



Some front pages from Melbourne's *Herald Sun* (Australia's biggest selling daily) during 2016.



AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER HISTORY GROUP

NEWSLETTER

ISSN 1443-4962

No. 91

February 2017

Publication details

Compiled for the Australian Newspaper History Group by Rod Kirkpatrick, U 337, 55 Linkwood Drive, Ferny Hills, Qld, 4055. Ph. +61-7-3351 6175. Email: rkhistory3@bigpond.com

Contributing editor and founder: Victor Isaacs, of Canberra, is at abvi@inet.net.au

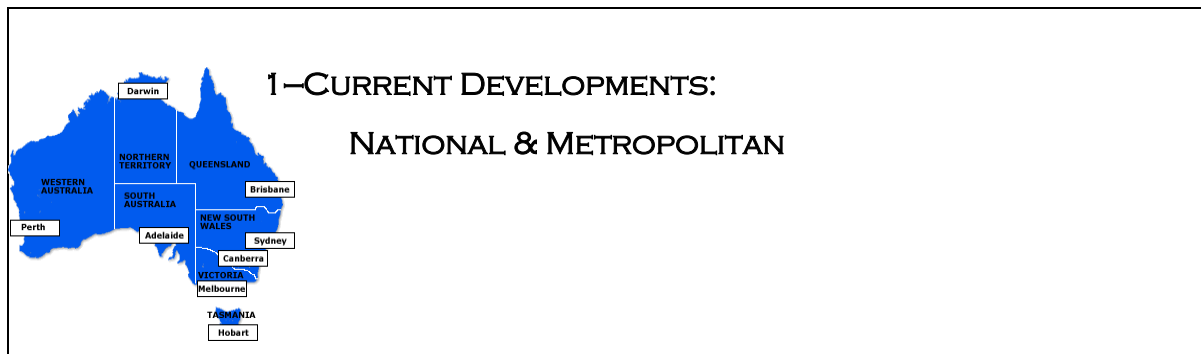
Back copies of the *Newsletter* and some ANHG publications can be viewed online at:

<http://www.amhd.info/anhg/index.php>

Deadline for the next Newsletter: 30 April 2017.

Subscription details appear at end of *Newsletter*. [Number 1 appeared October 1999.]

Ten issues had appeared by December 2000 and the *Newsletter* has since appeared five times a year.



91.1.1 Fairfax sticks to print but not to editors-in-chief

Fairfax Media chief executive Greg Hywood has said the company will “continue to print our publications daily for some years yet”. Hywood said this in mid-February in an internal message to staff after appointing a digital expert, Chris Janz, to run its flagship titles, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Melbourne’s *Age* and the *Australian Financial Review*. Janz, formerly the director of publishing innovation, is now the managing director of Fairfax’s metro publishing unit. Hywood said, “Chris has been overseeing the impressive product and technology development work that will be the centrepiece of Metro’s next-generation publishing model.” Janz had run Fairfax’s joint venture with the *Huffington Post* and before that founded Allure Media, which runs the local websites of Business Insider, PopSugar and other titles under licence (*Australian*, 15 February 2017).

On 13 February, Fairfax abolished the positions of editor-in-chief at the *Herald* and the *Age*, announcing the departure of Darren Goodsir after three and a half years as editor-in-chief of the *Herald*. Mark Forbes had already left a similar position at the *Age* in December after allegations of harassment. Goodsir has left journalism after 30 years.

Fairfax announced James Chessell as the national editor of the *Herald* and the *Age*. He is responsible for federal politics, business and world coverage. Chessell was formerly Europe correspondent of the *Australian Financial Review* for which he had previously been the business editor. The editor of the *Herald* is Lisa Davies, formerly the deputy editor, investigations editor and justice editor, and the new editor of the *Age* is Alex Lavelle who had been acting as editor. Lavelle had worked in various roles at the *Age* since 1999, including deputy news director and sports editor. Davies and Lavelle are responsible for coverage of state parliament, transports, health, education, crime and the courts. They are also responsible for sport, breaking news and investigations (*Telum Media Alert*, 13 February 2017). Chessell, Davies and Lavelle will report to editorial director Sean Aylmer.

An extract from Mark Day, “Fairfax in disarray amid newsroom muddle, shareholder angst”, *Australian*, Media section, 20 February 2017, p.24: “There will be winners and losers and compromises in what shape as three-way contests with Chessell, a strong-minded, ambitious character forcefully arguing from Canberra in favour of his national stories against the wishes of his local editors. Wins and losses are not conducive to team building and compromises lead to banality and boredom in the product. Every newsroom needs a boss.” Day suggests Aylmer “has shown in the past a reluctance to get involved editorially”.

The sticking-to-print message mentioned above was confirmed when Fairfax delivered on 22 February its financial outcomes for the first six months of the current financial year (*Australian*, 23 February 2017). Delivering a 6.1 per cent rise in underlying profit for the six months to December 31, Fairfax Media confirming it had bowed to investor pressure to spin off up to 40 per cent of its Domain online real estate listings business. The planned stockmarket listing of Domain may result in a new entity valued at \$2 billion. Stripping out one-off items, Fairfax said its profit increased from \$79.8 million to \$84.7m for the December half. This was on revenue of \$902.9m, down 5.8 per cent compared to the prior corresponding period.

Mark Ritson wrote a well argued analysis of Hywood’s stances on print, entitled “Hywood’s wrong call on the future of print”, *Australian*, Media section, 27 February 2017, pp.23-24. Extract: “...

print newspapers communicate the legitimacy, the soul of a newspaper business. If the day ever comes when digital subscriptions eclipse print ones, there will still be a case for a (more expensive) print version to legitimise and ‘premiumise’ the digital offer.”

Earlier in February: Billionaire small caps investor Alex Waislitz was rallying up to 20 per cent of the investors in Fairfax Media to intensify the pressure on its management and board to quit the print editions of its newspapers and release the value of its booming Domain real estate business (*Australian*, 6 February 2017). Waislitz, whose listed fund Thorney Opportunities (TOP) and private fund Thorney Investment Group own more than 50 million Fairfax shares, said he had spoken to several fellow investors in the company who shared his view that Fairfax management needed to show more urgency to downsize its legacy assets, liberate Domain and launch a share buyback.

91.1.2 Fairfax NZ posts loss for year

Fairfax New Zealand posted its first annual loss in four years last year (*Australian*, 13 January 2017). The Wellington-based unit of Fairfax Media Group reported a loss of \$75.3 million in the year ended 30 June 2016, marking the first time the books have been in the red since 2012. A year earlier it turned a profit of \$21.9 million. The bottom line was weighed down by impairment charges of \$106.8 million as the publisher of the *Dominion Post*, *Sunday Star-Time*, *Press* and *stuff.co.nz* website wrote off \$66.8 million from the value of its mastheads, \$26.3 million from buildings, plant and equipment, and \$4.7 million from software and websites. Redundancy costs also featured highly at \$19.3 million, up from \$9.4 million in 2015.

91.1.3 Clegg resigns from News Corp Australasia

News Corp Australia’s managing director of community publishing, Brett Clegg, has resigned to deal with a serious illness within his family. Clegg joined News Corp in 2013 as New South Wales regional director. He was previously chief executive of Financial Review Group at Fairfax Media and deputy managing director of the *Australian Financial Review*.

From April to June 2013, Clegg held the role of executive officer at Fairfax. He has worked across several mastheads including the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* and NewsLocal in New South Wales. He also served on the board of HiPages, SportsTG and Society One and helped build digital brand NewsXtend (NewsMediaWorks, 31 January 2017).

