

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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Issue # 44 October 2016

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Stormy Weather!

On the night of 3-4 August an East Coast Low made its presence felt with winds in excess of 100 kmh. Trees were brought down all over the district and there was considerable property damage including a beautiful one hundred year old stained glass window in St. Patrick's Church. With the greatest good fortune, there were no serious injuries. A few people reported finding strange garbage bins and trampolines in their yards the next morning. Power was not restored until midday following stalwart work by district linesmen.

The SES volunteers responded quickly to help prevent further damage but tennis players, eager to accept the challenge from Pat Carney to take up the sport, experienced a few difficulties on court.



Matchwood



Anyone for tennis?

Wardell Progress Association Meeting
Wednesday 19 October at 7.00 pm.

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Wardell & District War Memorial Hall.
Secretary Kerry Turpin 0414 899 247

Bunnings to the Rescue

Wardell Rural Fire Brigade

Prior to 1992 the Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service was housed in an old tin shed that once was the grader hangar of the Tintenbar Shire Council. The then Fire Control Officer, Ray Collyer, approached Council and gained approval for the building of a new Fire Station on the present site. It was constructed with volunteer labour under the guidance of Captain Bob Wilcox and Rex Kemp.

The station houses two modern fire trucks and has an office, a toilet, a meeting room and facilities to give logistical support to volunteer firefighters in times of major operations. However the fire station never had a ceiling to protect the valuable equipment and the crews from heat and cold and the noise of the adjacent Pacific Highway. Captain Ray Collyer, seen on the right, approached Bunnings Warehouse in Ballina to get costings for the insulation of the building and the construction of a ceiling for the Fire Station.



Ray met with the Activities Organiser, Julie Rolton at Bunnings Ballina. She advised that Bunnings were very keen to help. She said that they wanted to have their staff assist in the actual work and they would provide most of the needed material.

On the left, Julie Rolton with three of her tradesmen colleagues Cody, Chris and Brett. Bunnings supplied most of the material for the job and gave their expert help to ensure the project was a success.

Since then the Fire Station has been electrically rewired and preparations have been made to paint the ceiling and the floor.

On the right, three of the volunteer crew about to affix the last sheet in the ceiling. Not only is Boyd Wilcox an experienced firefighter but he is also a well qualified tradesman who voluntarily organised and supervised the work. Next to him is Senior Deputy Captain Ron Rosolen the Potter and Rex Farrell the Wardell Fire Brigade President and Sugar Mill Engineer.



Hoi!

On the first Monday of every month the PLCO - or Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation - holds a 'Hoi' meeting in the Pimlico Hall to raise money for charity. They have been doing it for many years to support organisations such as Camp Quality, St Andrews Nursing Home, Ballina SES and Marine Rescue or, in this case, the Wardell Rural Fire Brigade.

Photo -

Adrienne Doust



Wardell & District War Memorial Hall

The President of the hall committee, John Stead, applied successfully to Ballina Shire Council for a grant under the community halls capital works assistance programme. Council specified the money be spent on electrical work in the hall. This is to include new fluorescent lights and ceiling fans in the main hall, the 'Diggers Room' and the kitchen.

On Monday 22 August a team from the Roads and Maritime Services set up a "Pop up Information Stall" outside the Wardell Post Office. This took most residents by surprise although Paola Rickard emailed as many people as she could as soon as she became aware of the event.

Anna Andrews of the RMS is seen here explaining some of the recent changes to the planned Wardell by-pass. Anne Wilson, with her finger on the map where her family farm is located, hopes and prays that the plan is adopted so that her home, business and family heritage are protected.

Kevin Haynes, in the background, lives beside Wardell Road. He is against the plan which he fears will impact upon the Koala population and the wildlife habitats that first drew him to the area.

On August 23, The Sydney Morning Herald wrote that the Federal Environment and Energy Minister approved the four-lane expressway's new route near Ballina on the NSW North Coast on July 19. The RMS hailed the approval, without which the upgrade between Broadwater and Coolgardie cannot proceed.

The result will be a four lane divided highway from Hexham near Newcastle to the Queensland border. For more information, contact:-

www.rms.nsw.gov.au/koala

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/w2b>



Pat Carney and John Stead check the plans with Paul Busmanis.

The Wardell Boardwalk

The long awaited boardwalk proposed by the Wardell & District Progress Association is underway. It should provide safe passage for school children, parents with babes in prams and those who need wheel chairs to move safely from one side of Wardell to the other. Paul Busmanis, the Engineering Works Manager from Ballina Shire Council, met recently with members of the Progress Association to outline the plans for the boardwalk which is to be constructed by a Sydney based company.

