

September 2020 Donation \$1

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Circulation 360

Edition 334



Last Sunday Matilda, Xavier and Isobel DeFazio spent a few hours exploring the creek and waterfalls near home. They just missed the echidna train. I think the echidnas took off when they heard them coming – perhaps they wanted some privacy! *Janette Knapper*

## For the Love of Sheep: A Wealth of Stories 2/6/20

### Hazel Wann Final Instalment

Primitive sheep came to Britain from two areas: the short tailed (13 vertebrae in the tail) group via Russia and Scandinavia from Central Asia; and the long tailed group (22 vertebrae) – Celtic sheep originating from the Near East. But it was the Romans who brought the long wool sheep from Italy. They were twice the size of the Celtic breeds and the Romans set about developing the British wool industry. The Lincoln was the most successful long-wool and it was this breed that went to New Zealand where it was crossed with Merino, one quarter Lincoln:three quarter Spanish merino, producing the Polwarth; and 3:1 the Corriedale. The Dorset and Wiltshire Horn are also descended from this group. They have the Mediterranean characteristic of all year round lamb bearing but are lacking in multiple births. The value of the Dorset Horn to Australian and New Zealand is that they were a breed that carried out successful lambing without assistance. They are resilient, self sufficient and have lambs with small heads.

Transhumance is the term used for the movement of vast numbers of herbivores across significantly long distances. But also short distances as occurred in Britain from the lower lying winter pasture to the high hills in summer. In Spain transhumance was practised with the Merinos to such a degree that there are 78,000 miles of ancient drove roads still there and protected by the Spanish government. Every autumn since 2004 the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture has celebrated transhumance by allowing 2,000 sheep through the streets of Madrid, with full right of way for shepherds and drovers over traffic, on payment of a 11<sup>th</sup> Century coin to the city council. They are following the ancient drove routes that cross the city.

The livestock of Europe made seasonal moves just as the great herbivore herds of Africa and North America. "These beasts had shaped the landscape and trodden out a network of long-distance tracks long before they were joined by upright apes."<sup>2</sup> But man did take over, initially without altering the pattern of winter in the valleys or on the plains, and summer in the high pastures of the French and Italian Alps, and the Pyrenees.

In the Pyrenees, in spring, 60,000 horses, cows and sheep still migrate. Government funding is available for those moving their stock. But the main animal watershed was Provence where a million sheep, goats and cows poured out of the plains on the long journey to the Alps and Languedoc. They benefited the countryside with their manure and, in fact, there are 109 place names along these routes that contain the word fumade – an area where manure is spread. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century prior to significant road building, the passable roads of France fanned out from Paris and were few. The coaching businesses knew that at certain times of the year, the road from Lyon to Marseilles would be blocked as the great herds crossed the Rhone into the Alps. It could take 2 days for a herd of sheep to pass over a bridge. There were no alternative routes for coaches.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this practice receded as fencing expanded into the mountains. But the French government became aware that the vegetation of the mountains was declining with fencing and the without the fertilising benefit of the sheep. They created shepherding schools, 6 by 2013, and mounted a project to capture the knowledge of the remaining shepherds. This work was drawn together in a book published as a joint effort by French shepherds and interested parties in the USA. It describes the shepherds' life, their understanding of grazing, and sheep behaviour in relation to that grazing, and their understanding of Alpine pastures and topography. Today they handle herds of 800-2800 ewes belonging to different farmers and their goal is not just to bring back healthy sheep in the autumn but to leave the pastures in a healthy state, that is not overgrazed. Many people do short courses at these schools, allowing them to join a shepherd in the Alps for the summer.

The encouragement by the authorities is not without its problems. Today, in France, the European grey wolf is protected under the auspices of the Department of Environment. The growth of the wolf population commenced in the 1990s spilling over from Italy. In the Alps the population is unrestrained whereas in Italy and Spain it is culled. The Department of Agriculture compensates stock owners for their losses even when they have not taken steps to protect the stock with dogs, assistant shepherds and night pens. Night pens with such large numbers of sheep damage the pasture and are not well regarded. Protection contracts are offered subsidising the cost of fencing, dogs and extra shepherds.

With the support of the authorities and the attention given to scientific observation and analysis *The Art & Science of Shepherding*, 7 years in the making, is a book that has made a major contribution to sheep management. There are numerous diagrams of different travel, grazing and resting patterns produced by the shepherds who undertook the scientific studies that contributed to the book, Maps indicating the complexity of routes, dangers, topography, forbidden areas, appetite whetting forage, morning, afternoon and evening routes, resting places, water, salt licks, shepherds' huts, are not simple.

But it is not all science. French shepherds build a relationship of trust. "Sheep are hugely mobile, selective and capable of learning."<sup>3</sup> So the idea is not to challenge the sheep but rather guide them on a basis of trust in the shepherd. A shepherd must know the pasture state and routes according to climate, season, topography, the daily weather and needs of his charges. He must know the herd, its groups and individuals, their eating and movement patterns and even individual animal's obsessions. He knows that ewes seek to maintain visual contact with one another, something not so easy the Alpine terrain. Sheep have excellent spatial memory and the idea is to build a predictable herd where calmness reigns. Body language misunderstandings can cause chaos in a sometimes dangerous environment. Walking tourists are often a problem.

