

Uki Garden Club

Volume 22/01 February 2022 ugcnews@gmail.com P.O. Box 580 Murwillumbah 2484
<http://ukigarden.club/wp/>



Welcome back to all our UGC members and Happy New Year for 2022! I trust you have had an enjoyable Christmas/New Year break, spending some time with family and friends.

One thing I don't imagine I will hear at the moment is anyone complaining of a lack of rain! Perhaps I am more aware that some of you are waiting desperately for drenched soil to dry out – quite a change for summer in the Tweed. Like many, I have welcomed the cooler temperatures, which have certainly made being out in the garden more enjoyable this summer. The other common worry at present is of course, the prolific weed growth. Conditions have indeed been very favourable for this, unfortunately.

At the January meeting of UGC committee on Friday, 28th, it was decided that we should delay starting our Food Group and Garden Gatherings until at least March this year. It was felt that with COVID/Omicron still prevalent in the Tweed, members might not yet feel confident to meet socially in our large groups. We will reconsider this decision in early March, in case there are new developments which need to be considered.

In the meantime, we are planning/have drawn up a calendar for the three months from March to May. This is, however, tentative, in light of changes in government/health regulations which may come to bear on our activities. As you are all well aware, after experiencing the last two years of cancellations due to COVID, we need to remain flexible and not plan too far into the future. There will no doubt be further disappointments and rearrangements to be made along the way as we 'learn to live with COVID'.

There are still many vacancies for hosts of both Food Group and Garden Gatherings, so please don't hesitate to let Jenny Clark (for Garden Gatherings) or Marie Luxford (for Food Group) know if you would like to offer your garden in a month between now and November, 2022. We would also love to hear your suggestions for guest speakers or people willing to run workshops.

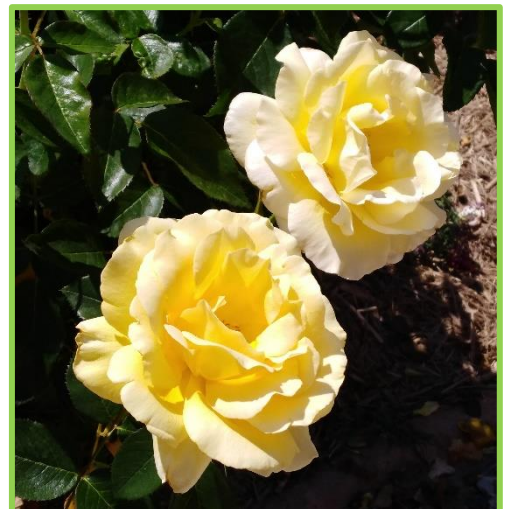
Please do continue to send in photos or stories about things that are happening in either your garden or another you have experienced recently. It is wonderful to have these contributions for our newsletter, as it keeps the interest and communication going for all of our members, especially when we are able to meet less frequently.

Your recipes and hints, especially those using ingredients from your garden, are always much appreciated for sharing as well. Being at home a lot more these days, it seems that many of us are re-discovering the joys of home-gardening, and also cooking from basic home-produce as well.

I hope this first newsletter for 2022 finds you keeping well and fit. And maybe it might lift your spirits to see and hear ways that others are coping in our changing environment. Happy gardening

Gillian

Roses from John Bennett's beautiful garden

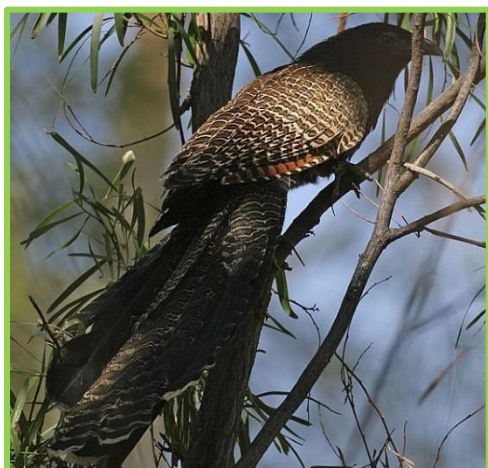


Summer in Our Garden – Mostly Through the Window – Jenny Kidd

David and I live on a sloping, acreage block in North Tumbulgum. While the slope and shallow topsoil present particular challenges for garden design and care, we have great views to the southeast across the Tweed River and out to the coast.



you may recall me lamenting that one of the wallabies had taken a liking to our sweet potato patch. About 7am one morning last month I was surprised to see a group of three adult wallabies on the small flat on the far side of our dam. Two of the wallabies started “boxing and chesting”: think of the behaviour of our male tennis doubles players in the recent Australian Open. The third wallaby, possibly a female, appeared to back away a little and watched the action.