91.1.4 Coster steps down

When Peter Coster retired from full-time newspaper work in December 2016, his daughter, Alice Coster, wrote a piece in the *Herald Sun* (10 December 2016). Here’s part of what she wrote in her “Page 13” column: What began as a school-holiday proofreader’s assistant job at the *Warrnambool Standard* turned into a colourful and celebrated career, much of it with the *Herald Sun* and a predecessor, the *Herald*. “Whether as a foreign correspondent based in Los Angeles, a colour writer and, in more recent years, an editorial writer, Peter’s writing has been more daily works of art than reportage,” *Herald Sun* editor Damon Johnston said. “His wit and intellect have brought many stories to life and entertained and informed Victorians over many decades.”

Bush training came from being the youngest editor of the *Hamilton Spectator* at the age of 19. Local member Malcolm Fraser used to knock on the door for a cuppa and a chat right on deadline. Coster made the news himself when he dived from the safety of a boat into bloody seawaters to save the life of a man being mauled by a Great White shark. He later earned an award for his courage.

Covering everything from the troubles in Belfast and apartheid in South Africa, Coster had his own brush with the law when coup leaders in Fiji didn’t like what he wrote about them. Freed from jail, he looked down the street to see two of Melbourne’s burliest police rounds reporters marching towards him with notebooks at the ready. The cavalry had arrived.

Peter Coster wrote about his career as a journalist in “Front row seat to life”, *Herald Sun*, 24 December 2016, pp.26-27. It’s a great read!

91.1.5 People

Trevor Sykes has written his final Pierpont column for the *Australian Financial Review*. Sykes' first Pierpont column appeared in the paper on 18 February 1972. It focused on "financial scandal reported with humour" (*Telum Media Alert*, 9 January 2017).

Damien Cave has been appointed Australian bureau chief for the *New York Times*. Jacqueline Williams, an Australian who has recently worked on the paper's investigations team, has also joined the bureau. Michelle Innis, a contributor for the past three years, is now also part of the bureau (*Telum Media Alert*, 24 January 2017).

Jason Whittaker, former editor and publisher of the Private Media-owned *Crikey*, has moved to Sydney as story editor for ABC-TV's *Media Watch* (*Telum Media Alert*, 25 January 2017).

91.1.6 Australia Day honours

Several people who have worked in or contributed significantly to the print media were recognised in the 2017 Australia Day honours. They include demographer Bernard Salt, who is a columnist for the *Australian* and the *Weekend Australian Magazine*. Here is the list:

Member (AM) in the General Division

The late **Christopher Roy McPherson** (Award wef. 13 October 2014), late of Shepparton, Vic. For significant service to the print media industry in rural and regional areas, to men's health, and to the community.

Bernard Joseph Salt, Melbourne, Vic. For significant service to the community as a demographer, and through research and commentary on social and cultural change.

Member (OAM) in the General Division

Graham Norman Greenwood, Mount Gambier, SA. For service to the print media as a journalist in rural areas.

Frederick John (Jack) Lunn, The Gap, Qld. For service to the print media and to the community.

Shirley Margaret Stott Despoja, Henley Beach, SA. For service to the print media as a journalist.

91.1.7 Recent chronology

91.1.7.1 Deaths

Fairfax, James: D. 11 January 2017 at Bowral, aged 83; fifth-generation member of Fairfax family to lead Sydney's John Fairfax newspaper company; in 1955 began what became a 32-year career at John Fairfax Ltd, starting as a trainee journalist under the supervision of *Sydney Morning Herald* editor John Pringle; to widen his experience, spent eight months as a reporter and sub-editor on the *Glasgow Herald*; joined John Fairfax board in 1957; became chairman in 1977, replacing his father, Sir Warwick Fairfax; his chairmanship ceased in 1987 when the company was foolishly privatised by young Warwick Fairfax (the company went into receivership and in 1991 ended up in the hands of Canadian Conrad Black); James sold his shares for \$164 million; known for his philanthropy, he made numerous gifts to art galleries and was a regular benefactor for many organisations and charities, including libraries, hospitals, universities and the World Wide Fund for Nature; author of *My Regards to Broadway: A Memoir* (1991) (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 2017).

Kommer, Walter Iman: D. 23 December 2016 in Perth, aged 86; born in The Hague; came to journalism by chance after adventurous early life that included time as a commando in the Dutch

East Indies army in West Irian, and, in Australia, as a maker of tennis shoes and a building labourer; studied English firstly, and later studied economics and was awarded an honours degree; became an economist for Max Newton on the *Australian Financial Review*; his writing for that paper (especially on how businesses worked) gave him an understanding of business at the coalface; followed Newton to the soon-to-be-launched *Australian* in early 1964; became Newton's deputy and then became the editor when Newton departed with the paper in some degree of chaos; Rupert Murdoch later acknowledged that Kommer had "saved the *Australian*"; editor until 1969 when he established Alwest, a mining company, for Murdoch and managed Murdoch's oil and gas interests for many years (Mark Day, "Clear thinker stepped into breach and brought order to chaos", *Australian*, 26 December 2016, p.2).

L'Estrange, Richard Austin: D. 3 January 2017, aged 73; ex-2AY Albury, Shepparton *News*, Canberra *Times*, *Daily Mirror* Canberra, *Truth* and *TV Week*, Melbourne, the *Australian*, News Ltd. USA, ALP Press Secretary, public relations.

Rohan, Glen: D. 29 November 2016 at Mansfield, Victoria, aged 70; began working life in Deputy Crown Solicitor's Office, Victoria, and later worked in radio at Goulburn, NSW; returned to Melbourne and became advertising salesman at the *Melbourne Times*; became involved in all aspects of the paper, especially editorial; three years later became a part-owner and a year later they joined forces with Southern Cross Publications to produce another weekly, the *Emerald Hill and Sandridge Times* in South Melbourne and Port Melbourne (and soon St Kilda); other publications followed; from mid-1990s to 2009, Glen's inner-suburban papers survived moves to premises in Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood, and mergers with APN News & Media, Text Media and finally Fairfax Media; moved to farming property near Mansfield and in 2011 launched magazine *North-by-North-East*; Glen's final column for the magazine appeared in issue no. 50 (*Age*, 10 December 2016, p.35).

Taylor, Gregory John: D. 13 December 2016 in Melbourne, aged 85; joined the Melbourne *Age* as a cadet journalist in 1949; rose to become editor and later managing director of the *Age's* publisher, David Syme and Company; born in Tasmania; educated at Hobart High School; his father was a journalist, as was his future father-in-law, and two of his brothers; after his cadetship, spent several formative professional years overseas working in London and New York for Australian Associated Press; back at the *Age*, he filled a range of editorial executive positions including chief of staff and news editor and after Graham Perkin became editor in 1966 served as his indispensable night editor and trusted deputy; former *Age* editor, Les Carlyon, said, "Greg Taylor ... will be best remembered for his extraordinary skills as a long-time night editor of the paper. He was an expert finisher of copy, had a gimlet eye for reporters' errors and loathed wordy first paragraphs. He could completely remake a paper between editions without once appearing flustered"; editor, 1976-79, and then editor-in-chief of the Syme group; group operations manager, 1981-84; managing director, 1984-93 (John Tidey).

Woods, Lial James (Jim): D. 27 December 2016 in Queanbeyan, aged 103; printer, journalist, editor and publisher in 66-year career; driving force behind such community initiatives as the Queanbeyan Sporting Gallery and the town's printing museum; born at Temora; first job was paper boy delivering *Temora Independent*; served apprenticeship on that paper, owned by the Bradley family; had life-long association with the family, firstly as employee for 22 years, then for 44 years as a partner in, at different times, 11 newspapers and printing business throughout southern NSW; managed the *Crookwell Gazette* for nine years; then became managing director and part-owner of the *Queanbeyan Age* in 1958 in partnership with the Bradley family and the Shakespeare family and, later, John B. Fairfax; handed over managing director role to son Bob in 1991; heavily involved in community and sport in different towns (*Canberra Times*, 31 December 2016, Forum section, p.4).

