform the town and surrounds with trees. Developers will be encouraged or required to provide more trees as part of any new subdivision, and it's suggested that council donate a new tree for every new resident. There are plans to plant trees at city gateways, existing residential areas, car parks and anywhere else where trees may benefit the community.

Tree Appeal

Every successful town and city knows that trees add value to retail areas, by making them more attractive places for shopping. Trees along streets and on private property increase property values, and they support flora and fauna habitats.

Maybe Council could hire a lot of unemployed, or work for the dole, young people to get out and dig holes and plant a lot of trees, supervised by a knowledgeable arborist. It'd be a start.

DM

Continued from page 1

Wingham revisited... A year on

with ideas. (They did donate ten thousand back after being here.)

The initial invitation from the Chamber was for "business types" to come and throw around ideas. Later, the humble community was invited to provide input. There were some good ideas. One, from a now-resident Sydney architect, was to use 50% of the funds required to paint/restore the more rundown shop-fronts with owners/tenants paying the other half. Not an exciting suggestion but, as it would effectively double the funding, it would have a greater impact on the quality of the Wingham street-scapes. One idea went further, to seed the cost of hiring a movie-set-type designer to facade the main street like they do for period mov-

ies, to make it look like the grand old days of Wingham. Another idea was to use the money as seed capital to fund/design/build a properly exciting and imaginative children's playground.

Another was a bandstand in the park for concerts, kids' bands, and entertainment from local musicians, and more comfortable seating around the park for watching sports, and for older citizens to enjoy the sunshine and conviviality. However, it seems that all Wingham can afford will be some planters, maybe a tree or two (scarcely the wonderful arborium of plantings that would look spectacular) and some seats along the street.

What happened to the ideas to cover the sewer lid of a roundabout at the bottom of Isabella Street? That could be planted with beds of seasonal flowers, as they do in Byron Bay. Perhaps we should all learn to be consultants, sounds more profit-

able. . ." MCN June 2017

So here we are a year down the track, and little to show for it, and a lot of hand-wringing and whingeing.

What we **do** have is a scheme to turn the beautiful Wingham Brush Nature Reserve into a congested camping ground, against all original advice and plans from National Parks and Wildlife Service.

And, meanwhile, there are two nice seats (one appropriately dedicated to local stalwart Alan Carlyle), and the planter boxes. We are told some murals are planned, thankfully to be supervised by Manning Regional Art Gallery.

What we **DON'T** want are unapproved "art" installations being erected or "donated" to the town like the inappropriate bedpan fountain at the entrance to our classical central park.

So let's see where we are in

June 2019.

Will Wingham reclaim its crown as the Heritage town, with graceful old buildings, (with that ugly cement box of a medical centre, which should never have been approved, somehow facaded), shady trees, hanging baskets of flowers and plants galore, and a vibe and a friendly feel, where locals stroll and sit to natter in the sun, eat home-cooking in pretty surrounds, shop for organic wholesome and local produce, antiques, as well as being able to buy just one tap washer, or something hand-made or offbeat?

I watched Byron Bay go from quaint and special, to soaring rents, chain stores and traffic jams.

Wingham is a gem, it needs a bit of a polish, but it's a treasure we should cherish.

DM

CHORIZO, POTATO AND EGGS TRAYBAKE



This is a lovely, easy dish for Autumn – it even looks Autumnal! It's easy to primp this dish to vary the flavours and, depending upon what you've got in your veg box – sweet potato or pumpkin work well instead of potatoes, just cook them for 10 minutes less at the beginning. And, to make the meal even heartier, add chicken thighs in with the potatoes at the beginning. Cheers, Neil.

Prep 5 min Cook 55 min Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

1kg baby red waxy potatoes, quartered lengthways
60ml olive oil
4 garlic cloves, peeled, 2 crushed and 2 thinly sliced
1½ tbsp thyme leaves
Salt and black pepper
½ tsp sweet paprika
200g cooking chorizo, cut in to 5mm round discs
250g cherry tomatoes
250g baby spinach
6 large eggs

METHOD

Heat the oven to 220C/425F/gas 7. Put the potatoes in a high-sided, 20cm x 30cm roasting tray or oven dish. Add three tablespoons of oil, the crushed garlic, thyme, a teaspoon of salt and plenty of pepper. Toss to coat, then roast for 20 minutes, until they start to brown. Stir in the chorizo, tomatoes and sweet paprika, and roast for 20 minutes more.

