

# THE BLACK WALL BUGLE

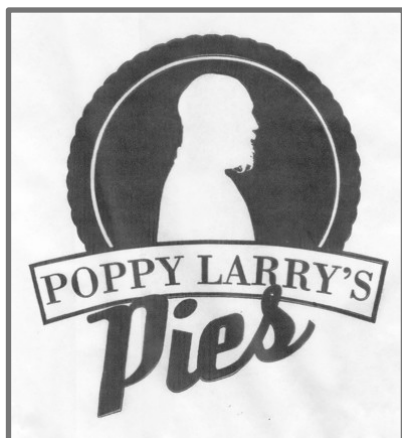
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Larry Endres, of 'Poppy Larry's Pies', is encouraging Wardell into the twenty-first century by taking risks, by applying energy and creativity to his business, by good management and by his undying faith in the future of this place.

Larry first came to Wardell as a two month old babe to visit his grandfather who grew up here. On leaving school as a fourteen - year old he worked in a sawmill for four years then in retail and then in hotel management. He was managing the Boyd's Hotel at Mount Isa when he met his future wife Nardi who worked at the Leichhardt Hotel.

In 2004 they left Mt Isa and bought three NORCO milk runs which they merged into one. It was the largest milk run in NSW, supplying the area from Lismore to Tenterfield and north to the Queensland border. After four years they sold the run and bought the Lismore Pie Cart. They ran the business as it was for three months but it got bigger and bigger every week and they needed a manufacturing base to produce the quantity and quality of pies they required. They found the ideal spot in the vacant butchers shop in Wardell.

Larry quickly realised that they could now produce more pies than the Pie Cart could handle, so he acquired new business outlets in the West Ballina Bakery and the Ballina Ice Creamery. He also developed a thriving wholesale business supplying pies and cakes to Coraki, Woodburn, Kyogle, Evans Head, Goonellabah, Nimbin, The Shannons and many other places. Larry says that his business supplies food to the schools at Wardell, Alstonville and Cabbage Tree Island. He has a regular outlet in Newcastle, another in Sydney and has even

supplied frozen pies to a Perth customer.

One young woman from Thailand, who was attending Southern Cross University, was visited by her parents. They had a pie at the Lismore Pie Cart. They got Larry to pack some frozen pies in refrigerated boxes which they took back to Thailand. Since then they regularly telephone an order and arrange for a courier to airfreight more pies to Thailand!

Wardell pies are international!

The Pie Shop staff work twenty-four hours a day six days a week, so there is someone in the shop all the time either baking pastry, or preparing pie fillings. Larry has been seen in his Ballina Ice Creamery supervising the making of delicious Gelato at 3.00 am!

Nardi and Larry had three staff to help operate the pie cart. They now have forty-one staff. Many have been trained within the business including several apprentices. Many more have joined the team bringing with them considerable experience. "Some of them have trained me," says Larry.

The acquisition of the café next door has enabled Larry to bring fresh Australian seafood to the village every Friday, Saturday and Sunday to complement the quality fresh meals that are served seven days a week. If there is a rush-hour, then staff from the bakery can go over to handle the extra workload.

"I'll tell you the story behind Poppy Larry's Pies," Larry said. "After our third store opened, we needed a common name for the 'Pie-Cart/Wardell/Ballina pies'. At a Sunday lunch, my three-year old granddaughter asked, on seeing the pies on the table, "Are they Poppy Larry's Pies?"

The name was born!



Larry, in his Wardell cafe, with his fresh ice cream.





Left to right: Kylie, Michael, Glenda, Bob, Peter, Garry, Robyn and Kath take a well earned break after planting, watering and securing the trees provided by Ballina Shire Council for 'Plant a Tree Day' at Patches Beach.

**Patches Beach Dunecare meets on the first Sunday of each month.**  
**Telephone Peter Lacey 02 6687 9580**

## Pimlico News

**Telephone 6683 4384**

The September charity afternoon held in the Pimlico Hall was attended by a happy group of loyal supporters who enjoyed the afternoon's activities. Proceeds from the afternoon will be forwarded to the Wardell Rural Fire Brigade.

It was lovely to see their beautiful fire truck arrive at the Pimlico Hall and several members alighted dressed in their new yellow shirts and looking very dab! The Captain of the Fire Brigade, Ray Collyer, who has been with the Brigade for over 39 years, gave an interesting talk about the activities of the Brigade including past and present operations.

