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Jumping Aboard "The Train"

As Pedr, Madi and myself (Jenny) celebrate our one-year anniversary of possessing 25 Jones Road; known amongst the locals as "The Train" with a sordid past and not a lot of care. I can only reflect on the funny, the sad, the frustrating, the success and failures we have endured, as we attempt to become fully fledged farmers.

This adventure started 15 years ago, with an idea, really bad accounting advice and a lot of tattsлото tickets. So after ditching the tatts tickets and the accountant, visiting a lot of properties and learning how to decipher real estate agents lingo, we stumbled across Jones Road. By this stage we had no expectations, and no idea that falling in love with exactly what we didn't want was going to be the best thing we ever did.

Our first 4 weeks were a blur. There was so much rubbish and that was just in the house paddock. Imagine our surprise when we started to explore and uncover 100's of red plastic triangular shaped things. What was this mysterious thing that lived amongst the grass, in bushes, in the creek and anywhere else it wanted to reside? Apparently these things were called tree protectors, but there was never a tree in sight to protect. I tried to burn one ...big mistake, I attempted to create an abstract cow with them, but they did not want to kowtow to my demands. So as a result of their uselessness, they have found a home at the local waste management centre. Even now after a year we are still finding these things everywhere.

Within these weeks, we also had an invaluable catch-up with our new neighbours, whom I suspect were suspicious about how green we may have been to farming and I'm pretty sure the questions that we asked were a dead give away, that we were in fact fluorescent green. But to their credit, they did not laugh at our crazy ideas, or steer us in any direction, they just advised us to set a plan and stick to it. And in no particular order, the plan for year one was in place.

1. Fencing
2. Paddock rejuvenation
3. Blackberry eradication
4. Hot shower and heating. (not really a part of the plan but essential to avoid a potential mutiny)

Now I am not someone who is a glass half empty, and hating things is such a waste of emotion. Or so I thought until I meet the BLACKBERRY.

The war on blackberries commenced on the day I attempted to start the motorbike on a hill, and promptly fell into a blackberry bush with the bike on top of me. The humiliation of having my family picking prickles from my bum for days was the moment I declared that I hated the blackberry.

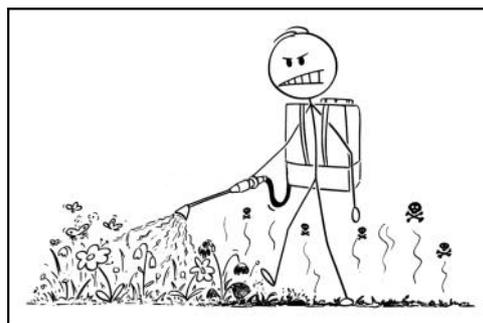
I had my 20 litre sprayer on my back and off I went like a crazy person on a search and destroy mission. Determined to beat this plant in a weekend (I mean how hard can it be) I spent hours and hours and hours spraying. Only to discover that the search part of my mission was not difficult it was the sheer volume that was overwhelming. Not to be deterred on my final spray for the day, I marched on with a full backpack to tackle the enemy again, only to realise that blackberries (apart from the hideous spikes) have their own secret weapon. They are great concealers of holes, skittish animals (including but not limited to animals without legs) and sneaky runners. So as I lay on my back like an upturned turtle, with arms and legs uselessly flailing around, I started to cry. I was not winning the war; I hadn't even cleared 100m of blackberries. The farm was doomed for all eternity to be blackberry invested.

But my Knight in shining armour appeared; picked me up (suppressing a laugh) gave me a cuddle (still suppressing the laugh) and brought me the best birthday present a girl could want. It was a shiny yellow 800L spray unit on wheels that was powered. An evil laugh escape my lips, as I thought of the damage I could now inflict on my enemy and as the threat of the first frost looms perilously close., I have comfort knowing that I have the means and now the weapon to conquer this beast next season.

Until next time. Stay safe and warm

Regards

Pedr, Jenny and Madi Klein



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EFT'd to GMCU BSB 803078 A/c 135720 Tatong Tattler.

CAIRN COMMEMORATING 1824 HUME & HOVELL EXPEDITION



Mollie Beard & Howard Lewis

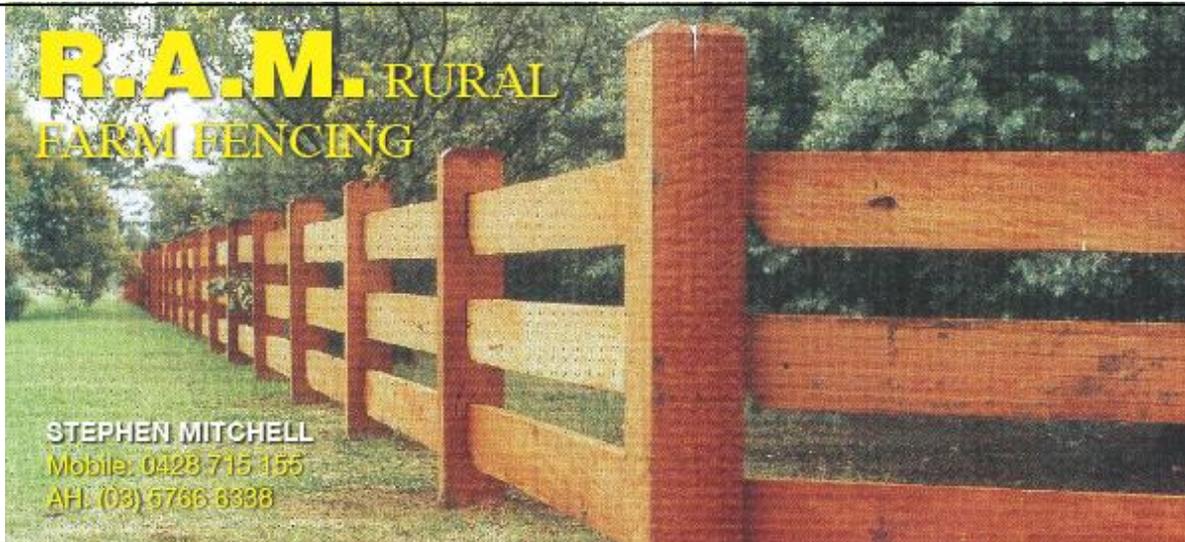
20th November 1924 this cairn was unveiled by Mollie Beard to commemorate the centenary of Hume and Hovell's expedition when they camped at the Hollands Creek Tatong on 27th November 1824. Howard Lewis laid a wreath, the emblem of victory. A clone from the Hovell tree which William Hovell carved his name in 1824 at Albury is planted next to this cairn.



