

Byron Baes: Beyond the hype

Netflix Director
of Content,
Que Minh Luu.



For a couple of weeks during April, Bangalow's most popular Facebook site, Bangalow Community and Beyond, lit up with debate about Netflix's docu-soap Byron Baes. A petition was shared demanding that filming rights for the show be refused. Posts highlighted a range of opinions amongst the site's 1.6k members. So, who exactly is Que Minh Luu, the Netflix Director of Content ANZ who commissioned the show? **Jim Hearn** talks with **Que Minh Luu** for *The Bangalow Herald*.

Byron Baes is a hot topic. Everyone seems to have an opinion about Netflix coming to town to make a reality TV show about a bunch of Instagram influencers strutting their stuff around the Bay. Those opinions though, are

based on an unproduced and unseen show. After speaking at length with Que Minh Luu, it's safe to say the series will be different to what most people think.

Looking at her career and body of work

to date, it's hard to find any evidence that points to Byron Baes being 'tacky', 'gender-stereotypical', 'exploitative' or 'trashy' - all accusations that have been fired at it sight unseen. *(continued p.4)*

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From the editor

Who knew a reality TV show could be so controversial? The stakes involved in writing about Byron Baes seem illogically high and I can't help but wonder why?

There doesn't appear to be a simple answer. Advocates and protesters are equally certain about the reason for the noise and passion about it.

It doesn't work to simply dismiss that passion. People are emotional about the idea of Netflix coming to town to make a reality TV show about influencers. That emotion is neither right or wrong, nor good or bad. It exists, and my interview with Que Minh Luu is an attempt to understand as much about the topic as possible.

The other big story this month is Murray Hand's article about the quality, or lack thereof, of Internet bandwidth and mobile phone reception in Bangalow and 2479 more broadly. As virtually every local will tell you, the Internet around here is a joke. This is an issue worth protesting.

The fact that many businesses on main street can't accurately predict if their ATMs will be working on any given day is ludicrous.

On a more positive note, we preview a range of artists about upcoming theatrical and comedic work that deserves your attention. And don't miss Rebecca Sergeant's regular column, Writing Home, which true to form for experimental writing, manages to explore, analyse and open up all the themes of this month's issue in a unique, experimental way.

Have a great start to winter, and I trust as news of elections State and Federal begin to dominate the media landscape, you'll be sufficiently engaged to help keep the bastards honest.

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Council Matters

Farewell Mayor Richardson

Being the Mayor is a tough gig - impossible to please all of the people all of the time. But irrespective of your political persuasion, Simon remained committed to his job and the Shire throughout deeply difficult personal circumstances. During his term of office Simon stood up for Bangalow on innumerable occasions. At times when our community's voice just couldn't cut through, Simon would use his Mayoral voice, often at the last minute, to affect an outcome. We wish him and his family all the best for the future. His two daughters are lucky to have him.

We also welcome Cr Michael Lyon as the new Mayor who will hold office until Council elections are held on 4 September.

Healthy Mindset Workshop

Business owners in the Byron Shire are invited to attend a free workshop that aims to provide strategies and tools to cope with the mental stress of owning or running a small business. Facilitated by Mullumbimby Psychology, the workshop will look at skills to help people manage burnout and how to look after their mental health. Council ran a similar workshop last year which was well received. They are running it again in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses in the Shire. The workshop will be held on 10 June 2021, 8:45am – 3:30pm at the Cavanbah Centre on Ewingsdale Road. Lunch will be provided. Register by emailing Irishards@byron.nsw.gov.au

Project updates

The new shared path down Station Street (south), along Deacon and Ashton Streets is under construction. Deacon Street has seen increases in both vehicle and pedestrian traffic with the two new playgrounds in the Parklands, Heritage House, the church, the Op Shop and the mobile library. The large coaches that use Ashton and Deacon Streets leave no safe room for pedestrians, strollers and children.

Council are still waiting on the results of the Speed Review at the intersection of Lismore and Rifle Range Roads that was conducted by Transport for NSW.

Plans are currently being drawn up for the Byron Street upgrade which will run from the primary school across Snow's Bridge.

Jenny Bird



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Every row, column and cluster, including the fragmented pink cluster, must contain the numbers 1 to 6.

Byron Baes: Beyond the hype

(from page 1) After graduating from Macquarie University, Que worked as a freelance film editor for eleven years. Then she landed a plum job at film and television production house Matchbox Pictures where she worked in script development. Moving onwards and upwards she shifted to the ABC to work with Head of Scripted, Sally Riley as the ABC's Executive Producer of Drama, Comedy and Indigenous. While at the ABC, Que produced a collection of 'genre bending' shows including highly acclaimed *The Heights*, *Retrograde* and *Content*, as well as detective drama *Harrow* and comedy *Frayed*. "I like to take popular mainstream film and television genres and subvert them" says Que. "That's what we're doing with Byron Baes and the reality show thing. It will be a reality show, a docu-soap, but different to what people might expect."

Que tackles diversity and inclusion head on in all her productions - across script development, casting and crew. *The Heights*, for example, was described by *The Guardian* as 'a warm, complex and credible soap opera', one that 'attempts to depict Australian life in its myriad forms,' a soap opera that interrogates class and identity.

It's also hard to reconcile accusations that Byron Baes will be exploitative of women. This might have as much to do with stereotypes of influencers as it does with Que. Last year Que

was invited to join 17 other influential women in the Australian film and television industry on Screen Australia's Gender Matters Taskforce. In 2017 she won an Australian Writers Guild Award for an interactive audio drama designed as a smartphone application called *The Ghosts of Biloela*. The app brings alive historical stories of girls interned on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour during the 1870s.

As previously reported, Que blames the press release for Byron Baes creating wrong impressions of the show. "We got the press release wrong. It created a snowball effect that led to local upset and misconceptions about what we're doing with the show, which, yes, is a reality TV show, but it's also a great medium to tell stories about real people and topical issues. The rise of influencers is a topical story, and we explore why that is by getting to know a bunch of influential people - both established and on the rise - who live in Byron Bay.

The people we feature include artists, musicians, designers, entrepreneurs, spiritual guides, fitness instructors, and yes, models. Some were born and raised in Byron and some have been in town for six months, which seemed to reflect the reality of the region. Everyone featured is really invested in their passions and how influence can strengthen them. Given social media provides people with the opportunity to do that - including some of

the folks opposed to the production - our show will explore how specific people in a particular location are communicating their message and identity to their followers, and each other. The show is very much about scratching beneath the surface impressions of the influencers and getting to know them as real people.

It's become something of a cultural phenomenon that influencers are vilified because of cliched or gendered stereotypes about what influencers are, and that's something the show examines too. What we care about in the stories we're making are the human beings behind the images. And it'll be fun."

When asked about why she chose Byron Bay as a site to explore such themes, Que says without hesitation: "People love Byron. They aspire to it. If a town could be an influencer, it would be Byron Bay. Growing up as a young Vietnamese Australian, Byron Bay represented to me a type of iconic, archetypal sense of what Australia and Australianness means. But my cultural heritage also makes me familiar with the pain of having my community misrepresented. If you peel the surface off that idealised Byron you find that things aren't all that perfect with increasing wealth disparity, a housing and accommodation crisis, and tensions between recent arrivals and long-term residents. We've always been aware of that, and the show goes beyond the surface definition of 'influencer' for



both the participants and the town itself. Of course, it isn't a social impact documentary, it's a docusoap, because personal stories are universally relatable and compelling to audiences and that's our way into saying something more."