Many prizes were won with the main prize going to a Ballina resident Pat Wager who rarely misses a charity afternoon.

The PLCO held a really successful garage sale on election day with the proceeds going towards the upkeep of the hall, which was built in 1937. Morning tea was enjoyed by many, with a variety of scones made by champion scone maker PLCO President Gwenda Shinner. Other PLCO members provided a sausage sizzle which did a roaring trade and the cake stall was very popular as everyone enjoys a home-baked cake.

Our next charity afternoon will be on on the first Monday of October at 1.30 pm when we will be supporting the Ballina SES. On that day, the PLCO will be celebrating 53 years since commencement with three original members still participating!

Betty Fernance



This magnificent Coastal Carpet Python is one of the residents of the area maintained by the Patches Beach Dune Care group. Photo: Peter Lacey.






Judy Cocomazzo pauses at one of the stalls to admire the hand-crafted jewellery.



To the left, hard working volunteers looked after your waistline whilst above, President Ruth Partridge attended to your needs at the polling booth.




**Branch President**  
**Ruth Partridge 6628 5751**  
**Meetings**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month**  
**Wardell on the River Hotel**  
**5.30 p.m.**  
**New members always welcome.**

**Australian Red Cross**

The annual Red Cross Arts & Craft Show was held once more in the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall. Vice President Monica Vomiero spent several weeks organising the event but then, on the critical day, she had to be elsewhere. Because of her planning and with the support of enthusiastic members of the branch, the day was a great success. There was a wide selection of stalls and members had spent days preparing a variety of traditional cakes, biscuits, slices, homemade jams and pickles which proved to be very popular.

John Gardon once again gave his support with a joy flight in one of his aeroplanes as a raffle prize and Paddy Goff tempted all of us with her artistically inspiring bird bath.



**Blackwall Historical Society Inc.**

Research room in Wardell & District War Memorial Hall,  
 Richmond Street, Wardell. Open any Thursday 1-3pm  
 President Margaret Kennedy 02 6686 0027  
 Enquiries: Barbara 0466 998 817  
[<blackwall\\_history@yahoo.com.au>](mailto:blackwall_history@yahoo.com.au)

**Empire Vale Public School**  
**Family Fun Night - Dinner & Trivia**  
 Saturday 12 October  
 Dinner at 6.00 pm Trivia starts at 7.30 pm  
 Tickets sold at Wardell Post Office  
 Adults \$25.00, 6 - 12 years \$10.00, under 6 years \$5.00  
 There will be games and trivia for the kids, lots of prizes to be won and lots of laughter to be had. So get a table together with your friends. Tickets to be purchased by 8 October.





## First Class ticket to Japan for 21st class art!



**On top of the world! Kirsty's art goes international!**

Local Empire Vale Public School student Kirsty Graham-Jones, has been selected to exhibit one of her artworks in the prestigious 'Nagoya Sister City Art Exchange Exhibition' in Japan. The exhibition aims to showcase artistic excellence in Visual Arts amongst talented NSW Public School students. The exhibition will be a collaboration of works by students from Japan, America, Mexico and China.

Kirsty's artwork is titled 'My Space.' It is of an interior setting where she has experimented with capturing light in her painting. She enjoyed applying a new painting technique that was inspired by Australian painting legend Grace Cossington-Smith, after her class fell in love with the painting style during Mrs Rantissi's art classes and

through admiring Grace's original artworks during an educational excursion to The Lismore Regional Gallery, earlier this year.

"I am thrilled and excited that my artwork is going to be in an international exhibition in Japan. When I started the artwork I thought my new style of dabbing paint was not going to work, but in the end it looked great," Kirsty said. After the exhibition Kirsty's artwork will travel to schools throughout Japan to inspire other young, creative minds. Great work Kirsty!

*Story created in Mrs Rantissi's media classes by  
Lillian Gillham, Yr 5 and Cleo McLeish, Yr 6.  
Photo by Jesse Barnwell, Yr 5.*

## The Wardell & District Progress Association

Construction of the boat ramp at East Wardell has been held up by the breeding season of the osprey. This, in turn, holds up future projects in town until the boat ramp is completed and fully costed.

The transfer of the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall from the School of Arts to Ballina Shire Council is well under way. The front room, which is known as 'The Digger's Room', has been given a 'make over'. Future improvements to the hall include a redesigned toilet facility incorporating a disabled toilet.