Continued next page

"A call of the shepherd is followed by silence. Then the sheep or goats that in the former instant had their noses buried in grasses and bushes raise their heads and begin to move calmly in a multitude of small single files...He turns, and the herd follows, as if a mutual trust once established is never called into question."<sup>4</sup> From an account by a trainee in the Pyrenees: "I have just turned the sheep around at the Spanish border. They seem to have understood for the rest of the day."<sup>5</sup>

Despite the inroads of the EU into the environment of hill sheep, there has been a revival in the Lake District, northern England and in Scotland and Wales, of the hill breeds. The passion for the Herdwick sheep of the Lakeland fells, for instance, has been well expressed in the book *The Shepherd's Life* by James Rebanks, and delightfully so in Rick Stein's tv series Food Heroes, where he visited a Dales farmer who clearly adored his rambunctious herd of Herdwicks. And rambunctious they are. Move a flock of Herdwicks into a field of fresh grass and they don't eat. They watch what you are going to do with that gate. If you shut it, they then tour the stone walls looking for weaknesses. So good they are at escaping that the walls are topped with strands of barb wire. The aim is not to eat the grass in the next field but to return to the fell pastures to which they are hefted. (Heft: a piece of upland pasture to which a farm animal has become attached; hefted – describing livestock thus attached.)

Hefted ewes know the land – the best places for lambing, the best places for sheltering, and the best places for eating. They know it so well that farmers leave them unattended, there being no predators, and whilst the ewes could wander right across the Lake District, they don't because they are hefted to an area. This unbroken chain of learning, ewe to lamb, goes back thousands of years. Were it not for hefted animals being in the moors during the 2001 Foot & Mouth debacle, this learning would have been lost. They were not shot like those living lower down that summer.

As in France, sheep from different farms are brought together for the move to the high land. But from James Rebanks' description of moving the sheep down from the fells it is no calm cooperation like that in France. Shepherds rely on dogs to dig out sheep where men cannot go or even see, and to round up ewes and lambs now half wild having no human attendance over the summer. Fell dogs work semi-independently a long way across a mountain using their wits to find sheep they cannot yet see. Quad bikes have little use in this terrain. And unlike France, the sheep do not leave the herd down a home track as they pass their farms, but rather have been pushed down a narrow race and sorted into each shepherd's flock. It is up to the dogs to keep them separate as they move down to the farms. These are the farms of stone walls and the lanes between them are centuries old. Rebanks is following his ancestors's footsteps.

But like the French shepherds there is trust. Here is Rebanks on a bad day in winter: "I don't like this snow. It is layering up into drifts very fast....I need to hurry. I push the ewes through the snow but they want to go back. So I pull an empty hessian feed bag out of my pocket and try to persuade them to follow me. If we can get a few hundred yards down this hillside into a new field there is shelter....I trudge

my way through the growing drifts and am pleased to see that the ewes seem to understand. The best ewe follows me in the trodden path I am making. She has bred me great sons and daughters, helping me to make my flock better. She has a sense of her own importance at all times....She is canny and streetwise; she knows they are being led away from danger now....We reach a gateway that is deep with snow, up to my waist...I crunch through up to my chest....the old ewe is already following in my footsteps. The others look at her, unsure...But then one of her daughters comes and they all bunch up...then I am through the drift...I tumble over as I hit a stone, and the old ewe walks over my legs followed by eighty others, all of which are now on a mission."<sup>6</sup>

*Counting Sheep: A Celebration of the Pastoral Heritage of Britain*, Philip Walling, Profile Books, London, 2015. 1. p.46

*The Discovery of France*, Graham Robb, Picador, London, 2007. 2. p.180

*The Art & Science of Shepherding: Tapping the Wisdom of French Herders*. Edited by Michel Meuret & Fred Provenza, Acres USA, 2014 3. p.181; 4. p.1; 5. p.336

*The Shepherd's Life: A Tale of the Lake District*, James Rebanks, Penguin, London, 2015. 6. p.186-7

*Sheep: The remarkable story of the humble animal that built the modern world*, Alan Butler, John Hunt Publishing, UK, 2006

## White Gate Dates

**White Gate Dinner @ The Tatong Tavern** is unlikely to take place on the usual date in September... although we could hold it once the lock-down is unlocked? Alternatively, we can get take-away & eat it in the carpark, but I think that might be illegal. Or we could do the Chew By Zoom thing.

The August dinner was terribly August, segregation applied, with the Superior Beings at one table & the men at the other. Good food, wine & conversation was enjoyed by all. A pleasant Last Supper.

Stay safe out there amidst the paddocks and the hills; and be careful, it may feel remote but that blasted virus will hitch a lift anywhere.

Oh, and don't get bogged in this excellent winter; you might need to hitch a lift yourself, only to find you're in a carload of escapees from hotel quarantine.

### White Gate Fire Brigade Roster: *Suspended During Stage 3 Lockdown*

Matthew Defazio	6 Sep	Bill Ferguson	4 Oct
Ross Runnalls	13 Sep	Norton Grimwade	11 Oct
David Elford	20 Sep	Terry Ryan	18 Oct
Leigh Humphries	27 Sep	Andrew Marriott	25 Oct

- Andrea Stevenson, 0429 439 336

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## Pastafarianism or *the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*



Warning, this article contains mockery and satire.

### **Somebody asked me to tell the tale of the Great Flying Spaghetti Monster. Are you sitting comfortably?...**

In the US state of Kansas, the teaching of "intelligent design" is given equal time to evolution. In 2005, one Bobby Henderson wrote to the Education Board, demanding equal time for "Flying Spaghetti Monsterism". His letter was ignored, so he posted it online; and thus was born Pastafarianism

The central creation myth is that an invisible and undetectable Flying Spaghetti Monster created the universe "after drinking heavily" – hence a flawed Earth. Pirates are revered as the original Pastafarians, Henderson asserting that a decline in the number of pirates over the years is the cause of global warming (as an illustration that correlation does not imply causation). He included a graph... so it must be true. In 2008, Henderson interpreted the growing pirate activities at the Gulf of Aden as additional support, pointing out that Somalia has "the highest number of pirates and the lowest carbon emissions of any country".