Photo from the "Harrison" collection

For further information on Hume & Hovell visit www.home.vicnet.net.au/~tathg





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Flowers for Mother's Day

With Mother's Day coming soon I thought I would refresh the flowers on my Mother's grave at the Tungamah Cemetery. As I walked through the cemetery I thought about the wonderful family history shown in these headstones.

The cemetery is about 5 kms from the township situated on the top of a hill; in the summer it's hot and windy, in the winter, freezing and windy. There's a big stick and a warning sign at the gate about snakes. There are many very old graves, great hiding spots for eastern browns.

First is my Great Grandmother Martha, she is buried in the Lutheran section in one corner. Martha was born in 1849, in 1864 she was married to a German immigrant at Germantown, Victoria. Her family said she was 18 but the figures don't really add up. After working on a farm at Winchelsea they later moved to Tungamah. She ran a birthing house and her claim to fame was that she buried 3 husbands in one year (according to my mother!).

Next is my other Great Grandmother, Isabella. I don't know much about Isabella except that she grew up in Tungamah on land selected and cleared by her parents, John and Isabella Johnston and suffered two unspeakable tragedies in her life. Her daughter Sarah, who is buried next to her at Tungamah, died from blood poisoning after a pregnancy termination. She left 5 young children behind and was only 33 years old. Sarah was a well-liked and much respected member of the community who were shocked by her sudden death.

Isabella's daughter-in-law Lucinda is buried beside them too with her 3 young children aged 5, 3 and 1. They were murdered by an itinerant hawkker on December 16th, 1914.

My aunt, aged 6 at the time, clearly remembers walking behind the cortege to the cemetery, all singing 'Jesus loves the little children'. This story was published in the Tattler a few years ago but I will include it again in case it is of interest.

My grandmother Elizabeth is next. She and her sister Sarah had married brothers. She cared for her parents Francis and Isabella until Francis' death in 1913 when they came to an arrangement for Elizabeth and her husband to buy the land called 'Sunnydale', she was the second female member of the family to inherit. Elizabeth also managed to raise a family of 9 children, largely on her own, with her husband working away for long periods. My father is the youngest child, she was only 38 when he was born. Her life was very hard with no modern conveniences, cows to milk, butter to make, a household to run. Elizabeth died in her sleep in 1954.

There are also 3 of my Aunties buried here, Bella, Mollie and Daisy, strong women whose husbands and brothers went to fight in WW2 and were gone for years. Two were POW's, their family had little or no news of their whereabouts, even if they were still alive. My Mother, Mavis, was also a 'war bride', married with little notice, in her sister's wedding dress during a 48 hour leave. Her new husband then left to rejoin his regiment.

I salute all these fabulous women on Mother's Day
Linda De Fazio

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Darcy The Secretary

Gawn to Town

"But I've always had chooks", said my partner-in-life, when I wondered if we really needed chooks, once in town. I too tended chooks all my adult life. They are delightful creatures, being of great character, and easily made happy. And they lay eggs, which are handy in cooking, nutritious to eat, and make good gifts.



On the other hand, chook feed attracts rodents; hens scratch up everything they can; and they never lay to order. Either there aren't enough eggs just when you need them, or you're frantically trying to give away eggs to people who were hoping to give you some. And we no longer eat so much as we used to.

As a child I delighted in the hens of my Auntie Edie, on childhood holidays on a farm South of Yarrowonga. Edie made a little money selling eggs, and a large area was fenced off near the house, as the chicken run. There was no hen-house; the hens roosted in the branches of the trees. Nor were there designated laying boxes; the hens had their favourite spots, and an adventurous child had to learn where to look to find the eggs. From taking the kitchen scraps to them, or their billy of wheat, to the obstacle course of egg-hunting, it was a magical wonderland.

Farming West of Moulamein, the hen-house resided on the bank of the river flat, an off-cut of the Edward River. In fact, the hen-house stood where a teacher's hut had been, some 80 years before, or so I eventually learnt from those who grew up there then. Every afternoon I would let the hens out, and they would run flat-out all the way around the house & garden, in order to get into the orchard on the other side of the homestead. Once in there they could enjoy the grass, and any fallen fruit. Or jump the fence into the garden (!).

When we moved to the Benalla district, and built at White Gate, the resident architect built a superior hen house which artfully adjoined the orchard. Every day the hens were let out directly into the orchard, to scratch to their heart's content, and to eat the fallen fruit. And the asparagus, the rotten thieving...

Then we moved to the edge of town, and the system was perfected. A small, covered, fox-proof orchard was built, with a hen-house at one end. The hens don't get locked up, and have free run of the orchard whenever they like. (Yet late every afternoon, an alarm in my head lets me know it is time to lock up the chooks.)

They have a fancy self-feeder for pellets, and they get a little wheat each day (which drives them mad with excitement.) And as a result of these superior, swanky conditions, the beggars feel fallen fruit is beneath them, and only taste the most exclusive kitchen scraps.

Somewhere along the way, we missed a trick...
- Andi Stevenson



Book Review**“Avoid Retirement and Stay Alive”**

The acquisition of this book was an example of what I think is called “synchronicity” where a thing happens at what seems to be the perfect time.

