



New Year Greetings from Jindibah Community January 2006

WELCOME TO THE annual Seasons Greetings card/newsletter from the residents and non-residents of Jindibah intentional community.

The events of the past 12 months at and around Jindibah have been - to us at least - eventful.

Our community is growing: this year we add another new member to our cast: **Pippa Markham**, who will arrive from London in the new year to take up residence in Harry Fowler's old wooden farmhouse.

Christobel and Christopher - who have been living in the classic century old Australian farmhouse - are building a brick and tile home on the 'mezzanine' level of the community (next to the old water tank on the hill), and plan to move when the house is completed, possibly in January.

Living for a decade in the Sleepy Creek valley, C+C's house has been a kind of 'gate-house' to the community. Moving away from this key cosy creekside position to face the windy hills will be a radical change for them, as will January temperatures in the 30s for Pippa (after London's winter!)



Above, Harry Fowler outside the original farmhouse - 1940s?



Above, the farmhouse at the time of purchase in 1994.



Above and below, the farmhouse today, located near the entrance to the community, now surrounded by tropical gardens: Pippa's new home.



Below, farmhouse back porch and gardens.



New views...



Construction on the **new house of Christobel and Christopher** (above + below) began in September 05. It's located half-way up our internal road, on the 'mezzanine' level. It's the second Jindibah house to be built by Mullum builder, **Phill Johnson** and designed by Mullum architect, **Eddie Buivids**.



JINDIBAH 2005 (06) News Update...2



Restoring the swimming hole...

As a community, we are keen to make sure there are special places on our property where individuals can relax and enjoy our rural environment.

In 2004, we restored the roof of the community shed in the property's south-western corner to make it more usable. In this past year, our major community project has been to restore the old swimming hole located next to it.

Originally established by Harry Fowler and his family in the 1920s (see *pix top right*), it was restored in the 1940s, when Harry returned from World War 2.

Justifiably, Harry was very proud of his 50-yard, four-lane creek pool, lanes indicated with ropes dotted with white wooden markers. (We found some of these white markers during the shed restoration, and included them in our permanent exhibition of the first 100 years of the property, located in the community hall.)

This old swimming hole was well known in the neighbourhood, with many hundreds of children taught to swim in it each summer in the 1970s, (*pic at right*) in classes supported by Byron Council. Harry Fowler himself used it to train for Masters Games events in which he participated well into his 70s.

To maintain the creek swimming hole, periodically Harry would dredge out built-up silt, so this year, we followed his lead.



JINDIBAH 2005 (06) News Update...3



Having first obtained the appropriate permits and licences from the **Department of Natural Resources** and the **Department of Primary Industries (NSW Fisheries)**, we asked environmental consultants from **Southern Cross University** to map the area of the creek swimming hole earmarked for restoration, and to calculate the quantity of silt to be removed (*pix at right - top*).

Walsh Environmental Management Services (in the form of our soil scientist friend **Joanne Walsh**, from the Irenicon Community further down Fowlers Lane) then prepared a detailed **Environmental Study** of the area to work out the impact of the restoration project on the environment, then **Les Eggins Earthmoving** was called in to carefully remove accumulated silt, and relocate it uphill.

In preparation for the earthmoving stage, we lined the upstream side of the creek spillway with protective fabric, to prevent silt from clouding the creek downstream, and put up silt fencing.

The whole project took 9 months to organise, prepare and undertake. Once dredging work was completed, planting began. Hundreds of lomandras and some tree ferns have already been planted to help stabilise the creek banks. The huge natural pool has been welcomed by residents and friends all through this hot summer.

Restoring the swimming hole...



Les Eggins (*below*) with his special dredger with a 52-foot reach, used to relocate accumulated silt.



Jindibah working bees: Bettina, Stephan, Christopher (*above*) and Christobel put up creek-side silt fencing, and then Jesse and Penny plant lomandra by the newly dredged creek.



JINDIBAH 2005 - 06



News Update...4

Maintenance is probably one of the most important considerations on a community of 113 acres (45.73ha). On our community, we find *ad hoc* working bees work best for us.

In January 05, while some of our long-distance partners were holidaying in Byron (and taking advantage of Nick's horticultural expertise), we worked out our planting plans for the year. (There's a giant whiteboard in the community shed, used for meetings like this.) Then, bit by bit, we put theory into practice.

This year, apart from plantings around the newly dredged swimming hole, we've done a make-over job on the **entrance to the property**. On previous buffer zone and visual plantings we've done, to minimise maintenance, we trialled Polygro, an excellent variety of weed matting.

