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Lightning strike Thursday 8th January

A big thank you to all those who attended the fire that started in the Hollands Creek on Thursday evening about 400 metres from our house. It was started by a lightning strike, along with one on Mitchell Road about the same time.

The Tatong Tanker was on strike team duties at Longwood, but the help from neighbouring brigades and private units it was quickly brought under control. DEECA also attended, and with a dozer put in a control line to prevent any further spread.

We are forever grateful,

Joe & Bev Hakkennes



From the Tatong CFA page, January 6th:

Tolmie & District was paged out to the bushfire at Tatong yesterday evening. Water bombing aircraft were used heavily to suppress the spread of the fire, including a couple of runs by the large aerial tankers. Thankfully it was contained fairly quickly but DEECA and CFA crews will be continue with blacking out and monitoring over the next few days.



FAILING FIREFIGHTING FLEET

The current aging CFA fleet of tankers has been the subject of a number of reports that have fallen on 'deaf ears'. The current situation has arisen due to chronic underfunding since the Labor party took over as the Victorian Government in 2014.

The reality is, within the latest available data which was April 2024, it was quoted that there were 230 CFA tankers over 30 years old, and 233 aged between 25 and 30. At the time of writing, it is suggested that the 'out of date' fleet numbers have now blown out to well over 500.

The current Victorian Labor Government seems to have a problem with their mathematics.

At the current rate of funding, many of the older units in the system will be yet another five years older before they are replaced, even if action is taken now!!

As at June 2025 the CFA had 2,331 appliances. The estimated average appliance replacement cost, over the next five years is \$550,000. The current 2025/26 budget allocation will only replace 40 units. In order for the CFA to achieve the goal of having no tanker older than 20 and no pumper over 15, they need an annual budget of at least \$50 million to replace 90 units annually. This is just to cover the replacement cycle of the estimated 1,800 'in date' appliances, and arrest the annual 'leakage' of further units into the 'out of date' fleet.

The Benalla & District Fire Brigades Group is the largest CFA group in Victoria comprising 19 brigades, and currently has 21 appliances, with 13 tankers and 1 pumper in the 'out of date' category.

The current 2025/6 budget proposal for fleet replacement of \$22 million is hopelessly inadequate. The Minister has announced that they were rolling out 48 heavy tankers and 2 light tankers in 2025/26, which is still 40 units short for maintaining the 'status quo' for the 'in date' fleet.

However, the current appliance fleet still leaves us with at least 500 units that should have been replaced in the past ten years, but due to the ongoing chronic underfunding by the Victorian Labor Government, these units have now passed into the 'out of date' fleet.

What is needed to correct this situation, is a 'one off' program of \$275 million, perhaps spent over the next five years, to correct the 'backlog' created by the lack of funding over the past ten years.

Samaria Tanker went into service on 10th April 1991. Photo by Captain Nick Taylor.

What will be needed once all of the 'out of date' units are repatriated back into the 'in date' fleet, is \$64 million per year just to maintain the 20 year cycle for the entire fleet.

The ability to achieve the above objectives is contingent upon the equipment suppliers being able to double production for the next five years, and to then produce 100 to 120 new units per year thereafter.

Whilst the 'out of date' units are kept in good working condition, the main issues at this point in time are, that the manufacturers are no longer required to supply spare parts, and these units do not comply with the current emission standards, or Occupational Health and Safety, and Workplace regulations.

The situation that the 50,000 CFA volunteers now find themselves in, as they attempt to protect the community, in what is shaping up to be one of the worst fire seasons on record, is an ABSOLUTE DISGRACE!!! Barry O'Connor. Benalla. 17th January 2026.



MY RESPONSE TO THE January 2026 FIRES

For me it is the surreal feeling following the firestorm of putting clothes in a drawer at home and realising that so many people did not even have a drawer let alone a house with a single place to put the clothes that they once loved and used for much of their lifetime.

It could be said that a fresh start to a person's lifestyle is not always a bad thing, nevertheless for me the idea of losing so much of the life that I am accustomed to and have honed to my own level of 'perfection' is unthinkable.

I did feel very sorry for myself during the worst night of the heat wave when the power and phones went off in the evening just as I was anticipating turning on air conditioning, watching the TV news and sleeping in a cooled room. I do have a generator but with a recent fall injury I don't have the strength to start it, especially at night when the intense heat and need for sleep are upon me. While it may seem petty to complain about my comfort compared to the people actually fighting the fires and those who have literally lost everything, it is a very real peculiarity of older age with its decline in acuity, strength and dexterity that amplifies difficult situations.

The bizarre reality now is that for those of us some distance away from the worst fires it is as though it never happened, except for one thing! While our lives continue on with the usual routines I occasionally remind myself that what seemed so urgent, in the way of household chores 'pre-fires,' does not necessarily have to seem so urgent anymore.