The 70 metre long and 3 metre wide timber boardwalk will begin along the riverfront just past the four Tuckeroo trees and end just before the highway underpass. Several bollards will be placed between the road and the grassed area adjacent to the boardwalk.

At the underpass, the boardwalk will join a new 2m wide concrete path that will run under the highway and wind along the embankment past the old ferry ramp and up to the corner of Bridge and Cedar Streets opposite the Police Station.

The boardwalk by now should be well under construction. Completion is expected at the end of November.

Kerry Turpin



Wardell Brigade of the RFS recently held an open day to let the public be familiar with modern firefighting equipment and to share information about fire prevention. Home protection measures were discussed and the preparation of bush fire plans.

← In the photo Michael Heugh, with his thirty years of experience as a volunteer firefighter, assists a potential future recruit to squirt water at a target.

Useful telephone numbers:

For fire and emergency **000**

Fire permits **6671 5500**

All Brigade members receive thorough training, personal firefighting equipment and mentoring.

Peter Clout, who was recently working in Wardell as a safety and traffic control officer with Essential Energy, is a passionate collector of "Petroleum Memorabilia" - books, signs, lubrication charts, old oil tins, uniforms - anything to do with any brands of petroleum. If you are a collector and share his interest, or if you have a few items at the back of your shed, then Peter would love to hear from you at:-

maxey14rdst@gmail.com





Models for 'Simply Fashion & Beauty'

At the front, Erin and Stella; then Zoe, Renai, Marie, Sophie, Michaela, Bronte, Virginia and Amanda who are all volunteer models. Sue McCowan choreographed the fashion parade in support of the Wardell Branch of the Australian Red Cross which raised \$1280 for charity. Sue,

who also does waxing, tinting and facials at her studio, said that this season's fashions will include maxi long dresses, straight designs, lots of colours and floral prints. The Wardell hall was packed for the occasion and there were prizes galore and a scrumptious buffet supper prepared by the Wardell Red Cross!



Wardell branch of The Australian Red Cross helping those in need!

The Australian Red Cross was founded on 13 August 1914 in response to the start of World War I. The Wardell Branch was formed then and is one of the few continuously serving Branches in Australia with over 102 years service. At their monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of September they presented a cheque for \$1000 to the Hope Haven Womens' Refuge in Ballina which is an emergency shelter for women experiencing family violence.

Photographed above are Karen, from Hope Haven, Gayle Collyer, Di Farrell, Gayle Baker, Paddy Goff, Rhonda Barnes, Leanne Gilles, Fay Nixon, Jane Sproule, Vicki Turner, Sue Steele and Ros Walsh.

Ros Walsh, the President of the Wardell Branch, is holding the cheque she is about to present to Karen. Ros welcomes any new members to their monthly meetings at the Wardell Memorial Hall. Telephone 6683 4111

The Wardell & District Progress Association Inc.

On 17 August the meeting of the Wardell Progress Association was just a bit different. After general business and after relating the outcome of my meeting with Paul Busmanis, the Ballina Shire Council Engineering Works Manager, concerning the construction of the boardwalk, the audience was enthralled by presentations by the C Ward candidates for the Ballina Shire Council elections.

Speakers in order drawn from a hat were: Therese Crollick, Ron Birch, Vanessa Barrett, David Wright, Sharon Parry, Ben Smith, Gail Mesinga and Eoin Johnston. We were able to listen to their presentations and then question them about their views and intentions. All candidates spoke well and their efforts are much appreciated.

The audience was given the opportunity to ask questions. Issues on development versus environment versus agriculture; sustainable living; future expansion of urban centres of Alstonville and Wardell; flood levels and building requirements in the shire and legislation regarding dual occupancy on rural land blocks were all touched on.



The Wardell & District
Progress Association Inc.
President Pat Carney
02 6683 4360
patrickcarney@westnet.com.au

Councillors Keith Johnson and Paul Worth who have given stalwart support to the Wardell district and C Ward chose not to stand for reelection. They served us well!

Councillor David Wright was reelected Mayor of Ballina Shire and Eoin Johnston, Ben Smith and Sharon Parry have been chosen by ballot to represent us in Ward C. We congratulate them but we are very much indebted to all the candidates.

Pat Carney

Sons of Empire Vale



Three soldier sons of Samuel and Elizabeth Elliott of Empire Vale who laid their lives on the line in World War 1. Private Wilfred Henry Leon Elliott was in action at Ypres, Messines, Bullecourt, Fleur Baix and Paschendale. He returned home only to die from the after effects of war. Private Walter Vivian Elliott was killed in action at Gallipoli on 28 November 1915 - a day after moving into the peninsular. He is buried at Gallipoli.