#### Headwear

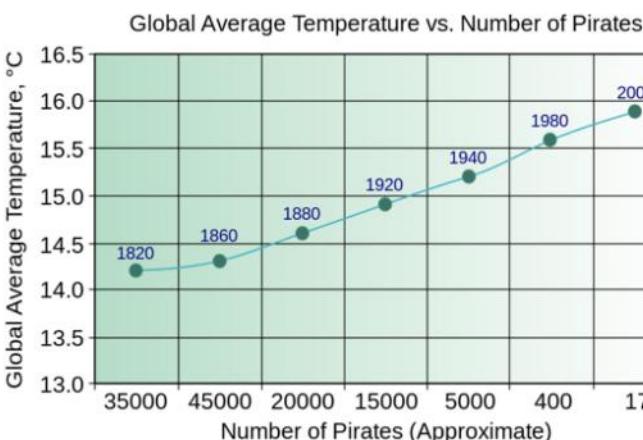
Pastafarians show their beliefs by wearing a colander on the head.

An Austrian pastafarian eventually won the legal right to be shown in his driving license photo wearing a pasta strainer on his head, on the grounds that it is worn for religious reasons.

Henderson says, "I don't have a problem with religion. What I have a problem with is religion posing as science." He wants religion kept out of government schools, and money kept out of religion. I wish him luck.

He looks forward to the time when these three theories are given equal time in USA classrooms; a third of the time for Intelligent Design, one third time for Flying Spaghetti Monsterism, and one third for logical conjecture based on overwhelming observable evidence.

I think he is an optimist, but live in hope that the Flying Spaghetti Monster will drop 18 tonnes of Spaghetti Bolognese onto Donald Trump. - Andrea Stevenson



## "Corona Cooking Catastrophes" Janette Knapper

During the various shutdowns and isolations we have had this year due to the Corona virus, I find I am not only lending and borrowing more books than before but also swapping more recipes. Our younger son called the other night and mentioned he didn't speak to me last time he called.

"I was busy cooking" I said. "In fact I am always cooking!" He replied, "That's ok – we are always eating!" I guess if the virus doesn't get us the extra weight will.

We have some very old orange trees which produce wonderfully tasty oranges and I decided I would pick some (before the birds get to them) and make some marmalade. I find sometimes my marmalade sets and sometimes it doesn't. This batch didn't set properly and, being a bit weary, I decided we would just pour it on our toast as the flavour was great. It also got me thinking about what other uses I could find for "Runny Marmalade".

We find it is still great on toast (it is sort of medium runny). Also, I saw an English program where they included marmalade in their fruit cake and ran with that idea – see recipe below. Probably the best result was making an Orange and Almond Meal syrup cake and using the marmalade on the cake (pour over whilst still warm from the oven) instead of a sugar syrup.

### Fruit Tea Loaf

500gms mixed dried fruit

150gms demerara sugar

1 cup of strong tea

*Place the above in a bowl and leave overnight or long as possible.*

230gms self-raising flour

1 egg

Grated rind of two lemons

60gms chopped walnuts

50gms butter

1 tablespoon caster sugar

Grease and line a loaf tin. Add flour, egg and grated rind to fruit mixture and stir well. Put in tin and level top. Scatter chopped walnuts on top then sprinkle over with caster sugar. Lastly, dot with small pieces of butter. Bake for 60 – 90 minutes at 180 degrees Celsius. Cool and wrap. Next day serve with butter (it is lovely on its own if you prefer to save the calories).

For the "**runny marmalade**" version, replace the demerara sugar with 350gms of runny marmalade and leave out the grated rind

### Church Ladies With Typewriters

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus walks on the water. The sermon tonight: Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

# Suck it Up

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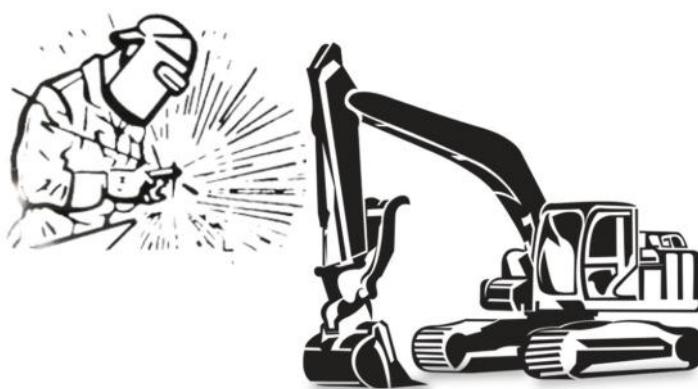
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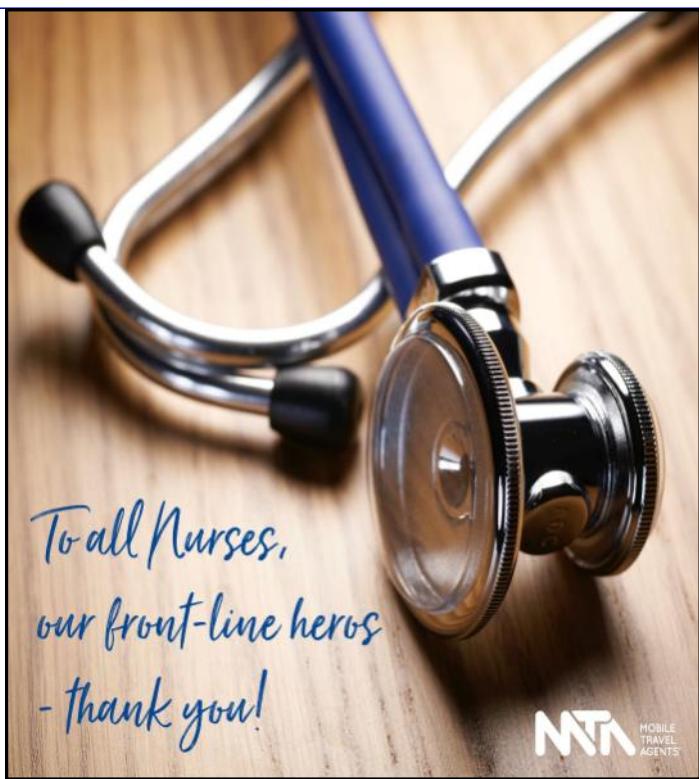
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Spring is in the air as the days get longer and warmer. Still in lockdown but hopefully the end of the tunnel is drawing closer as the weather warms our hearts.