In the faint pre-dawn light after a night of particularly heavy rain, I caught the silhouette of a rain-soaked bird sheltering under the roof that covers part of the deck. After about 25 minutes the bird slowly started to shake out its feathers, revealing itself to be a magpie and flying to a tree about 25 metres away.

Another morning a Pheasant Coucal, *Centropus phasianinus*, a member of the cuckoo family with a distinctive long tail, arrived on the deck railing. These birds are rather shy and usually stay near cover and closer to the ground.



Since my accident last October, both our lives have changed, with visits to the garden mostly limited to David tending to the chickens and mowing the lawn between the bouts of incessant summer rain. The gardens, weeds included, have thrived in the rain and warming weather. Wildlife has moved in closer to the house. I have had plenty of time to observe the garden from my wheelchair from the living room.

Solitary swamp wallabies, *Wallabia bicolor*, occasionally with a joey, are regularly seen venturing out from the surrounding forest to forage on grass slopes at dawn and dusk. Some of





Later the same morning a juvenile butcher bird walked up to the door to look inside and check me out.

Whip birds *Psophodes olivaceus* continue their piercing call from the forest floor in the mornings.

Many small birds have been visiting the callistemons as they start flowering, particularly a very old one near the shed.

Over summer, *Friends of the Koala* released two koalas. The first was a young female, *Wendy Darling*, who had been found away from any sustainable habitat on the corner of Fraser Drive and Leisure Drive, Banora. The second was a geriatric male, about 10 years old, called *Dougie D*. *Dougie* had been found wandering at night on Dulguigan Rd. He had required treatment of some eye ailments but now he can hopefully see out his remaining years on our ridge.

Our garden is free-form following the slopes with no formed paths. I have not been able to access the garden in my wheelchair. As my rehabilitation has progressed, I have made it using a walker to the edge of the deck and observed the garden responding to hot weather and rain. From this distance, the bright flowers of the gingers, heliconia, pelargonium, and hibiscuses have been a delight. To add to the colour, last fortnight, the purple *Tibouchina* burst into flower.

Our frequently used vegetables and herbs have moved to pots on the deck.

David is still harvesting various produce from the block, including these recent bananas and a lone pineapple.



Finally, it is proving to be a good season for our large natives. There are three flower stalks on the Gynea Lilies, *Doryanthes excelsa* close to the house and two on the Spear Lillies, *Doryanthes palmeri*, near the end of the drive. The latter have not flowered since they were relocated more than 8 years ago.

Our Bunya Pines *Araucaria bidwilli*, are dropping their enormous cones creating large thuds as they hit the ground and roll down the slope.



Thank you to our friends in the garden club who have generously offered and/or shared kind wishes, stories, healthy food and company.

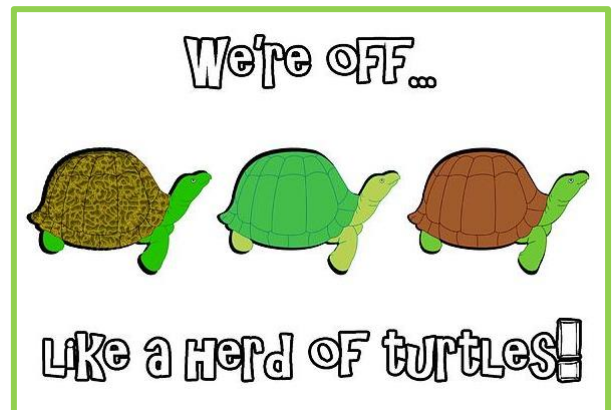
My rehabilitation progress has been slow and steady, but I am already plotting how I may get out into the garden as my mobility permits and the weather improves. It will be a while before I will be able to scramble over the banks.

In the meantime, there is plenty in the garden to give me pleasure from my chair.



Our thanks as always to Miss Pen for supplying the laughs.