The fact that Netflix is now making shows about Australians using recognisable Australian locations is not something that people protesting the commissioning of Byron Baes seem to take into consideration. And there are other Australian productions in the pipeline. As Que says, "We're rebooting *Heartbreak High* for a new generation as well as commissioning a bunch of other shows that we'll release more details about in the coming months."

One of the criticisms about the production that Que is most keen to clarify is that Netflix didn't follow protocols when commissioning the show.

"I came to Netflix via the ABC and I want to assure people that I am aware of the protocols surrounding consultation with First Nations communities. We've followed the same guidelines as every other film and TV production that's come to the area in that respect. As an aside, the production was in touch with the local council early on. But we also know there's so much more to do when it comes to working

with the Traditional Owners. It's something we've been working on behind the scenes to address, it's not a one off conversation and it's

The fact that Netflix is now making shows about Australians using recognisable Australian locations is not something that people protesting the commissioning of Byron Baes seem to take into consideration.

much bigger than just this show. It has kept me up at night but we're doing what we can and it's a priority."

Que is also keen for people to understand that Netflix ANZ is made up of a very small team: "As an organisation, Netflix ANZ is tiny. The content folks are currently a scrappy little team of three being extremely mindful about what an Australian Netflix show is. So we're

testing a number of ideas through our slate creatively and we're on the ground as part of the local ecosystem working within local industry standards. We want to be a rising tide for the Australian and New Zealand industry, not an earthquake, and keeping to those standards is about keeping the sector robust, and not outpricing or outgunning the other local broadcasters."

When asked about the relationship between Screenworks and Netflix, Que says: "Ken Crouch at Screenworks in Ballina is an important ongoing partner for us, and provided firm, thoughtful feedback about our press release after it was published, and we took that on board. We understand why the press release wasn't great and we've learned from that. But we also ask that people in the Northern Rivers don't judge us too harshly for that. The show is going to be fun as well as insightful. Yes, it's reality TV, yes, it features influencers in Byron Bay, but the stories that are emerging are about thoughtful, creative, passionate young people; their relationships, hopes and dreams. Our partners at Eureka are dedicated, talented professionals with integrity trying to make an excellent show, and all we ask is that people judge us on the final product. We know it won't be for everyone, but it's more than people think. We absolutely believe in it."

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Far-fetched? Not at all! A lack of a reliable Internet and phone service is a constant problem in Bangalow, particularly in the main business precinct. The Summerland Credit Union's ATM is down at least once a week. Visitors can't believe that locals, who seem to have the world at our feet, don't have modern telephonic services. It's a source of constant embarrassment and frustration for retailers.

Local entrepreneur, Heath Donald, wants to fix our Internet problems. Heath owned a Government and Enterprise Telecommunications provider for 10 years before moving to Bangalow. He is passionate about quality Internet and doing something to bring us into the 21st century. He has started a petition at Change.org to lobby the



Main Street retailers seeking Internet connection and mobile phone reception

NBN to bring fibre technology to Bangalow. He has already had meetings with them. The NBN wants data about demand so Heath has launched a survey to capture the relevant information (go to <https://bangalow-nbn.com>). The original NBN announcement was in

2007. It was a good idea but poorly budgeted (by about \$20b the industry estimated). Every government since has made shortcut changes to get the job done. COVID has proved that demand for online services is far greater than current technology can provide.



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Fixed wireless was never designed to be used by business, as admitted by the NBN on their web site. Some businesses in town are still using ADSL, which is being switched off now, while those using the NBN are on FTTN, which uses copper cable. The copper network is impacted by distance and rainwater which makes it slow and unreliable.



Heath Donald

Photos: Karla Conroy

FTTP uses fibre, which has no distance limitations and will work under water.

So, what about 5G? Heath says it is not a suitable substitute for fibre as it is impacted by load. A bus load of school kids passing

through town on their mobile phones will cause everyone's Internet speed to slow down.

Bangalow has a huge growing demand for Internet services, especially since COVID. People have moved to online business, are working from home, and thinking of new ways to be pandemic proof. There are a lot of creative people in the area who rely on the Internet for income.

As a demonstration of what is achievable with fibre to the premises, Heath has launched the Aussie Sounds project with a view to enable live performances from Bangalow's A&I Hall. The technology provides performers with access to a live global audience. This is a project born from COVID. Heath will be conducting a pilot starting in June from the A&I Hall, which will soon be connected to fibre Internet.

Upgrading the town's internet to fibre will keep jobs local and provide opportunities for the next generation.

An added benefit will be access to fast Internet on the Bangalow showground, which will be receiving wi-fi coverage from the A&I Hall, enabling live streaming of events on the showground, and on market days, quicker eftpos transactions for stall holders.

Once our Internet is brought up to an acceptable standard, all we need is decent mobile phone coverage.

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Bangalow Koalas volunteers, landholder Gray Pritchett, East Coast Bush Regeneration, and the Minyumbi Rangers

100,000 trees and counting

This week Bangalow Koalas Inc. has reached an important milestone. They have planted their 100,000th tree on a property in Bungawalbin in the Northern Rivers. It's hard to imagine that many trees but it's enough to plant an area the size of the MCG 2.5ha.

The 100,000th tree planted is the culmination of 49 plantings on 37 properties since 2018. Eighty per cent of those trees have been planted since the devastating Black Summer bushfires of 2019/20.

It's easy to underestimate the amount of work that goes into finding willing landowners, securing funding, preparing the land and planting each tree, one at a time, by hand.

It wouldn't be possible without the hundreds of volunteers who turn up to plant trees on both weekdays and Saturday mornings. It wouldn't be possible without the tightknit team at the core of Bangalow Koalas Inc. led by President Linda Sparrow. And it wouldn't be possible without the support of the individuals,

companies, charities and government departments that provide funding.

The planting of 4,500 trees at Bungawalbin is Stage 1 of 7,450 trees funded by WWF Australia's Koalas Forever Program, with trees funded by One Tree Planted and Forestry NSW. WWF have entered into a three-year funding commitment with Bangalow Koalas that will help them plant an additional 100,000 trees.

Bangalow Koalas won't be resting up after



Linda Sparrow with landholders Gray Pritchett and Suellen Thompson

the 100,000th tree is planted, their aim is to plant 250,000 by the end of 2025 to create a Koala Wildlife Corridor across the Northern Rivers. Linda Sparrow said, 'If there's one lesson we've learnt, it's that real impact can only happen with collaboration. Individuals, companies, charities and government, all working together to protect our beautiful and precious biodiversity.'

To enlist in the Koala Wildlife Corridor, volunteer to plant trees or donate, contact Bangalow Koalas Inc. at president@bangalowkoalas.com.au



George Catsi

Photo: Jay Penfold

Tragedy and Comedy in Epic Tale

George Catsi is bringing his personal brand of Greek pathos and comedy to town with his one-man-show, *Am I Who I Say I Am?* **Rebecca Sargeant** finds out.

George Catsi describes his career path as “an exploration of ideas”.

He is a man of diverse interests and talents, from working as a nurse, producing film festivals, performing and devising satirical work, an academic, collaborator, community facilitator and mentor. He’s busy, always exploring ideas, and often through the medium of storytelling, which he describes as “an inherent part of my curiosity”.

His capacity to draw narrative connections between personal experience and broader cultural issues, and his natural talent for performance, are showcased in his comedic memoir *Am I Who I Say I Am?* The show, which was presented at the Sydney Comedy Festival, has been described as ‘an exquisite balance of poignancy and pants-wetting hilarity – often at the same time’.