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan, on a medium-high flame. Once hot, fry the sliced garlic for one to two minutes, until it starts to brown. Add the spinach and a pinch of salt, stir for two to three minutes until the spinach has completely wilted, then remove from the heat.

Once the potatoes, chorizo and tomatoes have finished cooking, dot the spinach mixture randomly around the tray. Break in the eggs, and sprinkle them with a generous pinch of salt and plenty of pepper. Cover the tray with aluminium foil and bake for another six minutes. Remove the foil, bake for a final two-four minutes, until the egg whites are cooked but the yolks are still runny, then serve at once.



Continued from page 1

MidCoast budget blunder of, oops, \$13 million

increase of only 2.3% for all other Councils in NSW), and our rates will continue to climb by 5% each year for the next two years. MidCoast Water, now a division of MCC, will increase its rates by 8%, and the cost of doing business with Council will also increase, with charges going up by between 2-3%.

Readers may recall that the SRV was premised on achieving substantial State Government funding for our roads and bridges, yet there is no sign of that \$50M State Government Grant, that Mr Handford spruiked up at his travelling roadshow last year, nor any reference to the \$50m loan that Council was going to match, to fix our failing roads and bridges infrastructure.

The dust, far from settling since the former GM quit, seems to be rising in a great cloud to screen what's really going on in the Golden Towers of the MidCoast Council.

Especially now, as council staff, ex staff, and business people are gaily recounting who told them that former GM of MidCoast Council, Glenn Handford, is indeed working for Tea Gardens Developer Dong Fang Lee. There is also much gossip over senior staff marriage breakups and "girlfriends and promotions."

Some people report seeing Mr Handford "taking meetings" on a park bench outside Council Chambers, and in a popular Friday afternoon watering hole with his buddies, some still on Council.

And, as to the back door exit of Council . . . there is another significant departure, which is the surprising exit of Director of Planning and Natural Systems, Lisa Schiff, a powerful long time co-worker with Glenn Handford for many years. Like Jane Ree, Manager Engagement and Communications, (where do they get these titles from?) who suddenly resigned after signing a non disclosure of information document some months back, the powerful Lisa Schiff, a 30-year public servant, and a Director of MidCoast Council, has made a sudden and unexpected departure from her position at Council. No farewell presentation, drinks, or a bye-your-leave.

Initial assumption was that she had gone to work with Handford, her long-time co-hort. But some in the know say 'no way'. Ms Schiff (who recently bought a home and, one would assume, wouldn't easily quit a long-time high-paying job and its perks and privileges,) walked out of Council with no farewells, having signed a non-disclosure of information document, and has gone to ground.

McWilliams Silenced

At the Gloucester budget council meeting, Councillor Jan McWilliams rose to question this issue, but was gagged by the Mayor, and threatened with a code of conduct charge by Cr. Len Roberts.

However, we feel this is not the last we will hear from the redoubtable Cr. McWilliams.

Nor the last we will hear about the former GM, his cronies in a club... which we'll call The Pineapple Mob for now, rather than reveal their true identity.

And so we wonder. . . who will be the next to fall under a bus? And we repeat, we need a new shining knight GM to appear on the horizon on a white horse, or, in the immortal words of Hanrahan, "We'll all be rooned".

DM

Pure and Simple

Our nutritionist, Lydia Irving, interviews Heidi Falding, of Marrook Farm.



Pure and simple, these are the words Heidi used to explain Marrook Farm's ethos for yoghurt making. Made from the most pure of ingredients, and simply delicious, is how I interpreted that phrase. David's and Heidi's Biodynamic yoghurt, cheese and kefir are incredibly pure and honest. However, after chatting to Heidi, I've learnt that the process is far from simple.

I had the signal honour of interviewing Heidi about their fermented dairy products, how they came to be in Elands, and the importance of biodynamics.