- ☺ Why don't you ever see the Headline 'Psychic Wins Lottery'?
- ☺ Why is 'abbreviated' such a long word?
- ☺ Why is it that Doctors call what they do 'practice'?
- ☺ Why is the person who invests all your money called a broker?
- ☺ Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?
- ☺ Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?
- ☺ You know that Indestructible black box that is used on airplanes? Why don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff?
- ☺ Why don't sheep shrink when it rains?
- ☺ Why are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?
- ☺ If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?
- ☺ When one door closes and another door opens, you are probably in prison.
- ☺ To me, "drink responsibly" means don't spill it.
- ☺ Age 60 might be the new 40, but 9:00 pm is the new midnight.
- ☺ It's the start of a brand new day, and I'm off like a herd of turtles.
- ☺ The older I get, the earlier it gets late.
- ☺ When I say, "The other day," I could be referring to any time between yesterday and 15 years ago.
- ☺ I remember being able to get up without making sound effects.
- ☺ I had my patience tested. I'm negative.
- ☺ Remember, if you lose a sock in the dryer, it comes back as a Tupperware lid that doesn't fit any of your containers.
- ☺ If you're sitting in public and a stranger takes the seat next to you, just stare straight ahead and say, "Did you bring the money?"
- ☺ When you ask me what I am doing today, and I say "nothing," it does not mean I am free. It means I am doing nothing.
- ☺ I finally got eight hours of sleep. It took me three days, but whatever.
- ☺ I run like the winded.
- ☺ When someone asks what I did over the weekend, I squint and ask, "Why, what did you hear?"
- ☺ When you do squats, are your knees supposed to sound like a goat chewing on an aluminium can stuffed with celery?
- ☺ I don't mean to interrupt people. I just randomly remember things and get really excited.
- ☺ My luck is like a bald guy who just won a comb.





SOS – We Still Need Gardens for Meetings Please

We need garden hosts for the last Saturday in the month Garden Gatherings and second Tuesday of the month Food Group meetings.

The latest calendar is included at the end of the newsletter for the coming months, however we do need to fill the gaps, please and thank you!

So far the gaps are as follows:

Food Group

June – November – all months vacant

Garden Gatherings

June, August, September, October

If you can help by providing your garden or you know of a garden where we can meet or if you have ideas for speakers at these meetings please let the following people know:

Garden Gatherings: Jenny Clarke – 02 6677 9490 or via email to iimjen47@hotmail.com

Food Group Meetings: Marie Luxford - 0401 833 164 or via email to marluxford@yahoo.com

Remember – no location for a meeting then sadly no meeting.

And speaking of gardens needed – can you help Kyogle Garden Club?

The activity committee organiser from Kyogle Garden Club has contacted our Club, asking if they could arrange a day-visit to a few of our members' gardens.

They would have a group (maximum 20) travelling in private cars down Kyogle Road towards Murwillumbah, where they plan to have lunch and check out a few local nurseries. We have suggested perhaps May/June might be a good time (not so hot). One or two gardens on the way down (Doon Doon/Uki/Smith's Creek??) and maybe another two either close to town or Nunderi way might be enough to fill up their day.

They would arrange to visit for maybe half an hour or so at each garden for a brief tour/ramble –giving hosts an arrival-time estimate.

If you would like to offer your garden for the Kyogle club trip, please make contact with Doug Layton, phone 0418 616 388, douglaslayton8@bigpond.com



Ahoy Members,

We had a couple of weeks in Mackay, with “Gold-Finger” up on the hard stand. During that time, we helped with the painting etc on the hull and keel, as well as using the time for Gary to recover from his broken nose and cracked ribs. Both have healed, although the ribs are taking a bit longer. There is always a lot of shipping action in Mackay harbour and I love watching the amazing cargo being unloaded from these enormous ships. Over a couple of days, I counted at least 100 coal train wagons being craned up out of the belly of one ship to be trucked away. It is a precision act, taking only 20min from when one wagon is loaded onto a semi until the next one is disgorged and loaded. You can’t believe they could all fit inside the ship as cargo. That same ship also unloaded many, many plastic wrapped loads of timber.

We were lucky that Mackay was hosting a round of the WBB cricket, so we spent Gary’s birthday watching 2 games...at the night game, we witnessed the complete eclipse of the full moon. An amazing spectacle.

After her stint on the hard stand in Mackay, it was good to get “Gold-Finger” back in the water and to see her looking so smart.