The show draws on themes which have informed much of Catsi’s work over a long period. Themes that revolve around identity, religion and resilience.

Catsi is a seasoned writer and performer. He has won an Australian Writers’ Guild AWGIE award, and received a Kit Denton Fellowship for courage and excellence in performance writing. He enjoyed success in the 90s with the performance trio *God’s Cowboys*, and more recently, presented a multi-platform theatre project *I want to be Slim*.

While he has previously mixed elements of memoir into his performances – such as his experience of growing up as a Greek boy under the sway of evangelical Baptists – *Am I Who I Say I Am?* is the first time he’s performed as himself.

Authenticity is an idea that interests him: “how do I be me, publicly?” Catsi also runs Authentic You Masterclasses with Mandy Nolan, which encourage participants to speak their own powerful narrative.

As an exploration of self, *Am I Who I Say I Am?* revolves around Catsi’s father, a man who he describes as larger-than-life, and Catsi’s reckoning with his father’s contradictions and

entitled sense of masculinity.

But Catsi is a comedian and storyteller, and in true Greek tradition, the show is both a tragedy and comedy.

Catsi loves a local bowllo. As President of the Petersham Bowling Club, he is proud of the Club’s achievements in turning its fortunes from death’s door to a thriving community and cultural hub. He hates pokies, and is all about creating a place with soul, where different members of the community interact and connect.

Am I Who I Say I Am? promises to resonate at the Bangalow Bowlo, a place where Catsi will no doubt feel at home.

The Federal show is inviting guests to go THE FULL GREEK, featuring a vego Greek feast by Ilias the Greek and maybe even a little dancing with plate smashing!

Am I Who I Say I Am? Thursday, 17 June 2021, 6pm, Federal Hall (\$50) and Saturday, 19 June 2021, 7:30pm, Bangalow Bowlo (\$30).

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A collective response to the growing housing crisis

With sky-rocketing house prices and limited affordable rental options, the region's housing crisis has reached a tipping point. However, a small but determined group of women have banded together to create innovative housing solutions.

The Women's Village Collective was formed in 2020 in direct response to the housing crisis impacting women across the Northern Rivers. Women still experience significant barriers to buying their own house and are the largest group experiencing homelessness across the country. Facing added disadvantage when applying for rentals as a single parent or older woman, and fierce competition for limited rental stock, are all factors that contribute to what Women's Village Collective Managing Director Sama Balson calls "a housing emergency".

The Women's Village Collective was started by Sama as a call to action after seeing a woman in the online accommodation page, Soulful Abodes, rejected from a rental property because she had a baby. "This was not the first time I had witnessed this, it was simply the final straw. As a sole parent myself, my heart went out to this woman and so many others that are being unfairly discriminated against," Sama says.

The recent influx of city escapees after COVID, the lack of social housing, and the massive increases in short-term holiday letting depleting permanent rental availability, have all added to housing pressure for a growing number of people in the community.



Photo: Samuel Holt

With some people spending up to 80% of their income on rent, the average wage earner, let alone those on lower incomes or benefits, are slowly being priced out of the community.

Maxine has been looking for a rental for the last 12 months without any luck. She runs a family business in Mullumbimby, but increasing rental prices might force her family out of the area. With an impending valuation being done on their current rental, Maxine says "We know that we'll eventually need to move so we've been looking since pre-COVID. All over the region from Bangalow up to Cabarita, we have noticed the number of rentals has decreased and prices have steadily increased so the options are so limited. This isn't only in the residential market but the commercial market as well."

In response to the growing housing crisis, the Women's Village Collective has a clear goal to make real and lasting changes for women that will benefit the whole community. To address the issue of housing insecurity and homelessness, the group is researching and developing sustainable and affordable housing models to assist women to secure short, medium and long term accommodation. The group has been actively engaged with key stakeholders including property developers; landlords; councils; local, state and federal housing

bodies; lending institutions; holiday parks and more.

With determination and an online community of over 2,500 people, the Women's Village Collective is exploring a range of solutions to address housing insecurity including stakeholder partnerships, impact investment funds, innovative housing alternatives, accommodation listing platforms, managed rentals and co-equity home ownership. Reflecting on the groups achievements, Sama says "We have built a grassroots movement and network that is galvanising and unifying people to address this housing emergency. We have brought stakeholders together with the means and resources to create lasting solutions. Alongside the action group on social media, we have created an accommodation group, where people list and seek properties to rent. I have heard from many women that they have found homes and land to park their vans or caravan through our networks."

As a volunteer-led organisation, the Women's Village Collective is keen to hear from anyone who is interested to share their skills, donate or get involved. For more information contact Sama at womensvillagecollective@gmail.com or call Board member Alison Crook on 0416 101 040. Follow their Facebook page for the latest updates.

Kieryn Deutrom



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RENT

Musical theatre is set to return to the A&I Hall as the Bangalow Theatre Company re-boots its production of RENT



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The cast of RENT
Photo: Anna Podgorczyk

Alphabet city, lower east-side New York, late 1980's: against a gritty urban backdrop, a Bohemian arts culture emerges despite the ravages of drugs, poverty and AIDS.

Created by Jonathan Larson and drawing inspiration from both his own life experience, and Puccini's classic opera *La Boheme*, RENT was one of the longest-running shows on Broadway, lasting 12 years after its debut in 1996.

Director Anouska Gammon says that while the local production will be very authentic to its New York city roots, the parallels to life in the Byron Shire today are uncanny.

"Themes of homelessness, gentrification and the displacement of community are obviously very topical in Byron at the moment," says Anouska, "as well as the threat of an unknown disease".

The Bangalow Theatre Company was forced to postpone their planned production last year, five months into pre-production, as a result of COVID.

But the authenticity of the production lies not just in the physical reproduction of an era - the set design will comprise recycled material either donated or sourced from the tip shop, and costumes are being curated from local op-shops - but in the make-up of the cast.

"We have an incredibly talented young cast of performers who really embody the cultural moment and live the diversity of lifestyles celebrated in RENT," says Anouska. "I think that's what makes this show so exciting. There's a real momentum that's built around the youth, enthusiasm, talent and diversity of our cast."

Lead roles include BTC veteran Tia McQueen Nelson, who has previously appeared in the BTC's productions of *Little*

Shop of Horrors and *Chicago*, and local musician Mikey Bryant, who is making his first foray into musical theatre, having previously performed at Splendour in the Grass with his band, Mt Warning.

"RENT is memorable for its songs - described in *The New Yorker* as passionate, unpretentious and powerful - and we have been lucky to bring together such incredible vocal talent to perform for us in Bangalow", says Anouska.

When Lauren Daneel relocated to the Northern Rivers for a work placement, the surgical registrar and mother of two young children never imagined she'd have the opportunity to reconnect with her former dance teacher.

"I'm currently on maternity leave," says Lauren, "and when I saw the call-out for auditions, I put together a video and sent it in."

When she attended a follow-up audition, she introduced herself to Anouska as a former student; Anouska had taught Lauren 15 years ago at the Australian Institute of Performing Arts in Sydney.

"So much of what we aim to do at the BTC is about community-building and providing opportunities for locals to be involved with live performance," says Anouska.

"RENT just feels like the perfect fit for us right now - the plight of the struggling artist to create and connect, against a backdrop of change, materialism and indifference."