Mike Larkin



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TATONG TOPICS – JAN-FEB 1926

The Argus 6th January 1926;

TATONG, Tuesday-A thunder storm of unusual severity passed over the district on Monday afternoon, and caused a number of fires. A number of cattle, sheep, and horses were killed. In one case six cows belonging to Mr. Merrigan, of Swanpool, were killed by one flash of lightning. Fortunately a good fall of rain accompanied the storm, 130 points having been registered. Seventy-two points fell in 20 minutes. The storm affected all telephones.

Benalla Standard 12th January 1926;

TATONG.

The annual meeting of the Tatong Bush Fire Brigade was held in the Tatong hall on Saturday evening. Mr. J. Wallace (president) occupied the chair. The hon. secretary (Mr. D. H. Coghill) presented the balance sheet, which showed a credit of £8/19/9, with an outstanding account of £1/10/ to be collected. The chairman reported that they had been clear of fires during the season. He also desired to resign as president of the brigade. Cr. A. Harrison was then appointed, and moved a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Wallace for his years of service to the brigade. This was seconded by Mr. D. H. Coghill, who referred to the respect that Mr. Wallace was held in, and the manner in which all helped him to make the brigade a success. The motion was carried unanimously. Messrs L. R. Wallace, J. V. Harrison and N. Briggs were appointed vice-presidents; and Messrs E. Lewis and G. Sullivan scouts. Mr. D. H. Coghill was re-elected hon. secretary. The meeting decided that the fire cart be stationed at Mr. Coghill's for the next twelve months. It was also resolved to have the cart re-painted and improvements effected, under the caretaker's supervision.

The Benalla Standard 19th January 1926;

TATONG TELEPHONE FACILITIES

Mr. R. Cook, M-P., has received the following communication from the Deputy Postmaster General in reference to the above:—
Further to my letter of 10th November, 1925, regarding your representations on behalf of Mr. A. Harrison (president V.F.U., Tatong), in the matter of improved telephone facilities in that district, inquiries have been made, and the position is as set out hereunder:—Tatong, Fern Hills, Samaria, Moorngag and Toombullup are intermediate stations on the Swanpool—Archerton trunk line. Based upon a review of the traffic on 7th and 8th December, 1925, eleven calls daily are disposed of over this line, with an average delay of two minutes per direct call, and three minutes per through call. Swanpool is also in circuit on the Benalla—Mansfield trunk line, to which nine stations are connected. On the 7th and

8th December, 1925, an average of 50 calls per day were disposed of over this line, with an average delay per direct call of five minutes and per through call of eighteen minutes.

Calls from stations on the Swanpool—Archerton line for stations on the Benalla—Mansfield trunk line, or for stations outside the district, and vice, versa, are switched for by Swanpool, it is not possible permanently to connect the Swanpool—Archerton trunk line to the Benalla—Mansfield trunk line, owing to the large number of stations connected to these lines. The postmaster at Swanpool however, is employing assistance to enable the switching duties to be performed efficiently and no difficulty or delay should be experienced at that office.

From the information given above, it would appear that an efficient service is now being given. The traffic at present passed over these lines does not, at this juncture, warrant additional facilities. Provision will, however be included in the draft Estimates for 1926-27 for the erection of a new line between Benalla and Swanpool. When this is completed, it will be joined to the existing Swanpool—Archerton line, thus obviating the necessity for switching at Swanpool.

Arrangements have now been made to connect the Swanpool—Archerton line; to the Benalla—Mansfield line after office hours. It will not, therefore be necessary for Swanpool to switch for calls after office hours.

The Argus 9th February 1926:

TATONG.

Mr. C. Hughan and friends, while driving to Benalla, met with an accident. One side of the pole became detached from the buggy, which frightened the ponies. The buggy was wrecked, but the occupants escaped serious injury. Mr. R. J. Mason, head teacher, has resumed duties after having been under treatment for six months at the Caulfield Military Hospital. Miss B. Mc Lochlan has also resumed teaching after recovering from a broken collarbone, sustained in a gig accident.

A farewell social was given to Mr. Neil Coghill by the residents on the eve of his departure for New South Wales, where he intends going in for wheat growing.

The Age 10th February 1926:

Benalla shire council has agreed to make arrangements for an official opening of the Tatong—Toombullup Tablelands road, which commenced three years ago, and extending over 5 1/2 miles of mountainous country, has just been completed, at an approximate cost of £15,000. It will be a direct road to Mansfield, and offers scenic beauty equal to any in the State.

Compiled by Barry O'Connor. Tatong Heritage Group.