I found the book at the Benalla Cooinda Village garage sale (an ominous portent you might think) and while I frequent many garage sales I don't often look at the books, but this book felt just right immediately for me. I did go through the usual retirement process of stopping my electrical business and attempting to settle into the nirvana of everlasting relaxation and enjoyment, while at the same time being reminded that I was stepping onto the “slippery slope to the grave”. Somehow though a ‘greater power’ kept me even busier in retirement, as I tried to find the secret to a life of retirement bliss.

Upon reading it the book immediately began to weave its magic, unlocking the cursed spell, the wicked illusion that retirement is a form of guaranteed happiness.

The central “carrot” of retirement is that ‘no employment plus a pension’ will relieve the tedium and effort of the workaday world. This concept does not take into account that many of us love our work and retire either because it is mandatory or we believe that it is the right thing to do. This can result in a person feeling useless and unwanted with little purpose unless they have a replacement job, hobby or activity which will satisfy and fulfil them.

Personally, I do really appreciate the greater autonomy of life without the endless demands of paid work during retirement where you can have more choice about your daily timetables. Such things as not rushing meals and the luxury of reading the newspaper or giving your pet that extra-long brush in the mornings are not to be sneezed at.

Apparently the pension/retirement was devised so that room was made for the next generation of younger workers which sounds ok but it does not account for evolving social changes such as increased longevity and the expectations and aspirations of today's workers. A ‘retiree’ could live and be useful with certain types of work or reduced hours of work, for another 30 years. Young people of today want work that satisfies them and they are willing to change jobs many times unlike the situation before where for many the job was just a necessity to pay the bills and ‘get by.’

Of the many insights the book reveals, the main one for me was the emphasis upon the vital area about the state of mind which retirement induces and that state can be one of decline, giving up and of being an under-serving nonentity. Coincidentally, at the time of reading the book, and at 77yo, I was engaged in painting one of the most significant (for its public impact) and best artworks of my life, the Fire Shed mural, (not forgetting the brigade members who assisted and encouraged me) and I could not have had better confirmation of my usefulness than that.

The book promotes the positive and exciting news that we can live our life to the full regardless of our situation and that does not necessarily mean the conventional retirement pursuits such as travel. Worthy as these pursuits may be they can also be a form of distraction and

‘time filling’. It is best to pursue whatever it is that we have long dreamed about, or felt that we would love to do, such as more study, a hobby or anything at all that can be imagined. Admittedly our activities and output are reduced as we age but we only have to work within our capacity and especially without giving up altogether. The book's authors are very witty and I found myself laughing at some of the somewhat ridiculous things we do and for no good reason other than because it seems to be the ‘done thing.’ I agree with the authors about the importance of the word ‘perception’, a state of mind in which certain perceptions can be a form of imprisonment. The book was written by David Bogan and Keith Davies, first published by HarperCollins, Sydney in 2007 so it may be a bit hard to get hold of. I am very reluctant to lend my copy as it is such a trove of knowledge and wisdom. Then again, putting the book's message to good use, and capitalising on an opportunity, I will lend it out at \$250 per loan, as well as a deposit of \$250 in case it is lost! It cost me about \$1, if that, but its value has skyrocketed due to a favourable review, some wise notes I scribbled into it, and its probable scarcity!

Mike Larkin

TATONG and District TATTLER

Would you be interested in contributing to the management of your local community newsletter?

We have Vacancies on the

Tatong Tattler Committee

and are hoping to balance out the age range of the current committee (ie field some less aged locals.)

We meet once every two months, to review the content, creation, distribution & expedience of the Tattler, and to consider how well it serves our community.

If interested, please make contact;

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ring Andi on 0429 439 336.

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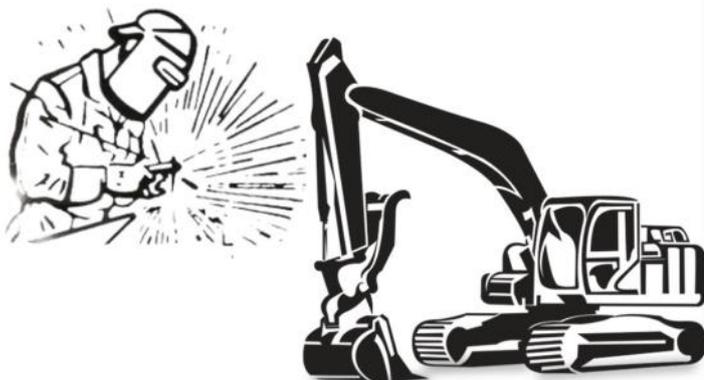
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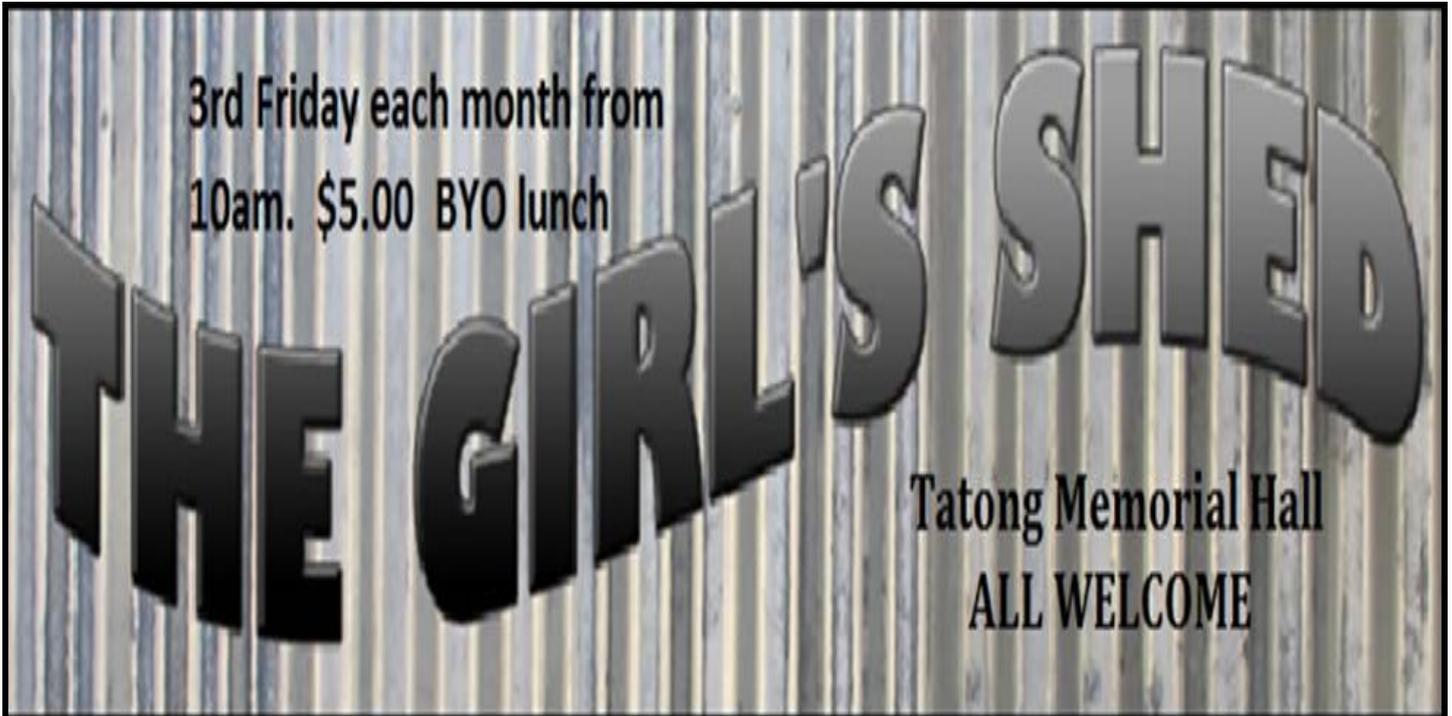
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TATONG CFA MURAL