I've tried to make cheery food, with lots of colour and textures during lockdown. One of my favourites is a chicken recipe, loosely based on a Kylie Kwong classic – chilli Black-bean Chicken. It's super easy and on the table in no time. The colours are inviting and it tastes tingly hot. Adjust the chilli heat to your liking.

Perfect served with steamed rice or cauliflower rice which I love, or you can add steamed silken tofu at the end for a "one pot wonder". Serves two but can be easily increased. Leftovers can be frozen.

I like cooking chicken thighs with the bone in as I believe is gives better flavour.

4 free range chicken thighs, bone in

50 g plain flour

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

200 ml chicken or vegetable stock

1 large red capsicum, seeds removed and sliced

7 or 8 spring onions including white and green parts, sliced

2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 teaspoon sesame oil.

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1 inch piece of ginger, chopped

2 table spoons light soy sauce

1 tablespoon brown or coconut sugar

½ cup Chinese rice wine (cooking wine)

3-4 teaspoons black bean and chilli sauce – I use Lee Kim Kee brand



Dust the chicken in the flour, shaking off any excess. Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a heavy frypan.

Sear on both sides until well coloured. Remove from heat. Wipe pan clean with paper towel.

Using same pan heat the vegetable and sesame oils and gently fry the ginger and garlic. Add the soy sauce, sugar, rice wine, stock and chilli black bean sauce. Add the chicken back into the pan along with the red capsicum. Simmer gently for 15 minutes until chicken is cooked. Add the spring onions and rice wine vinegar. Check seasoning and add more chilli black bean sauce or very finely chopped red c if you like it hotter.

Serve whilst piping hot.

Note. I also used some sautéed mushrooms last time I made this chicken dish, you could also add a large handful of washed baby spinach or canned baby corn to make it "stretch" further and serve 4 people

**Tis** the season for citrus and what better way to enjoy the back yard fruit than making citrus curds or butters. I love Lime Curd on toast, swirled through vanilla ice cream or on scones and pancakes. It's also great as a filling for doughnuts and small pastry cups. Mix with beaten cream and fill bought cannoli shells, Yum!

Lime or Lemon Curd

This recipe can be doubled or even quadrupled, just make sure you cook the curd in a bowl that doesn't touch the water below.

¾ cup lemon or lime juice

125 g butter

4 eggs – free range preferred – well whisked

¾ cup white sugar

Set a pan with water on the stove and fit a bowl or double saucepan on top, ensuring the bottom of the pan or bowl in which the curd is cooked does not touch the water simmering below.

Melt the butter and sugar in the bowl over simmering water. Stir until butter is fully melted and sugar is starting to dissolve. Add lime/lemon juice and whisked eggs. Whisk continuously until mixture starts to thicken.

Continue to whisk/stir all the time for approx 10 minutes, this helps to sterilise the eggs. Make sure there is always water in the bottom pan.

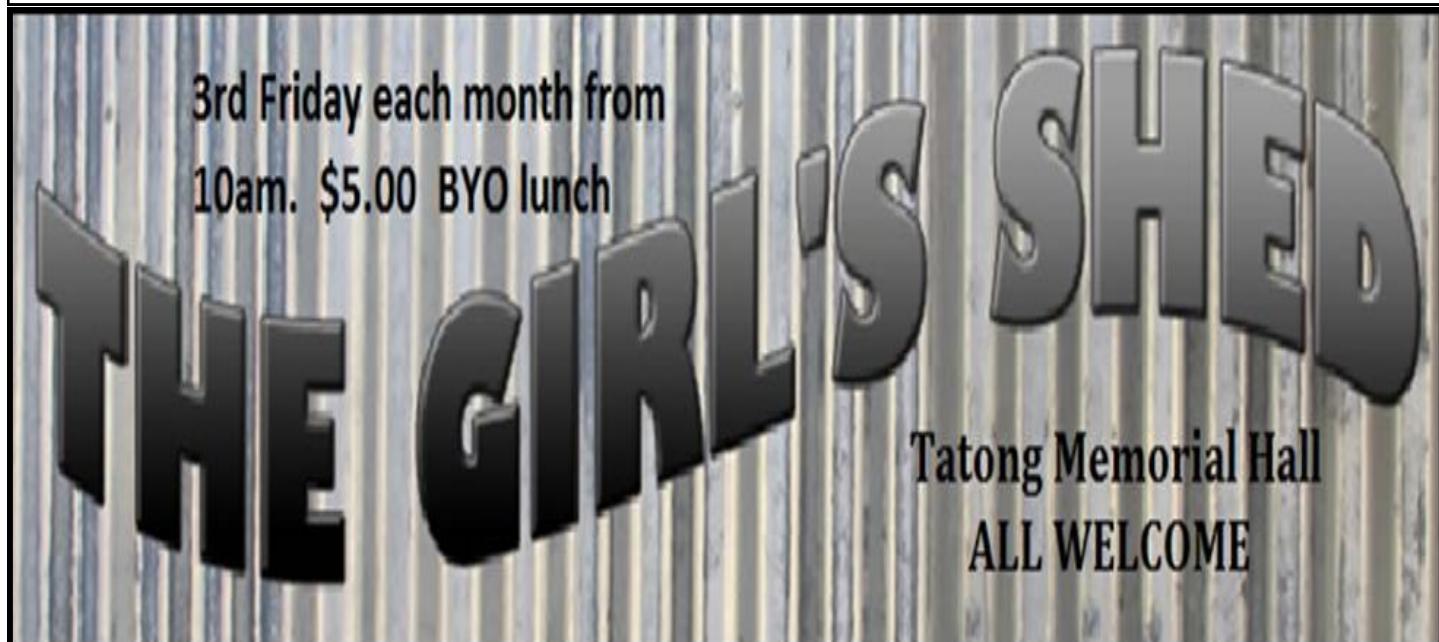
Pour into warm sterilised jars. This will make 2 medium jam jars. Curd will last in the refrigerator for 2 weeks (if not eaten before!)



