

MANNING RIVER Times

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The Times team in 2014: Toni Bell, Hayley Sansom, Lauren Green, Colleen Mackie, Tess Chown, Kerry DeStefano, Amanda Kavanagh, Cindy Martyn, Brett Murphy, Scott Calvin, Leisa Smith, Lisa Stevens, Ainslee Dennis, Kelly Hammond, Jo Mansell, Tim Jux, Kylie Power, Mick McDonald and Carl Muxlow.

We're 145 not out

By Toni Bell

THE Times, they are a changing...

Not grammatically correct in this case, but apt for today's newspapers in general.

The Manning River Times marks 145 years today (January 8) and there have been vast changes over that period.

But that change has made giant leaps in the last 20 years, and the pace is increasing.

Newspapers no longer think of themselves as a single product. We are multi-platform, ie available in

print, online, via your phone or tablet and via Facebook and Twitter.

Now editor, I began as a cadet at the Manning River Times in 1976.

I had just missed the "hot metal" days and "bromide" was the new format, not that that concerned a cadet too much.

The newsroom was dominated by typewriters and photographers printed their own photos from rolls of film in the Times darkroom, all black and white. We typed our stories on copy paper, the first paragraph on one piece of

paper because it needed to be set in a larger font by the typesetters for the compositor to place on the page before the proof reader would check it.

Typesetters, compositors and proof readers no longer exist.

The arrival of computer technology has seen the news team assume more and more of these roles, until today when we are responsible for getting the finished pages to the press (so please forgive the mistakes).

But from my first day at the Times, the focus has not changed. Our focus is local news - we are

parochial and unapologetic about that.

And today we have several new ways to deliver that news.

Our online presence allows us to deliver breaking news. Floods and bushfires are always big news in the Manning and through our web page we can provide almost immediate updates on such serious events. Feedback tells us that our coverage helps.

Online we can also deliver more indepth news, photo galleries and video of news and events around the Manning.

And it gives us a broader audi-

ence - news from the Manning is reaching the world.

Our community is important to us and we would like to think we are close to our community.

We certainly appreciate feedback, positive or not so positive and our door is always open.

Some speculate that newspapers are a dying breed but community newspapers like the Times still have a very relevant role to play and will continue, in print, for many years to come.

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Lifeblood of community

THE Manning River Times this year celebrates 145 years of uninterrupted publishing in the Manning Valley.

The paper has grown and changed with the town, chronicling all major events and developments.

The first issue of the Times came off the press on January 8, 1869.

In it, the proprietors wrote: "The rapidly increasing prosperity and importance of the district requires adequate representation by means of the press."

Their ideals, carried out by subsequent operators over 145 years, have made the Times part of the lifeblood of the Manning region.

Six days before the first edition, on January 2, Charles Boyce and George Buckleton both swore before Henry Flett JP that they were 'the first proprietors, printers and publishers of the Manning Times, to be printed at Taree each Friday'.

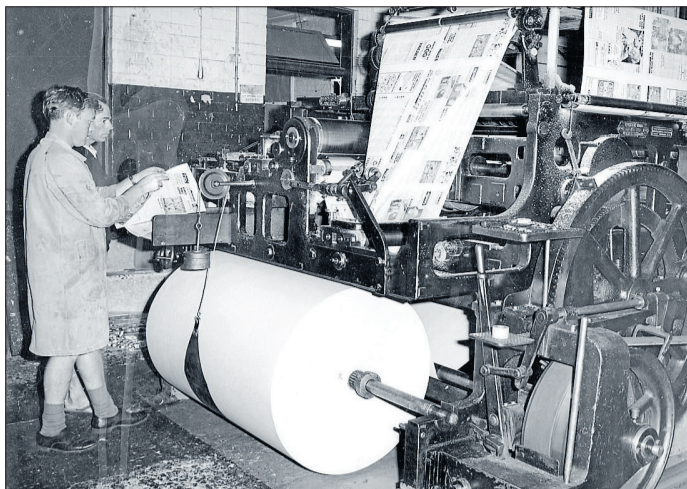
The Times, however, was not the first newspaper printed and published on the Manning.

In 1865 Dr Horace Dean of Tinonee founded a newspaper known as the Manning River News, which continued for about two years.

Co-founder of the Times, Mr Charles Boyce, came to the North Coast with his brother, Thomas Burnham Boyce in the 1860s, about the same time as Dr Dean started his paper.

The Boyce brothers were born in London and came to Australia in 1849 with their parents.

Both were apprenticed to



Past Times: Printers Bill Thurling and John Doust examine the first copies off the press of a Manning River Times many years ago.

the printing trade in days when apprentices received small wages, if any, in their first year.

Charles established the Macleay Herald, the first paper on the Macleay, and was assisted by his brother.

However, after several floods Charles came to Taree; with Thomas going to Tenterfield.

Along with George Buckleton, Charles set up the Times in an old cottage somewhere near the present Coles supermarket in Manning Street.