The mural is now officially finished and I can catch up on some of the 5 months of neglect on the home front – fun things like a partly blocked toilet, creepers/climbers growing where they are not wanted and firewood to cut and stack for the beckoning fires, among many others.

I have felt like a celebrity, for a week anyway, with the official opening, an article and photo in the Ensign and my first ever radio interview on Star Radio, which I have never heard about, because I'm a talk radio avoider. Also the Silo and NE Art Trails on Facebook have featured the mural gaining tens of thousands of view within a few days. I am not a big fan of fame but a little bit is fine and then I'm happy fading into the quietness of an undiscovered Egyptian tomb, or similar words, spoken by Professor Henry Higgins in the famous musical "My Fair Lady."

The mural had its final coats of clear paint a few days after the official opening and there is just some tiny details mainly about names to be completed. My thanks to Joe Hakkennes and Bob Mazurak for applying that final protective coating and to Pedro and Shirley from the Tavern who supplied the anti-graffiti paint.

Compared to the Silo Art towns north of Benalla Tatong lacks a committee or group who can co-ordinate the smallish tidying and maintenance jobs around our locality which don't quite fall within the responsibility of Council, landholders or existing management committees. Such a group could also raise funds for such maintenance and improvements as well. As Councillor Davis reminded us during his talk on Australia Day the council provides regular \$500 grants for small community projects. Fortunately the fire brigade and other donors supplied what was needed for the mural but a group with willing volunteers and a community oversight would be handy.

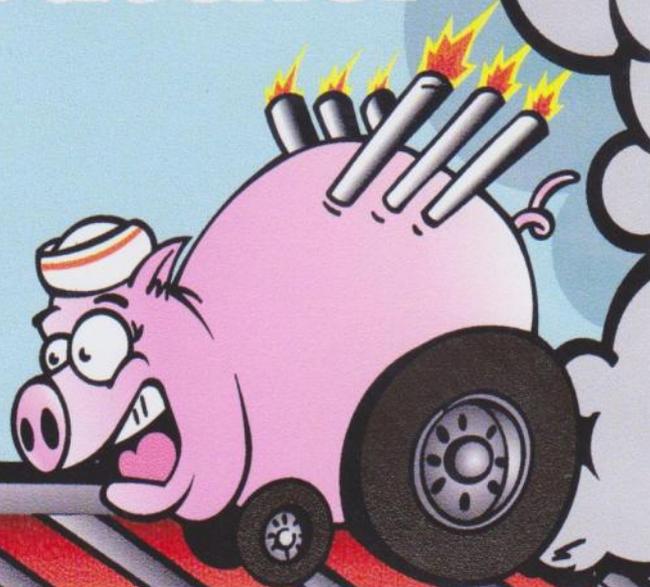
This would be the perfect coordinator/convenor job for someone looking for a way to donate some community service making Tatong an even better place to live! I would be a part of such a group but as I already have voluntary jobs it would be good for someone to take on the leadership.

Mike Larkin

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THE YOUARANG TRAGEDY

By David Buerckner

The Murder

At 8am on Wednesday, Dec 16th 1914 David Pugsley left his home in Youarang to feed his horses. Asleep in the house were his wife Lucinda and children John, aged five, Olive, three years and David, 15 months. He returned half an hour later to find his wife and children had been murdered. After quickly searching the house David informed his neighbour, Mr Lucas, of the tragedy. Mr Lucas immediately rode to Katamatite to inform the police; Constable Fowles found the murder weapon to be a pea rifle with 5 cartridges being found on the bedroom floor. Dr Ratz arrived at the same time and pronounced all the victims extinct, each having a bullet wound to the head.

Butchum Singh's Arrest

Suspicion at once fell on Butchum Singh, a 46 year old Hindu, who worked as a labourer and fruit hawker. He had been camped for the previous four months at a site about 50 metres from David's cottage. Singh often came to the cottage for milk. The previous evening he had asked David if he could put some horses into the Pugsleys' paddock. Feed was scarce and David refused the request. Singh did not appear angry about the refusal.