## **BIRDS FOR SALE**

Two very friendly cockatiels need a new home. We have acquired two cockatiels that we thought would be going back to their owner (our son) but this is not working out. They are extremely personable and love life. I am very fussy that they go to a place where they will be enjoyed and are given an opportunity to exercise their wings. We currently let them fly outside their cage twice a day if possible (inside of course). Jaymicks (the male bird) is exceptionally friendly and loves to travel on a shoulder, dances to '*If you're happy and you know it*' and tries very hard to whistle to the same tune but does not do very well. I spoil them and want it kept that way. I would be willing for them to have a trial before a commitment is made. They have a lovely big cage.

Please contact Chris and Rosslyn Lourens. 57672279. Email: [crlourensz@gmail.com](mailto:crlourensz@gmail.com)



CHEERS to Chris Wiley who stopped and kindly emptied my bucket full of rubbish into his ute when I was out walking, so I could continue with my collecting. Thanks Chris. I filled that bucket up again. JEERS to those who so thoughtlessly throw their rubbish out of the car window instead of taking it home with them.

Sallie

### **GRANT TSUNAMI**

A storeroom is about to be added to the top side of the Tatong hall thanks to President Pat Manser's successful grant applications. This will enable table tennis equipment and chairs and tables to be stored, freeing up the hall floors. The storeroom will also have a roofed concrete apron at the front for outdoor BBQ type of gatherings. The slab floor will be laid very soon as long as the weather allows. Our own local concreting DeFazio family will complete this first step in the building process.

There are further grants for community infrastructure upgrades via Council's latest, up to \$20,000, building stimulus grants. Somewhat ironic that these latest funds are available, apparently, because of district drought conditions and our garden is waterlogged in places!

On top of these grants DELWP is encouraging applications for grants to install solar panels on district community halls. If only the grant writing fairy would come along, sprinkle pixie dust and 'job's done. I've got a bad case of "pandemic induced momentum deprivation disorder."

Mike Larkin

### Some more personal observations.

We keep hearing “we’re all in this together” but it seems to me that some are more together than others.

PM Scott Morrison responding to a journalist’s question during a press conference, “...don’t worry about the politics and other nonsense...”

Daniel Andrews speaking about the tightening of CoViD-19 restrictions, “... there’s no need to panic buy, you’ll be able to buy what you need, maybe not what you want, but what you need. There’s no need to panic buy...”

I hate T.L.A.s (three letter acronyms).

Since we’ve all had to wear masks, more people than ever say “hello” to you.

It is important that we say the word important correctly. So many people now say *impordant*.

Since CoViD, there has been a marked increase in parochialism in many States.

It never ceases to amaze me how many people will pick a conspiracy theory over scientific facts.

We keep being told to use common sense. There’s only one thing wrong with common sense – it’s not very common!

The cynic in me has long said that politicians are mostly concerned with getting into office and staying there. What I see now are world ‘leaders’ who are ‘engineering’ to stay in power indefinitely.

China seems to be the leading contender in the ‘Biggest Bully in the World’ contest.

Aged care more and more seems to be nothing more than a business to many providers.

Hasn’t vocabulary changed:-

We don’t have waiting lists any more, we have *wait lists*.

We aren’t asked to do something, we are *tasked* with something.

Have you ever considered *summiting* Everest?

Still ranking as the best remark I’ve heard re the CoViD restrictions – we’re asking you to stay home for a while, not go to war.

John Knapper

### Molyullah Search and Rescue Event

Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of June began a two day search for missing local, Wally McGown.

A lot of search activity in the home vicinity quickly developed that day and by that evening a staging area had been established at the Molyullah Hall. Victoria Police are the controlling agency for such events with SES, CFA, Ambulance Victoria, and others involved in different capacities.

Senior Sergeant Mark Byers of Benalla Police extends his thanks on behalf of both the Benalla and Melbourne Victoria Police crews for the effort that Molyullah CFA and other locals contributed to the event. Local area knowledge and input was valuable and appreciated. They were very thankful for our part played.

Mark emphasised that, due to COVID 19 restrictions, this search event was the most heavily restricted he had been involved in. As a result, it was perhaps not an easy control centre to work in. And some locals who came along wanting to help in any way they could, might have felt not able to contribute. I have been assured that the offers of help were heard and appreciated, but it wasn’t straightforward to organise those offers. There was consideration given to

setting up a Volunteer Manager for all those willing ‘non-aligned’ helpers, if the search had gone into the next day. So to all who turned out, whether you played an active search role, provided some food (but couldn’t access the kitchen) or felt you didn’t do anything much, I want to say that your willingness was appreciated. The spirit of togetherness and support in our community always shines at these times, and each contribution is greatly valued. Our thoughts are with the family at this time of sadness and loss.