After researching and speaking with friends with commercial orchards in the neighbourhood, we decided to use this weed matt as a **non-chemical answer to weed control**. When we used organic mulch, weeds laughed at us, cropping up almost overnight (meaning many more working bees to remove them.) Using this highly permeable matting, water and air reach the seedlings, soil moisture evaporation is reduced - and weeds are thoroughly discouraged!

This year working bees laid weed matt at the front entrance, which we covered with wood chip mulch. Jesse and Penny bought about 100 plants, working from Nick's design (top right). Everyone has a specific task: watering, auguring, planting seedlings... Many hands make light work (providing things are planned well, in advance).



Keeping it together...



Above: phase one of the front entrance project. First clear the weeds; follow with weed matting, top with wood chip mulch (right).



First plans are mapped out on the whiteboard.



Chris gets stuck into removing some stray groundsel.



Above: Mini lomandras are planted round the edges of the area, baby gymea lillies along the rock wall, with the 'middle bit' filled with clusters of creeping natives - grevillias and more. More creeping natives were planted along the roadside rock wall during a July working bee.



JINDIBAH 2005 - 06



News Update...5

You probably know by now that at Jindibah, we are an eclectic lot, into a diverse range of activities, with some fascinating past-times.

◆ This year, for instance, **Stephan** and **Bettina Kahlert** decided to join 2,000 other Harley Davidson motorbike riders in a ride to Uluru and Alice Springs. Taking time out from their "normal" life, teaching yoga and meditation, the pair drove 9,000km in three weeks. The highlight was participating in a procession of thousands of Harley Davidson bikes from Australia and NZ riding round Uluru at dawn.

◆ **Tania Evers**, Jindibah's not quite resident barrister (currently in Sydney) was a speaker at a seminar in Paris, France, mid-2005. (Her talk, based on a specific case she'd handled, traced the connection between a prescribed anti-depressant and a homicide.)

◆ **Keira Dott**, our horserider extraordinaire, celebrated her 10th birthday on 1 August (she's a Leo) with a gymkhana on the property, organised by her tireless mother **Penny Cooke**.

◆ At the end of the year, **Nick Jensen** and **Warren Buchanan**, our non-resident high flyers (working as pursers with Qantas) were delighted to hear that they will both start long haul (overseas) flights on 1 Feb 06.

◆ It must have been a fertile year for Jindibytes. Our Melbourne partners, **Danny** and **Vikki Lee**, had their first much loved baby, **Matthew Richard**, on 8 September 05. **Christobel's** daughter **Sasha** gave birth to a son, **Harrison James**, on December 11, while **Maggie Mulham** and partner **Paul Donovan** were very pleased to announce the birth of their baby daughter, who may be called **Allegra Kate**, at 3 mins to 3am on 3 January 06.

◆ Resident novelist and freelance writer **Jesse Blackadder**, launched her book **AFTER THE PARTY**, in Sydney and Byron Bay this year, then promptly turned her skills in other directions, taking to ballroom dancing like a duck to water. We often find Jesse and friends hot-footing it in the 'Building once known as the Dance Hall'.

People...



A horsey birthday to you! **Keira** celebrates her tenth (1 Aug) with a Jindibah gymkhana. Proud mum **Penny** (below left); **Keira** (centre) and friends.



Tania talks on anti-depressants and violence at a legal seminar in Paris (below) then, as an antidote, tours the Basilique du Sacré Coeur (left).



PR shot of **Jesse The Writer** (above right) for the launch of her book **AFTER THE PARTY** celebrated at the Northern Rivers Writers Festival in Byron Bay mid-year, and at Gleebooks in Sydney.



Jesse and friend **Andi** start ballroom dancing in the community shed, and already the medals are rolling in!

Maggie (right) at 7 months, and with brother-to-be **Elliott**, who has already watched his own birthing video several times in eager anticipation of his sibling's birth in January.



Matty Lee!



Nick (left) + **Warren** celebrate the longhaul; **Christobel** a granny, and Hog Heaven at Uluru.

JINDIBAH 2005 - 06 News Update...6



To keep it all together and in good repair, a community needs ongoing, diligent maintenance of all its assets.

Our assets include a **paved internal road of 1.523km**. Alas the enormous July 05 floods channelled huge quantities of flood water from a neighbouring property across our internal road, causing the bitumen to buckle like orange peel at one point.

Again we called on **Mark Hajjar** from **Mullum Pools**, who brought in his team to upgrade the drainage of the rock wall along our western border, then we **patched up the damaged road**.

With more houses being built, we decided it was time to **widen our internal road** at a certain point, to make it safer for two cars to pass. Nev Pazzuti sent in an efficient team from **Broken Head Quarry** to do the work to widen and seal the road.

Water and drainage being key to the survival of our internal road, we also decided to reinforce the culvert underneath the roadway before the bridge, so that if/when we do get the 'one-in-10-year floods' cascading across the road, it doesn't collapse under the extra weight. Luckily rocks had been stock-piled after Council upgraded Fowlers Lane in 2004, and were used for this job.