Marrook Farm is a Biodynamic Farm, that is located on the Bulga Plateau, on the edges of Elands. Heidi and David were attracted to the clean air, water and soil that is Elands. This year marks the 20th year of Heidi and David making the most delicious and nourishing fermented-milk products such as yoghurt, kefir and cheese. This year also brings for them a new processing factory, that is located three metres from the dairy where the cows are milked. You can not get fresher milk than that!

As a nutritionist, it is not just what the foods are, but more so where the food comes from, that decides whether it is good for you or not. The nutritional difference between the milk from a cow fed grain, and a cow fed grass, is significant. The grain-fed cows produce more omega 6 fatty acids (which are inflammatory and are linked to heart disease), whereas grass fed cows-milk contains more omega 3 fatty acids (which are anti-inflammatory and protect brain health).

THE BEST WAY TO CONSUME DAIRY IS IN FERMENTED FORM!

Yoghurt and kefir are both probiotic (good bacteria, which supports digestive health) foods that are rich in diverse microbes. Cheese is less a probiotic food, but rather a very tasty and more digestible way of eating dairy (meaning the nutrients in cheese can be unlocked by the digestive tract).

WHAT IS BIODYNAMIC?

This is about making milk products from the ground up, literally, as I will soon explain. Marrook Farm is certified by the Australian Biodynamic Demeter Standard, and adhering to this system is the most fundamental part of what Heidi and David do on the farm. *Biodynamic farmers work with nature, and observe the natural environment closely*, it says on their brand new website. When I asked Heidi more about it, I realised it is quite simple in theory, but not simple in practice. Maintaining and enriching the health of the soil is the most essential aspect of biodynamic farming.

There are absolutely no shortcuts when it comes to the laboursome task of biodynamic farming. "What you put in, you get out!" says Heidi in a tone that reveals years of experience and knowledge of the greater benefits. Giving nutrients and life to the soil is important because... healthy soil, healthy grass, healthy animals means healthy humans.

Taking a Holistic approach to making food products is the significant difference between simple organic foods and biodynamic food. A lot of Organic farming is not thinking "holistically", as in healthy soil and upwards, but rather replaces conventional farming techniques with organic versions.

FERMENTATION

Yoghurt, cheese and kefir are all fermented foods. In modern Australia, fermented food is not a rich part of our cultural identity. In fact, when I teach fermentation classes, I often have to ask people to unlearn what they know about "cleanliness and sterility".

Heidi remembers being exposed to fermented foods from a young age. Her mother was a "health food fanatic" and knew the health benefits of properly made yoghurt. However, having arrived in Sydney from Switzerland in the 1960s, her mother found it hard to buy genuine probiotic yoghurt. Heidi reminisced about how it was a big deal to journey all the way into the city of Sydney, to get real yoghurt.

HOW IS MARROOK FARM'S YOGHURT MADE?

Fresh full fat, biodynamic, unhomogenised milk is mixed in with yoghurt culture. This culture contains lots of good bacteria that feed off the milk, converting it into a thick, sour (delicious) and longer-lasting product.

Most of Marrook Farm's yoghurts are pot set, which means the milk ferments in the jar, forming the liquid on top, called Whey. This is what I encourage people to look for on labels, as it often means that it contains probiotics. The only yoghurt that is not pot set is Greek Yoghurt, which is hung up in a bag to let the liquid whey drip off. This is how the Greeks achieve such a delicious, creamy consistency. No added thickeners, emulsifiers, preservatives or sugars!

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUPERMARKET YOGHURT AND MARROOK FARM YOGHURT?

A concern both Heidi and I share is that yoghurt is now associated with being sweet and coloured. However, that is just because of all the added sugar, flavouring and colouring. These non-pure ingredients are a significant concern to your health and well-being as a consumer.



PURE INGREDIENTS

Did you know that food companies don't have to label everything that is in your food? Especially if the chemical or substance is added to aid manufacture, such as "Anti-foaming agents".

This is something Heidi and David learnt when they had extra frothy milk, and were advised to add anti-foaming agents to assist this process. They, of course, did not. At Marrook farm, they label everything that is put into their products, which is just the culture and milk.

Furthermore, most of the yoghurt in the supermarket is re-pasteurised meaning all of the microbes are killed, and the probiotic benefits of yoghurt are gone. This, in my opinion, defeats most of the purpose of eating yoghurt.