When we left Mackay, we cruised to the Percy Islands and anchored with about a dozen other yachts. These Islands are about 70NM SE Mackay and among the last of the Island anchorages when travelling south, and looking for a safe anchorage out of the skittish north wind. So it wasn’t surprising that we were in company with these yachts the next day as we all headed to Island Head Creek or Port Clinton, back on the mainland. “Gold-Finger” was last to leave the Percy’s, but over the whole day, we eventually caught up and over took these other boats who were all sail boats. We were the first into Island Head Creek and were safely anchored and had had a late lunch, when a rather fierce storm hit us. We “battened down the hatches” and watched a movie. When the storm blew over, we found we had been joined by half of these boats, who would have all been caught in the storm. One of the boats called over to see us and it was good to recognise friends we have been seeing from time to time all the way north and now heading south. We had last seen them at Hinchinbrook Island where they had a broken rudder and had limped into Cardwell to wait 6 weeks for a new rudder to come from America. So it was good to see them underway again.

Next day, we set off towards Keppel Island, but we had rain and showers all day and the wind had changed to the south so we went into Yeppoon to sit out the weather. We had finally caught up with the rain and storms that had been battering the southern areas of Queensland during the past few weeks. This was our first rain in 7 months...so no complaints. During this day’s cruising, we came across a small yacht with engine problems. He had been at the same anchorage as us and we heard over the radio that he had become separated from his sailing buddies and they were getting concerned. We came up behind “Honey B” and, using the radio, offered to “escort” him to the next anchorage where his friends were waiting. It was a wild day with very bad visibility, so it was a relief to come into Yeppoon Marina. What a lovely little harbour that is.



We stayed here for a couple of days till the weather settled.

From Yeppoon, it really is just a “run down the coast”, with anchorages few and far between so we aimed for the Port cities of Gladstone and Bundaberg. Just after leaving Yeppoon, we crossed the Tropic of Capricorn, leaving the tropics behind us.

Gladstone has a beautiful Marina and fabulous parklands and foreshore. There's a lot of money in the area for sure, from the export of many resources. There is a multitude of shipping activities, including a lot of traffic to Curtis Island, the home of an immense gas plant.

Again, we were aware of bad weather and used all our tools to mainly dodge rain, showers and storms. We struck lovely conditions as we left Gladstone...waves “below a meter”...my favourite words in boating.

I missed snorkelling on Keppel (off Yeppoon), and Heron and Wilson (off Gladstone) due to rain and poor visibility, but I can't complain. Of the 900 Islands off the Qld. coast, I think we visited 50 and snorkelled at most. I will definitely go back some day, for a little local holiday, as a tourist to these spots. They are easily accessible and now that we know how much it costs to run a boat, I will be only too happy to support the tour companies to visit these Islands.

We anchored in the Burnett River (Bundaberg) in wildly flowing, very muddy flood waters, a result of the nearly 600mm of rain they have had recently. It was our first taste of the scope of the weather the SE has been enduring.

Next stop was Urangan, Hervey Bay, where we began our fabulous journey 7 months ago. “Gold- Finger” has returned “home”.

And so ends this amazing chapter in our lives.

We have decided that the coast runs without all the Islands are just a bit “ho- hum”, and also we are running into the summer storm season. There is a very good reason that the Queensland Coral Coast; the Whitsundays and places further north, and winter sailing are so popular. There is a definite sailing season and why so many people take to their boats from April to November, but we have noticed that by now, most boats are safely tucked up in their berths. “Gold-Finger” is on the market here, where she is well known and in an area that is a boating haven. Whilst we love “Gold-Finger” and have had a ball, we have absolutely no desire to own a boat that we are not out using every day; paying exorbitant berthing fees and being responsible for her upkeep and maintenance (which in the boating world is a full-time occurrence)...just sitting idle until the next venture.



What an incredible year Gary and I have enjoyed. We only ever went into this venture as a “one off” and we could not have chosen a better time to be out at sea, away from the news; lockdowns etc. The timing was perfect. We only came up with the idea of a boat trip in late January. By mid February we had bought GF, then spent an exciting 3 months setting up our second “home on the water”. By mid May we had set off and spent an absolutely WONDERFUL 7 months cruising the incredibly beautiful waters off Qld. All in all, a truly exceptional chapter of our lives. We have loved meeting other “yachties” and found all in the boating community to be friendly and generous. I love their stories, especially the stories of mishaps and near disasters, and how they coped with adversities and came out the other side. Somehow, the stories always seem to be funny by the time you get to tell them. I love the names of boats...2 here beside me now: “Fishful Thinking” and “She got the House”.