A Night Train in Thailand Part One

I have always been somewhat of a train nerd, and have recently read Monisha Rajesh's book "Around the World in 80 Trains". Reading this entertaining book, and the others she has written on her train travel experiences, inspired Gail and I to share a story about a train journey that we took 40 years ago or so. Memories fade of course, but we have tried to reconstruct the journey from our memories of the time.

Many years ago, having lived in Australia for a couple of years, we decided it was time to pay a visit to family back in the UK. We decided to break our journey by taking a brief holiday in Thailand - specifically, in what was then the unspoiled and relatively unknown island of Koh Samui (this was 1984 after all). Now that Koh Samui and the surrounding area are tourist hubs, I suspect the journeys are much more farang friendly - which is both a blessing and a curse.

The journey from Melbourne to Bangkok was uneventful and we took a connecting flight on Bangkok Airways from that city to a town called Surat Thani, which was the closest point on the mainland to Koh Samui. From there we took a bus, followed by a short ride on a very small ferry to the island, where we were met by a number of accommodation providers enthusiastically offering a range of accommodation services. After some mutual gesturing as the locals knowledge of English was unsurprisingly rudimentary, and our knowledge of Thai largely non-existent, not being in funds, we chose a hut on the beach and rode pillion on a couple of mopeds to get there. It was pretty basic – an open air place to eat, electricity for a couple of hours a day if you were lucky, a bucket shower and toilet, but the place was unspoiled, we were young(ish), and the view was spectacular.

A couple of days before we were due to depart to continue our journey to the UK, being a bit of an obsessive, Steve wandered into the town to check in the island's hole in the wall travel agents to confirm our return flight. To his dismay, no such return flight appeared to exist. Contacting the airline was not straightforward. The only publicly available telephone on the island was in the post office, and required the removal of shoes and a long queue. He finally got his turn, but the bad news was confirmed. Our flight wasn't just cancelled – apparently it had never existed (except perhaps in some sort of parallel universe).

Suppressing a rising panic, a return to the tiny shop front travel agents discovered an alternative. There was an overnight train from Surat Thani on the mainland to Bangkok, but it couldn't be booked from Koh Samui. So, we took the ferry, clambered on a bus and made our way to the railway station, where there was a very long queue and not a great deal of time before the night train departed. Thankfully, a railway employee noticed our distress and led us to a much shorter queue which we think was solely for sleeper tickets, and helped us negotiate the process of buying a ticket - thankfully, sleeper berths were available, and we were about to embark on what turned out to be a wonderful experience, that allowed us, as train journeys do, to experience a country and its people rather than observe it from above.

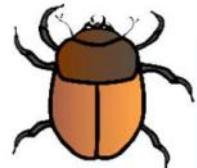
In the next instalment, we'll get to the journey itself.

Steve Ingram and Gail Bourne

White Gate News & Dates

The February White Gate dinner @ the Tavern comes forth on Wednesday 4th. May it be less eventful than the first one for 2026, which was cancelled due to a power outage. So we had it the next night instead (nice one Beth). - Andi Stevenson

This month on the De Fazio Dairy farm I am extolling the virtues of a rather ugly little fellow - the Dung Beetle. We always look forward to the arrival of these little guys in Dec/Jan and the associated reduction in flies. Australia has hundreds of native dung beetles mainly suited to marsupial droppings, but relies on 50 odd introduced species, from Africa and Europe, to manage large livestock dung, interrupting the fly lifecycle and improving soil health. Other benefits include water infiltration and increased pasture productivity by burying dung and returning nutrients to the soil. These introduced species established in the 1960's by the CSIRO have been a major success story. Residues from some cattle drenches can affect the larvae but responsible use will minimize impact. - Linda De Fazio



The Whitegate Christmas Party at 'Yarrabuk'. Little Rhys Thorne thinks he's seen Santa before; "Don't I know you, but what are you wearing?"



The White Gate fire truck has attended several fires recently. Some new recruits would be welcome; join your community in protecting your community.

White Gate Fire Brigade Roster:

Andrew Marriott	22 Feb	Angus McMillan	22 Mar
Terry Trounson	1 Mar	Noel Hutchens	29 Mar
Dave Sweatman	8 Mar	Hamish McMillan	5 Apr
James Parton	15 Mar	Laurie De Fazio	12 Apr