Constable Fowles was joined by nearby police and residents of the surrounding district to search for Singh. Newspaper reports stated this was dangerous as he had a repeater rifle and a reputation for being a crack shot. At about 4pm Singh was seen sitting under a tree at Broken Creek, about 5 ½ miles from the murder scene. Constable Slater approached Singh cautiously and began a conversation about rabbit shooting. Slater then grabbed the rifle and arrested him, he was taken to the Katamatite Lockup, then later in the day to the scene of the murders. Constables Slater, Fenton and Carruthers were all present. Singh was cautioned not to say anything that may incriminate himself, but stated 'I did it'. When asked for the motive he said 'We must have been bad friends; she tried to put poison in my milk'. An inquest was opened on the Thursday. Formal evidence was taken and a post mortem examination made. The inquest was then adjourned until December 29th and an order given for the burial of the victims. Butchum Singh was removed to Melbourne Gaol the next day.

The Funeral

The funeral took place on Thursday evening, after the post mortem, leaving the house at dusk. The road was thronged with vehicles waiting to follow the cortege. It reached the Tungamah Cemetery at about 9pm where a large number of mourners were in attendance. The bodies were placed in two coffins, the eldest children in one, Mother and baby in the other.

The Inquest

The inquest continued on Tuesday December 29th. Evidence was given across two sessions from 14 witnesses including all 3 constables and Dr Ratz. Detective Sullivan of Benalla stated that Butchum Singh had made an accusation some months earlier in regard to certain people trying to poison him. He had also taken some powder to a Doctor in Shepparton to be analysed, which was found to be non-poisonous. Inquiries made into the accusations proved them to be groundless. After the evidence Butchum Singh was called. The Deputy Coroner stated 'As you are not represented by counsel you need

not make a statement unless you really wish to do so'. Singh replied 'I say nothing'. Butchum Singh was committed for trial at the Shepparton Supreme Court.

The Deputy Coroner found that the deceased woman and her three children had died of laceration of the brain caused by bullet wounds.

The Trial

The trial took place in the Melbourne Criminal Court on 16 February, 1915 before Justice Hood and a jury. The defence was that the accused was insane and no motive was offered. The Doctor expressed the opinion that the accused was suffering from delusions at the time he committed the offence. The jury returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty' on the grounds of insanity and Butchum Singh was ordered detained at the Governor's pleasure.

Prologue

Three years later, on May 7th, 1918, Butchum Singh died of Tuberculosis at the Ararat Hospital for the Insane. He is buried at the Ararat Cemetery.

Contributed by Linda De Fazio.





White Gate Dinner @ The Tatong Tavern, in the Merry Month of May, should take place on Wednesday 5th. Why such a Merry month? Ask poet Thomas Dekker, who wrote of May, "So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green!" He was clearly unfamiliar with Australian climatic humour. Given he was born in London, and breathed his last in 1632, this is not surprising.

Here's to White Gate being Green in May, and to May being Merry. Just not so Merry that anyone gets booked. We can toast to that on May 5th: please book yourself in, arrive 6:30/7-ish, and be merry.



White Gate Fire Brigade Roster:

Bill Sykes	25 Apr	Leigh Humphries	23 May
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Ross Runnalls	9 May	Bill Ferguson	6 Jun
David Elford	16 May	Norton Grimwade	13 Jun

- Andrea Stevenson, 0429 439 336





Garden Daze

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago - the next best time is now



Halfway through Autumn and the leaves are starting to fall.

Hoyas - popularly known as wax flowers, are very hardy and have large scented pendulous blooms during the warmer months.



Whilst there are many variations available to suit different climatic zones, the most commonly grown is *Hoya carnosa*. These attractive evergreen climbers feature glossy dark green foliage that is variable in shape. Naturally found in Northern parts of Australia, America, Pacific Islands and parts of Asia; they flourish well in tropical and sub-tropical zones. In suitably warm climates wax flowers can be grown

outdoors in a partly shaded position in moist, rich, free-draining soil. Elsewhere they are popular house or patio plants often grown in hanging baskets..

Grow them in bright filtered light in a well-drained potting mix. They do require some sunlight to flower well. Morning sun or dappled shade are ideal positions for flowering. Protect from harsh summer sunlight. Water well in the warmer months and a little less during the winter months.

Flowering from October right through to April. The dainty fragrant blooms are arranged in a star-upon-star configuration, usually white or in pale shades of pink or red, often studded at the centre with a contrasting starry corona. The flowers are produced from peduncles protruding from the same stem junction every year, therefore - *it is important not to cut the flowers off after they finish flowering.* They will drop off on their own.

Also worth noting - is that Hoyas drip a sticky nectar, so choosing an appropriate position is important especially if it is in a hanging basket.

Fertilising Hoyas before their flowering season and during flowering will greatly encourage more blooms.

Feed every month with a liquid organic fertilizer.



Propagating Hoya

Take a cutting from a healthy plant in Spring/Summer. This is the best time to propagate Hoyas as it is their growing season so they will develop roots and grow faster than during winter when they are "sleeping".

The cutting should be around 10 - 15 centimeters long and have at least two leaves (it can have up to 6 leaves)

There are two ways of encouraging the cutting to develop roots.

1. Place it in a glass of water and wait until it develops roots, around 5-10 cm long.
2. Place the cutting in a small pot with propagation mix. (Recipe: 3 parts perlite, 3 parts coco-peat, 1 part vermiculite). These proportions hold water well. The cuttings need to be constantly damp to develop roots.

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago - the next best time is now

For those who are planning to get some trees into the ground this season I notice that the

The Greta Valley Landcare Group have a very good revegetation Planner on their website

gretalandcare.org.au



It is always a pleasure to hear of the gardening success of the Tattler's readers. Congratulations to Brian for his wonderful crop of Mortgage Lifter Tomatoes this season.

And now something for the coming month

WHAT TO PLANT IN MAY

PLANT SEEDLINGS OF: Broccoli, Broad beans, Cabbage, Garlic, Leek, Radish, Spring and Salad Onions, Japanese Turnip, Swedes Asian Greens and Winter Lettuce.