Trooper William Elliott served with the 2nd Light Horse in Egypt and Palestine. He took part in the battles of Roumani, Raffa, Gaza, Beersheba and Jerusalem. He was killed in action and is buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery.

From the book, "Australia's Fighting Sons of the Empire" B.Jackson & Co. and from the records of the Australian War Memorial.

(See page 7 - Jack Elliott.)

Jack Elliott

speaks with Mike Rushby

I am an eighty-one year old cane farmer and family man from Empire Vale in good health and good spirit. I have worked here all my life except for some time away in the army. I have also seen a lot of the world from Communist China to Ireland with many places in between.

My great grandparents came from Ireland of Irish-Scottish heritage. My grandparents, Samuel Henry and Elizabeth Emma Elliott left Cootamundra and settled at what was then known as German Creek in 1912. After a meeting my grandfather suggested the name German Creek be changed to Empire Vale, which was more patriotic. They purchased land from Mr Petrie. Samuel and Elizabeth's children were Ethel Bethwick, Ann Nicole, Walter, William Wilfred and Edward. Edward became my father. When World War I broke out, the four boys enlisted, but Edward, my father was rejected because of his medical history. He was born in the Snowy Mountains, got caught out in the weather and caught pneumonia and developed bad health. Walter and William were killed in action - William at Gallipoli and Walter in Egypt. Wilfred died from his war injuries after returning home. The only remaining son - Edward my father- took up farming at Empire Vale and married Irene Walker who had been born on a farm at Tuntable Creek. Irene attended Empire Vale School for a short period before she was married. They had three daughters and I was the only son. I was born at Ballina on 17 August 1935 in a maternity house called "Claremont."

My youngest sister and I rode horses to Empire Vale Public School. In my early days, before school, I had to milk four cows and feed weaner calves. I went to school at Empire Vale Public School in 1941 for six years then went to Ballina Intermediate High School. When I was about eleven years old I helped move twelve springing cows by road to a Possum Creek farm belonging to the Robins family. We started from Empire Vale at six am with very smart stock horses all shod and ready for the job. We walked the cows down over the Burns Point Ferry and drove them through Teven, Booyong, Binaburra and on to Possum Creek arriving at the farm about five o'clock the same day. Cyril Robins was in charge with his son Barry and me. The cows arrived in good shape and we stayed at Possum Creek farm overnight and rode the horses back to Empire Vale the next day.

My Mother's family came from the Channon. Mum was born at Tuntable Creek. Her father Frederick Walker was a bullocky who used to drag logs to a sawmill up in the hills. He had two sons who went to war to fight in New Guinea and Mum had three brothers who went over there to fight during World War II.



My father was a racing man. He loved racing horses - anything with horses and boy - he was good with horses. My father would put a wild horse in a crush and put his hand on them. There's a bloke up here used to work at the mill at East Coraki. Dad gave him a demonstration. We had a two-year old foal running with its mother on the Robins' farm before we bought it. He heard Dad was a good horseman so we brought the horse into the yard. It had never had a strap on it in its life. We ran it into the crush and Dad handled it all over its head and felt it all over its body. Then he put a bridle on it and handed me a long stick and said, "Now I'll open the side gate and if it stops, just touch it. In five minutes he was just leading it around the yard. But he didn't ride it because we didn't own it - it belonged to the neighbours. Graham Smith from the mill was impressed. My father was up at Broadwater one day and he rode a horse up the back steps of the old pub on the riverbank. He rode it up the steps to the top storey and then rode in up and down the verandah.

My Dad was a tough boy who used to fight in tournaments all over the North Coast. He would put the money in the ring and say he would fight anyone! But he was a smart boy and dressed very well. He was born in the Snowy Mountains and never bought a horse in his life. He would catch a wild horse and in three quarters of an hour he would be riding it!

My Auntie Nichole's son Col was in a prisoner of war camp in Japan for three and a half years during WWII. He went in weighing sixteen and a half stone and he came out weighing six stone. He got off the boat in Brisbane and walked past his mother who didn't recognise him. My cousin - Dad's daughter's boy - Desmond John Tully was called to fight in Vietnam. He was killed on the thirteenth

day at nineteen years of age. He was a beautiful boy. His father, who was born on a farm just down the road, was Reginald Richmond Tully. He was in New Guinea and went down to the rifle range for target practice. His very best mate, who occupied the next bed to him in the barracks, didn't clear his rifle properly on leaving the range. Back at the barracks when cleaning his rifle he accidentally shot my brother-in-law in the back. He was a cripple for the rest of his life. When he came out of the army he had no job so his brother used to lift him up and put him on the tractor and he would drive the tractor all day. His brother would take him down dinner and they would leave the tractor idling while he ate his lunch. Then when he had had his meal he would get on with the tractor work again. He married my second eldest sister. He was lucky enough to get a job later on the tick staff and was a senior inspector in the Kyogle district until his death.