91.1.8 Print and readers

Print is the past and online is the future, as all can attest (writes **Jack Shafer**, *Australian*, Media section, 6 February 2017). But a new study by Neil Thurman, for the University of London, indicates that print isn't quite prepared to surrender to online. According to Thurman's research, 88.5 per cent of the total time British readers devote to 11 national newspaper brands — *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Times*, *Mail*, *Mirror*, et al. — is spent on the print edition. Only 7.49 per cent of reader time goes to mobile and 4 per cent to PCs. *Guardian* readers spend 43 minutes a day on the print version and only 0.68 minutes on the online version. Readers of the *Mail* spend 39 minutes on print versus 2 minutes to the online edition. And so on down the list. “

UK national newspaper brands engage each of their online visitors for an average of less than 30 seconds a day, but their print readers for an average of 40 minutes,” Thurman writes. Are the Brits just slow readers? Nope, says Thurman, who drew on a year's worth of data. “Time spent reading print newspapers doesn't vary much country-to-country, and neither do online dwell times,” he said.

Thurman's work follows the research of University of Texas scholar H. Iris Chyi, who criticised the newspaper industry for splurging on online editions when real profits remain in the fading print product. In correspondence, Thurman points to a Deloitte study that found that 88 per cent of the newspaper industry's revenues comes from print, making time spent reading and money collected a near percentage match. Like Chyi, Thurman thinks newspapers need to rethink resources they've allocated to online editions. He believes his research should raise questions about the wisdom of the online expansion of UK newspapers to non-domestic markets. Both the *Guardian* and the *Mail* have taken their product to the United States and elsewhere.

The Guardian, which has invested deeply in its online editions, reported declines last summer in its digital revenues. In the fall, it announced that it would cut 30 per cent of its US staff.

Chris Mitchell followed up Shafer's article with “Print media is proving its revenue resilience”, *Australian*, 13 February 2017, p.25. Mitchell enlarged on Shafer's article and gave it broader context.

91.1.9 Print and young readers

ABC-TV's 7.30 program featured a segment on *Crinkling News*, an Australian children's newspaper. Here's an edited transcript:

LEIGH SALES, PRESENTER: The future of newspapers is unclear, but in Australia at least one publication is enjoying exponential growth. It's a newspaper written for children. Sarah Whyte went to take a look.

SARAH WHYTE, REPORTER: Each week in this suburban home a national newspaper comes to life. Editor Saffron Howden founded the newspaper after noticing a gap in the market for an untapped audience.

SAFFRON HOWDEN: I've done a lot of research into the newspapers overseas that are written for children and the amazing thing is that while print circulation for grown-up newspapers, as we call them, is obviously in decline worldwide, kids' newspapers are on the rise.

SARAH WHYTE: While *Crinkling News* has an average readership age of just 10 years old, it doesn't shy away from tackling serious topics.

SAFFRON HOWDEN: We sort of try to cover, you know, all the bases in the paper like you would find in a grown-up newspaper. One of the really amazing things about producing news for kids is that you might think with something like a terrorist attack that the less knowledge the better, because it is so scary for children. But, actually, it is all about giving them knowledge, encouraging them to ask questions. You want to tell them okay well, what is terrorism, why are there people in the world who want to scare other people. So you take it right back.

DIYA MEHTA, JUNIOR REPORTER: I think there is this idea surrounding a lot of the news that it doesn't concern kids, or there is a general feeling of apathy around kids consuming the news and I really think that's not, might even be a dangerous attitude to have.

SARAH WHYTE: Fourteen-year-old Diya is one of Crinkling News' star reporters. She's spending a week at the *Sydney Morning Herald* honing her skills.

DIYA MEHTA: I want to be a journalist so I can kind of give back to the people that, the public, who don't always know as much or need to be informed, because I reckon that if everyone's informed, that is like one of the pillars of democracy and that is really important and never going to go away.

SARAH WHYTE: This week she is getting advice from one of the best journalists in the country.

KATE MCCLYMONT, SMH INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER: Hi Diya, nice to meet you. There is no secret to journalism. I find the things that I do, which is investigative journalism, all it requires is extra time and patience and perseverance. And one of the mottos that I always live by is to follow the money! (Laughs)

Where you see something unusual happening, you know, instead of making one call, I might make 100 calls.

DIYA MEHTA: Right. Makes sense

KATE MCCLYMONT: And maybe only two will come off. But it's just, there is no great secret to it. ... Except having good contacts does help.

SARAH WHYTE: *Crinkling News* now has a readership of 20,000, and is used to spark classroom discussion in 450 schools across Australia.

SCHOOL STUDENT: It was really, like, cool, how we got to know about what's happening to the numbats and what's happening out in the wild.

SARAH WHYTE: So, do you rely a lot on educational resources to make sure you get it right for the kids?

SAFFRON HOWDEN: Yeah, look, funnily enough, it is one of the interesting things about writing news for kids is that you have to be more rigorous, in a way, because, A) you know, this might be the first time a child has ever read about a topic and it may stay with them forever. So you always want to get it right but also there is absolutely no assumed knowledge. We have never had a complaint suggesting that *Crinkling News* has given too much information.

SARAH WHYTE: Diya sees her work as crucial to educating future voters.

DIYA MEHTA: A lot of the policy decisions or a lot of the stuff that goes on affects us like really directly. And I think if kids know about it and they know about what's going on in the Government, then they are better equipped and also they are better equipped for right now.

91.1.10 Cover price of *Australian* rises

The cover price of the weekday issues of the *Australian* rose from \$2.70 to \$3 on Monday, 13 February. The cover price of the *Weekend Australian* remained at \$3.50. For \$16, subscribers can receive the *Australian* and *Weekend Australian* home delivered as well as obtaining unlimited digital access to the paper. For \$8, you can have the *Weekend Australian* home delivered and obtain unlimited digital access to the *Australian*.

On 31 August 2015, the cover price of the weekday *Australian* rose by 20c to \$2.70 and the *Weekend Australian* rose by 20c to \$3.50.

91.1.11 *Canberra Times* and the news

What's happening at the *Canberra Times*, a paper that used to pride itself on its coverage of national and international news? On 10 February a major judicial ruling in the US upheld a ban on President Trump's Order banning the entry to the US of people from seven designated countries. This story was known in Australia from about midday on 10 February, but the *Canberra Times* of



11 February carried no mention of the ruling. (There were small articles about it in the *Age* and *SMH*.)

From the other end of the news spectrum comes this: Because of the extreme heat in south-east Australia, the race meeting at Sydney's Randwick course was postponed. This was also known from about midday on 10 February. Despite this the *Canberra Times*' Turf Guide of 11 February was still prominently headed "Randwick Today".

91.1.12 Tasmania's Black Tuesday remembered 50 years on

Mention the 1967 bushfires in Tasmania to your editor and the town of Snug springs immediately to mind. Sixty-four people died in the fires in southern Tasmania, but it was at Snug that the devastation was greatest, with 11 residents losing their lives and 80 of the town's 120 buildings being destroyed. The Hobart *Mercury* published a five-part magazine series this month, 50 years after the fires. Here's how series editor Damian Bester introduced the magazines:



"February 7, 1967, was a day of drama, heroism and tragedy that quickly came to be known as Black Tuesday. The most deadly bushfires Tasmania has ever experienced blackened a swathe of the island state, leaving 64 people dead, 900 people injured and more than 7000 people homeless. Some 110 separate fire fronts burnt through 260,000 hectares of southern Tasmania within the space of five hours. Nearly 1300 homes and more than 1700 other buildings were destroyed, and the damage bill amounted to nearly \$40 million—nearly half a billion dollars today. One of Australia's worst natural disasters, Black Tuesday became the yardstick for every other Tasmanian bushfire, as well as the standard by which threatening bushfire seasons are judged. To mark the 50th anniversary of the tragedy, the *Mercury* presents the five-part magazine series, with archival images, retrospective articles and interviews with people who lived through the disaster."