Cookin' with Carole

With more hot weather expected keeping the house cool is imperative, which means I keep indoor cooking to a minimum with one bowl salads, BBQ'd meats and quick stir fry's in hot weather. Fresh baby spinach leaves make a very nutritious alternative to the lettuce element of a salad, adding not only essential vitamins and minerals but also vibrant colour. Baby spinach leaves mixed with crumbled blue cheese and walnuts and an aioli dressing make a perfect accompaniment to a pork chop or pork scotch fillet cooked on the BBQ. I roast sweet potato or pumpkin cubes on the BBQ, cool then mix them with spinach leaves, dried cranberries, finely chopped shallots, toasted pistachios and a little shaved pecorino or Parmesan cheese before adding a vinaigrette dressing. Tomatoes of course come into their own in February and are full of sun ripened flavour. Those from Boris's shed on The Benalla Shepparton road are my favourite at this time of the year. Tomatoes marry perfectly with basil and an insalata caprese, an Italian classic with tomatoes, basil, fresh mozzarella and olive oil goes with just about any grilled meat or fish. Cherry tomatoes make a great Greek style salad mixed with finely sliced red onion, chopped cucumber, marinated feta and chopped fresh oregano – perfect with grilled lamb and crispy potatoes.

Tinned chickpeas, lentils, black beans and cannellini beans are a pantry staple and make a super quick salad mixed with tomatoes, spring onions and whatever chopped vegetables you have in the fridge, think raw carrot and celery, cooked beetroot, radishes for crunch and a mountain of chopped herbs from the garden. Finished with an olive oil and red wine vinegar dressing it's virtually a salad meal on a plate! Try using Chinese wombok cabbage in a coleslaw, it's softer and I love the taste and texture; add a little soy sauce to the dressing and serve with Chinese style sticky chicken wings cooked on the BBQ. Kylie Kwong, an Australian food treasure, has a recipe for hot and sour cucumber salad which is basically Lebanese cucumbers – about 400g, a chopped spring onion, a small amount of finely sliced hot red chilli mixed with a dressing of 2 tablespoons of light soy sauce and brown rice vinegar, 2 teaspoons soft brown sugar, 1 teaspoon of sesame oil and 2 cloves of garlic and 2cm piece of ginger finely chopped or grated. Mix the dressing and pour over peeled and halved lengthwise cucumbers, cut into slices. Toss and it's ready to serve. Great as part of an Asian style banquet or I love it with grilled chicken thighs, bone in for better flavour. Caesar salad is another complete salad meal when mixed with chicken, tuna (tinned or freshly grilled) or prawns. Fattoush, a Middle Eastern staple, made with day old, olive oil brushed and grilled pita bread, chopped tomatoes and Lebanese cucumbers, lots of chopped flat leaf parsley and mint and tossed in a garlic, lemon juice dressing. Add or not thinly sliced red onion or a couple of spring onions and some pomegranate seeds. (Tip I buy pomegranates when plentiful and cheap, take out the arils and freeze until needed).

And what would summer be without peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots, mangoes and watermelon - well it wouldn't really be summer !! Grilled peaches lightly tossed with fennel, rocket and goat cheese is a perfect easy side to go with lamb, chicken, pork or quail. When picked and firm peaches are lovely halved, destoned and poached in a rose wine with a little sugar and vanilla bean seeds. Perfect with good quality vanilla ice cream for a simple dessert, likewise apricots lend themselves to simple poaching. Halved stone fruit placed cut side down on top of a basic butter cake before baking is good for afternoon tea or anytime you feel like a sweet treat. I cheat and always have a packet of Aldi Vanilla Cake mix in the pantry. I substitute plain Greek Style yogurt for the milk and vegetable oil for butter. Topped with whatever fruit is in season it makes a moist every day cake that's doesn't taste of "packet cake" – a quick and easy dessert. Plums are so versatile for both sweet and savoury recipes. They make a great spicy plum sauce just cut, destone and cook with vinegar, white sugar and chilli flakes. There are lots of easy plum cakes on the internet that have a streusel topping and Stephanie Alexander's is, in my opinion, the best. Mangoes are divine just as they are but are especially good when drizzled with freshly squeezed lime juice and summer fruit salad or Pavlova are just not the same without mango slices.

Mango chutney is a must when there is a glut and they're dirt cheap and fully ripe. Greek style yogurt topped with crushed mangoes and passion fruit pulp is a great way to start a summer's day.

Watermelon, when it's firm, tight fleshed and seeded is lovely on a hot summer's day straight from the fridge. I love to wizz the seeded flesh of water melon in a food processor with a little lime juice and a touch of sugar. Then I freeze the pulp in ice cube trays and add a couple of frozen cubes to a vodka and tonic – delicious !!!

LOCAL COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

Greta Valley Primary School is now offering eligible students

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Gawn to Town

Recycling of materials is a worthy aim in this modern world. But people are much more enthusiastic about recycling names. Colonisers in a new landscape proceed to name stuff after their dear old homeland.

This reflection is brought to you by Social Media.