RENT, 15-24 July 2021, A&I Hall.
Tickets (\$50) on sale 1 June 2021 at www.bangalowtheatre.com.au. Student and Industry preview night, 16 years and older, 14 July 2021, Student tickets available with valid Student ID (\$10 cash at door, 14 July show only).

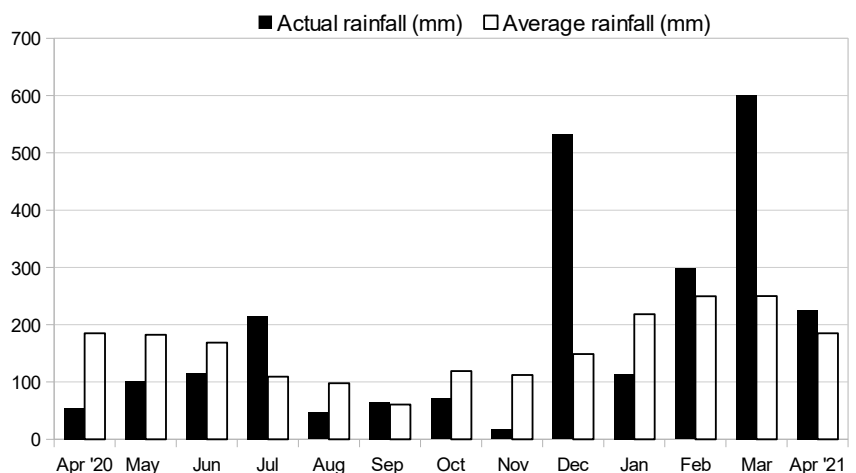
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Keep doing your thing

Yaegl Bundjalung man Mitch King is in the final stages of polishing his original work, *Flow*, for NORPA. From a shy Year 7 boy at St John's College Woodlawn, Mitch at 35 is an accomplished rapper, spoken word poet and contemporary dancer.

What's at the heart of *Flow*?

The Clarence River. It's the central thing that we Yaegl people always return to – swimming, fishing, hanging out on the river, ancestor stories about its creation, me as an adult coming back and connecting with the river in my own way. When I see the river, I'm home.

It's also about connecting back to culture and expressing ancient stories through contemporary styles. I'm not a knowledge holder, or a custodian, but I admire those who are, and I want to acknowledge them through this work. Our ancestors and our culture have beautiful stories and we have to keep telling them in different forms while keeping respect with cultural tradition, making sure we don't devalue our cultural integrity.

Flow is rap and rhyming, dance, storytelling, poetry and some beautiful visuals of country.

How did hip hop fit with being a young black man in Lismore?

I spent my childhood on Yaegl country in MacLean where I grew up close to culture. And my cousins all listened to rap music. Then we moved to Lismore, to Widjabul country. I could see both disadvantage and opportunities all around me. You can get into sport or creative culture. For me it was listening to American rap music and hip hop. I felt like there was a connection with a universal black culture. I was trying to figure out who I was and where I



Mitch King

Photo: Tree Faerie courtesy of NORPA



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Mapping Biirrinba depicting the Clarence River by Yaegl artist Frances Belle Parker whose work is featured in *Flow*

fitted and felt frustrated about my identity. Hip hop culture supported me through that time. People look at you and see 'young, black and violent'. The world told me I would amount to nothing, be a disappointment, end up in jail. Hip hop gave me a positive way to be rebellious. Plus, I had a strong role model in my mum - a tough woman with a strong spirit. She kept me on track and played a massive role in who I am today.

What's your rap performance history?

Me and two older students used to freestyle rap out the front of the Woodlawn sports complex at lunchtime. One guy would beatbox and the other two freestyle. I was really shy, but they encouraged me, got me into the art form. I didn't know how to write a song, we just made stuff up, rapping about things we saw. It took until Year 9 to perform in front of anyone. We had to do a performance piece for music, so I did a cover of Xzibit by Multiply. I did music for my HSC and both my teachers (Mr Gahan and Mr Price) encouraged me. A good education in music helped me articulate my delivery.

At 19, I became a dad and went to work as a youth worker to support my family. I didn't do much music for years. Then I got interested in making music again - connecting with people, performing in little gigs here and there and



Mitch and Blake Rhodes.

Photo: Tree Faerie courtesy of NORPA

making music at home.

I ran a community event called Aussie Battlers for two years - hip hop and dancing rap battles on Survival Day. I was the event co-ordinator, so was picking up event skills. Blake Rhodes and I performed at the Falls Festival in 2014.

And what about your dance history?

I didn't start dancing until my 20s. I didn't have much confidence because I was bigger. I'm a self-taught dancer. I just watch others, learn, and soak it up. My main frame is a hip hop language of words and dance/movement, but I translate it into my own style. I've never looked at traditional dance and thought 'oh I could interpret that through hip hop'.

Who are you collaborating with on *Flow*?

I started developing *Flow* in 2019 when I won an Indigenous Makers' Studio - Artist Residency with NORPA. My main creative partner is Blake Rhodes who I met 8-10 years ago. He likes music and I like rhyming. Blake is the composer. He's on stage with me doing the music live instead of being out the back.

There are three strong women who are key to the show. The Producer Letila Mitchell is a Pacific Islander, the Director Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal is of Indonesian heritage, and Bundjalung woman Rhoda Roberts is adding her wisdom to the whole process - the script, the movement, the performance. So, it's a first nations team from the Asia/Pacific region.

What would you say now to your 12 year old self?

I'd say keep doing your own thing. Things will make sense in the future. Trust yourself.

Jenny Bird

Flow will premiere at Lismore City Hall as part of NORPA's 2021 season on July 2-3. Tickets are available at norpa.org.au



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Sparks like Stars by Nadia Hashimi

Born in 1977, Nadia Hashimi is an Afghan American paediatrician, international best-selling author of four books, a former Democratic congressional candidate, and mother to four children. One wonders how a person is able to fit so much into a single life.

Afghanistan is at the centre of her stories, even though Hashimi was born in the USA.

Sitara Zamani, the ten-year-old main protagonist of *Sparks like Stars*, lives an idyllic, privileged life in Kabul. It is 1978 and her father is the chief consultant to President Daoud of Afghanistan. Her mother, father and three-year-old brother have their own home but frequently stay-over in their rooms at the Presidential Palace to attend functions. Hidden behind a curtain late at night there is a bloody coup and Sitara witnesses the slaughter of the Presidential family and her own family. One of the security guards who has been kind to the children in the past discovers her hidden in the library and plans her escape from the palace. But, despite his efforts to secure her safety, she is convinced that she witnessed him pulling the trigger on her parents and harbours anger and resentment against him for many years.

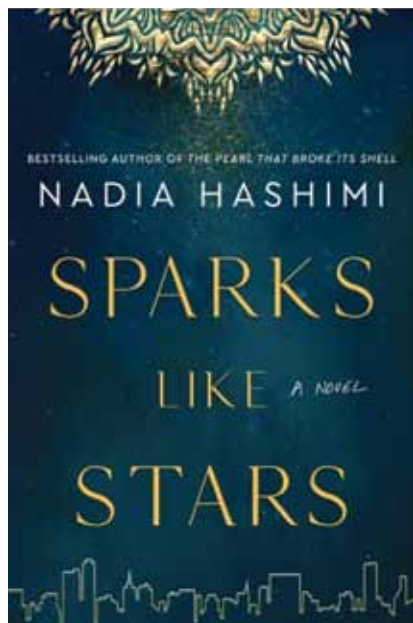
This first part of the book is a roller-coaster ride of danger and high emotion convincingly told as Sitara is assisted by Nia, an American Embassy worker, to achieve passage to the USA, firstly through diplomatic channels, but then as a refugee.

