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Surfing on a motorbike? Australian Robbie Maddison sank more than a few bikes in Tahiti before he perfected his technique. You can see the video below.

Dear client

It has been a while since the last correspondence. Blame it on travel, the renovation project (see below) and the day-to-day requirements of running a business.

Self-publishing

A few years back my wife published a book on colonial architecture in Tasmania. Five hundred copies were printed by a giant German-made printing press on high-quality paper. And it cost megabucks.

Today there are many options for self-publishing and, unlike the early days, it need not cost you anything. You can either go the on-line route with Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iBookstore, Google Play, Sony, Kobo and other equivalents, or if you want hard copy, you can use print-on-demand

services. You can manage the entire process yourself or use the services of an [aggregator](#) who will distribute your book to multiple ebook outlets, and provide additional services such as formatting, a US bank account and US tax ID, if required.

To give a single example: Amazon's [Kindle Direct Publishing](#), claims to publish your work in less than 5 minutes and have it on Kindle stores worldwide within 72 hours. You receive 70% of sales revenue, retain control of your copyright and set your own pricing.

There is something rather attractive in the idea of producing content and having it gradually generate a following – and maybe some income – all at no financial risk. **Have any of our readers taken the self-publishing route? If so, what did you write and how did it go? Let me know your experiences and I will pass them on in the next edition.**

With warm regards

Nigel Davies
Director, NDA

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Home renovations and home automation



We purchased this property in Ross, seduced by the its 360 degree views and rural environment. Somewhere underneath the add-ons, sketchy foundations and asbestos cement cladding was the core of a 19th century sandstone cottage. When I first mentioned Ross to a friend he was not encouraging: "too cold in winter, too hot in summer and too windy all the time", he said. Maybe - but it's also very lovely, with a thriving local community, film club, pub and two bakers – one of which is the home of the scallop pie. 'Nuff said.



This undated photograph from the Tasmanian Archive Office shows an encampment of troops in the large, open paddock between Ross and the Midland Highway by-pass. In the background you can see the church, which was built in 1885. To the left of the church you can just discern a building, which is the earliest record we could find of the cottage



In this blow up of the same photo you can see the cottage more clearly, with double veranda posts and roof parapets. This gave us a basic model for the renovation. Interestingly, the closest match to the soldiers' uniforms we can find are British troops from the 1856 Crimean war - but this doesn't correspond to the circa 1890 date of the photo. Perhaps Australian military uniforms of this era were 30 years behind UK fashions, just as Australian architectural styles also lagged by around 30 years?



We pulled down the additions from the 1940's onwards and took it back to the 19th century stone core - two walls and two chimneys! The parapets were restored, double posts added to the veranda and new windows and door constructed.

Home automation

Doing a ground-up renovation is an opportunity to run cable and install modern electronics, but after lots of reading it became apparent that if the budget doesn't run to the off-the-shelf C-Bus systems, it is premature to try and construct a home automation system from components. There are several competing standards and too many stories of disasters, including 'intelligent' thermostats that destroy air conditioners, smoke detectors with unstoppable false alarms and clunky if-then-else programming logic.

Yes, it is too early right now, but the big boys like Google and Apple are

developing home automation systems - Google around their Nest thermostat and smoke alarm and Apple around Apple TV - so it is likely that a more mature set of technologies will emerge in the next year or so.

What we did

We used technologies that seemed to offer worthwhile convenience without being overly complex or expensive.

NBN. The core of all automation is a high-speed Internet connection. We used an NBN (don't laugh) [fixed wireless](#) connection that delivers a reliable 25 / 5 mbs. Unlike Launceston, where I am still waiting for a fibre connection two years after applying, the connection in Ross was trouble-free and made within three weeks of placing the order with iiNet.

Solar. It's a good feeling to be self-sufficient in power production, especially as electricity prices have risen so much recently. Five kilowatts of solar cells hidden on the rear roof provide discrete, renewable power. What we need next is one of Elon Musk's 7 kwh [Tesla battery packs](#). This will permit storage and use of power during the evening, rather than selling it to TasNetworks at 6c / kwh during the day and buying it back again at 24c / kwh later. Our system has a wireless connection that enables monitoring of power production through a smartphone app.

Audio. Five [Sonos Play-1](#) speakers are installed – a stereo pair in the main room and single speakers in the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. The Sonos speakers are brilliant. They are linked to the Wi-Fi system so no wires are required, and installation and operation are by a smartphone app. You can stream music from your own phone, from a wide range of streaming services such as Spotify, or from hundreds of Internet radio stations, including the ABC. The sound quality is excellent.