SOW: Broadbeans, English spinach, Asian brassicas and root crops, spring and salad onions, shallots, chives and green manure crops.



A crop of Green Manure will give soil a boost when it is dug into the soil in the Spring - try Lupins, Vetch, Oats, Wheat or Broad beans.

Happy Gardening *Kathy Z*



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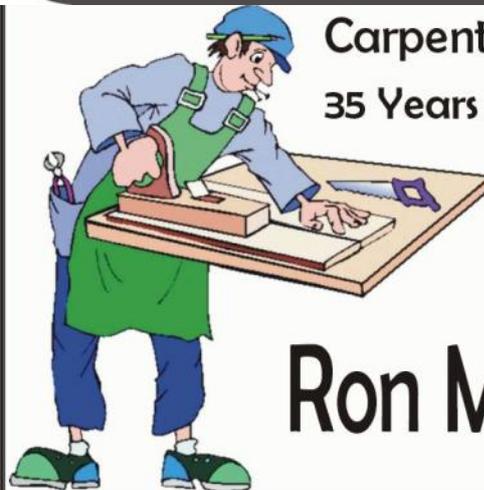
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Brian Vial presents an article written by a relative of his, of life just to our North, probably in 1938.

A New Guinea Journey

by Leigh Vial; from the Geographical Magazine, March 1942 Part 1

A SHORT time ago I had the good fortune to make a journey through a little-known valley in the interior of New Guinea.

Up to about 1930 it was thought that the unknown centre of New Guinea, like the explored areas near the coastline, would prove to be a land of rugged mountains and deep narrow valleys, densely covered with jungle and supporting a scanty native population. In 1933 the Territory of New Guinea Administration sent out an exploratory patrol from the head of the Ramu River to investigate the rumours that had been drifting in for some years from trading natives, prospectors and missionaries that a large native population lay over the ranges. This patrol penetrated westerly to Mount Hagen, finding a plateau with a series of fertile valleys, supporting a Neolithic population estimated at well over a hundred thousand. These people were of superior culture to tribes previously discovered in New Guinea; they had beautiful stone axes, a highly developed sense of decoration, and took great pains with their agriculture, constructing neat drains that made their gardens look like chessboards.

Administrative posts were established on this plateau, at Mount Hagen, Chimbu and Benabena. As I was at Mount Hagen and had to return to Chimbu, I decided, instead of following the main route along the plateau, to skirt it on the north, traversing the Jimi Valley, and climb back to it near Chimbu. This Jimi Valley had been partly explored by the patrol in 1933 but some of it was still unknown.

We set out from the Mount Hagen Post, a party of seven native police, two interpreters, twenty-three carriers and myself. The first two days took us over well-known country, across the swampy heads of the Wagi River, and though we were 6000 feet above sea-level the mosquitoes were bad. At Kanzivi on the edge of the swamp we rearranged our cargo into individual loads instead of the two-man loads suspended from poles that the carriers preferred on good tracks.

Ahead of us, along the edge of the plateau, was a wooded range which is the main divide of New Guinea – on one side the Wagi flowed south into the Purari River and the Gulf of Papua, and on the other side the Jimi joined a northward-flowing river to reach the great Sepik River. Here the divide was comparatively low – one to three thousand feet above us. The Kanzivi natives said they knew of a track over it that would take us to a village on the other side in less than a day. To be able to reach a village each night was important, for the party relied on purchasing food locally and carried only a small supply of rice for emergencies.

Next day we climbed to the crest of the range, a narrow ridge covered with dense forest, big trees of many kinds struggling for foothold on the steep slope with moss hanging from their branches. A thick mist allowed no hope of a view, and even if it had been clear it is doubtful if we could have seen anything without felling many trees. The carriers rested, eating the baked sweet potatoes they had been carrying, and then we started the steep descent. At noon we came to a level grassy clearing beside a stream, with gardens nearby. The clearing was

a ceremonial dancing ground, where at certain times the people gathered in their decorations of bird of paradise feathers and mother of pearl to feast and dance. The guides from Kanzivi said this was the place to camp, and the invitation was confirmed by the local people, who came bringing bundles of sugar-cane for the carriers.

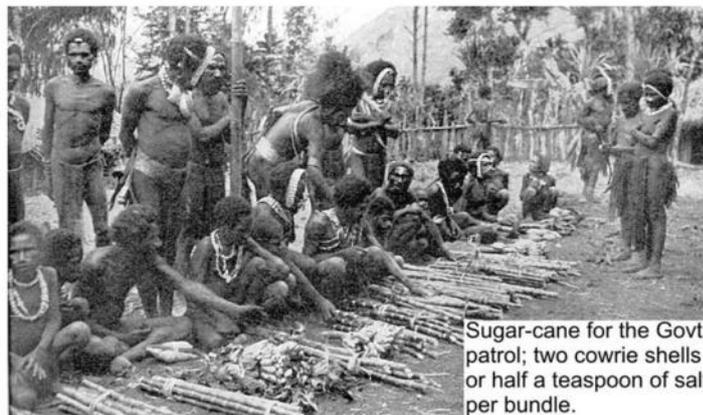
While the police erected the tents I talked to these people and found that they spoke the same language as the Hagen natives of the plateau, and had practically the same culture. They were pleased to see us, knowing that soon they would get cowrie shells and salt in exchange for food. The women came in twos and threes, carrying net bags of sweet

potatoes and other foods by cords over the head. They wore little; a belt of bark cords supporting a narrow apron of strings in front and a somewhat wider one behind, with the hips and thighs bare. As decoration a woman might have a necklace of boar's tusks or a string of cowries.

The staple food is sweet potatoes, but judging by the food brought to us the people have a varied diet. We paid each woman for her bagful and emptied it in a pile, and soon there was as much as we could use. Sweet potatoes, ropes of green bananas of different kinds and four-foot lengths of sugar-cane made up the bulk of it, but mixed in were raw ginger, cucumbers, marita (the red fruit of a screw-pine), native asparagus and five or six different kinds of edible leaves. When the women had finished a group of men came forward leading a pig, which we bought with a gold-lip shell.