Part two of the book is thirty years later, and Sitara has achieved the dreams of her beloved father and become a Specialist Oncologist in New York. However, she is very damaged from PTSD, has not stuck with any meaningful therapy, has not had any meaningful love interests, is a workaholic, and runs at all hours of the night to relieve stress. The one constant in her life since the tragedy is her adoptive mother, Nia.

One day, a ghost from the past arrives in her consulting room and disrupts the equanimity she has managed to achieve.

As with other novels by Nadia Hashimi, I thoroughly enjoyed this book too.

Carolyn Adams, Bookworms & Papermites



Mulan: Before the Sword by Grace Lin

Although from the same family, Mulan and her sister Xiu are very different. Mulan is adventurous and likes to ride her horse Black Wind. At home, she is clumsy and doesn't do anything right. Her sister Xiu is elegant and well mannered, the perfect daughter. Mulan's parents say a daughter should bring honour to their family, but can Mulan do that?

Racing through the village on her horse Black Wind, Mulan sets out to save her younger sister Xiu, bitten by a nine-legged white spider. Mulan has to make a decoction of Dragon Beard Grass and a freshly picked blossom of the Essence of Heavenly Majesty otherwise Xiu will die.

To save her sister, Mulan must travel through mountains

and rivers with the immortal healer, the Jade Rabbit. As Mulan sets out on her quest, she faces a deceitful demon named Daji, who can transform herself into anything she likes - a spider, a graceful woman, an old hag, but her real form is the white fox.

I loved this book and how there are stories inside the story. After you've read one chapter you just



Eadie reading *Before the Sword* at Red Ginger Bangalow

want to read the next. This book is a magical tale and an exciting adventure. Some parts are a bit eerie but I really wanted to discover whether Mulan saves her sister.

Grace Lin has written other books based on Chinese mythology including *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, *When the Sea Turned to Silver* and *Starry River of the Sky*. *Mulan: Before the Sword* is good for 8-14 year olds and anyone who likes mythical stories full of adventure.

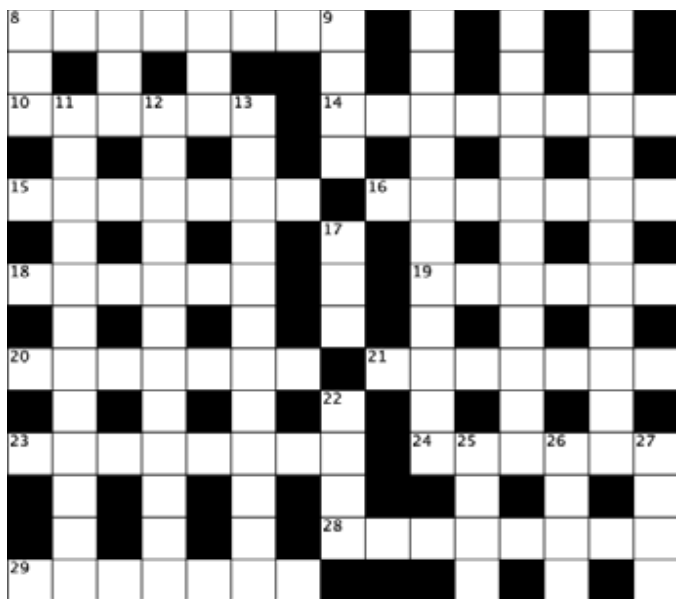
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ACROSS

- 4 Artificial intelligence covers recent presumption. (1,6)
 8 Just an idea, but could these sailors be in front of a piece of land. (8)
 10 across, 2 down, 17 down.
 However bat hits tea last month. (2,4,2,2,3)
 14 Intellectual properties that surround yours truly found in the waiting room. (8)
 15 Rock the debts around Greater Network Enterprises. (7)
 16 Southern sailors up to no good? (5,2)
 18 Pointed to some bangle down on your ankle. (6)
 19 Returned best tax collector for chips maker. (6)
 20 Weirdo made sod trod weird. (3,4)
 21 Fixes aspirer. (7)
 23 Succinct description of six great new beginnings before the easterlies surround the abstainer (8)
 24 Sped direction. Mixed outlays. (6)

- 28 Was allowed in and confessed. (8)
 29 In part Dirk Somers was so tedious. (7)

DOWN

- 1 Alternatively leads mobs to this innocent creature. (4)
 2 See 10 across.
 3 Almost an eureka moment! Kev and Eric removed carbamide (4)
 5 Appropriation of snaps in the office? (12)
 6 Assessment follows the concern for mortgage issue. (8,4)
 7 Reorganised returd truces (12)
 9 Rising mark is best. (4)
 11 Steerer of motorized water course. (6,6)
 12 Sounds like he'd had insufficient monster freedom. (12)
 13 The endless, endless subordinate ring Reginald Menzies outburst. (7,5)
 17 See 10 across.
 22 Much improved letter. (4)
 25 Fair container. (4)
 26 College returns memo. (4)
 27 Team leaders show inadequate duty experience. (4)

Welcome to the revolution

There is movement at the station in the wine ranks recently - a return to days when less was best. The organic approach to farming where fruit is grown without the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides or fertilisers has been a precursor to a mini revolution in winemaking and a return to the past commonly referred to as 'minimal intervention' or the 'natural wine' movement. The minimal intervention approach to winemaking usually involves the use of wild yeasts to initiate ferment and little else. Sulphur dioxide is used sparingly or not at all (read labels to check).



Unico Zelo Esoterica 2020 (\$25)
Available at The Cellar, Bangalow

These wines embrace the natural characteristics of the grape, but the process can produce cloudy, unusual wines that differ from the traditional fare that most wine drinkers are used to. In short, some people love them, others not so much. There is a younger demographic however, without preconceived ideas of what wine should taste, or look like, that are gravitating towards these funky, hipster offerings. A wine that has achieved a very, healthy following amongst this audience is the Unico Zelo Esoterica.

The 2020 vintage of this wine presents as pale, golden orange in the glass despite a little cloudiness. To the nose, think cold, black tea with a little herby spice in the background. It's all candied orange peel up front on the palate, but any confectionary is immediately balanced by a zesty, fruit tingle line of acidity and ultra-fine tannins, courtesy of 14 days on skins. Winemakers Brendan and Laura Carter have blended exotics Zibbibo, Gewürztraminer and Moscato with a little Greco and Fiano, all unfinned and unfiltered, to produce a beguiling, more-ish wine that continues to win fans year after year. Indulge yourself, enjoy!

Wayne Steele



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Antique Windsor Chairs

Bill Tracey, former host of *Antiques and Collectables* on 2UE Sydney, provides a monthly roundup of what's happening in the local and national antiques market.

What is a Windsor chair? This uniquely English chair has a thick, one-piece, wooden seat into which the legs are mortised from below and the spindles forming the backrest are slotted in from above. Unlike other chairs, the back legs have no connection at all with the chair back.

The solid seat is frequently made of elm, a decoratively grained wood resistant to splitting. The legs, back-rest and arm-bow are usually of other native woods such as ash, beech, fruitwood, walnut and sometimes yew.

Many 19th century Windsors also have a central back splat fretted out to form a wheel (Wheelback Windsors). The backrests of Windsor chairs also take various forms: low backs, comb backs, bow backs, and Windsors without a back splat are sometimes referred to as stick-backs.