John Stead, who is the president of the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall Committee, is always happy to discuss hall matters and can be contacted at [stead.jw@gmail.com](mailto:stead.jw@gmail.com) or telephone 6683 4060.

The next general meeting of the Progress Association is to be held at the hall on 16 October at 7.00 pm. It will be a good opportunity for new members of the community to meet with the locals and share ideas with some of Ballina Shire's councillors. The December meeting on 18 December at 6.30 pm. will be followed by a BBQ that will be open to all.

**Pat Carney**

President Wardell & District Progress Association.

## Boat Cruise

**Ballina to Wardell (return) on  
the Richmond Princess.**

**Saturday 9 November 9.30 am - 3 pm  
(approx.)**

**Enjoy our River and learn some  
of its pioneering history.**

**Morning tea and light lunch provided.**

**Tickets from Sue at the Wardell Post Office**

**Telephone 6683 4101 or Ballina Visitor**

**Information Office 1800 777 666**

**\$55 p.p. Book early!**

**Blackwall Historical Society Inc. Wardell &  
District Progress Association Inc.**



Narelle, Rupert, Errol, John and Ray - just a few of a large group of friends from far and wide who first met during their time in hospital and rehabilitation. They share companionship and sustain one another. They have been meeting monthly over several years and have formed strong friendships. We have great medical and nursing support but nothing heals the scars of life better than good friends who have been through tough times themselves.

## What Friends Are For

**Errol Leeson's** great grandfather Marmaduke and his family came to Australia in 1843 as bounty immigrants settling first in the Richmond area. They then moved north to Clarence Town, Clarence River, Casino, Lower Richmond, Coraki and finally Pimlico.

At the turn of the last century, Errol's grandfather, the late William Leeson, settled at Pimlico. He leased and later bought the farm that runs from the Pimlico Road to the bank of the Richmond River. William's siblings owned almost all the land from the site of the present caravan park, north to Pimlico Riverbank Road and almost to Whytes Lane, east to the river and west to the foot of the Blackwall Range where the Pacific Highway now runs.

Chris Leeson (Errol's great uncle) eventually sold off blocks of land and retired to Ballina having gifted land to the community for the Pimlico Community Hall and tennis courts. Before the hall was built, dances were

held at his barn at the back of the Pimlico Post Office.

Errol was born in 1942 to his parents Herbert and Linda (Campbell) Leeson. He has lived all his life in Pimlico except for four years 1965 to 1969 when he married Rose and lived first in Ballina and then at Carney's Lane before returning to the family farm.

As a boy, Errol helped his father with the dairy herd until Aub Flick offered him a job chipping cane. Errol left school at fourteen and worked the cane with "Flickie". He then went derricking cane with Ray Walsh and Russell Clifford at Meaney's Lane and Owens Lane.

During the slack season from January to June he and a group of lads from Wardell would go to Mildura, picking grapes to supplement their income until the cane season began again.

In 1964 his father changed from dairying to sugar cane production and went into partnership with his son Errol. They cut their first crop in 1966 and then every year until Errol retired in 2007. Sugar cane farming had been good to Errol and his family despite the unpredictabilities of the weather, the market and the rising costs. But then, problems set in!

Having lived like a Malley Bull, Errol went into hospital in June 2008 and lost his lower right leg due to complications with his diabetic

condition. Then in April 2010 he lost his lower left leg. He was later readmitted with a burst blood vessel.

But this is a good news story! Between 2008 and 2011, Errol used community transport to attend day rehabilitation at St Vincents on Tuesdays and Thursdays. With their guidance and perseverance, he was able to walk with his prosthetic legs and a wheelie-walker. In August 2011 he regained his drivers licence after having had specialised driving lessons on a dual control vehicle with hand-operated controls. Errol now has his own car, his independence and his social life is back on track.

Much of Errol's new lease on life is due to the wide circle of friends he has found in hospital and rehabilitation clinics. They have formed a strong bond between them and, for the past three years, they have met regularly on the third Thursday of each month. Together they form a band of heroes in support of one another. They include Rupert and Gail from Fairy Hill, Ray and Joy from Goonellabah, Margaret from Alstonville, John and Paula from Coraki, Alice from Alstonville, Narelle and Peter from Byron Bay and Nola from Mullumbimby. They all have a positive attitude to life and when they see a friend going through a tough period, they rally around and share the burden. That's what friends are for!