Video. We ran cat 5 cable for video in case the bandwidth demands exceeded the Wi-Fi capacity. We equipped three potential viewing locations with both aerial connections for terrestrial TV and the cat 5 cabling to stream content from YouTube, Netflix and other online sources.

Heating. Did I mention the -7 degree temperatures in winter? We hope that a 9 kwh reverse-cycle air conditioner will deal with this. This is connected to the web with a wireless card. A smartphone app can be used to program the heating and operate it remotely, so the place can be warm on arrival.

Lighting. I once had a business meeting with a client in a room with lighting activated by a movement sensor, and it was lights out every ten minutes unless we waved our arms in the air. No thanks! We settled for

low-power, dimmable LEDs.

Security. This is handled by web-connected internal and external cameras viewable through a smartphone, external security lights activated by motion sensors, and web-connected internal movement sensors. Thanks to the Chinese these systems can be purchased at extremely competitive prices.

There are many other technologies that can be automated, operated remotely and programmed, including lighting, blinds, power points and door locks – but note earlier comments re standards, reliability and complexity.

This month on YouTube

It's not my usual cup of Darjeeling but you have to admire this guy who fitted skis to his motorbike and [went surfing](#).

Forthcoming training courses

The following courses will shortly be presented by NDA - some at significant discounts on standard rates. To obtain the discount, please phone Janelle on 1300 765 736 and mention this email when making bookings. Clients with existing bookings for discounted courses may not change them, but additional people may be added at the discounted rate.

Hobart IT Courses

[MYOB Payroll](#) 1 Sep - \$285 **only two places left**

[Excel Introductory](#) 31 Aug / 2 Sep - \$480 **only three places left**

[Excel Intermediate](#) 2/3 Sep - \$480 **full**

[Excel Advanced](#) 3/4 Sep - \$480 **full**

[Project](#) 10/11 Sep - \$480

[PowerPoint](#) 14 Sep - \$240

[Word Intro](#) 14/16 Sep - \$480

[Word Intermediate](#) 16/17 Sep - \$480

[Word Advanced](#) 17/18 Sep - \$480 **two for the price of one**

[MYOB Advanced](#) 29 Sep - \$285

[Excel Introductory](#) 5/7 Oct - \$480

[Excel Intermediate](#) 7/8 Oct - \$480

[Excel Advanced](#) 8/9 Oct - \$480

Hobart Business Skills Courses

[Superior Customer Service](#) 8 Sep - \$285

[Time Management](#) 15 Sep - \$285

[Learning Design](#) 16/17 Sep - \$570

[WH&S in the Workplace](#) 6 Oct - \$285

[Business Writing Skills \(Basics\)](#) 12 Oct - \$285

[Training Delivery](#) 28/29 Oct - \$570

Launceston IT Courses

[Excel Introductory](#) 1/2 Sep - \$480 **only one place left**

[Excel Intermediate](#) 2/3 Sep - \$480 **only one place left**

[Excel Advanced](#) 3/4 Sep - \$480

[Word Intro](#) 14/16 Sep - \$480

[Word Intermediate](#) 16/17 Sep - \$480

[Word Advanced](#) 17/18 Sep - \$480

[Intro to PCs with Windows & Office](#) 24/25 Sep - \$480

[Excel Introductory](#) 5/6 Oct - \$480

[Excel Intermediate](#) 6/7 Oct - \$480

[MYOB Advanced](#) 13 Oct - \$285

[Project](#) 15/16 Oct - \$480

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 28/29 Oct - \$570

[Publisher](#) 30 Oct - \$240

Launceston Business Skills Courses

[Time Management](#) 15 Sep - \$285

[WH&S in the Workplace](#) 6 Oct - \$285

[Learning Design](#) 13/14 Oct - \$570

Devonport IT Courses

[Excel Introductory](#) 1/2 Sep - \$480 **only three places left**

[Excel Intermediate](#) 2/3 Sep - \$480 **only three places left**

[Excel Advanced](#) 3/4 Sep - \$480 **only two places left**

[Word Intro](#) 15/16 Sep - \$480 **two for the price of one**

[Word Intermediate](#) 16/17 Sep - \$480

[Excel Advanced](#) 7/9 Oct - \$480

[Publisher](#) 30 Oct - \$240

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