The first of the five magazines appeared on the precise anniversary of Black Tuesday, and 7 February was a Tuesday this year, too. On that day the *Mercury* was published with a translucent wrap (on "natural translucent paper"), paired with a more traditional wraparound underneath (see photo). Damian Bester, the *Mercury*'s education services manager, says, "We also produced a Newspapers in Education resource kit that was taken up by about 10 per cent of the schools in Tasmania despite Term 1 starting half-way through the series. The whole thing was very well received and the general consensus is that it attracted our greatest reader engagement in a long time. Newsagent supplies were increased in anticipation of extra demand and despite this advance planning we still had newsagents requesting additional copies on the day of the anniversary. Sets of the magazine series were posted all around the country and can now be downloaded free of charge via this link: <http://bit.ly/MercuryBlackTuesday/> We also had a strong online presence including a special long form feature and daily photo galleries with images from our collection."

The reader response to the magazines was so great that on the final day of the series, 11 February, the *Mercury* ran four pages of reader feedback and memories: "Ordinary people, extraordinary tales", pp.16-17, and "Heroes, horror and heartbreak", pp.18-19.

91.1.13 Circulation figures: print and digital

A 12 per cent rise in digital subscriptions drove up sales at the *Australian* and the *Weekend Australian*, the only major newspapers to record year-on-year growth in the latest print-and-digital circulation figures (*Australian*, 17 February 2017). Total paid masthead sales of the Monday-to-Friday *Australian* rose by 1.9 per cent to an all-time high of 180,435. The *Weekend Australian*'s total masthead sales gained 2 per cent to 305,743, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations' figures for the October to December quarter. The masthead now has 84,000 digital subscribers.

The *Weekend Australian's* print sales fell 1.2 per cent to 221,930. Weekday print sales fell 5.4 per cent to 96,602. Because Fairfax no longer reports average net paid digital sales for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Age*, overall sales comparisons are difficult to make. But the Monday to Friday *SMH* print sales fell 10.3 per cent to 93,403, and the Saturday edition fell 8.5 per cent to 177,722. Print sales of the *Age* remain under the 90,000 threshold during the week, falling 9.7 per cent to 88,085, and down 8.8 per cent to 152,229 at weekends.

Melbourne's *Herald Sun*, now has more than 75,000 digital subscribers, a rise of 18 per cent against the previous corresponding period. Backed by a concerted marketing campaign in regional Australia, higher digital sales have underpinned year-on-year total sales growth at the *Geelong Advertiser*, *Townsville Bulletin*, *NT News* and the *Sunday Territorian*.

The *Canberra Times* was, as usual, a big loser, with circulation decreases of 2591 to 16,246 (13.8%) on weekdays, 3810 to 24,940 (13.3%) on Saturdays and 2858 to 16,842 (14.5%) on Sundays. Most of the former APN newspapers in Queensland and northern NSW recorded slight increases.

91.1.14 Readership figures

The *Australian* has posted readership growth of 5.1 per cent on its Monday to Friday editions, the biggest rise of any daily newspaper (*Australian*, 16 February 2017). Weekday print readership reached 475,000 in December, according to the latest official Enhanced Media Metric Australia (emma) statistics. The *Australian's* print readership rose 23,000 compared to the

Newspaper average issue readership (M-F)

	'000 December	12-month change %	3-month change %
The Australian	475	5.1	0.6
Adelaide Advertiser	394	-9.2	-2.5
Courier-Mail	588	-3.4	-1.7
Canberra Times	80	-18.4	-5.9
Daily Telegraph	988	1.3	0.2
Financial Review	314	1.3	-1.3
Herald Sun	1215	-2.9	-2.2
Sydney Morning Herald	655	0	-0.5
The Age	567	-3.2	-4.9
West Australian	606	3.9	0.7

Source: Emma

same period the previous year. Other papers to increase weekday print readership included the *Daily Telegraph*, up 1.3 per cent at 988,000, and the *West Australian*, 3.9 per cent higher at 606,000. The *Sydney Morning Herald* was flat at 655,000, and the *Age* fell back by 3.2 per cent to 567,000.

91.1.15 New Domain liftout

Fairfax Media launched on 17 February in the *Australian Financial Review* a new high-gloss Domain magazine covering Australian property and lifestyle. The refreshed supplement includes new columns from Domain's journalists, including expanded columns from property journalists Lucy Macken and Marc Pallisco. New contributors include lifestyle writer Rebecca Judd, Lucy Feagins of The Design Files, interior designer Darren Palmer and founder of The Edible Balcony, Indira Naidoo. Chief data scientist Dr Nicola Powell joins the Domain team to report on market insights. Domain is published in Saturday's *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Age* and Friday's *Financial Review* (*Telum Media Alert*, 17 February 2017).

91.1.16 News Corp and some statistics

Victor Isaacs writes: Two significant changes have occurred in newspaper ownership in Australia. Firstly, News Corp has sold its Perth Sunday newspaper, the *Sunday Times* (and the Perth Now website) to Seven West Media, giving Seven West a near newspaper monopoly in WA. This change took place with effect from the *Sunday Times* edition of 20 November (see ANHG 90.1.1).

Secondly, APN (APN News & Media Ltd) has exited the Australian newspaper business, having sold its Australian newspaper interests to News Corp at a bargain price (see ANHG 91.3.1 and 2

below). This package comprises 12 daily newspapers in rural Queensland and northern NSW, plus many non-dailies in these areas. On 8 December the ACCC indicated that it would not oppose the sale (see ANHG 90.3.1).

So, what is the net effect of these two transactions? Does it increase or decrease News Corp's dominant position in the Australian newspaper business? The following figures are taken from the newspaper audit survey for the three months ending September 2016 (with figures rounded to the nearest thousand).

The Perth *Sunday Times* is a big selling newspaper – 179,000 copies a week. The 12 daily newspapers going from APN to News Corp are comparatively small. The biggest selling are the Toowoomba *Chronicle* at an average of 15,000 copies a day and the *Sunshine Coast Daily* with an average of 12,000 daily. Other newspapers involved have much smaller circulations, down to the *Warwick Daily News*, with an average daily sale of just 2,000—Australia's smallest selling daily newspaper. However, these figures need to be multiplied by six (five in the case of the *Gympie Times*) to give the overall weekly circulation. These 12 daily newspapers sell 518,000 copies a week. To this should be added the *Sunshine Coast Sunday*, which is unaudited, but sells about 9,000 weekly. This figure does not take into account the sale of APN's non-dailies.

Thus, we see that from the two transactions, News Corp has come out very greatly ahead. It has lost 179,000 newspaper sales weekly, but has gained about 527,000 plus copies per week.

91.1.17 Hollands resigns from NewsMediaWorks

Mark Hollands has resigned as chief executive officer of NewsMediaWorks after almost four years with the organisation (NewsMediaWorks, 23 February 2017). Under Hollands' leadership, NewsMediaWorks has undertaken a series of initiatives to support Australia's leading news media publishers and communicate the sector's value proposition to advertisers. These include the 2013 launch of the cross-platform readership metric emma (Enhanced Media Metrics Australia), rebranding the organisation to reflect the multi-platform nature of today's news media publishers, and implementing the News Media Index, which reports whole of industry advertising revenue. Hollands will depart the organisation on February 28. See ANHG 72.1.17 for Hollands' appointment to what was then TheNewspaperWorks.



91.2.1 Advertising revenue

Australia's news media sector has reported \$2.28 billion in advertising revenue for calendar year 2016, according to the latest News Media Index with data collated by SMI. It remains the third largest media sector based on advertising revenue, behind digital and television (NewsMediaWorks, 31 January 2017).

Digital revenue grew by 9.9 per cent, print declined by 11.3 per cent and newspaper-inserted magazines (NIMs) declined by 9.2 per cent. Print revenue continues to account for around 80 per cent of total sector ad revenue. With significant global and domestic news stories in recent months, national news brands were the best performers in Q4, with revenues essentially stable at minus 1.4 per cent.