## Richmond River Cane Growers' Association Ltd



### The Manager: Monica Poel.

Monica Poel has over 10 years experience in natural resource management in the public and private sectors. Her expertise includes natural resource analysis, planning and reporting. After completing university degrees in environmental science and economics, Monica worked at South East Queensland Water's Wivenhoe Dam for over 10 years before working in Alstonville at the Catchment Management Authority for 3 years. She has been at Wardell for three months and loves it. She has a husband, a six year old son and a four year old daughter, so she leads a full life.

Monica's work brings her in touch with all aspects of the sugar production business, from the growers to the harvesters, the mill, the transport operations and the suppliers of agricultural necessities. She must also liaise where necessary with local government. This is Monica's first harvest season and she hasn't met all the growers yet but she is impressed by the genuine warmth of the welcome that has been extended to her. She is well aware that cane farmers care for their land and for the environment, because that is their source of income and their investment into the future.

Monica says she has been pleasantly surprised by the responsible attitude taken by all divisions of the industry and by the speed with which they can make decisions for the common good of the business and the environment. After a couple of bad-weather years for farmers, things appear be improving this year and she believes that the future of the industry in the lower Richmond is looking very good.

In future additions of the 'Blackwall Bugle' there will be a sugar industry report by Monica Poel, the Manager, Richmond River Cane Growers' Association Ltd.



**Wardell Sporting Recreation Club**

**Telephone 6683 4437.**

The Club is mourning the passing of Vic Foster who was a member of the Club and on the Board of Directors. He died suddenly and his funeral was held at St. Barnabas Anglican Church Wardell followed by a gathering at the Club. The club's support and sympathy goes out to his family.

The Seafood and Roast Buffet night was held on Saturday 17 August. Approximately 150 people attended and ate their fill of seafood, roasts and dessert.

Membership fees are due, if you have not received a renewal notice, please call at the Club and we will give one to you. We will be having our AGM sometime in October. Please keep an eye out for the actual date and time.

The Kids Christmas Party is to be held on **Saturday 7 December**. This is aimed at children – big and small – and is open to all members of the community. Please remember to put this in your diary.

The Club is open in the evening and serves meals on Friday evenings. Please call the Club on 6683 4437 for bookings and further information. **Kerry Storten**

Celebrated poet, artist and author, **Edwin Wilson**, called in to visit Wardell, the place of his childhood, recently. He was on his way from Sydney to Murwillumbah to organise an exhibition of his art at the Tweed River Art Gallery next year. Edwin paused to pay homage to those of his ancestors, the Wilsons and Riordans, who lie at rest in the Wardell cemetery. They came to Wardell from Denmark, Ireland, England and Scotland as mariners and farmers.

Here Edwin pauses by the grave of his father Edwin James (Tidge) Wilson who was a farmer at East Wardell.



To read more about Edwin Wilson, go to his personal website for some of his history, art, poetry and books. <http://www.edwinwilson.com.au/>

### Continued from page 8

"He said, "Quick! Get me some hot water so that I can have a bath."

"What's wrong?" I asked. "The war is over and we are off to town," he said. He was covered in black soot from the burnt cane. He said, "The war has ended and they all just threw down their cane knives and took off!" So I got him some hot water and he had a bath as good as he could and off we went to Ballina. We stayed there for a whole week and every night we celebrated the end of the war well into the night by dancing in the streets.

"We finally moved to another house nearby which belonged to Eric's grandfather. By this time we had been married about three years and we were really excited to be having our first baby. I had a really good friend who lived next door. We used to go to tennis together and we used to go bike riding together. She came over to my place one day and she said, "I've got something to tell you!" and I said, "Well I've got something to tell you too!" We discovered that we were both pregnant and due to have a baby in October. We both thought it was great. Anyway she had her little boy in early October and I had a little girl late in October. But we were devastated because my little girl was stillborn. Oh that was a terrible blow to us. But my neighbour, who had the little boy, was so kind to me and she used to let me mind her little boy and nurse him and feed him and bath him. That young man is a grown up man now and I've always felt special towards him. I've always felt he was very special towards me.

"The next year I had a little boy – Barry. I was really grateful and excited and I loved him and he was beautiful but I always yearned for a little girl. When Barry was almost ten, I had my little girl – Leigh. I was so excited! Barry grew up and finished high school then went off to Newcastle to further his career. Leigh was nine. Then one day, Eric went to work and he never came home. He just died by the side of the road!