So we are left with many fantastic memories:

Sunsets to die for...





Breakfast @ Whitehaven Beach

And this breakfast at glorious Whitehaven Beach in the Whitsundays. Not to mention...riding the bow seat...a favourite for us both.



The best seat on the boat...Mackay to Brampton Island

And of course...the wonderful wonderful snorkelling and being a part of this amazing underwater world.



Giant clam

I have been totally in awe of Gary's ability to turn his hand to everything mechanical that GF threw up at him, especially as he is not all that keen on mechanics. He has found himself wrapped up in very awkward and difficult to reach spaces. And dirty...as in the bilges etc. This is not a game for those who don't like to get their hands dirty. We both learned the ins and outs of navigation, but I am always thankful that Gary's brilliance with maths and calculations got us to our destinations on time, and with enough water under the keel, no matter the height of the tide or the current. And I am forever thankful that he got me to so many snorkelling sites. I do know, as well, that he would not have done this trip with anybody else, so we are a great team...a win win situation.

Happy gardening...Love Gary and Kate ❤️

Footnote recently received from Kate...

So GF has sold and settled within a couple of days of one year since we first went to inspect her @ Hervey Bay. We are very pleased with the sale procedure especially given that she went on the market a week before Xmas, then the cyclone between Xmas and New Year, then the floods @ Maryborough, cutting Hervey Bay off.

It seems the lovely old boat will have more interesting stories to add to her history. She is going to Sydney...the new owners are multi multi millionaires, the son of one of the biggest property developers in the country. Apart from their millions of dollars of real estate, they own at least 2 other 50m dollar mega yachts, one of which was on the same jetty as us @ Port Douglas, and a private Fijian Island!

What an amazing year, and wonderful experience, she has given us. Who knows what will be next? Gary is back at work, some days from home. I have finished unpacking all the stuff off GF and managed to fit 2 households into one. Now to enjoy the pool, the beach and get back to swimming and aqua. Thank you for taking such a keen interest in this amazing journey...

Ed: Thank you Kate and Gary for sharing your amazing journey with us and we are glad you are home safe and well and look forward to seeing you at a meeting sometime soon.

Another Safety/Medical Warning – Crown of Thorns

– Michael Balk



My thanks to David Hancock for telling us of his bad experience with a tractor last year – it is so easy for us to overlook the dangers when enjoying our gardens. My experience was not as bad (well not at the start), it was just a seemingly minor irritation to my gardening pleasure that was very easily overlooked.

On Christmas Eve, I managed to hit my hand against a Crown of Thorns bush (*Euphorbia millii*) and embed a largish thorn in the back of my hand.

ACTION TAKEN: Express some expletives (it was a big thorn worthy of several choice words), pull the thorn out and carry on.

That evening and throughout the following day my hand felt like it was badly bruised and the swelling was increasing.

Boxing Day found me at Murwillumbah Casualty first thing in the morning with a very swollen and sore hand. The doctor was obviously clued up on this sort of injury and immediately gave me a course of antibiotics. A week later, I still had some minor tenderness in my hand.

Most importantly though, the doctor explained that some of these plants (particularly those with white sap) are really nasty and that we should monitor wounds very closely, checking for bad reactions and seeking advice. In my case, with this particular plant, the doctor said that had I left it untreated for a couple more days, the poison would have travelled up my arm and I probably would have ended up in hospital on a drip. Stick to friendly plants!



Date for Your Diary

Murwillumbah Community Garden Waste Event

Come along to a workshop at the Murwillumbah Community Garden to learn and share your ideas about no-cost, easy, practical ways to reduce waste at home.

The event is on Saturday 26 February 2022 at 3 pm at the Murwillumbah Community Garden, Gate 3, Murwillumbah Showground, Mooball Street.

Register by emailing murbahcommunitygardens@gmail.com and follow the team on [Facebook](#). For more information see the [event flyer](#)





Strawberry & Almond Friands – Jenny Kidd

When I found some leftover egg whites in my freezer last week, I decided to make these treats for visitors. The recipe is easy and flexible, and you can substitute other seasonal fruit.