WHAT IS DAIRY KEFIR?

Thanks to the increasing awareness of gut health and the role of fermented food, a market has been created for David and Heidi to start making Kefir. The name "Kefir" is derived from the Turkish word to *feel good*. This is exactly how I feel when I'm consuming dairy kefir on a regular basis. Kefir contains three times more probiotic species than yoghurt, which means it has a lot of health benefits. Food really can be medicine!

MARROOK FARM PRODUCTS

Of all the dairy products that they make, kefir and yoghurt are for daily consumption, whereas "cheeses are more of a delicacy food" says Heidi. There is a full list of products on the Marrook Farm website, (which is looking very snazzy, if I may say so). Their products are currently sold all over Australia and, in the local area, can be found at Granty's Fruit and Veg in Wingham, Taree Go Vita and Hallidays Point Foodworks.

ON LIVING IN THE MANNING.

"It's the beauty that holds us here" Heidi shares fondly of the Bulga Plateau. They initially arrived in Elands, having come from the Upper

Hunter, where pollution from mining was impacting upon the quality of their environment. The search for clean water, air and soil to build a biodynamic farm that continues to nourish the soil, led them to Elands.

The natural beauty of the Manning Valley and its surrounds is something I am sure we can all agree on. Therefore, encouraging more farmers to support and enhance the perfect processes of nature, will ensure optimal health of the Manning's environment and inhabitants.

As a nutritionist, I understand the nutritional importance of consuming 'local' produce first and foremost, that is ideally biodynamic or organic. Supporting local farmers, who look after the environment, is great for the local area, as well as the health of our community. So it is win win! We support local farms like Marrook, and they continue to grow and develop products that support our gut.

Oh, and I must mention, thanks to my sister, coincidentally walking in with a jar of Marrook Farm Golden Kefir (I have taught her well), I am fortunate enough to be enjoying some liquid gold, fresh from Marrook Farm, as I write this. Thank you Marrook Farm for continuing to make such delicious and nourishing products. Love your guts!

For more information
www.marrookfarm.com.au



Lydia Irving
Internal Instinct www.internal-instinct.com

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES



Collect the past, invest for your future and have great fun in the process.



Have you had any finds this month? It is wonderful getting out and about, and seeing what you can find in our local area, and even further afield. Jen and I have just done a trip to Newcastle, then up the New England Highway to Scone. We continued on until Gunnedah, then onto Moree, up to Toowoomba, over to the Gold Coast and then back home again, to Tinonee, along the Pacific Highway. We took a week. A great trip with lots of interesting places visited, and interesting discoveries made.

When you collect, you have to wander, to see what can be found. Your wandering may be physically getting out there or, these days, many people do their wandering by scanning on computers, and make their finds that way. I love the getting out there and wandering.

Here are some of my regular local haunts, they might supply a treasure for you. My very favourite collecting place, in Taree, for at least twenty years, has been Clancy's, near MRD Hospital. They are more into Office Furniture these days, but my car always wants to call in as I drive past, and some treasures can still be found. Kate and Don at Olympia Antique Solutions - opp. The Railway Station - they always have interesting items, and with something unique to talk about. Barry at Isadora's Antiques - at the Valley Fair in Victoria St, always has a great variety. Belle and Neville at Old Cinema Antiques in Pultney St., Col in Commerce St - near the Pie shop, Sue at Delinquent Funk - Isabella St in Wingham right next to the chemist - Sue always has new and interesting stock that turns over quickly, and Grant, in the old McCullagh's Produce store, also on Isabella St, in Wingham, is worth a visit.

Happy hunting!

Each country has its own Standard

Weights and Measures, so that regulation can be enforced, and consumers are not being taken advantage of. All commercial weighing and measuring devices have to be checked regularly, and be calibrated to the standard weights and measures of that state or country. The system had to be re-organised when we moved from an Imperial System to a Metric System in the early 1970s.

Many years ago, we were travelling back from Sydney, and I had heard of a little shop in the Gosford area that always had interesting things, so we made the detour. The shop turned out to be in a private home, and the gentleman had been to an auction in Sydney, where the NSW government was getting rid of its Imperial Standard Weights and Measures, after converting to the Metric System. What a treasure trove of interesting items he had!