Communities tend to have a page on which locals may exchange information, ask questions, and offer free sofas. Early one morning, peering at my phone, I arrived at a post on the Swanpool Community page:

"Hey my mum has lost her car key somewhere in between swanpool beach- gelly beach she also walked to pendennos point, long shot but if anyone happens to find a hyundai car key let me know please."

Waking up, I puzzled; Swanpool beach? The Broken River winds past Swanpool, probably has a beach or two, mostly on private property... the penny dropped. This was Swanpool, but not as we know it.

I posted a reply: *"Dear Kayleigh, hello from North-East Victoria, Australia. The little town of Swanpool here has been under warning of bushfires, enduring temperatures around 40 Celcius, and would no doubt love to be at the beach! Hope your mum finds her keys."*

To which Kayleigh replied, *"Omg I thought this was swanpool in the UK sorry."* Another casualty of replicated place names across the globe.

Apparently our "Swan Pool" was named for swans floating nearby, but "Swan billabong" was probably never in the running. People like familiar names.



This is Swanpool

The original "Swanpool" is in Cornwall. Viewed on Google

Maps, it has an interesting coastal lagoon (the swan-pool), which is bounded by "Swanpool Beach". Further along is "Gellyngvase Beach". The Swanpool Beach Cafe menu lists stuff like we have; except they have Baps, and Quirky Ice Cream. Poking round on Google Maps is fun, with at least two great-great-grandparents coming from that part of the world. Did they eat baps?

There is also a Swanpool in Lincolnshire, UK, but it is a recent creation. Even there they recycle names.

Tasmania, occupied early on, has barely an indigenous nameplace within it, but the British must have gradually got used to the original names as they moved into the mainland. You can find Alburys the world over, but Wodonga is a one-off. Unexpectedly, Beechworth and Myrtleford, although constructed from British terms, exist only here. Benalla ought be unique, being a mis-spelling of Benalta, but it is also a French surname. Dang.

Place names can arrive through curious transitions.

Consider Coolangatta, town on the NSW-Qld border. Is it named from a local dialect? No; the schooner

"Coolangatta" was wrecked on a nearby beach, endowing first a creek with the name Coolangatta, then the place. The name is from Coolangatta Mountain, near Nowra, which is where the unfortunate schooner was built.

And here? The Splatt brothers named their run "Tatong", the meaning given as a corruption of the aboriginal word 'Tutting' meaning 'out of sight'. The name is not common. There is a "Tatonga" district near Tallangatta, maybe a related word. There is a "Tatong Town" in China... probably not related.

Some maps place a Tatong in Queensland, SW of Winton (ironic) where Tatong Homestead stood. Maybe it was named for our Tatong.

- Andi Stevenson



TATONG TAVERN



Bopple - Order Online Pick-up at Tatong Tavern

The Tavern now has backup power and can open for beer and food when your power goes out.

Some thoughts....

Happy New Year.

I made a new year's resolution not to make any resolutions – does that mean I failed before I started?

"100%" seems to be the new "absolutely".

'Important' appears to now be pronounced 'impordant' especially by our P.M.

People 'pass' these days rather than die – seen recently on SBS, "warning – this program contains images of people who have passed"

Donald Trump is so peed off at not getting 'his' peace prize that he is threatening war.

We have satellite TV and satellite nbn. We have mobile phone capability through wifi. Bad weather easily affects the satellites and knocks out both TV and wifi capability. Power outages obviously knock out both as well. A battery radio obviously helps but our essential is our landline with its old Telstra phone.

It's amazing how Vic emergency warnings and the smell of bushfire smoke hastens my fire prep.

So many women these days speak with a 'little girl' voice. Some people seem to think that if they shout at you loud enough for long enough, you'll change your point of view to theirs.