Windsor side chairs (those without arms) and armchairs made in the 19th century have turned legs united by transverse and side stretchers and were often stamped with the maker's name. By contrast, 18th century Windsors, especially those made in the Thames Valley region, often have cabriole legs and the makers are largely unknown.

History: In the early 18th century, Windsor chairmakers were centred in small workshops around Windsor and Slough near London. Later in the 18th Century, as popularity grew, larger furniture makers like Gillows of Lancaster also made and supplied Windsor chairs.

The main period of Windsor chair production

Outstanding 19th century oak 'Yorkshire' Windsor armchair- Insurance Value \$3000



Faded elm 'shortback' Windsor with crinoline stretcher - Insurance Value \$1400



was the 19th century. However, the design originated in the early 18th century. Earliest known models date to around 1720.

In the 19th century, areas around High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire became major centres for Windsor chair production. As popularity soared, makers sprang up all over the country, each developing models with individual design features. Today, the areas from which these pieces originated can be readily identified according to individual design features.

Lincolnshire Windsors have distinctive leg turning that often differs from that seen in chairs from Nottinghamshire. Also, Windsors made in Mendlesham, Suffolk have rectangular backrests unlike any other Windsors.



Elm and oak 'shortback' Windsor circa 1880 - Insurance Value \$1400

The earliest 18th Century Windsors bring big money, selling for \$4,000 to \$6,000 apiece. It is notable that some of the early Windsor chairs were exported to the American colonies where they influenced the development of the slightly different but highly popular American Windsor.

In America, Windsor chairs were the seat of choice for the founding fathers. George Washington kept 27 Windsor chairs at Mount Vernon, while Thomas Jefferson is believed to have written the Declaration of Independence in a Windsor. When the Declaration was signed on July 4, 1776, the assembled men sat in Windsors.

These very popular chairs are still being made in large quantities today. If very old age is not important you can still purchase a vintage 1930's Windsor in fair condition for less than \$1000.

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Bangalow Community Children's Centre

The children found their excursion to Seabird Rescue very inspiring.

It has led to lots of discussions about the environment and they are particularly concerned with helping the turtles.

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Airdre Grant's guide to what's worth streaming in May.

The Jane Austen trope appears to be inexhaustible. There are many, many versions and spin-offs of her work. **Sanditon** (ABC iView) is a British historical drama, written for screen by Andrew Davies and based on her last, unfinished novel. One may grow weary of Austen/Regency style dramas but stay the course with this as it is a highly engaging series. The usual suspects are present - a handsome, rich, arrogant hero, a clever, pretty, not rich heroine, a forthright wealthy Lady, poor relatives after her money, and a good few plot twists to keep you intrigued. The series includes a POC heroine who from Antigua, daughter of a slave owner and his mistress and heiress to his fortune (Austen refers to her as mulatto). The costumes and setting are outstanding. There are a lot of very nice hats worn by the men which begs the question, when did men stop wearing gorgeous hats? They add such flair, such style! Gorgeous viewing.



Eden was filmed in and around Ballina.

My friend came to stay. He's a huntin'/ fishin'/shootin' kinda guy and I was introduced to a whole new genre. Every day he watched the fishing and pig hunting shows. More manly types can satisfy their

Ru Paul's Drag Race contains plenty of smutty one-liners.

sporty needs by tuning into these channels where bait and good fishing spots are discussed (7plus, 7mate, 9 and more). The pig hunts are found on YouTube. And here's me with my period dramas.

Ru Paul's Drag Race (Stan) kicked off with a flamboyant bang. What a show! What costumes! What makeup! The dedication of these queens to their art is spectacular. Locals will be pleased to see that contestant and wonderful drag queen Maxi Shield designed an outfit as a homage to the Big Prawn, famous in her hometown of Ballina. Watch this for the delight of seeing the incredible artistry and skill. Absolutely fabulous. Be warned, there are plenty of smutty one-liners.

Old folks' home for four-year-olds (ABC iView) is a treasure and delight. It follows an experiment in intergenerational care where 10 elderly care residents are placed with a lively group of 4-year-olds for fun and exercise. The health and wellbeing outcomes are measured by gerontologists. This wholesome reality show is a hit. Viewers will

be moved by the affection between the elders and children. It shines a window on loneliness and isolation and how much we need to treasure and care for our elders and also for the honesty and delight of the four-year-old. When a senior says that they may not be able to walk in the park or do a task, a child will spontaneously take their hand and say "you can do it." The love and affection is very touching. The series is a gift to us all. Unmissable.

There has been a growth of filming in the Northern Rivers. Netflix was in Lismore filming **God's Favourite Idiot** with Melissa McCarthy (Netflix).

Eden (Stan) was filmed in and around Ballina. The trailers for Eden are out so keep your eyes peeled for a good dose of stories set locally. Should be fun looking for local settings.

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Butterfly Rose or Rosa Chinensis Mutabilis

Our exceptionally wet summer and autumn has seen most roses struggling.

When I arrived in the area, I expected that I would never grow roses.

Then I noticed a neighbour's colourful garden.

Successful roses require careful selection as particular varieties can adapt with good soil, drainage and lots of sunlight and air flow.

Many years ago, in a large retail nursery in Brisbane, one of the regular customers gave me a large bundle of cuttings. He said: "These are the best roses you will ever grow, Girlie." And so they proved to be. From those cuttings I have produced several strong plants.

Rosa chinensis mutabilis is a hybrid. It was first bred prior to 1894 and then introduced to a Swiss Botanic Garden in 1934. The rose gained popularity for its unusual flowering, hardiness and adaptability. It tolerates excessive moisture as long as it has good drainage and air flow.

Notably in 2012, it was inducted into the Old Rose Hall of Fame by the World Federation of Roses.

Rose growers take these things very seriously!

Mutabilis means changeable, and the simple 5-6 cupped blooms emerge as yellowy-cream and then change to apricot and pink, which resemble butterflies.

The bush is leggy and tall. Unlike other roses, it looks best surrounded by open flowering perennials or bushes.

Pruning is optional and will depend on the type of garden you have. In late winter, I mostly take the new canes back to a third, older canes back to two or three buds, and remove old and damaged wood.

It never has black spot or any insect damage.

Lately, while my husband's dedicated rose garden is sadly unproductive, these old fashioned, unshowy roses have flowered continuously.

No wonder it's a favourite of mine.

They aren't great as cut flowers but do last a few days when picked in the early morning.

A beautiful addition to any garden as it is so easy to grow.

Carole Gamble



The Butterfly Rose is hardy and adaptable

Photo: Carole Gamble

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Illustration: Lyn Hand



Baked tomatoes with capers, olives and croutons

If you love tomatoes and like to eat them all year round, even in the cooler months, this is a recipe for you. Tasty and finger-licking good, you will be mopping up the juice of this wonderful salad.

This recipe serves 4-6 people.

Ingredients

10 firm ripe tomatoes (about 1.5kg)
cut into 3cm pieces
250g (1 cup) creme fraiche
1 tbsp brown sugar
1/3 cup capers, rinsed and roughly chopped
2 rosemary sprigs, leaves chopped finely
2 garlic cloves, grated

3-4 tbsp olive oil
100g parmesan, finely grated
500g stale sourdough (or other bread) cut into bite-size pieces
100g olives, pitted and halved
1/2 cup basil leaves, torn
2 tbsp oregano leaves
Sea salt and pepper

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C
Place tomato, creme fraiche, sugar, half the capers, rosemary, garlic, half the grated parmesan and 1-2 tbsp of oil in a large bowl.
Toss together well and season with salt and pepper.
Place on a tray and bake for 20 minutes

or until tomato starts to crisp up.
Remove from oven and cool slightly.
Coat the bread in remaining oil and sprinkle with a pinch of salt.