We negotiated on a few things (he wasn't cheap), and I came away with the NSW Standard Weight measures in the form of thirteen Bell weights (all appropriately marked) from 56lb (pounds) to 1/8 oz (ounce). Also, I came away with the Troy Ounce measures in the form of eleven cup weights from 128 Troy ounces to 1/4 of a Troy ounce. I was super-excited and cash poorer. These weights and measures were a great find.

I recommend collecting. Find the category that suits you, or take the plunge and collect a wide variety of unique and interesting treasures, or limit yourself to one area. It is always fun, and is a hobby that lasts a lifetime. Make some great finds this month!

If you have items you are not sure of, I may be able to help with information, appraisals or sales. I love the history and stories of old and interesting items. Phone Rex - 0427 880 546.

Our nutritionist, Lydia Irving, introduces us to THE SMALL INTESTINE

Here we are at the small intestine, in the Fourth instalment of my Guide to Good Digestion. Parts One, Two and Three of our journey down the digestive tract are available on my website, if you need to catch up (www.internal-instinct.com). By this stage of the digestive process, the mouth, stomach, liver, gallbladder and pancreas have broken down macronutrient (proteins, fats and fibres) food bits into micronutrients. Now it's time for those useful micronutrients to be absorbed into the blood and all travel around the body and help keep us healthy and fuelled! This absorption mostly occurs in the small intestine, just after leaving the stomach.

A Snake?

The small intestine is like a giant snake in our abdomen: it's a long tube which wiggles through the abdomen from the end of the stomach to the large intestine in the lower right hand side of the belly. The small intestine snakes around the midsection of your belly, folding over and around itself dozens of times, and is often the 'visual' that appears in horror movies as 'guts'. It is easily the longest section of the digestive tract, with some individuals having a small intestine measuring three metres long, and some having up to ten metres. I like to think that, because I am 188cm tall (6 ft 2, for you imperial folk), my small intestine is longer than yours! However, that's just my competitive nature showing and, honestly, I have no idea if that is true.

The top section of the small intestine is called the duodenum, the middle section is the jejunum and the last section before reaching the large intestine is called the ileum. In the duodenum, some more enzymatic digestion (macronutrients being turned into useful micronutrients) happens (still!) with the help of the liver, gallbladder and pancreas. The jejunum and ileum are where we absorb most nutrients into the bloodstream.

What bloating and the real cause of a rumbling tummy?

As I mentioned earlier, the small intestine is where our micronutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. The small intestine is lined with finger-like projections called villi, which are covered in even smaller finger-like projections called (ingeniously) microvilli. This design increases the surface area of the inside of the small intestine, maximising absorption of nutrients into the bloodstream. The villi also create a wave of motion, gently pushing the contents further down the digestive tract.

As well as the villi, the wall of the small intestine is called the mucosa, and is made up of cells called simple columnar epithelium (don't worry about the name - there won't



Lydia Irving

be a quiz at the end!). These cells are held together by proteins called desmosomes, which link together the simple columnar epithelium into an impenetrable chain fence. The walls of the small intestine are incredibly important, since they help to keep undigested particles or bacteria from entering the bloodstream, and hurting our wellbeing.

Our Lifestyle

Unfortunately, the foods and lifestyles we are currently exposed to are damaging this delicate lining of the small intestine. A modern western diet may be high in flavour but

lacks in digestibility, meaning it's extremely difficult for our body to digest these foods. For example, the protein gluten found in some grains often causes digestive issues, because it cannot be broken down by the human digestive tract alone. It needs to be broken down outside the body by a process of fermentation (such as in sourdough bread) first. When we over-consume a range of products that are difficult to digest (like non-fermented gluten), this damages villi and creates holes in the walls of the small intestine by breaking apart the desmosomes holding the cells together.

Recap

More about gluten and digestion in a moment but first, let's recap what we've learned so far. The lining of the small intestine is made of bumpy projections called villi which maximise nutrient absorption and move the contents inside the small intestine further down. Villi and the walls of the small intestine need to be held tightly together (just like the skin on the outside of our body) so nothing foreign enters the bloodstream. Gluten and other hard-to-digest foods can damage the physical lining of the digestive tract.