Have a great year

John Knapper

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Miscellaneous Announcements	Swanpool News
<p>Update on the Freeway Overpass</p> <p>We have received some further advice from the department</p> <p>Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) have been managing a lane closure on the Hume Freeway overpass on Benalla – Tatong Road that has resulted from aging drainage infrastructure.</p> <p>After inspections uncovered the problem, DTP implemented a lane closure and reduced speeds to ensure the safety of everyone using this important road. Subsequent investigations have revealed that the repairs needed are more substantial than initially expected.</p> <p>DTP engineers are currently designing the repairs, which will address the issue and ensure that repairs are in line with current standards. Although the work requires time to complete, it is crucial to protect the overpass from future deterioration.</p> <p>At this stage DTP anticipates that the safety measures will remain in place until at least mid-2026. While delays on Benalla-Tatong Road may be frustrating for road users, these measures are necessary to ensure everyone's safety and to prevent further damage to the overpass while repair work is being planned. DTP thanks all road users for their patience while we work to provide a safe solution at the overpass.</p> <p>Kind regards, Jada Cannizzo Electorate Officer Office of Jaclyn Symes MP Member for Northern Victoria Thanks to Michael Smith for sharing this update, after many weeks of seeking answers.</p>	<p>Hoping that everyone has had a happy festive season in our little communities.</p> <p>Most of our clubs have enjoyed a short break, and are now gearing up for 2026. Our Bowls Club pennant players ended the year on a high. The Bowls club is hoping that Thursday Social Bowls will be resuming soon, please call Shayne on 0429 682 577 for an update.</p> <p>Update from the Swanpool Crafters, their next craft day is scheduled for Saturday 31 January at the Albert Heaney Oval, 9.00am-4.00 pm. Cost \$10 per head, BYO lunch, morning and afternoon tea provided, all welcome</p> <p>The hard working volunteers at the Oval Pizzeria will be cooking up a storm on Friday 23rd January, from 5.00pm, for takeaway and in house dining. BYO drinks!</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Cinema has been very busy, with its iconic sold out New Years' Eve Gala featuring "The Dish" and "The Castle", and family friendly matinees of delightful Aussie film "Kangaroo" and "Paddington"!</p> <p>And there's something for everyone on our February programme starting with the beautiful new film starring Ralph Fiennes, "The Choral" heading up the Double Bill for the 31 January and 1 February at 6.00pm. Other treats on our February programme include the acclaimed "Song Sung Blue", screening as a stand-alone matinee on Friday 13 February at 10.00am, and first on our Double Bill for that weekend, 6.00pm both nights. The second film on the same Double Bill is "Hamnet" touted for Oscar wins, especially for female lead Jessie Buckley. The male lead in "Hamnet" also stars in the beautiful "History of Sound" screening first on our Double Bill for 7 and 8 February..</p> <p>You can find hard copies of our programmes in various outlets in Swanpool, Benalla and Mansfield, or check online at www.swanpoolcinemqa.com.au</p> <p>There is no need to book for our regular programmes, and we are still the cheapest cinema deal in the region!</p> <p>We look forward to welcoming our patrons and volunteers in air conditioned comfort.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Deb</p>
The next Girls Shed will be on 20th February at the Tatong Hall.	The next Tatong Dinner will be on 11th February at The Tatong Tavern.

Wanted!

Co-Ordinator for the Tatong Market & More!

Job description:

- Recruit stallholders
- Take bookings
- Allocate sites
- Plan site layout



This event has run over nine years, first as the "Tatong Community Great Big Garage Sale" then the "Tatong Market and More". Initially started by Belinda Franks, in 2017 John Knapper took over as President / Coordinator. John has now reluctantly stepped back from the role, and none of the current committee members look to take it on.

To continue, a new co-ordinator is needed. Might it be you?

Recycled in memory of Kathy Z

GardenDaze

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

Enjoying the (mostly) cooler than usual Summer



Gardenias With their lovely, scented creamy white blooms appearing from late spring to early autumn Gardenias are a popular choice in many gardens. From a container plant to ground covers, standards, or turned into loose hedges—there is a Gardenia for every garden type.

An attractive landscape plant, Gardenias are mostly evergreen shrubs or small trees. They have luxuriant deep green leaves. The fragrant, large tubular to funnel shaped flowers can be white or yellow and are produced singly or in semi-double and double forms, along, or at the ends, of branches. Cultivated forms often have double rose-like flowers, which open from large buds with a distinctive whorl of petals. Fleshy or leathery berries then follow.

Gardenias do best in a well-drained humus-rich, acidic soil in a sunny or partly shaded position protected from frost.

If grown in containers—it is important that they do not dry out between waterings.

When in growth, mulch with good quality compost and fertilizer. Water and feed well to promote lush foliage and heavy flowering.

It is best to prune gardenias right after their summer blooms fade. The older wood can then be cut back without damaging the newer buds that are developing.



Yellow leaves especially in spring could mean lack of water. A dose of fertiliser and water over a few days and the leaves should start to turn back to a glossy green.

There are also a few diseases that affect gardenias. Root rot is common in gardenias with poorly drained soil. This can cause the plant to yellow. Best action is to dig up the plant, prune away damaged roots and then re-plant in a spot with better drainage.

Propagate by taking softwood cuttings in autumn and winter. Or . . .

An easy way to propagate gardenias is to enjoy the flowers inside in a vase and then leave the stems in the water after the blooms have finished. After a few weeks roots will have formed and it is then easy to pot up and leave in a cool moist environment over the winter.

A Vase that excludes light works best.

Tomato Russet Mite - a Timely Reminder

If you have had problems in the past with tomato plants dying too early then it could be Tomato Russet Mite

These mites are a problem for tomato and for other members of the solanaceae family (Capsicums, Chili, Eggplant). The problem generally arises following significant hot dry weather, usually the first heat wave.