"On the last day I saw him, I was about to rush over and open the gate as he went to work, when the phone rang. We had only just got the phone. I went to answer it. I never saw Eric again. When he didn't return from work that night, I got in touch with his mate Joe who went looking for him. Joe found Eric's truck pulled over by the side of the road with Eric's body lying beside it with his hat pulled down over his face. Eric had just turned forty-five.

"Leigh and I were devastated. She was only nine, but she was a great comfort to me. I don't know what I would have done without her. Somehow we struggled on and when Leigh reached ten, I made a great big decision. Eric and I had always intended to go to Shepparton to the fruit industry. We

were always going to go but something always stopped us. We had wanted to go before we married but no – you weren't allowed that sort of thing in those days. Then we got married and things happened and we got kids and we couldn't go. Eric said, "We will go one day when the kids grow up and leave!" Then he died and I decided it was time to go to Shepparton.

"Everybody was shocked and scandalised. They said, "You can't go down there! You've never been away from home! You've never been on a plane!" The more they went on, the more determined I was that I was going to go. I got to Shepparton and found a room in a boarding house and within a couple of days I got a job in the cannery. I loved it and I met some really nice people who I am still in touch with. They come to visit me and we correspond.

"After about a fortnight I realised that I was desperately home sick and I missed my little girl who was staying with her nanna and her aunty and she missed me. I thought that I would have to go home and I thought everybody would say, "I told you so!" So I was thinking that the next day, having been there a fortnight, I would get on a plane and go home. That night there was a knock on my door at the boarding house and when I opened the door, there was my beautiful sixteen-year-old nephew from Altonville. He said, "Aunty Betty I've come to look after you."

"My nephew got a job at the cannery and I felt a lot better having him there. We both stayed there until the cannery finished and we were both there for three months. Then we came home. I went to the school and saw Leigh. We cried and cried and I promised her that I would never leave her again.

"Then I went to Ballina Hospital and I got a job there and I worked there for eighteen years. It was a very happy time of my life. I made so many lovely friends. I left there after eighteen years and came home and I just sat in the kitchen and cried and cried. I thought, "What's going to happen to me now?" Working at the hospital had been my full life. Leigh had gone. Barry was gone - he had married and presented me with twin granddaughters. They had another girl later. Leigh was at University in Armidale and she has lived at Armidale ever since. But when people knew that I was no longer working, I got invitations to go here and there and everywhere and I took up tennis again.

"I've played tennis for seventy-eight years. I started when I was a little girl. When I went to Wollongbar School, there was a tennis court dead opposite the school and from about six years of age, if I got the chance, I would rush over there and play tennis – even if I was just hitting it by myself. When I got married, Pimlico had seven tennis

courts. Now it's got none. I've played on every court in the district – every court you could think of – Wardell, Pimlico, Empire Vale, Meerschaum Vale, Rous Mill, Armidale and Charlestown where Barry lives, Yamba, McLeans Ridges and dozens of other places. I have now given it up after seventy-eight years. I have loved it.

"People often ask me why I didn't marry again, but I've never met another man I wanted to marry.

"I have always enjoyed looking at flags and seeing them fluttering in the breeze. One day I saw an ad in the Northern Star paper. I think it was Apex that said they would come to your place and put up a flagpole for something like twenty pounds. They came and put up the flagpole and I was really excited. I had an Australian flag and then I bought a New South Wales flag. I have hardly bought another flag but I now have about 40 and fly a different one every day. People have just given them to me. My son and his wife go overseas all the time and always bring me back flags. My grandson Brent has lived in China for seven years and when he comes home he brings me flags. My other grandson Dane owns his own travel agency and he goes to many places and he brings me home flags. Leigh and Paul went over to Vanuatu recently and brought me back a flag. I fly a birthday flag for friends and relatives and flew it the day the Royal baby was born. It is a great hobby and creates a lot of local interest.

"I've always loved gardening – even when I lived at home on the farm with Mum and Dad. When I got married, the wedding was at eleven o'clock on a Thursday morning. I got married on a Thursday morning because the taxi driver was the cream carrier and he didn't take cream on Thursday. On the day of my wedding I got up and went to the yard to milk all the cows then I raced up and did the last bit of work on my garden because I knew that was the end of my gardening at home. Times have changed so much.