91.2.2 Sankey is new digital editor of the *Australian*

Daniel Sankey, a former regional daily newspaper editor, has been appointed digital editor of the *Australian* (*Weekend Australian*, 24-25 December 2016, p.2). The ANHG issues reveal that he edited the *Queensland Times*, Ipswich, 2004-2006, leaving to become the founding editor of Fairfax

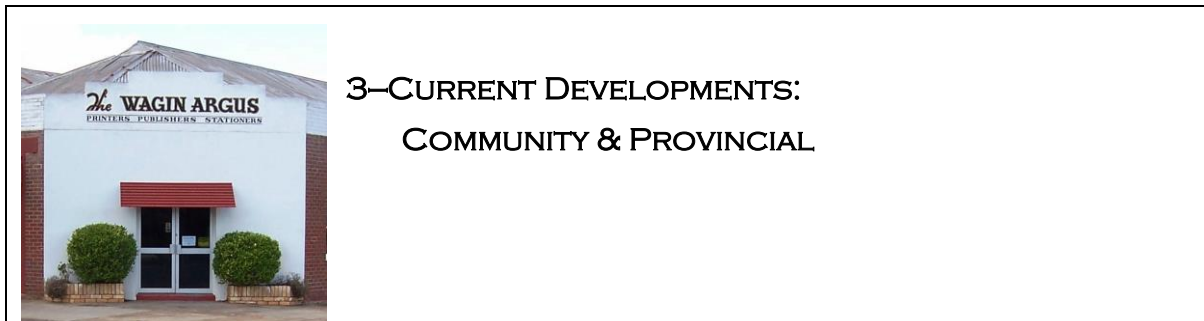
Media's brisbanetimes.com.au. In 2009 he became the editor of theage.com.au and in late 2013 the editor of the online *New Daily*, launched by Bruce Guthrie and Eric Beecher.

91.2.3 Super group takes charge of *New Daily*

The *New Daily*, a free news site set up by six super funds as a “commercial venture” in 2013 has been handed over to a single parent fund and is barely profitable. A superannuation umbrella group has now merged as the single owner of the *New Daily*. Financial records show the site is now profitable—by the tune of \$14,000—and the venture appears to have “burnt through” two-thirds of the \$12 million it has received from shareholders. Bruce Guthrie is the managing editor of the *New Daily* (Lucy Battersby, “Super group take reins of *New Daily*”, *Age*, 22 November 2016, p.23).

91.2.4 *Mayne Report* ceases

The final edition of the *Mayne Report*, a shareholder activist email newsletter and website, was published on 31 January. Publisher Stephen Mayne had announced that this would be the final issue. There is no longer a website or public archive available of the past nine years' issues, but there are 281 videos on the *Mayne Report*'s YouTube channel (*Telum Media Alert*, 1 February 2017).



91.3.1 Queensland/ NSW: Acquisition of APN's regionals completed

News Corporation's purchase of APN News and Media's regional newspaper publishing arm has been finalised, after it was given competition and foreign investment regulatory approval (*Australian*, 29 December 2016). In a statement to the ASX on 28 December, APN said the sale had been completed and News Corp would take control of 12 daily newspapers, 60 community publications and dozens of related websites. The deal will cost News Corp \$36.6 million and the finalisation of the transaction to buy Australian Regional Media was expected after the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission gave it the green light.

91.3.2 APN loses \$6m but it now has a future without print

APN News and Media has reported a 15 per cent lift in revenue from its operating businesses to \$298.6 million for the 2016 full year after divesting its interests in print and two significant acquisitions (NewsMediaWorks, 23 February 2017). With losses on discontinued operations and the transactional activity, APN posted a loss for the year of \$6 million. Statutory earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation from continuing operations were up 14 per cent to \$90.9 million.

In 2016 APN demerged its New Zealand print, broadcasting and digital business, NZME, and completed the sale of its Australian Regional Media division to News Corp Australia for \$36.6 million. It expanded its outdoor interests by acquiring the remaining 50 per cent of Adshel for \$268.4 million, as well as taking over digital business Conversant Media.

The APN board resumed the payment of dividends for the first time since 2012, declaring a fully-franked full-year dividend of 4 cents. APN chief executive Ciaran Davis said APN was effectively a new business that over the last three years had gone from having one third of revenues in growth assets to generating all its revenues across the high-growth sectors of outdoor, radio and digital.

91.3.3 Yea and Dandenong Ranges: An update

This is an update on the item 88.3.7 that ANHG ran last July about the competing newspapers in Yea, Victoria. The focus was on the *Local Paper*, which began publication on 17 February 2016, competing against the *Yea Chronicle* (estab. 1890). Ash Long, publisher of the *Melbourne Observer*, started the *Local Paper*. Long wrote (on 9 January 2017):

“We have been able to attract important ‘marquee’ weekly full-page advertisers in real estate (Landmark), groceries (Foodworks) as well as some of the Murrindindi Shire Council advertising business. Our weekly Trades Guide has 134 local tradespeople as advertisers each week; the *Yea Chronicle* has about 36 Trades clients.

“An item that may interest your readers is that when Leader Newspapers closed seven titles at the end of June 2016, we approached them about the *Free Press Leader*. The newspaper was founded 70 years ago by John and Nell Bennett for the Dandenong Ranges area. The couple ran the *Mountain District Free Press* from 1946, mostly from Belgrave, with the title being purchased by Cumberland Newspapers (Murdoch) in the early 1970s. It was taken over by Leader (Mott family) in 1977, and it was one of the first newspapers that I managed (1978). I produced its largest-ever issue (76 pages) in 1979, with a ‘100 Years of Local Press’ celebration.

“Leader and Local Media (our company) reached an agreement that Local Media could produce a weekly newspaper under the name of the *New Free Press*. (Leader still has a *Free Press Leader* presence on Facebook.) The *New Free Press* has continued at a similar size (16-20 pages) most weeks in the second half of 2016. It resumes in February 2017, with increased forward advertising orders for the coming 12 months. Distribution has increased to include the Yarra Valley as well as the Dandenong Ranges.”

91.3.4 Nhulunbuy: Paper closes

The weekly paid-circulation *Arafura Times*, Nhulunbuy, on the Northern Territory’s Gove Peninsula, ceased publication in December 2016 (*Telum Media Alert*, 12 December 2016).

91.3.5 Tamworth: *Leader* moves from iconic building after 91 years

The *Northern Daily Leader* has moved from its iconic building at the corner of Brisbane and Marius Streets, Tamworth (part of the New England Highway), after occupying it for 91 years. The building was built for the newspaper in 1925. The move from the premises was completed on the weekend of 22-23 October 2016 and involved not merely the newspaper’s staff but other Tamworth-based Fairfax Media employees—from the *Tamworth Times*, the *Land, Domain* and Fairfax Rural Events. The new Tamworth home for Fairfax Media is a custom-designed, open-plan office which has brought the company’s Tamworth operations under one roof for the first time. It was best known as the Rabobank building at 27 Bourke Street. *Leader* editor Fiona Ferguson wrote a “Letter from the Editor” (22 October 2016, p.17) to explain the move.

91.3.6 Colac: *Herald* and 150 years of town’s newspaper publication

The *Colac Herald* published on 16 December 2016 a 32-page tabloid newspaper feature “celebrating 150 years of publication”. The *Colac Herald* began publication on 22 October 1869, 147 years earlier. The town’s first newspaper, the *Colac Observer*, began publication on 24 August 1866. On 27 October 1874, five years after the *Herald* had begun, it bought out the *Observer* and incorporated that title. The *Herald*’s historical feature of December 2016 heads each page with “1866-2016”. It never quite brings itself to acknowledging that the title was only 147 years old at the time. In fact, the ordinary edition of the *Colac Herald* of 16 December 2016 includes as part of its masthead: “150th Year of Publication”.