After some time a move was made to a cottage facing Manning Street near where the Savoy Theatre later was built. A printing office was added to the cottage, on the Manning and Albert Streets corner.

The Times was printed here during the proprietorship of Charles Boyce, who sold it on

December 31, 1885 to his brother Thomas.

Charles went into business as an estate agent and died about 1907. He had become one of Taree's most prominent citizens.

Charles was the first returning officer for the election which brought into being Taree's first municipal council in 1885; he was also mayor in 1904 and 1907.

Newspaper printing was a primitive art in Boyce's day.

Publication of a paper was fraught with obstacles such as maintaining supplies of paper and ink, gathering news of interest to the hardy pioneers of a sparsely populated area, and then having the same delivered to the subscribers.

For weeks at a time the district was cut off from the outside world by floods.

The paper was printed on a hand press practically the same as that used by Caxton

when he introduced the first printing press to England.

The ink was put on by a boy, who was usually ink from head to toe.

It is a far cry from today's clean, computer driven production.

Thomas Boyce continued to print the Times on the Savoy corner until 1895 when the paper made its only move away from Manning Street.

In that year a paper known as the Manning River Independent closed down and Mr Boyce, after buying the property in Commerce Street (near the present Agincourt Motel) moved in.

The Times was printed in its new home until 1899 when the present building in Manning Street was erected and the plant moved for the last time.

Soon after settling in the management installed an oil engine to drive the big press, as well as a jobbing machine and a folder.

This means of power remained in force until about 1918 when the electric light and power was installed in Taree by a Mr Ikin.

Always determined to keep pace with the growth and development of the extensive district for which it catered, the management carefully watched the advent of machinery.

Until 1925 the old two page printing press was used, but the then proprietor, Mr WB Boyce imported a new Swiss press weighing 26,500 pounds. An extension had to be made to the building, with a specially constructed concrete floor and pit.

Congratulations to the Times on 145 years

Regional Manager Mid North Coast NSW
Janine Buesnel



THE Manning River Times is a shining example of the unwavering connection between a regional newspaper and the community it serves.

The connection is built on trust and respect and is a privilege that newspapers in regional towns never take for granted.

The Manning River Times has recorded the births, deaths, marriages and achievements of local people since its first edition in 1869.

In its proud history the Times has published thousands of stories, taken pictures at just about every event in town and has driven campaigns important to the Taree community.

Today the Times employs over 20 local people, and indirectly provides work for many more, and it continues to service the people of the Manning Valley with the fine principles and integrity of yesterday, while recognising that we must continue the process of change and adapt to our readers' needs.

The relationship between a regional newspaper and its community is unique. The staff at newspapers like the Manning River Times are active members of their community - they engage with their readers in the shops, at the schools, in the parks, over coffee and at sporting and social events.

This intimate local knowledge gives the local paper a direct line into the heart of the community.

As the community blows out the 145 candles on the Times' anniversary cake, the paper can be proud of its past and excited about its future; a future which will see the Times expand its connection with its community, not only through its printed newspaper but also through the exciting world of digital technology.

Continuing to keep in touch with changing technology

IN the 1960s Maitland Mercury took control of the Times and it became part of Kerry Packer's Australian Consolidated Press group and remained there for 25 years.

The Times was changed to offset production. Gone forever was the cumbersome linotypes casting lines of lead types for stories and advertisements. The old Swiss Duplex flatbed press was dismantled for scrap metal and gone were the days of ink stained hands and clothing.

Printers, typesetters and journalists were now performing their duties on Vidikay and Panterm VDUs specially designed for newspaper production.

Instead of heavy lead pages

to type, a page was now being "pasted up" on benches from stories and advertisements produced in bromide form by the new equipment.

Pages now weighed only a few ounces on an aluminium printing plate.

In 1985 the Times with other Packer newspapers was sold to the Herald and Weekly Times for a short period and in quick succession passed to New Ltd, John Fairfax Pty Ltd and finally to Rural Press Limited in March 1987.

For 17 years after the offset printing in 1975 the Times continued to be printed at the Maitland Mercury.

In late 1992 the Times commenced printing at the news office in Port Macquarie. That

same year the Times embraced the GBT newspaper production system.

In 2000, photography moved from film to digital.

Rural Press Limited merged with Fairfax Media in 2007 and the Times started using the computerised Pongrass Publishing System in about 2009.

The printing of the newspaper was moved to Fairfax's



The 1990s: Then editor Helen Manusu with journalist (and now editor) Toni Bell, and Ruth Hammond from the production department.

Beresfield Print Centre in early 2010. The newspaper has undergone some big changes over the past few years, due to the growth of the internet.

Club Taree would like to congratulate the Manning River Times on celebrating 145 years.

- Throughout the years Club Taree has grown to become the premier function venue in the Manning Valley. We cater for all occasions and offer members and guests a range of facilities including:
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