Pigs, cassowaries and fowls are the only livestock kept on the plateau, and we found it the same in Jimi Valley. The pig is most important; a man is wealthy if he has ten pigs; despised as a useless person, a ne'er-do-well, if he has none. Near Chimbu when a man is born a pig is killed, when he is initiated into the mysteries of the bamboo flutes a pig is killed, when he marries many are killed, if he gets sick one is killed and he is anointed with the grease, when he dies there is a funeral feast of pork, and after he has been dead for some years pigs are killed at his grave so that he can feast on their spirits. At any ceremony of his tribe, such as dances or harvest festivals, there is a pig feast also. So it is not surprising that he watches over his pigs almost as if they were children, and men divorce wives who do not tend the pigs properly.

Next day we followed down the stream by our camp; this was the Ganz, a tributary of the Jimi. Most of the way was through gardens and many of the people gathered to watch us go by. Men would point me out to their children, probably saying, "That's one of the white men you have heard about," and the child, naked and pot-bellied, would stare with wide eyes, half curious and half afraid, likely to cling to his father's legs and cry at any sudden movement.



Sugar-cane for the Govt. patrol; two cowrie shells or half a teaspoon of salt per bundle.

Later in the journey we found the men and women were quite as curious about the white man as were the children, many not having seen one before, though all had heard about this strange being from friends living on the plateau.

The level of the valley fell quickly and the police recognized trees and plants that many of them had not seen for years – breadfruit, certain kinds of bananas and yams – for we were between two and three thousand feet and higher. Even the smells were different; a moister, more jungly smell than that of the highlands greeted us.

Parties of men stopped us and asked us to camp near their villages, but it was still early in the morning. These invitations were no doubt inspired by a desire for the cowries and salt we would distribute. They are a fine muscular type, these mountain men – on the short side, big-chested, with sturdy legs. Their 'dress' displays their bodies to the best advantage; it is only a carved belt of bark with a strip of netting hanging from it in front to below the knees, and a bunch of leaves, renewed from time to time, pushed through it at the back. Some wore head coverings of netting or mulberry-bark cloth, and some were decorated with necklaces of cowries or strings of small shells draped over the nose, resting on twigs piercing the flesh. The young men used flowers or bright leaves effectively in their hair or on their foreheads. All the men we saw carried stone axes, thrust through their bark belts or resting on their shoulders. This stone axe is a lovely thing; the stone is a thin slab ground to graceful proportions, with a sharp curved edge like a battle-axe. The T-shaped wooden handle is carved and partly covered with fine cane of two colours woven into designs, and sometimes decorated with banks of fur.

The whole axe shows the skill and pride of workmanship of these primitive people. I had been asking them where these axes were made, and about midday some men who had accompanied us from our camp pointed across the river and said, "That's where our axes come from." The other side of the river was merely a jungle-covered slope, but they said there was a quarry for the stones there, so we camped, and with difficulty forded the river and saw the quarry.

Two men started work on axe blades as we watched. They took blocks of stone, split them with blows from other stones, and split again until they got suitable slabs. Holding these slabs they carefully chipped flakes off, using stones held in the hand as hammers. It was not long before one man had a good blade chipped out. The chipped blades, they told us, are taken home and ground in the villages.

In the next two days we saw many men at work grinding. Each village had its 'factory', where up to ten men

worked together making blades. The factory was always in a shady place, either beside running water or with a number of holes in the ground that had collected rain water. The man sat cross-legged beside the water, with a block of sandstone on the ground in front of him, and dipping the blade in water, rubbed it back and forth, back and forth, on the sandstone. Every now and then he would



pause to wet it again, and examine its surface and shape. Carved pieces of wood were soaking in the water to be made into handles. Probably central New Guinea is the only place in the world where stone axes are still made.

The axes when complete were exchanged with the people of the plateau for cowries and occasionally steel. We saw half a dozen men in the Ganz with steel knives, which they said had come from near Mount Hagen. The tribes living near the Government and mission stations can obtain shell and steel by selling local foods, and the steel is gradually becoming common. Despite the spread of steel, the plateau people still form a good market for the stone axes, which are used now more as money than as tools. When a man marries, his clan must give so many axes to his wife's clan; and when a man is killed, compensation must be paid in stone axes, pigs and shells.

The huts in the villages were well made, waterproof and sturdy, but very low. The top of the door was three feet above the ground, and it was impossible to stand up in a hut. The huts were oval in plan, thatched with grass, and walled with bark or grass between a double row of stakes. Inside there was a partition dividing an inner room for sleeping from an outer room for cooking and talking. A low porch outside sheltered firewood. Near the doorway, pushed into the wall or the roof, there would be bows and arrows, and against the wall perhaps one of the big fighting shields, about five feet high and nearly a yard wide. A hut was seldom occupied by a family; a husband slept in the communal men's house, and a wife in a house with other women. Further up the Jimi Valley we found the Chimbu custom of men's club-houses and separate houses for each wife. This must have many advantages where a man has several wives.

- *Continued next month*

BORROW BOX

We hear much advertising these days about audio books being available for sale on various apps etc.

I've been listening to 'talking books' for many years available to download on your smartphone or another device for FREE, through the local library, called Borrow Box.

I listen when I'm out walking, in the garden, in the car, doing housework or just plain too tired to read a normal book. There is a great variety of genre, everything from young adult to sport to business management to my favourite, historical fiction.

Sometimes you have to reserve a book, maybe wait a few weeks for it to become available but there's always something else of interest to fill in the time.

Cheers, for our local library.

Linda De Fazio

PRELIMINARY NOTICE FOR TATONG HALL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS OPENING

A celebration will be held for the 50th year since the Tatong Memorial Hall was opened. The date is tentatively set for **Sunday the 19th of September 2021 starting at 2pm** with a special afternoon tea as well as historical photos and memorabilia. Please note in your diary. For further information contact Joan Lewis 57672251 or Bev Hakkennes 57672324. The 50th year was in 2020 but unable to be held due to the pandemic.