This strange desire among some newspapers to want to be seen to be older than they really are is an affliction that led your editor to write an article for *GXpress* magazine in March 2010. Here’s an extract (and you’ll note that the *Colac Herald*’s affliction is not something new):

Sadly, most newspapers place greater emphasis on accuracy when writing news stories than when writing their own history. They tend to want to appear as old as they can, even if it means fudging the facts a little—or sometimes a lot.

The *Hamilton Spectator*, a tri-weekly serving Victoria's Western district, turned 150 years old on February 11 but it had already blown out the candles on its cake and indulged in its historical reminiscences. It cribbed seven months by publishing its excellent anniversary supplement ("Hamilton Spectator: 150 Years") in July last year. The town's first paper was the *Hamilton Courier*, launched by Thomas Wotton Shevill on July 23, 1859. George Robinson bought the *Courier* in February 1860 and changed its name immediately, but he continued the *Courier's* folio numbering. From February 11, 1860, he published the *Hamilton Spectator and Courier*, and the *Grange District Advertiser*. Eleven weeks later he dropped the *Courier* from the title. The *Spectator*, probably one of the best tri-weeklies in Australia, was a daily, from January 1908 to September 1917.

Compared with some of the inaccurate historical claims made by Australian newspapers, the *Hamilton Spectator's* "crime" falls into the "rap-on-the-knuckles" category. The *Portland Observer* (estab. 1890) is in the 39-lashes category: it fudges 47 years and lays claim to being the third oldest newspaper in Victoria. The *Observer's* website says: "Established in 1842, the *Portland Guardian* eventually merged with the *Observer* in 1890, dropping the *Guardian* banner to become the *Portland Observer*." In fact, the *Observer* began publication in June 1890 as a Labor paper when the conservative *Guardian* was two months short of 48 years old. The Davis family, which had helped found the *Observer*, bought the *Guardian* in April 1964 and absorbed it in the *Observer*. It chose to continue what the *Observer* was identified with, not what the *Guardian* stood for—yet now it wants to piggy-back on the *Guardian's* history.

Similar things have been attempted at Newcastle and Colac. The Newcastle *Herald* began on April 3, 1876, as the *Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners' Advocate*, but has at times piggy-backed on the birth date of the *Newcastle Chronicle* (1858), which the *Herald* absorbed after three months. The *Colac Herald*, a Victorian tri-weekly, did a similar thing when it celebrated "140 Years" in December 2006, stating: "In 1866, your *Colac Herald* was born."

Yet Portland, Hamilton, Newcastle and Colac should note that the Hobart *Mercury* (estab. 1854) does not claim its birth was in 1847, although the paper it absorbed right at the start was established then.

[Note: Richard Beks, principal of the Hamilton Spectator Partnership, telephoned me after my 2010 article appeared and acknowledged that they needed to get their history right. Most newspaper executives like to turn a blind eye to the fine details of dates of establishment dates. — Rod Kirkpatrick.]

91.3.7 Ferny Hills, Brisbane: *Echo* celebrates 25th birthday

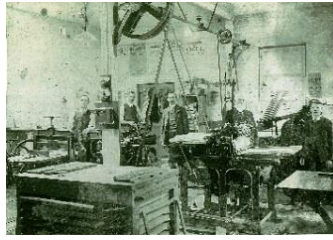
Rod Kirkpatrick writes: The *Hills Echo*, the monthly quarto news publication that serves my new neighbourhood, is 25 years old. Roger and Lyn Fryer began publishing it in January 1992 [the month I moved to Brisbane from Canberra to become a journalism lecturer at the University of Queensland]. When the *Hills Echo* began, it was 24 pages and had a print run of 3500. It is now 32 pages with full colour throughout and the print run has reached 13,000. Katie Maclean of MAC Publications is now the owner of the *Echo*.

91.3.8 Such a wonderful Summer Time leads inevitably to Autumn

The success of NewsLocal's mini-mag, *Summer Time*, has led to a decision to publish an Autumn magazine. The magazine, with fashion, food and lifestyle content targeting affluent readers, will again be distributed with NewsLocal's the *Mosman Daily*, *Many Daily*, *Wentworth Courier Inner West Courier* and *North Shore Times*. In addition, it will also be delivered to select precincts, bars and cafes across Sydney's CBD and have an interactive digital environment. (Telum Media Alert, 20 January 2017).

91.3.9 Hervey Bay: Philp is new editor

Jordan Philp, who had been acting as editor of the *Fraser Coast Chronicle* since last June, has been appointed editor (Telum Media Alert, 13 February 2017).



4-NEWSPAPER HISTORY

91.4.1 Trove and geolocation

Dr Tim Sherratt, associate professor of digital heritage at the University of Canberra, writes: A couple of years ago, I did some work on geolocating Trove newspaper titles. I've just resurrected the code and updated the data. If you'd like to play with a simple interface (just enter a place and it will display the 10 nearest newspapers) go here: <https://troveplaces.herokuapp.com>

If you'd like the data, it's here in a CSV file (1200 titles):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rURriHBSf3MocI8wsdl1114t0YeyU0BVSXWeg232MZs/edit?usp=sharing>

If you'd like the code I used to harvest and process the titles, it's here:

<https://github.com/wragge/trove-places-processing>

91.4.2 John Curtin and 'The Task Ahead'

Troy Bramston wrote an article (*Weekend Australian*, 31 December 2016-1 January 2017, p.15) about John Curtin's prime ministerial New Year message, issued at the end of 1941 and published in the Melbourne *Herald* on 27 December 1941 under the heading, "The Task Ahead". It was 20 days after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour. Bramston commented that Curtin's message signalled a shift in strategic thinking: "Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom." The *Herald* article was republished in the rural paper, the *Weekly Times*, 7 January 1942, p.2, noting: "This is the article that aroused so much interest in Britain and U.S.A." It also noted: "The year that has just begun will be the most critical in the history of Australia."

THE TASK AHEAD OF US IN 1942

By the Prime Minister (Mr J. Curtin).

**That reddish veil which o'er the face
Of night-hag East is drawn . . .
Flames new disaster for the race?
Or can it be the Dawn?**

So wrote Bernard O'Dowd. I see 1942 as a year in which we shall know the answer. I would, however, that we provide the answer. We can and we will. Therefore I see 1942 as a year of immense change to Australian life.

The Australian Government's policy has been grounded on two facts. One is that the war with Japan is not a phase of the struggle with the Axis Powers, but is a new war. The second is that Australia must go on to a war footing. These two facts involve two lines of action — one in the direction of external policy as to our dealings with Britain, the United States, Russia, the Netherlands East Indies and China in the higher direction of the war in the Pacific. The second is the reshaping, in fact, the revolutionising, of the Australian way of life until a war footing is attained quickly, efficiently and without question. As the Australian Government enters 1942, it has behind it a record of realism in respect of foreign affairs. I point to the forthright declaration in respect of Finland, Hungary and Rumania, which was followed with little delay by a declaration of war against those countries by the Democracies.

We felt that there could be no half-measures in our dealings with the Soviet when that nation was being assailed by the three countries mentioned. Similarly, we put forward that a reciprocal agreement between Russia and Britain should be negotiated to meet an event of aggression by Japan. Our suggestion was then regarded, wrongly, as time has proved, as premature.

Now, with equal realism, we take the view that while the determination of military policy is the Soviet's business, we should be able to look forward with reason to aid from Russia against Japan. We look for a solid and impregnable barrier of the democracies against the three Axis Powers, and we refuse to accept the dictum that the Pacific struggle must be treated as a subordinate segment of the general conflict. By that it is not meant that any one of the other theatres of war is of less importance than the Pacific, but that Australia asks for a concerted plan evoking the greatest strength at the Democracies' disposal, determined upon hurling Japan back.

The Australian Government therefore regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the Democracies' fighting plan. Without any inhibitions of any kind I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs, as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength. But we know, too, that Australia can go, and Britain can still hold on.

We are therefore determined that Australia shall not go, and we shall exert all our energies to the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy. Summed up, Australian external policy will be shaped towards obtaining Russian aid, and working out, with the United States, as the major factor, a plan of Pacific strategy, along with British, Chinese and Dutch forces.