This year, for a second successive year, we've also spent a great deal of time and effort in **removing the plague of whisky grass** which has been infiltrating our pastures, and reducing the amount of feed for our cows. A tedious process (walking from clump of whisky grass, spraying them, walking to the next clump), it has been a necessary evil. In the end, we purchased a quad bike (pic at right) to more easily access and deal with the whisky grass on steeper slopes.

Infrastructure: Floods - then water and drainage upgrades



Mark Hajjar and his team from **Mullum Pools** upgrade the drainage system on our western property boundary. New concrete 'saucer' drains, above and below the rock walls, now steer heavy rainwater clear of the road and into spacious culverts.



Safety first! Our internal road is widened to allow two cars to easily pass each other on the hill.



So these 3 pix (above) might just look like a pile of old rocks to you. Well to us, it means that the internal road is now more secure, and far less likely to collapse in time of extreme flood.



Continuing the drainage/water theme, (at left) we are testing out the **use of turf** to prevent road-side erosion. Above: Stephan checks out the new quad on a steep slope, riddled with pasture-consuming **whisky grass**. An 8m hose on the quad allows easier access to weed infestations than crawling over the hills with backpacks.

JINDIBAH 2005 - 06



News Update...7

Thought you might like to hear how our various planting projects have been getting on.

Well, we are pleased to be able to report the very high survival rate of all our buffer and screening plantings, planted both to “enhance the visual amenity of the landscape” and to “reduce the impact of the community on neighbouring properties”.

You may - or may not - recall that Jindibah is a primary producing farm, with 24 cows, one contented bull and their offspring. This means our beef cattle (who provide us with an income to pay for property maintenance) need access to fresh pasture.

As part of our ongoing ‘Environmental Enhancement and Vegetation Management Plan’ devised by **Firewheel Rainforest Services**, we are also in the process of regenerating native trees, and planting out the banks of Sleepy Creek.

To protect our plantings while allowing the cattle to graze, we use solar powered electric fencing around our plantings until trees are mature.

As mentioned earlier, we also use weed matting to help us minimise maintenance (i.e. prevent weeds growing round our emerging plantings). This combination is proving successful, as seen (*above right*) in the planting from 2003.



Maintenance, trees, MO2CT..



BEFORE AND AFTER: Below are two shots from our **Seasons Greetings News Update of December 03**, showing the preparation and planting of one of our buffer zones in August, 2003. Above are the trees two years later, still successfully protected from animals and weeds by the combination of solar powered electric fencing and weed matting.



Bird Deflectors: Jesse came back from an eco-village course at Findhorn and passed on the ingenious idea of preventing birds from eating our figs by hanging old CDs in the tree (above). It really worked! This season we benefitted with heaps of untouched figs, and yummy fig jam. (The leaves came back once the fruit was harvested).

The native platypus, echidna, turtle and frogmouth owl shown in this newsletter coexist happily with us (+cows) at Jindibah.



The house of Penny and Keira

MO2CT: As members of the **Rural Landsharing Communities Association** (the RLCA), we are in constant communication with Byron Council staff as we negotiate our way from **Multiple Occupancy** to **Community Title**, for which we applied in May 04.

At left: an **RLCA** information night, before a May 05 Council meeting, in which it was decided that Jindibah and three other communities would be in the first batch of converting communities to have our rezoning applications processed. These applications were then exhibited (and received more than 100 positive letters of support). Now the rezoning applications of 14 converting communities have been approved by Council and sent to the State Government for processing. Then the remaining outstanding step in the conversion to Community Title will be for Byron Council to start processing individual **Development Applications**, which is likely to happen this year (2006).

...and a Happy new Year!

From all of us here at Jindibah – both onsite residents and residents-in-waiting – we would like to wish you a very Happy New Year and an exciting year ahead.

We would also like to thank all those people who have worked with us to help us establish Jindibah as a beautiful, functional community.



The **World Without Wires** team:
Dainen,
Damien
and Drew.



Thanks to the tireless efforts of Christopher and the boys from **World Without Wires** (far left), **JindiNet**, our wireless broadband network now has 18 subscribers located at Jindibah and along Fowlers Lane, Coolamon Scenic Drive, Friday Hut Road and Possum Creek Road (per letterboxes above). This non-profit community project gives subscribers excellent access to broadband, at very competitive rates.

Jindibah Community, Sleepy Creek, Bangalow, NSW 2479
is a 12-house site Multiple Occupancy intentional community located on a 46ha farm in Fowlers Lane, Bangalow.
For more information, see www.jindibah-community.org, or email DIY@jindibah-community.org

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