Geoff Forman

Captain, Molyullah Brigade

*This important message from Geoff Forman was received a bit late for the August edition. Ed*

### What’s Happening at Molly Rose?

So you may have noticed that we missed last month’s Tattler and are about to do the same this month having only just remembered at 9:42pm that today is the 20<sup>th</sup>!!!

Some of the following I started writing for last month’s Tattler, part of the reason for my slackness has been the fact that I am doing a course with Global Sisters (they help women start-up businesses – check them out if you have a business idea and are a woman) on top of everything else.

The sheep are back, the last of the 2019 lambs have been processed and unexpectedly Cherry dropped twins a couple of nights ago. Sadly one did not make it. The poultry are beginning to lay again. We went from one to two eggs a week to almost one egg a day and now we are getting between 8-12 eggs a day!

Nice to have enough eggs to keep us in brownies, chocolate custard and hard boiled eggs. Speaking of brownies, it’s about time for another batch! I am beginning to lose control, especially as I’m not selling any yet as I still need to get an egg stamp because I have more than 50 laying hens. The definition of hens also includes, ducks, geese, guinea fowl etc. so I’m kinda snookered at the moment.

And as we’ll be breeding this year I will need to start incubating soon. We have the Silver Laced Barnevelder with four Barnevelder ladies. The Cream Legbars are in a pen and we have the white Muscovy girls in with ShadowKing and the black & whites in with Snowy as we’re attempting to breed white headed black & white muscovies. And the Aruacanas are all penned for breeding too. We’ll also be breeding our Andalusians, Lakenvelders, Frizzles & Welsh Harlequin ducks.

The rain’s been great, although that does mean the permanent pens are mostly mud so I am madly taking up barrow after barrow of straw to build them up enough that when it rains it drains into the garden beds on either side of the pens.

Considering I am still planning on getting some more study done and need to wash dishes before bed. I’m going to finish here.

Write you again next month! And hopefully I’ll get more written for next month! Maybe even with photos.

Carla



## Garden Daze

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



**Longer Warmer Days** - just the thing to get us out and growing.

When the rain started this year, our evening "Dog Walk" took us down to check the big dam which had reached "empty" in the summer. Slowly the little stick put in at "high tide" would gradually go under, to be replaced by another until - a great sight - the dam was overflowing.

When we decided to put in a couple of dams, we didn't have the soil tested for suitability. Which we decided later was just as well as we would have missed out on the pleasure they have given us. The soil has a lot of gravel and any test would have come back - "Don't bother" - the probably couched in more professional terms.

So happily ignorant of future leaking, the dams were dug and - beginner's luck - they filled the coming winter. And then started gradually emptying. Fortunately they don't (usually) empty completely.

We have fenced them off and trees have grown up around them and a small jetty was built into the larger one, which I am pleased to say - at the moment of writing - has most of its feet in the water.

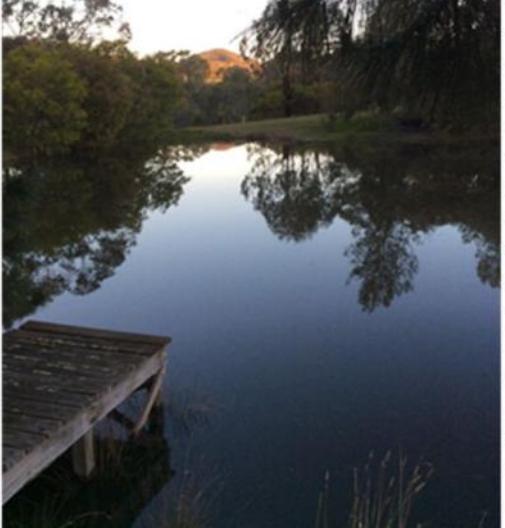
Until the leeches

moved in - we swam in it, but now we leave that activity to the ducks.

**Seed Sowing Time** - I have dug out the hole for my hot box, and there are certainly plenty of opportunities to fill it with grass clippings and chook poo, so in a day or so I hope to have it filled with the making of the "hot" part of the plan and the seeds of this year's tomato, capsicum and egg plant crops sitting in trays getting ready to sprout.



The use of the word "crops" evokes images of buckets brimming with garden produce. However, the last couple of years have been disappointing for us as far as the tomato "crop" was concerned. Not many tomatoes and the plants seemed to die very early in the season. So I was very interested to see a segment in *Gardening Australia* from Sophie who said that she had problems with Tomato Russet Mite which usually showed itself with the first wave of hot weather.



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

### **Tomato Russet Mite (*Culops lycopersici*)**

are 0.15-0.2 mm long and 0.05 mm wide. Too small to be seen with the naked eye.

These microscopic mites attack tomato, chilli and capsicum plants. The feeding by nymphs and adults causes loss of plant hairs, bronzing of the stem and death of lower leaves. Fruit ripen unevenly and immature fruit have greenish white spots. Infestations are worst in warm dry weather.

*Tomato Russet Mite is a perpetual problem for Sophie on her tomato crops, generally following significant hot dry weather, usually the first heat wave.*

*These 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 foliage of the plant will turn silver, followed by brown, from the bottom of the plant upwards. The first thing Sophie does to manage the issue is remove any affected foliage, and spray the plant with a seaweed-based plant tonic to give them a feed and a boost. If further treatment is required, a horticultural oil, soap spray or even sulphur will sort the mites out.*

*Gardening Australia Series 31 Ep 3 - 21/2/20*  
The full story is available on the ABC website.