All Australia is the stake in this war. All Australia must stand together to hold that stake. We face a powerful, ably led and unbelievably courageous foe. We must watch the enemy accordingly. We shall watch him accordingly.



JOHN CURTIN

91.4.3 Changing geography of overseas news

Peter Putnis and Jee Young Lee write in "The changing geography of overseas news in the Australian press, 1905-1950", *Australian Journalism Monographs*, Volume 16, 2016, p.31 (see 91.5.2 below):

Australia's 1950 news geography is markedly different to that of 1935. The US is much more prominent. In 1950 the US accounts for 22.2% of all country references (8.6% in 1935) while 30.1% of stories with overseas news content included significant reference to the US (11.8% in 1935). The UK, while still ranked as the top country, is much less prominent in 1950 than in 1935. The percentage of stories referencing the UK is down from 50.7% to 36.9%. British Empire countries are, as a whole, less prominent in 1950 than in 1935 while Asian countries are more prominent. Korea occupies third place with 9.1 per cent of country references. It is noteworthy that of the 107 references to Korea all but four occurred in the second half of the year, after the actual outbreak of the war in late June. This underlines how dominant a single event can be in determining the newsworthiness of a country at a particular point in time.

91.4.4 From the pen of William Henry Leighton Bailey

Australasian Journalist, 15 July 1925, p.105: The pioneer of Sunday journalism in Australia and the founder of the *Sunday Times*, Sydney, Mr W.H. Leighton Bailey, who can claim to be Australia's oldest journalist as he is nearing 90 years, received a copy of the *Journalist* at his home at 3 Ivy Place, Worthing, England. He sent the following interesting article for publication:

By the kindness of my old friend Mr Charles Cox, formerly of the *Age*, Melbourne, and latterly of the N.Z. press, now living at Sherborne, Dorset, England. I received a copy of the *Journalist* of

March 15, every line of which I read with pleasure, and I rejoice that now the pressmen of the Dominion have a staunch supporter of their own, and a strong advocate of their salary rights.

I notice on page 43 of your March issue a paragraph concerning the demise of the *Cooktown Independent* and mentioning the names of several men connected with the Cooktown press, but you who are of modern growth have never heard or perhaps may have forgotten the name W.H. Leighton Bailey, who was one of the early pioneers of North Queensland in 1873, and who landed on the banks of the Endeavour River after the great Captain Cook.

When W.H. Leighton Bailey reached the spot of landing, all parties held their lives in their hands as against the blood-thirsty cannibals that then occupied the land, and if you didn't give them a "Snider pill" for their health's sake, they would accommodate you with a ventilation hole in your body with the aid of the poisoned end of a spear, so "Pills" were in demand.

Had it not been for my astuteness in starting the *Sunday Times* in Sydney whilst Parliament was in recess, an Act would have been passed by the "Killjoys" similar to that which the Melbourne Parliament passed some years after, prohibiting me from publishing a Sunday journal. So the proprietors of the *Sunday Sun* and the *Sunday News* are indebted to me for the big newspaper dividends they draw from these papers. But I, like all the old pioneers who have paved the way, am now revelling in the work of trying to find where the next meal is coming from.

I first ran the *Northern Argus* in Rockhampton for several years, and I could tell stories of prominent men that would make their scions' hair stand on end, but no! "De Mortuis"—I started the *Cooktown Herald* in a tent and did almost everything myself, and many a time I had to use cuttings from my moleskins to put on my rollers, as I could not get composition, but I did it all and made the *Cooktown Herald* the most popular paper in the North of Queensland. I conducted it with credit to myself for several years until family health compelled me to sell it.

General Spencer Browne, C.B., in his *Reminiscences of Northern Queensland* in 1877, after paying high compliments to the surrounding country and its prospects, inter alia said of me:

I had gone on to Cooktown to do literary work for Mr William Henry Leighton Bailey, the proprietor and editor of the *Herald*. It feels now a rather complimentary circumstance that after a week or two the editorial work really, if not nominally, came to me. Mr Bailey was a remarkable man. If one may imagine a tropical Bond Street, it would be said that every day he was tailored there. His dress was immaculate; his home—and a generously hospitable home it was—had every refinement. He was a reader, scholarly, and with a wide knowledge of art. In music he excelled. His was one of the most wonderful tenor voices I have heard—and I have heard many, from Jean de Reske down—and it seemed remarkable that he escaped an operatic career.

W.H.L. Bailey, minus his eye-glass, would have as great a shock as if he had appeared in a bathing suit. He knew every one, every one knew him, and yet he was usually reserved. In many respects he was exotic. There were many other splendid men, educated and of good breeding in Cooktown and thereabouts, but the editor-proprietor of the leading paper had naturally the grand manner. Not so long ago when I was president of the Queensland Institute of Journalists, the president of the New South Wales Institute visited Queensland, his native State. He also was a Leighton Bailey, a son of my old chief at Cooktown. We entertained him here and there seemed to be a transposition of periods.

When [W.F.L.] Bailey of the *Evening News* spoke, I could close my eyes and hear his father speaking over the wide sea of years, laying down the law on some point in the amenities of journalism. Another newspaper chap and I bought the [Cooktown] *Herald* and its business, but the bad times came, and I am afraid that the deal was not a satisfactory one for the vendor. Bailey, sen., now lives in England. He had a big family, but his son in Sydney is the only one I have seen since the Cooktown days. The *Herald* was a good paper, and became, in the time of the Bailey control, a supporter of the M'Ilwraith Party.

[This is an extract from the article that appeared in the *Australasian Journalist*.]

91.4.5 Letters to the editor (1): Women

Rod Kirkpatrick writes: This is the first in a series of articles about letters to the editor and the nation's keenest contributors of such items to newspapers. I will draw on my "letters to the editor" clippings file that goes back to 1974. The first clipping is a letter from D.W. Mitchell, of Glen Iris,

Victoria, published in the *Age*, 8 May 1974, p.8, under the heading, “Now the women show the way”:

I have been a regular reader of the *Age* for the past 70 years, perhaps longer, for I believe we oldies in our schooling years learned to read, write and master other worthwhile subjects quicker and sounder than the youngsters of today under the somewhat nonsensical and cramming “advanced” educational system now in operation. But that’s beside the point.

The thing that interests me in reading the *Age* over the years is the increasing number of letters appearing in Letters to the Editor from women correspondents, something one rarely found in any daily newspaper a few years back. I hope the good ladies will continue to send their sane contributions, for apart from being a commendable service to the readers of the *Age* it will certainly prove to the chauvinistic male species that the members of the opposite sex are quite capable of holding their own on any subject, political or otherwise.

On 18 November 1976, the *Australian* publicised the variety of professionals and others who had written letters to the editor for it to publish. It said:

In just three months (12 weeks to 9 September 1976), 75 teachers, educationists and counsellors, 40 academics, 29 politicians, 28 members of the medical profession, 23 environmentalists, 17 businessmen, 10 public servants, eight clerics, eight members of the media, seven lawyers, five authors, four accountants, four members of the Services, four charity workers, three ecologists, two farmers/graziers, two engineers, one geologist, migrant spokesman, athletics coach, penologist, policeman, politician’s wife, zoologist and an elderly gentleman who resented being called “Baldy”, wrote letters to the editor of the *Australian*. That’s top-drawer pulling power. That’s the *Australian*.

91.4.6 Memories of the *Labour Daily*

In the *Journalist*, August-September 1945, p.3, Harry Moore, editor of the *Daily Mercury*, Mackay, wrote: Many of us of the ink-stained breed who padded the rounds in Sydney in the early twenties got a pungent whiff of an eventful past from the fire that burned out the old *Labour Daily* offices in Brisbane Street, Sydney, the other day. Fortunately, you can’t cremate memories, and I’m sure the memories that many will share of the anxious, sometimes desperate, and oftentimes comic, efforts to keep the *Labour Daily* going will exhilarate their thoughts, in these days of streamlined journalism. The old *Daily*, sickly from the start, began its convulsive career as the *Daily Mail*, at offices in Pitt Street, near the Quay. Michael Shannon was Editor and an optimistic cove named White was publisher.