Why is gluten bad?

So what really is the problem with gluten? Why does it make so many people unwell?

Humans have no enzyme to break gluten down. Remember, we have specific enzymes capable of breaking down specific foods. Enzymes convert food into micronutrients ready for absorption. For a deeper explanation of enzymes, refresh yourself with my previous articles.

Now, because we have no specific enzyme that can effectively break down gluten, it makes its way into the small intestine undigested. Gluten influences the body to release a chemical called Zonulin. Zonulin breaks down the desmosomes (proteins holding the cells together) in the body, starting with the small intestine, and eventually making its way to the rest of the body. This is what we call 'leaky gut', or intestinal hyperpermeability. This means that all the contents of your stomach can enter the bloodstream, whether or not they're ready for absorption.

Intolerance

When undigested foods enter the bloodstream, it triggers an immune response. This immune response - called food intolerance - is an attempt to remove undigested foodstuffs out of the bloodstream to protect the body. Unlike an allergy, which causes an immediate reaction like anaphylaxis, a food intolerance is a protract-

ed and cumulative immune response. The intensity of the immune response, and the signs and symptoms, are unique to every individual, but a common condition is inflammation. This can vary from physical pain to autoimmune conditions, to skin flare ups, and everything in between. Food intolerances are often not taken as seriously as they should be, because they can often contribute to chronic pain or illnesses if not addressed. Helping clients to understand and manage their individual food intolerances is one of the most common things I do in nutritional consultations, and it can have an amazing impact on your wellbeing.

Research

One quick note before we move on, don't feel the need to suddenly cut out all gluten after reading this! Gluten-free products aren't necessarily a 'healthier' alternative for everyone, since all grains have the capacity to upset the health of the gut - especially if your gluten-free replacement is highly processed. So, instead of running away from gluten today, the best option is to start researching how to prepare food for easier digestion (like eating sourdough bread, where the gluten is fermented into a form capable of digestion).

Bloated?!

Our small intestine is home to about 1000 recorded species of microbes (bacteria, fungi, yeasts and parasites). It might seem like a lot, but in next month's article on the large intestine, I'll explain why 1000 species is actually a really small number.

When undigested bits of food make their way into the small intestine (this happens when the previous stages of digestion are compromised, or when eating foods we cannot digest ie. gluten) the food feeds a range of microbes we don't want thriving in our small intestine. The result is an overabundance of unhealthy bacteria, known as Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO). These bacteria feed off sugar in the food, and create gas that builds up and distends the gut (and makes you burp and fart more).

This process is identical to fermentation that occurs outside of the body - like brewing beer. To make beer 'fizzy', you add sugar (in malt) to feed the microbes inside. When this process is contained inside a bottle or fermentation vat, the pressure builds and the container can become explosive - like some people we know! This is not the only cause of bloating but is a very common one. Other causes of bloating may be severely inflamed organs in the abdomen, a buildup of fluid or excessive fat stored around internal organs. These are all

much more severe causes of bloating and require further investigations.

Talking Tummy

Have you ever wondered what that gurgling rumbling sound in your tummy is? It's often thought to be the gut telling you that you're hungry, which is half true. More accurately, it means your small intestine is completely empty of stomach contents. When this happens, normally around three hours after a big meal, a wonderful fluid called chyme (pronounced kyme) cleans our small intestine to keep it healthy. The chyme (which is acidic and made of gastric juices) gushes down our small intestine, sweeping up any residual food bits left behind in the crevices of the villi. It's the chyme fluid rushing through your small intestine that makes the rumbling in your tummy!

This cleaning process also stops bacteria or microbes from getting out of control, preventing the Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth I mentioned before. So, be thankful for that tummy gurgle, because it's a sign your gut is cleaning itself to keep you healthy. And if you want to take better care of your guts, extending the gaps between meals (instead of continually snacking) allows your small intestine to empty and invites chyme to clean it.

We have covered only a few neat features of the small intestine here in this article.