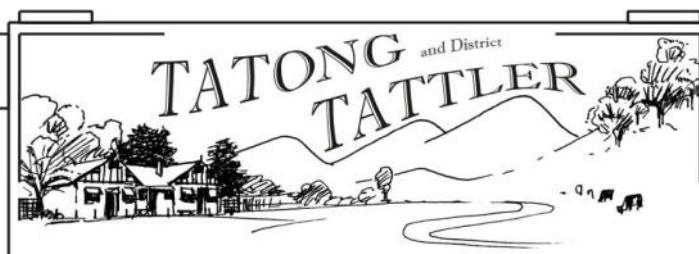


This interesting photo was sent to me by my Granddaughter who lives in the Melbourne suburb of Cheltenham. It shows a Manchurian (ornamental) Pear which still has the very small pears that some of these trees grow alongside this Springs show of blossom and new leaves.



Spring is finally here  
... I think ... Maybe  
... Hopefully.

Kathy Z



The 2020  
**Annual General Meeting**  
of the  
**Tatong Tattler Committee**  
will hopefully take place  
Some time in September  
At the Tatong Tavern.

Please watch the web page, or contact the committee, if interested in attending.

- Committee Meeting 5pm
- AGM 6pm •Dinner! 6:30



Tattler Distributors / Contributors / Readers etc.  
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## Carpobrotus Modesty



Until I read "Recollections of Squatting in Victoria" by Edward Curr, I knew "pigface" as a coastal plant. With its fat, succulent leaves and bright pink flowers, it is also a popular garden & rockery groundcover. The fruit, I did learn, is edible, and the leaves were found to be a tasty accompaniment to baked fish, by the previous management of this land. But still I thought of it as being down by the sea-side.

In Edward Curr's reminiscences of the 1840s he says, "Originally also, in conjunction with a little grass, large portions of the continent were covered with salt-bush and pigs'-face." And, "The pigs'-face, once general in that country, has also disappeared, a luxuriant growth of grass having taken its place."

He described a journey taken with his brother, from near present-day Echuca to near Pyramid Hill. "On this trip it was exceedingly hot during the day, though not at night, and the pigs'-faces were covered with ripe fruit, so, naturally, as we had been living on mutton and damper for months, we indulged in them rather more than we should have done, and suffered in consequence a smart indisposition of a few hours. The plain, for the thirty miles we followed it, from the Campaspe to Mount Hope, was one bed of ripe fruit, some juicy and some dried like raisins.

"As often, however, as I crossed the same country afterwards, I never again saw the pigs'-faces ripe, so that I fancy they only came to maturity in exceptional years. The plant is now nearly, if not quite, extinct in that locality."

Having 5 acres to plant things in, I then wanted some Inland Pigface. Hence I learnt its proper name; *carpobrotus modestus*; but being black of thumb and poor at identifying plants, I struggled to be sure of the correct stuff. I didn't want one of the other Australian varieties, or an import. This is a very old family of plants, and the ex-Gondwana lands each have their own; an African variety is called the "Hottentot Fig". And when introduced into a new environment... well, you can guess. So I sought *carpobrotus modestus*. At markets, plant stall holders tended to have several varieties and no idea which was what. One did say he had seen it growing wild, out in the bush, in remote places.

A friend gave me some cuttings, nearly sure that they were inland pigface. You can't kill them, she told me. I think she was almost impressed when I did. It was the height of summer... Friends nearby have some growing in a very healthy way. Indeed a neighbour had gone raging to Benalla council, complaining that a virulent weed was on the rampage! I gratefully accepted some cuttings, and just to be sure, took them to Park Lane nursery for verification. I was told, "Yeah, that's *carpobrotus modestus*." So I carefully dug six holes, and

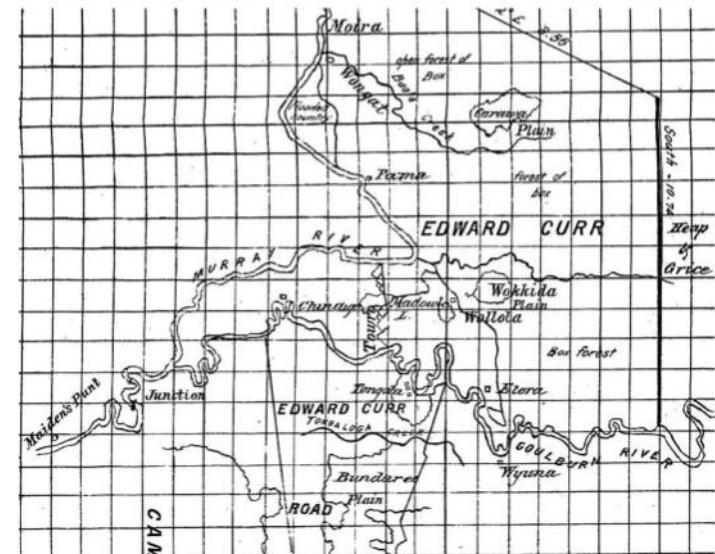
lovingly planted 6 cuttings last May, and gave them tree-guards in case Skippy thought they might be tasty. And they are still alive! They are even growing!

Then friend Noel asked if I would take some more...

Theirs was growing very enthusiastically. He gave me a wheelbarrow load full. With rain due the next day, I spent an afternoon planting the stuff all over the paddock, just making a slit with the shovel & stuffing in a cutting. No guards. Good luck little pig's faces.

Perhaps much of it will die. Possibly the wallabies, rabbits, deer, cockies, kangaroos, etc, will pull most of it out. But maybe, just maybe, in time I too will be able to over-indulge in the fruit of the "pig's face". And say to it; welcome back, did you use to hang out hereabouts, a few hundred years ago?