The microscopic mites are sap suckers and while they can't

be seen with the naked eye, you can certainly see the damage they cause. The damage is first seen on the lower part of the plant and moves upwards as the mites ascend. The foliage of the plant will develop silvery sheen on the underside, followed by brown from the bottom of the plant upwards. The leaves become brittle.

Badly affected tomato leaves and stems lose their leaf hairs. Affected stems turn a rusty brown and in serious cases they may snap.

Considerable damage can occur, especially at high temperatures when population growth is most rapid and affected leaves dry out quickly. The fruit can also be affected and when this happens the skin becomes coarse and turns reddish brown and the fruit itself is sometime deformed.

The tomato russet mite are extremely small and difficult to observe. Eggs are roughly 0.05mm in diameter and are laid on the underside of leaves, on leaf petioles and on stems on the lower portion of plants. They develop quickly, turning into adults within three or four days.

Managing the Problem

Start by removing any affected foliage and spray the plant with a seaweed-based plant tonic to give them a feed and a boost. A follow up with a horticultural oil, soap spray or sulphur should sort the mites out.

To Avoid Future Problems

Start Clean: Transplants should be free of eggs, nymphs or adults.

Planting in hot, dry periods should be avoided

New crops should not be planted near infected crops and infested crops and weeds should be destroyed.



Happy Gardening

February 2021

Kathy Z

RECIPES BY SUE



With zucchini being plentiful, all the recipes this month contain zucchini.

ZUCCHINI WITH HERB CREAM

For 4 servings

500g sliced young zucchini

½ cup water

1 Tablespoon butter

¼ cup cream

1 teaspoon chopped rosemary, thyme, sage or marjoram.

METHOD: Slice zucchini 5 mm thick. Cook in a covered frying pan over a high heat, with the water & butter. When the liquid has evaporated, add cream & herbs & cook uncovered, over high heat, until the cream thickens & coats the zucchini.

EASY ROASTED ZUCCHINI

750g zucchini, sliced 12.5 mm thick

1 Tablespoon olive oil

Salt & pepper

Paprika (about ¼ teaspoon)

METHOD: Preheat oven to 450°F & line a baking sheet with foil. In a large bowl, toss zucchini with olive oil. Pour oil-coated zucchini slices onto prepared baking sheet & arrange in a single layer. Sprinkle generously with salt & pepper & paprika.

Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until zucchini is fork tender.

Serve & enjoy.

CARROT & ZUCCHINI LOAF

Serves 10

125g Australian reduced fat cream cheese

½ cup caster sugar

3 eggs, lightly beaten

1½ cups self-raising flour

¼ cup Australian skim milk

1 cup grated carrot

1 cup grated zucchini

¼ cup currants

METHOD: Beat the cream cheese & sugar together until well combined, then gradually beat in the eggs.

Fold in the flour & milk alternately. Fold in remaining ingredients until well combined.

Carrot & zucchini loaf continued: -

Spoon mixture into a grease-proof paper lined

11cm x 30cm loaf tin & bake at 180° for 1 hour.

Note: this can be thinly sliced & used to accompany a cheese platter.

ZUCCHINI CAKE

3 eggs

2 cups sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla

1 cup oil

1 cup plain flour

¼ teaspoon baking powder

2 cups wholemeal flour

1 teaspoon bicarb soda

1 cup chopped walnuts

3 teaspoons cinnamon

2 cups grated zucchini.

METHOD: Beat eggs till frothy, add sugar, vanilla & oil.

Beat until thick (not very long)

Fold in remaining ingredients. Place in greased & lined tins.

Bake 350F or 175C for 1½ hours.

Slice & spread with butter.

YUMMY ZUCCHINI CHOCOLATE CAKE

125g butter

1 cup (packed) brown sugar

½ cup white sugar

3 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

½ cup yoghurt (any type)

2½ cups plain flour

3 cups (350g) grated zucchini

¼ cup cocoa

2 teaspoons baking soda

2 teaspoons cinnamon or mixed spice

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup chocolate chips

METHOD: Heat oven to 170°C. Line bottom & sides of 25cm square pan or roasting pan with two crosswise strips of baking paper.

Beat softened butter with sugar in a mixer or food processor until light & creamy. Mix in eggs, vanilla, yoghurt & ½ cup of the measured flour, then mix in grated zucchini. Sift in the remaining flour, cocoa, baking soda & salt. Stir gently, then pour into pan. Sprinkle with chocolate chips.

Bake for 45 minutes, or until centre feels firm & a skewer comes out clean. Cool on wire rack. Refrigerate, or freezer wrapped slices.