The main takeaways from this article:

- The small intestine has a large surface area to absorb adequately prepared nutrients into the bloodstream.
- Gluten damages the walls of the intestine and causes "leaky gut" which leads to food intolerances and chronic inflammatory diseases.
- Too many of the wrong microbes in the small intestine cause bloating and discomfort in the belly.
- When your tummy is rumbling this means it's being cleaned.

We'll learn a whole lot more about the special microbes that inhabit the digestive tract in my next article: The Large Intestine. See you then!

Lydia x.

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Walk against Cruelty to Animals

Taree & District Branch of the RSPCA are getting ready to hold their major fundraising event for 2018. **The Million Paws Walk against cruelty to animals will be held on the 20th May 2018 at the Taree Showground.**

Registrations will start at 9am, walk begins at 10am.

Cost of Registration: \$5.00 dollars per animal.

All the funds raised by the Branch are spent locally, assisting and protecting our much loved animals. With subsidised desexing programs for low income families, microchipping days, Education Days in local schools in conjunction with RSPCA NSW, to teach children responsible pet ownership, as well as providing support to our Inspectorate. The branch has only a small band of volunteers but they are continuously working & fundraising to raise awareness of the prevention of animal cruelty.

We have a range of categories to be judged on the day with great prizes on offer for:

- **Smallest Pet**
- **Biggest Pet**
- **Oldest Pet**
- **Pet owner/look-alike**
- **Waggiest Tail**
- **Best Dressed Pet**
- **Best Trick**

There will be sausage / rissole sandwiches, soft drinks, water & tea & coffee available.

Various stalls will also be in attendance:

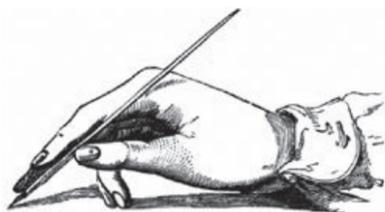
RSPCA Merchandise Stall, Show bags, Lucky dips, Taree Vet Hospital, Reptile Dysfunction, Guardian Soaps, Wingham Pet Motel and On the Ball dog Training will also have a display & obedience demonstration.

We will also have "hook the duck" with a prize for all children. Come along for a fun filled morning for all the family and support a great cause.



RSPCA
Million Paws Walk

Sunday
20 MAY



YOUR SAY...

Letters may be edited for space, offensive language or defamatory reasons.

Dear Editor
Regarding the Report from Savills, dissected by Mike Deignan in the last issue re Council's master plan to buy the Masters site... I make three points that do not change, no matter what Savills have said in their report:

1. If a consolidated site is the best option, why didn't Savills explore all the available combinations; 2 campus and their locations etc. ?

2. If a single consolidated location was shown to be the best and most efficient CTP option, who decided (and on what basis) that Taree was the location, or was just

the 'whimsical' choice because the Masters building came up?

3. If, by 'happenstance', Taree turned out to be the best location, because no one has studied where the best location or locations are, has anyone costed whether it is good business to do it on the Masters site? I had a leading Australian architect cost the type and size of building needed, with future expansion, and a 250 vehicle car park, and it came in \$10/\$15 million cheaper than the Masters option.

*Bill Richardson
 Tallwoods*

To the Editor
RE: Grangewood Avenue, Tallwoods Village, Hallidays Point

Our road, Grangewood Avenue, has now been closed for over two months due to a huge hole caused by the recent heavy rain. I contacted Stephen Bromhead's office to lodge a complaint, and was told today (7/5/18) that there is nothing they can do as council has to apply for emergency funding, which could take forever. How incompetent is our council that they can waste millions of rate payers' money on a new Pal-

ace, but can't afford to fix a hole in the road. All the residents have to travel an extra 3 kilometers just to get out of Tallwoods, which is totally unacceptable, especially in case of an emergency. Someone in authority should take a serious look at how this council is run. They have been elected to look after ratepayers and not their own egos and whatever else might be going on.

From a disgruntled ratepayer amongst many others - Ray Reisberger

Paton Hooke
 — LAWYERS —

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Publisher and Editor DI MORRISSEY

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APOLOGIES!

This paper has had to update its website which has proved to be a technical nightmare. So apologies to readers who couldn't access the online edition. Hopefully all the gremlins are gone. Our email address was also affected. We do appreciate your comments and feedback so please do resend and apologies for our non response.

Editor.