- Andrea Stevenson



A Tattler team member gets a feel for Ned.  
Can any reader suggest another caption for this photo?  
Results published next month.

Ed

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### BACK TO THE PLAGUE

So far so good for our district and the spread of the COVID-19 virus. I do think that eventually it will test us all just as the annual flu does, but I could be wrong, and that would be good.

The other impending difficulty is that when the Commonwealth treasury runs out of money to support the jobless, businesses and other needy situations we must do something different – a so called ‘sustainable solution’ that is able to continue indefinitely. This will be like the Swedish model which attempts to balance health with the economy.

What interests me in particular is the way a society reacts to situations like a plague which suddenly erupt and put our health and governments to the test. Because the previous widespread and deadly virus happened just over 100 years ago it is outside of the experience of nearly everyone to know what best to do. At this stage we are trying the safety first system, attempting to ‘flatten the curve’ early on so that hospitals were not overwhelmed. To prioritize the saving of lives creates other huge side effects, especially for small business, such as our own Tatong Tavern. Also isolation and shutdowns separate us all. This can be tragic for families with once in a lifetime events like births, sickness, wedding and funerals. There is growing unease about the way the population is being controlled by unelected health officials whose priorities and vision is not necessarily as broad as the governments. If this fear and safety first mentality persists we may in future find that most of the nightly news and other media is dedicated to a daily tally of deaths caused by multitudes of deadly illnesses as well as suicides, murders, business failures and every other conceivable thing. There could be one positive outcome from the current pandemic and that is a compensating increase in quality care and protection for those vulnerable to plagues. When plagues occur in future the health care of older people, will need to be managed better than it is now.

Everyone will have their own stories about the good and bad of isolation and the fear of the virus. I am having strong and sometimes disturbing dreams, not nightmares but more intense than normal. Also I have become almost obsessed with certain projects, as if I must get them done before it's 'too late!'

I'm also aware, when shopping, about behaving properly and wearing a mask because if you don't you could be publically shamed like the "Karen" of Facebook infamy. It makes me feel for all the innocent Karen's whose name is now synonymous with Bogan behaviour. It's interesting also when shopping to see who you can recognise and who recognises you. In the city where people don't say g'day to nearly everyone, (like Croc Dundee when in New York), we of the small towns know many faces and lots of locals personally. I find it tempting to just give up and concentrate on the shopping list.

Mike Larkin

### What's in a word?



### What's in a word?



As our TV's are taken over by "Talking Heads" - take a moment from the bombardment of advice and information to pity the poor speech writers.

I have a vision of well thumbed Thesaurus and much head scratching as adjectives are sought to add interest to what we are hearing daily, hourly - constantly.

A "Locked-down" city apartment friend started a list of these hard won descriptions, gleaned from the daily newspapers and much repeated TV reports . . . .

- Abnormal
- Challenging
- Changing
- Chaotic
- COVID
- COVID conscious
- Crazy
- Demanding
- Difficult
- Difficult economic
- Distressing
- Ever more complicated
- Extraordinary
- Frightening (someone's reaction to seeing the Army on the streets )
- Hard
- Hard and Hurtful
- Isolating
- Lean and uncertain
- Medically challenging
- Over-excited
- Polarising
- Strange

Strange times we're still not getting used to  
Stressful  
Tough  
Troubled  
Troubled economic  
Trying  
Uncertain  
Uncertain economic  
Unprecedented  
Unsettling  
Unusual  
Worrying  
Weird  
Wicked Nature of



Kathy Z with thanks to Aileen N

When I asked if you had a good idea to remind me not to touch my face . . . this isn't quite what I had in mind.



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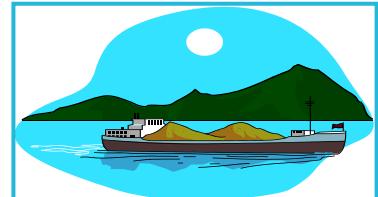
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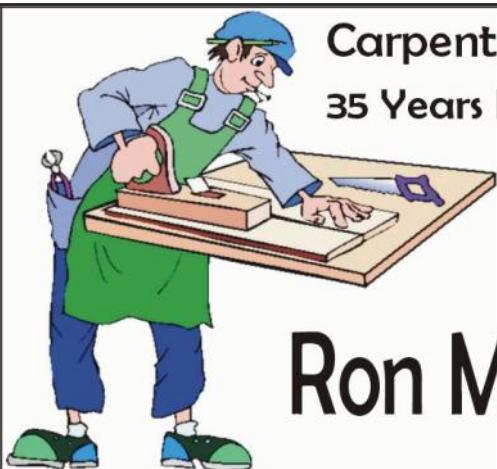
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Welcome addition to the Tatong Community:

Chris and Joelle Gaudion welcomed the arrival of little Harry Richard on 15 May, 2020 at 2.47pm. He weighed 3.605 kilos and is not too heavy for his sister, Sophie, to nurse. Congratulations to all. *Janette*

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2010	39	153.7	86.4	65.2	67.5	82.8	67.5	162.1	116.8	123.7	109.2	150.8	1224.7
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						568.3

#### WEATHER IN THE TATONG TOWNSHIP

The rainfall for all of July was 43.5mm and up until the 15<sup>th</sup> of August we have had 36.8mm. Currently the weather is feeling Spring-like and it shows in the garden with prodigious growth especially in the lawn grass and weeds.  
Mike Larkin



## The Last Supper



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

Donations can be:

- ▲ 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.

**DEADLINE**

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

Submit via e-mail to [tatongtattler@yahoo.com.au](mailto:tatongtattler@yahoo.com.au) or post to: Darcy Hogan, 150 Mt Joy Rd, Tatong, 3673.

**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.