Sue O'Brien

TATONG HALL NEWS

The hall has fortunately acquired an almost full committee after the Triannual Elections held mid-November '25. The members are elected for a 3 year term. Some members who were lost due to illness have been replaced by new residents and this is exceptionally pleasing in an era of 'non-joiners.'

Even though the hall does not get lots of use it is much appreciated by those who do such as the Girls Shed, Heritage meetings, birthday parties and the Table Tennis winter competition.

If you have a celebration or event requiring such a space please consider hiring the hall for what are reasonable fees. Mike Larkin

SIMPLE MESSAGE FOR THE MONTH

Please check out this website

(thekukereport@substack.com) if interested in shedding the shackles and other assorted conditioned beliefs, political stresses and so on which can blind us to the joy, love, freedom and beauty that is innate to our original selves.

Mike Larkin



Christmas at Tatong December 2025



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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.
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.	53	77	43.5	66.8	49.4	132	34.1	40.7	891.3
2021	76.6	47.8	39.6	8.2	66.5	99.3	154.9	51.5	92.6	66.5	111	40.5	855
2022	219.3	4.8	72.7	81.4	42.5	102.5	49.7	126.6	111.9	232.2	139.2	25	1217
2023	25	18.7	61.1	62.8	59.2	197.6	51.1	67.2	25.2	120.8	57.1	98.2	846
2024	156.4	17.6	14.7	26.9	73.8	53.1	76.7	47	42.2	46.4	167.7	48	770.5
2025	22.5	13.5	66.5	8.9	20.9	81.8	118.2	51.9	34.4	49.7	74	70	622.3

WEATHER IN THE TATONG TOWNSHIP

The total rainfall for Nov '25 was a good 74mm and the total for December '25 was 70mm, and finally the total for January, up until the 15.th was nil rainfall.

Since the last rain of December and till the 15th of January there has been nearly a month without any rainfall and as a consequence the Hollands Creek has almost stopped flowing. This is not good after the horrendous fire storms that Victoria experienced mid-January when hundreds of houses were destroyed, among them friends from Ruffy and Longwood, people who lost so much.

Mike Larkin

ARCHERY

We have started shooting regularly again after some patchy sessions due to inclement weather, holidays and in my case, a fall which broke a rib.

We shoot fortnightly, as always at the oval on every second Sunday starting at 1:30pm and all are welcome. Children are also welcome, but best from upper primary school age.

Contact me on 0428 273 613 for other information.

Mike Larkin

Joke Corner

Last night I was sitting on the sofa watching TV when I heard my wife's voice from the kitchen, 'What do you feel like for dinner my love chicken, beef or lamb?' I said, 'Chicken, please.' She replied, 'You're having soup you fat bastard, I was talking to the cat!'



Come along, bring your lunch and some goodies to share, do some craft or just have a chat. Hope to see at the Tatong Memorial Hall. Cathy 0488 377 243
Next Girl's Shed Friday 20th February 9am to 4.30pm.

Tattler Advertising Rates

Inc num:

Full Page	Half Page	Quarter (or 2x1/8th):
Single Issue: \$32	\$16	\$8
Six Issues: \$180	\$85	\$45
Eleven Issues: \$320	\$160	\$80

PAYMENT

PAYMENT by EFT:

BSB 803078 A/C 100076311 a/c name: Tatong Tattler Goulburn Murray Credit Union, 30 Bridge Street, Benalla Please identify your payment, & e-mail details to Tattler.

Is it an ad? Publicity for an event with an entry fee is classed as advertising and charged accordingly. Local community events may be excepted.

FORMAT (ATTENTION ADVERTISERS!)

For pre-formatted advertisements, the size of a "half page" is 13.6cm x 19cm, and "quarter page" 13.6cm x 9.3cm.

To avoid distortion to your image, please fit your advertisement to these sizes.

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 (i.e. JPGs) can be attached, to be laid out by editor.

If layout is important, submit your work as an image, or in MS Publisher. If laid out in a **Word** document, contents will 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 a Tattler committee-member.

DEADLINE

The Tattler Deadline is end of the 20th of the month, January-November. Non-digitised items which need scanning or typing, by the 15th.

SUBMISSIONS / CONTACT

Submit via e-mail to tatongtattler@yahoo.com.au, leave in the Tattler Mailbox beside the Tavern, or send by post to the Secretary.

Secretary: Linda De Fazio, PO Box 588 Benalla 3671, 03 5766 6375 linda.defazio6@gmail.com

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DONATIONS

A donation of \$1 per issue, or \$10 per year, is appreciated & helps cover costs. The Tattler is managed, produced and distributed entirely by volunteers.

Donations can be given to committee members, left in the locked Box by the Tavern, or sent by EFT (see above).

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