I had transferred my cadetship from the genial interest of Walter Jago and Bill Lawless at the old *Fairplay* and *Lone Hand* to the *Daily Mail*, there to learn the remorseless business of scrounging for news as an unidentified nuisance from an unknown sheet. We were a scratch crew, but we had a zest and gaiety in earning a precarious pay. Vince Stratton covered the waterfront; the late E.J. Dunn and Jim Birch did the financial and commercial rounds respectively; Claude Delalande floated in and out, and Charles Lee, C.S. McNulty and Jim Rogers fitted in somewhere. The social chatter and hot news on the kitchen front were served up by Rena Wallace and Abby Clancy. One Stone, and Roger Kearney subbed.

Then we shifted our gunyahs to Brisbane Street, began anew to wrestle with the unremitting attention of mortgage men and the problem of doubtful public appearances. The Labour party had bought us, and soon we spread ourselves as the *Labour Daily*. Again we were an unheard of crew, and it was not always comfortable to face up to a “big shot” for an interview on behalf of the *Labour Daily*. We had a bewildering succession of editors. Roy Connolly figured as the boss somewhere about that time, and soon after we had given him a farewell he turned up again in the same capacity. Godfrey Kelly came to the throne, followed by Kelsall, L.L. Woolcott, E.J. Dunn and one or two more.

For a while we had as our news editor the mercurial personality who hit international headlines for his interview with De Valera “in smoke”—Chris O’Sullivan, to be sure. George Warnecke was one of our numerous news editors, and Butler Gye buzzed about the same office for a while. We

had a chap on Australia's longest round—Aiden de Brune. He walked around Australia, and told our readers what it felt like. Aiden wrote some good detective fiction after that.

There was a strike in the *Labour Daily* office—about 1923 or 1924. I forget what it was all about—nothing really consequential, for all but three of us went back to work that same evening. I remember making a bitter speech against the strike, finding that some who had shouted for it were the first to hurry back to work, and going off in disgust to Melbourne. Flames have consumed the building, but its ghosts live on; and one of my life-long memories will be of Bob Aubrey, “Brother” Inge and myself anxiously watching the pay clerk enter with a bag strangely flat and wondering whether there would be enough to go around!

91.4.7 Peter Richardson's final column

Peter Richardson, a former editor of the *Nambour Chronicle* and a journalist for more than 70 years, has written what is expected to be his final column. It appeared in the free south-east Queensland “55+” magazine, *Your Time*. The monthly column, called “Good One, Grandpa”, began in July 2016 even as he was being afflicted by Alzheimer's disease. In addition, he had had dwindling sight for about 10 years. His final column appeared in February 2017, with an editorial note beneath it: “Sadly, this is Peter Richardson's final column. His failing eyesight has won in the end. All here at *Your Time* wish him well.” The editor is Dorothy Whittington, whom Richardson had once employed as a cadet on the *Nambour Chronicle*.

Richardson, born in 1929, wrote and self-published a memoir, *Aged in the Ink* (2009), which he described as “an undisciplined cherry-picking of memories and musings on regional journalism, and on life, by a child of the Great Depression, with which I share a birth year”. By 2009, Richardson had been a *Sunshine Coast Daily* columnist for 29 years and a senior journalist there for about half that period. Here's an extract from an article Richardson wrote for the *Sunshine Coast Daily* more than three years ago (27 July 2013).

A reminder that 110 years have passed since the publication of the first newspaper between Caboolture and Gympie put my memory into rewind mode. It doesn't go quite that far back, but I do recall taking over the editorship of the *Nambour Chronicle* 56 years ago, having no idea then that it would one day morph into one of the most successful regional dailies in Australia. In 1957, the *Chronicle* was a stodgy weekly paper serving a predominantly rural region, officially known as Brisbane's Near North Coast with Nambour as its prosperous capital but including a handful of small towns and villages along the coastal strip. The paper had been run for half a century by the McFadden family, following its establishment by Luke Wilkinson in 1903.

Looking through that first edition of the paper, I was intrigued by Wilkinson's no-nonsense declaration: “The *Chronicle* is not being started as the mouthpiece of any politician or of any party, but as a purely business venture from which the proprietor hopes mutual benefit may accrue to those he caters for and himself.” Whether this disclaimer had anything to do with the fact that Wilkinson's father was then the federal MP for Moreton, however, can only be surmised. The most prominent advertisement in the first issue was inserted by William Whalley, storekeeper, plumber and galvanised iron worker. Whalley's was for many years the best-known store in Nambour and was still dominating the front page when I arrived in 1957.

Among the many surprises awaiting me in my first week as editor was that the job description could have been a little more detailed. I found myself to be not only the editor, but chief (and only) reporter, sub-editor and proof reader. Then on Thursdays I was expected to deliver the papers to Woombye and Palmwoods. An early version of multi-skilling. As a trained journalist, I found the news coverage, or lack of it, appalling, and as editor, impossible to accept. I had little or no interest in the advertising side of the business, but it was obvious that thanks to the paper's regional monopoly, it was highly profitable, with a regular advertising content of some 80 per cent, and news the poor relation.

Noting that the coastal strip, long popular with Brisbane holidaymakers, was just putting a toe in the water of tourism and that the hinterland was increasingly attractive to what are now called tree-changers, I could see that the newspaper had an even brighter future if I could make it a news paper. This prompted me to suggest that my former employers, owners of the *Toowoomba Chronicle* (the Dunn family), should acquire the paper. This they did, and that was the first step in a process that led eventually to the birth of the *Sunshine Coast Daily*.



5—RECENTLY PUBLISHED

91.5.1 Books

Griffen-Foley, Bridget, and Scalmer, Sean (eds.), *Public Opinion, Campaign Politics and Media Audiences: New Australian Perspectives*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2017. E-book. RRP: \$16.99.

McDonald, Neil, with Brune, Peter, *Valiant for Truth: The Life of Chester Wilmot, War Correspondent*, NewSouth, 500pp., hardback., \$50.

91.5.2 Articles

Hess, Michael, “Birchalls Bookshop: a history of survival”, *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 63, No. 3, December 2016, pp.4-18. Birchall’s newsagency is the oldest newsagency in Australia. It has been operating at the same premises in Launceston since 1844. This article, however, does not mention the newspaper retail aspect of the business.

Knight, Elizabeth, “The one pertinent question the market dare not ask Rupert Murdoch”, *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 February 2017, BusinessDay section. Analyses News Corporation’s most recent quarterly results.

Leak, Bill, “Offence no defence for silencing disagreeable opinion”, *Weekend Australian*, 17-18 December 2016, p.20. The author and cartoonist argues that the attempt to make some opinions unlawful is authoritarian and illiberal. Discusses the responses to cartoons Leak drew in response to the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre and to the Four Corners program on conditions inside a Northern Territory juvenile detention centre.

Putnis, Peter, and Lee, Jee Young, “The changing geography of overseas news in the Australian press, 1905-1950”, *Australian Journalism Monographs*, Volume 16, 2016. This 43-page monograph analyses the changing pattern of overseas news coverage in the Australian press in the first half of the twentieth century. Discusses how overseas news coverage reflects historical circumstances in relation to world events, patterns of global interconnectedness, Australia’s position in the world, and the state of press communications. [Cover of the monograph features wonderful black-and-white images related to Australian city and country newspapers.] Available online – search Australian Journalism Monographs. Some free hard copies are also available from Peter Putnis: peter.putnis@canberra.edu.au

Stokes, Alan, “Play an active part in the future of your favourite newspaper”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 2017, p.17. Advocates home printing of personalised copies of the *SMH*.

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