Ingredients

- 6 egg whites at room temperature
- 185g of melted butter
- 1 cup (120g) of ground almonds/almond meal
- 1 1/2 cups (240g) icing sugar
- 1/2 cup (75g) plain flour
- 100g strawberries, sliced thinly
- extra icing sugar for dusting icing sugar



Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/400°F.
2. Lightly whisk egg whites in bowl until combined.
3. Add butter, ground almonds, sifted icing sugar and flour and stir with a wooden spoon until just combined.
4. Divide mixture among 12 greased friand pans and top with strawberry slices.
5. Bake friands for about 25 minutes. Turn out and place topside up on wire rack.
6. Serve friands warm, or at room temperature, dusted with extra sifted icing sugar.



February Job File

Julia Hancock

- ☼ Keep an eye on nutgrass – it can spread like wildfire in the hot wet weather.
- ☼ Overgrown geraniums (pelargoniums) that have become top-heavy and leggy are liable to fall over in strong winds. Pruning them makes them more stable and provides the opportunity of getting rid of spotty, rusty growth.
- ☼ Camellias may be struggling in the hot conditions we have recently had. Scrape the mulch away, sprinkle some organic fertiliser pellets around the root zone, rewater and top up the mulch again. Look forward to increased blooming in autumn (sasanquas) and spring (reticulatas and japonicas).
- ☼ In recent years sweet peas have been tricky to grow here, although several Murwillumbah people grow prize-winning specimens. If you adore them, try growing them in their own pot, either the tall varieties with a wigwam to support them, or the dwarf 'Bijou' variety which will happily cascade out of their container. Seeds are much more reliable than seedlings.
- ☼ Pansies will be starting to come into nurseries now and for true value you can't beat these little stalwarts of the winter/spring garden. Unlike sweet peas, it's best to buy pansies as seedlings rather than germinate your own seeds, which are notorious for damping off as a result of fungal disease.
- ☼ Frangipanis have become somewhat underrated, perhaps because we've begun to take them for granted. But recent hybrids in gorgeous shades of orange, blood red and egg yolk yellow provide a stunning feature in a frost-free subtropical garden. The beautifully perfumed flowers are lovely in a float bowl. Best of all, their succulent stems can store moisture so that the plants require minimal watering.
- ☼ A lavender plant in a pot is a lovely, impromptu present to give someone you like. Lavender is easy to propagate from softwood and semi-hardwood cuttings from now until May. In our climate the bushes are relatively short lived, but if you grow them like an annual with a short life-expectancy they won't disappoint.



Late summer lovelies

Does your garden looking tired at this time of the year? When planning next year's beds and borders consider including the following:

- ✓ Salvia 'Indigo Spires' – a beautiful deep blue that sways in the breeze, and like other salvias is very drought and heat tolerant.
- ✓ Dahlias – an old-fashioned favourite, and no wonder. They power on until the end of April, especially if they are well fed and watered, and regularly deadheaded.
- ✓ Gaura (pic at right) – look best massed or grouped with other perennials.
- ✓ Hydrangeas – develop some interesting colours as autumn sets in.
- ✓ Ornamental (and edible) chillies – look fabulously fiery.





Full details regarding these meetings will be in future newsletters closer to the dates. However please put these into your diaries as we would love to see you all.

Food Group

Date: 2nd Tuesday	Hosts name	Address	Speaker/notes	Contact:
MARCH 8	No meeting			
APRIL 12	Nellmary McEwen	4 Eyles Avenue Murwillumbah		0400 425 009
MAY 10	David and Bronwyn Hancox	327 Limpinwood Valley Road Limpinwood		0429 845 884 dibj1972@gmail.com

Garden Gatherings

Date: last Saturday	Hosts name	Address	Speaker/ Notes	Contact:
MARCH 26	Brigitte Pritchard	5 Christies Rd Palmvale		02 6677 7253 brigitteprammer@yahoo.com.au
APRIL 30	Greg Forbes	72 Pumpenbil Road, Pumpenbil		0407024204 utopianpessimist@icloud.com
MAY 28	Jenny Kidd	Tumbulgum Public School		02 6676 6462 or 0431 989 477

That's all Folks for This Month...

Huge, huge, huge thanks to all the contributors to this newsletter – especially Kate for all her wonderful words bringing her fabulous sea adventures with Gary to life.

As always, all of your contributions are welcome and we would love to hear what you've all been up to. Send your hints, tips, recipes, travel stories, bragging photos to us at ugcnews@gmail.com

And thanks as always to our printer – Sandra & Alan Guthrie at Poster Paradise, Murwillumbah.