Place on a large baking tray and bake until the bread is slightly golden, about 15 minutes. Remove and cool slightly.

Combine tomatoes with the olives and croutons. If you can, let the salad sit for about 30 minutes to soak up all those wonderful juices.

To serve, scatter over the basil and oregano leaves, remaining parmesan and capers.

Lyn Hand
Recipe from Hetty McKinnon's *Community*.

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Pool Trust	Jo	6687 1297
Progress Association	Ian	0414 959 936
Poultry Club	Hector	6687 1322
Quilters (2nd/4th Thur)	Karen	0413 621 224
Red Cross (1st Fri)	Liz	6687 1195
Show Society	Anne	6687 1033
Sport		
Bowls men (1pm Wed & Sat)	Gerry	6687 1142
Bowls women (9.30am Wed)	Frances	6687 1339
Cricket	Anthony	0429 306 529
Karate self-defence	Jean	0458 245 123
Netball (3.30pm Wed)	Ellie	0429 855 399
Rugby Union (Rebels)	Dave	0412 080 614
Soccer (Bluedogs)		0434 559 700
Tennis court hire	Bernie	0433 970 800
Venues		
A&I Hall	Brian	0427 157 565
All Souls' Anglican Hall		0488 561 539
Bowling Club	Chris	6687 2741
Coorabell Hall	Ouida	6687 1307
Heritage House		6687 2183
Moller Pavilion		6687 1035
Newrybar Hall	Blair	0404 880 382
RSL Hall	Charlotte	0418 107 448
Scout Hall	Shane	0475 732 551
St Kevin's Catholic Hall	Russell	0423 089 684

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Crossword Solution

L	A	U		A	P	R	I	O	R	I
A	B	S	T	R	A	C	T		H	N
M		I	E		O		O	T	S	
B	E	T	H	A	T		P	A	T	I
N	E	H				S	O	R	R	
I	G	N	E	O	U	S		S	C	R
I	D	N				M		O	S	C
A	N	G	L	E	D		A	P	O	T
E	E	E				Y		I	R	U
O	D	D	S	O	R	T		R	E	P
R	S		S	B			R	T	E	
V	I	G	N	E	T	T	E		S	P
V	E		O					A	O	I
E	S		R			A	D	M	I	T
I	R	K	S	O	M	E		L	E	E

HINTERLAND OSTEOPATHY + ALLIED HEALTH



Kate Egan OSTEOPATH Neil Moran OSTEOPATH Betty McKew OSTEOPATH

Jamie Bellamy - ACUPUNCTURIST

Evelyn Stavrinidis - SHIATSU THERAPIST & BODYWORKER

Taylah Cockram MASSAGE THERAPIST

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Dr Jill Pryor Dr Sasha Morris
Dr Jan Maehl Dr Jemma Buultjens
Dr Clinton Scott Dr Alex Booth
Dr Callie Irving Dr Lydia Hubbard

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womens health and wellbeing

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Dr Victoria Maud Clinical Psychologist
Melanie Manton Psychologist

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Daisy Dare celebrates her milestone in a daisy tiara and with a beautiful cake decorated with her namesake daisies
Photo: Judy Baker

Queen Elizabeth wishes our Daisy Dare “Happy Century!”

Bangalow Garden Club recently celebrated the hundredth birthday of one of its founding members, Daisy Dare (nee Lavercombe). Among tributes displayed at the celebration was a beautiful card of congratulations from the Queen. Stories were told, memories were shared, champagne was drunk, and Daisy was resplendent in a daisy decorated crown and beautiful dress, thoroughly at ease with being the centre of attention.

The Garden Club has evolved since its modest beginnings, but through all the changes, Daisy has been in the front row of the assemblage, contributing sage advice, sometimes acerbic comments, all

with good humour.

Daisy grew up in Newrybar, later moving to a dairy farm in Midgen Flat Road. A great worker, Daisy's various occupations included working as a nanny, housekeeper, milking hand, and teacher of needlework at Broken Head Primary School where she was also active on the P&C.

Daisy also worked with Allan on the farm, looking after the pigs, chickens and vegetable garden, as well as lending a hand milking the cows. Despite what younger folk would regard as a punishing schedule, which also included raising their family of four, Daisy and Allan found time for tennis,

fundraisers and community work.

Later, when Allan was unable to do heavy work and the farm was sold, they moved to Suffolk Park and Daisy went to work at Walkers Meat Works in Belongil. The story told by family members was that she was asked to slow down because she was showing up the other workers.

In retirement, there was more time for orchid growing and gardening, especially in Allan's award-winning vegetable garden.

Daisy still lives independently in Suffolk Park with help from family and carers.

Happy birthday Daisy, from everyone at *The Bangalow Herald*. Carole Gamble

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There's plenty happening to keep us entertained and connected

Bangalow Garden Club

When Wed 2 June, 1.30pm
Where Moller Pavilion, Bangalow Showgrounds
Contact Annie 0417 636 011 or abbinkanne48@gmail.com

Garden Club member Julia Bambery will talk on The Basics of Orchid Growing. Due to COVID restrictions, numbers are limited and the meeting is strictly for members only. Please bring along a teaspoon and mug for afternoon tea. Details of the garden visit on Saturday 5 June will be provided at the meeting.

Amatori and Syrinx

When Sat 19 and Sun 20 June, 3pm
Where A&I Hall, Bangalow (19th) and St Mary's Anglican, Ballina (20th)
Tickets Mullumbimby Bookshop or at door

Musical Directors Ian Knowles and Hamsa Arnold present a sublime program 'Music for a While' for choir and orchestra of ancient to modern acapella music and Vivaldi's beautiful *Magnificat*.

Bangalow Progress Association General Meeting

When Wed 23 Jun, 6pm
Where Heritage House, Deacon Street, Bangalow
Contact Ian 0414 959 936



The Mitford Sisters

Photo courtesy War History Online

ADFAS Byron

When Mon 7 June, 6.30pm
Where A&I Hall, Bangalow
Contact adfas.org.au or adfasbyron@gmail.com or facebook@ADFASByronBay

Susannah Fullerton looks at the lives and works of the aristocratic and unconventional Mitford sisters in her lecture *Those Mitford Girls*. The Mitford sisters were writers, socialites, biographers, and essayists. Jessica ('Decca'), who wrote *The American Way of Death*, was a communist and human rights activist. Unity sympathised with the Nazis and worshipped Hitler. Nancy was also a writer and her characters in *Love in a Cold Climate* had a reckless upper-class Bohemianism and were determined to find life amusing. Diana became the most hated woman in Britain during WWII. Deborah was the youngest and a writer, memoirist and socialite. Doors open at 6 pm for a welcome drink. Non-members are most welcome.

This quarterly general meeting will include an update on planning and project activities in Bangalow, both highly active agendas. This work conserves and shapes our village so come along and be

part of the community voice. All BPA members and Bangalow residents are welcome.

CWA Bangalow Cake Stall

When Sat 26 June, 8am-12noon

Where CWA Rooms, Byron Street
Contact Rebecca 0438 871 908

All the usual CWA goodies on sale - cakes, biscuits, slices, jams, pickles and lots more.