Footgolf

How do you entertain teenagers staying with you over Easter?

How do you prise them away from their electronic gizmos?

Have you ever heard of footgolf?

Having two teenage grandsons staying at Easter, and with no Molyullah Sports to occupy everybody, we needed to find 'stuff' to do. Until last year, it had been a long, long time since we had an Easter that wasn't totally committed to Molyullah. Janette sought assistance from the information centre. She gathered lots of pamphlets to get inspiration.

A very helpful person suggested that teenage boys might enjoy a game of footgolf. He explained that the Boorhaman Golf Club has footgolf.



“What on earth is footgolf?” I hear you ask.

Well, it's the same as golf – almost. The course is the same but one plays with a soccer ball instead of a golf ball. Instead of using clubs, the ball is kicked and the holes are bigger to accommodate the soccer ball.

Janette made a booking for Easter Sunday morning. Son-in-law, Kevin, sixteen year old Bailey and fourteen year old Hugo met to play at the designated time. They are very competitive, which probably added to their enjoyment. In fact, they enjoyed it so much that they played the nine holes twice.



The golf course is conveniently located very close to the Boorhaman Hotel, aka the Buffalo Brewery. A short walk, or drive, can see you tasting their brews, including a rather nice ginger beer. We certainly did that, and enjoyed a very nice lunch too.

The course fees for footgolf are: adults \$10, children \$5, under 5s free – scorecard provided. They do say ball hire is \$5, but we took our own – might be a good idea. As with many activities in regional areas, the golf course is run by community volunteers.

Do yourself a favour, take the kids and have some fun

For bookings – Judy - 0418 129 367.

John Knapper



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LANDMARK

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2011	107	177.3	65.0	36.1	62.9	47.1	84.5	81.0	67.3	32.0	88.3	46.3	894.7
2012	82.5	94.0	184.9	18.1	35	57.6	115.8	92.1	35.5	34	28	30.1	773.6
2013	1.8	52.4	85.5	8.4	43.0	60.1	112.1	141.1	61.2	27.5	26.2	65.3	684.6
2014	33.9	16.4	86.4	89.6	82.8	146.5	98.8	9.8	68.5	20.4	58.5	64.2	775.8
2015	44.7	29.1	5.7	87.4	70	33.7	97.3	69.4	25.7	13.7	55.5	81.7	613.9
2016	69.7	11.9	36.9	38.5	117.2	110.5	142.8	108.4	172.1	91.4	50.1	101.3	1050.8
2017	67.6	36.2	49.1	61.7	52.5	6.5	92.1	112.4	23.9	100.1	29.3	118.9	760.3
2018	34.3	6.4	24.9	13.7	49.8	67.2	52.8	81.2	25.1	22.3	75	73.1	525.8
2019	27.7	13.2	23.8	22.7	105	72.9	83.7	49.4	51.3	34.9	37.9	40.8	563.3
2020	63.6	35.6	88.4	207.2	53	77	43.5	66.8	49.4	132	34.1	40.7	891.3
2021	76.6	47.8	39.6										164

WEATHER IN THE TATONG TOWNSHIP

39.6mm of rain fell for the whole of March and up until the 15th of April only 6.5mm has fallen. The paddocks are still reasonable green probably because the days are cooler and there is less evaporation.



Tatong Heritage Group Inc

**The next GENERAL MEETING will be held on
Monday May 24th at 4:00 pm**

At The Tatong Memorial Hall

A warm welcome is extended to all interested persons
Contact Secretary – 5767 2324

Lee's Cake raffle Biggest Morning Tea / day
Garden Party
Raising Money for Cancer Friday –28th May
1895 Kilfeera Rd Molyullah - 0419513735
10.00 - 3.00
M.Tea - 10 – 11.30 - \$ 15.00 All Day - 10 –
3.00 - \$ 25.00
All day includes M.Tea /Lunch/ A.tea
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s/18242/19449/es:](https://www.biggestmorningtea.com.au/s/18242/19449/es)

Public Meeting – Wednesday, 12th May, 2021 7.30pm at the Molyullah Hall

**This meeting is for the purpose of the election
of new committee members for the Molyullah
Recreation and Public Hall Reserve Committee
of Management**

All positions on the Molyullah Hall Committee will
become vacant on 16 May.

The new committee will be for a term of three (3)
years. No less than three (3) and no more than
nine (9) people may be nominated.

Nominations can be submitted to the Committee
Secretary, Janette Knapper
knapper@bordnet.com.au or phone 57 666 268.

There are currently eight members on the commit-
tee, two of whom would like to step down. We en-
courage all community members to consider this
role, an important one in the ongoing management
of our very special facilities. Meetings are currently
held every two months, and the commitment is not
an onerous one.

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Enquires :Darcy Hogan, 0409167908 or email darcyhogan@bigpond.com

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Format for Tattler Submissions

The Tatong Tattler is set up in Microsoft Publisher.

Text can be submitted in the body of an email; or in file formats such as .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .txt.

Photos (as jpgs) can be attached, to be laid out by editor.

If your layout is important, submitting your work in MS Publisher is ideal. (*The Editor may need to adjust your layout.*) If laid out in a **Word** document, the text & photos will need to be copied into Publisher; however the Editor will have an idea of your preferred layout.

The content of a PDF file can be difficult to extract.

If you require help, contact one of the Tattler committee.

DEADLINE

The Tattler Deadline is end of the **20th of the month.**

Submit via e-mail to tatongtattler@yahoo.com.au

or post to: Darcy Hogan,
 PO Box 2038 Benalla West 3672.

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or: The Secretary, Tatong Tattler,
 150 Mt Joy Rd, Tatong, Vic, 3673.

*A donation of \$1 per issue, or \$10 per year,
 is appreciated & helps cover costs. The Tattler is
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- ▲ Given to Committee Members
- ▲ Left in the Locked Box by the Tavern
- ▲ or EFT'd to GMCU, BSB 803 078, A/C
 135720, Tatong Tattler.