My mother had been a champion dancer. When I was in my late teens I went all over the North Coast to dance at Woodburn, Coraki, Lismore, Tintenbar, Teven and other places. I played a bit of football but really my only sport was dancing. I was very light on my feet but I'm too old now. My Mum and Dad would say, "Move the table aside." Then I would dance with my Mum who liked to teach me to dance. She came from The Channon and was just a plain and ordinary lady but she was a champion dancer. But I didn't like Mum dancing with me so I would get on my motorbike and go.

After two years at high school, I was offered an apprenticeship at May's Motors. In the second year there, I received a letter to front up for National Service training. I was given a medical then took the train to Ingleburn for jungle training with the 13th Battalion – second intake 1954 for 98 days. It was the dead of winter and the training was very intense. We were put on the road early after tea in full battle order including taking turns carrying a Bren gun and a six-inch mortar for twenty miles to the jungle-training campsite for fourteen days. We arrived at the campsite as the sun was just coming up. That was the biggest intake – three thousand five hundred boys all 18 years of age in 1954 at Ingleburn.

After National Service training at Ingleburn, I was sent to Singleton for more jungle training with fifteen days living in tents. I later joined the 41st Infantry Battalion based in Lismore. I attended weekend training assisted by Lieutenant Morrie Walsh whose brother is Jim Walsh of East Wardell. After two years with the 41st Battalion I was called to come home to help run the farm. I did a bit of part-time work with May's Motors in the slack season. In 1957, manual cane cutters were in short supply so I went cutting cane in the Moylans Lane gang full time. I cut full time for four full seasons without missing a day. The ganger was Burt Purcell. Then I cut at Purdys Lane. Burt was easy to work with but he was an ex Military Police Sergeant with quite a colourful career behind him in Sydney. At season's end I went with Lionel Clifford hand cleaning drains with a brush hook and a shovel at Empire Vale and East Wardell.

I am married to Ursula Mary Elliott. She was born a Gaudron on 3 July 1939. Her Father was Francis Sebastian Gaudron who, with his twin brother, was the first man to ever grow bananas commercially at Coffs Harbour. He owned property in the Bagotville district. They bought some rough land and got a dozer to clear it. Ursula was sent to a boarding school in Ballina and never went to the farm but she knew her father was farming bananas at Bagotville. We went dancing every Saturday night mostly at the Evans Head RSL.

I grew up in the age of motorcars I suppose. I've got a quad bike out there and my grandson has a big 600 motorbike which I ride – although not very often! I was very lucky. We had had dry weather and there was oil on the road. Then we got a storm with a few big spots of rain. I came down River Street Ballina and turned into Kerr Street and the bike just went from under me. Luckily I was wearing a leather coat. When I came off I tore right through to the lining on my hip and on my right sleeve.

I've done a lot of things in my life but I can't speak well in public. I am nervous! I can speak to you. I was offered a job as a politician. The National Party came with a carload of blokes – and said you are the man we want! I said I couldn't do it as I was not educated enough and they said, "We'll do all the educating. You just do the job." But I told them I would not take it on. That was before young Larry Anthony. I'm politically motivated but my wife has gone crazy over politics! I start her off. I used to help at the little polling booth at the local school and she would say, "Why do it? You're mad! You don't get paid why do you do it? I said, "Well I meet a lot of people and I enjoy it." And now, she talks politics all day! She'll come home with the Telegraph and sit down and read the thing from end to end – all those letters and stories. I'm not that bad!

We have a 48-acre block here at Reedy Creek and another 48 next door. Then we bought a war veteran's 103-acre neighbouring property but there is a lot of sand on it that was brought across the farm by a cyclone. It is rated as environmentally sensitive so we can't farm it. I purchased 80 acres of cane land from Mervin Albert Robins about 1976 when he retired to Ballina.

John Edward – our eldest son does the lion's share of the farming of our farms as well as share farming in Sneesbys Lane. He is a great worker. Our son Leon manages Processed Food Distributors in Lismore and our son Brett, who lives next door, has worked at the cucumber farm for the Pippas for many years.

We love this part of the world and we are well aware that many young members of our family and of other families of Empire Vale, gave their lives in war for this country. They have no offspring. We honour their sacrifice.

Jack Elliott.

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