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Andrew Stockdale of headliners Wolfmother.

Byron Music Festival

When Sat 19 June, 11am-8.30pm

Where Denning Park, (beside Byron Surf Club)

Information/tickets byronmusicfestival.com.au

Wolfmother headlines a 100 per cent North Coast line up of local artists. Aimed at kick starting a post-COVID resurgence in the local music scene, organisers aim to activate central Byron and support local artists and businesses. There will also be an Industry Conference and Showcase on Sunday 20 June, 10am-5pm. The event will be COVID safe.

School Holiday HSC Monologue Workshop

When Mon 28 - Wed 30 June, 10am-3pm

Where NORPA, Lismore City Hall

Contact/information/tickets norpa.org.au/whats-on/

NORPA Youth's three day HSC Monologue workshop offers students the opportunity

to analyse, rehearse and polish their HSC performance pieces from a professional perspective with actor/teacher Scott Johnson. Scott will teach students vocal skills, movement dynamics, timing, style and form to add a new dimension to their performance skills and knowledge.

June diary

2 Bangalow Garden Club

7 ADFAS

17 Am I Who I Say I Am?

19-20 Amatori & Syrinx

19 Byron Music Festival

23 BPA General Meeting

26 CWA Cake Stall

27 Bangalow Markets

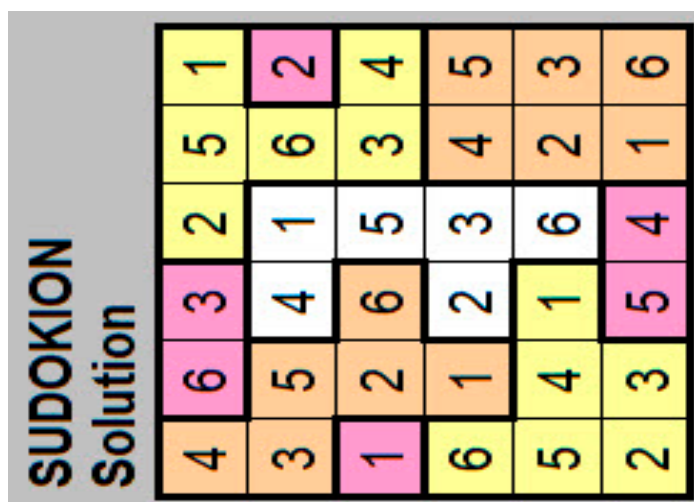
28-30 HSC Monologue Workshop

Deadlines for July 2021 issue:

What's On 11 June

Advertising 13 June

Copy 13 June

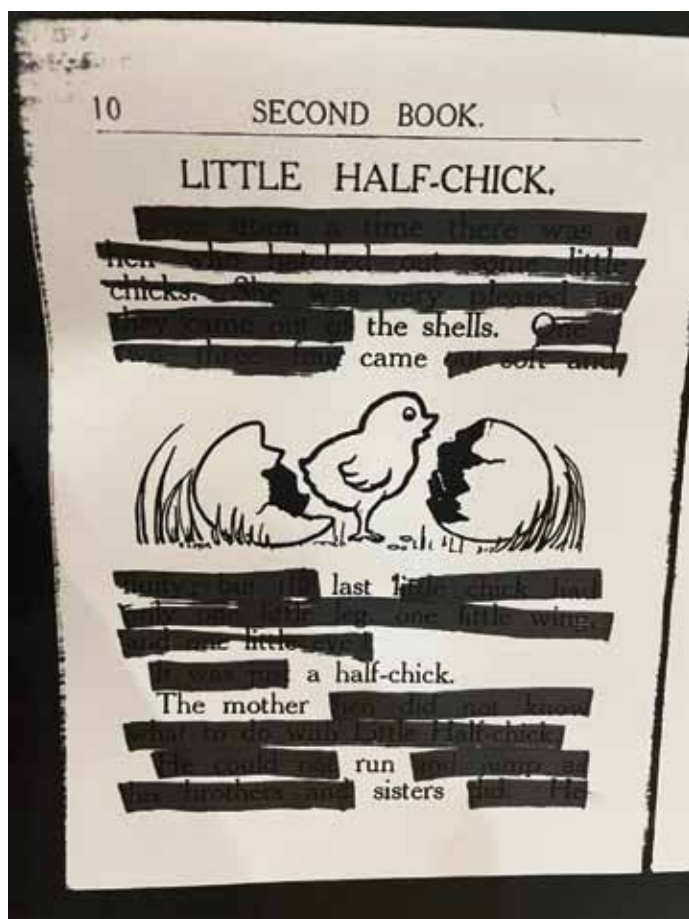


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Found poetry, The Victorian Readers.
Photo: Rebecca Sargeant

invoking *conversation* as a counter-revolutionary tool with the power to change the world. Conversation that involves *listening* and, then, *responding*.

Twice now, I have heard visitors to Bangalow discuss its history of fires, while standing in front of the plaque on the wall outside Wax Jambu, opposite Fire Station Park.

I like to sit in Fire Station Park and drink my coffee. I don't love the 'heritage' mural, though. I feel like it talks at me, but doesn't like to listen. It is titled, *Bangalow – Past, Present and Future*, and marks its territory across several walls.

I was listening to the latest *The New Yorker: Poetry* podcast, featuring Asian-American poets, while walking around the Sports Fields. They talk of their poems as a mind at work: weaving fragments into being, while embracing that it's OK to be a little bit illegible. How else to reconcile an elusive homeland?

Megan Fernandez refers to Meena Alexander's line: "In the absence of reliable ghosts I made an aria".

For Frank Fisher, the Derbyshire butcher, his reckoning was with too many ghosts. The shop was a staging place for his life - he had stood on the same patch of floor to be told of the death of his father, mother and girlfriend – and confronting its closure felt too close to his own death.

The doctor was right to be suspicious of my spots, and I returned for a wider excision. My scar is a symbol of care; the battle scars enacted on my body are not as clearly visible.

Frank's skin told of a "career's worth of wounds", marked by his own butcher's knife. But his deeper wound was inflicted by a society that no longer valued his work.

To discuss what it is to be a "local" is to grapple with presence and absence, and to tend to wounds both inflicted and enacted. Relationships to place are forged through the natural landscape, the built environment and the imagination.

Should public art tell a story of place that attempts to be so legible? Or are we missing the opportunity to make an aria?

Roots and Blues

Rebecca Sargeant on conversation, and what might be found by weaving together fragments of each other's unique experience.

I was reading an article, titled 'The butcher's shop that lasted 300 years (give or take)', in the waiting room at the doctors' surgery where I was scheduled to have several suspicious skin spots cut out.

The 90-year-old butcher had watched the town of Dronfield, in Derbyshire, change, from within a shop that remained much unchanged since he began working there as a teenager.

A beautifully written and evocative piece (by Tom Lamont for *The Guardian*), it included sentence fragments such as, "subtleties that spoke of talent with a knife".

Anaesthetised and lying on the doctor's

chopping block, I could feel only the subtle pressure of the scalpel.

I read at the inaugural *Fate and Fable* event at the RSL Hall, *Burning Down the House*. The sentence fragment that I keep thinking about is this: "when beauty in the eye of the Emperor is enacted on the body".

Erasure poetry has emerged as a popular form of writing back to the centre. It involves a process of erasing words from an existing text to find something new. I experimented with creating an erasure poem from a text message. It was cathartic.

Richard Hil recently wrote in *The Echo*,



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