"Another happy thing in my life is our PLCO (Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation). We've been going nearly 53 years with three original members left and I am one. During that time we have raised many thousands for local charities which is much appreciated by the community.

"I see Leigh and Barry several times a year and they are the most wonderful family on the face of this earth. We are very close and we love each other so much. I have had a very happy life living here! I am never bored. Never! I have a loving family and many good friends. I have good health for my age and many interests to keep me usefully occupied. What more could I want?"

Betty Fernance



# A Pimlico Lady

Betty Fernance speaks with Mike Rushby.

"I was born in Lismore. My father was James Thomas Ryder of Rosebank and my mother was Ruby Myrtle May Gates of Little Milton. My mother hated her three given names. She said, "If ever I have children they will have one plain name each!" She named her children Gwen, Jean, Betty and Nance. Later, when our brother arrived, he was given two names, Kenneth, after the Alstonville doctor who delivered him, and James after his father.

"I reckon that Fernance is a great name. I love it! Before I was married my surname was Ryder and when I went to school the kids used to say, "Betty Ryder rode a spider to the Lismore Fair. The spider bucked and she got chucked, and lost her underwear!" So I was glad when I got married and changed my name.

"I'll tell you a funny thing about my ancestors. I was in hospital a good few years ago and I had an operation on my stomach. When the male Sister took out my stitches, he said, "I could tell you something about your past relatives." So I said, "Tell me!" He then said, "Oh you mightn't like it!" So I said, "Look I don't care what my relatives did. I'd love to know." Well," he said, "you've got Island Blood in you." Anyway, I told my sister and she said, "I've suspected that for years because my mother's only sibling was a little short man with a flat nose and black frizzy hair." So we must have Island blood but I don't know from where and I don't care!

"Mum lived at home and helped her mother because my mother's father was an invalid who had been in bed for twenty years before he died. He had rheumatoid arthritis. He couldn't walk and she tended him for twenty years. My mother always said to us if the Salvation Army ever come asking for donations, give it to them because they visited her father every single day!

"The income from the little farm with a few cows that were milked by my Mum was all that we had to sustain my grandfather. My grandmother, who was the crankiest old bugger, came to live with us after my Mum and Dad got married and had children. Oh she was cranky! She used to belt us kids. I said something to my cousin about what a cranky old thing she was and he said, "Don't you ever let me hear you say that again. She had had twenty years of a dreadful life looking after her husband and she was really good to him."

"Dad had to leave school at the age of twelve to manage the farm at Rosebank and pay off the bills when he got some money. He grew up to be a hard working farmer and a great father. Dad's four daughters performed all types of work on the farm - milking cows by hand, cutting crops for feed and ploughing with a horse-drawn disk plough.

"When I was ten years of age I became very ill with diphtheria and I was sick for a whole month but nobody took me to a doctor. We had no car, no phone and I just stumbled along. After a month, Dad got on a horse and rode for miles until he came to a phone and the doctor called in later on that day. He took tests and he said to Mum he would be back next day to tell her what was wrong with me. Well, within an hour there was an ambulance at my door. It took me to hospital and I was in isolation for a whole month - never seeing my parents or siblings for the entire time. Many children died of diphtheria in those days. Immunisation came in a year later.

"I went to many dances with my sisters. I met my future husband when we were sixteen. He used to live down here at Pimlico on a cane farm with his family and came up to Wollongbar to visit his grandparents. He was slim and a terrific dancer. We kept company for five years and during that time I often rode my pushbike from Wollongbar to Pimlico and he often rode his pushbike to Wollongbar. His father got peritonitis and there was no penicillin or anything like it in those days. He just died and he was only thirty-seven. My boyfriend was his eldest child. He had to leave school and take over the cane farm. So later, when our son wanted to leave school early, my husband said, "No way! I had to leave school before I got an education: you are going to stay at school until you have had an education!"

"We were married in the Methodist Church at Wollongbar. My three sisters and I all married in that church. I think we were the last people to be married there because it has now been turned into a house and a really attractive house it is too. When we got married, we had never been on a train and we had never been to Sydney. So we got on a train and went to Sydney for our honeymoon. On your honeymoon you are supposed to go to exotic places but we stayed at Eric's auntie's place because we had no money to do

anything else. It was an adventure and I remember getting off a train in Sydney and there was a machine where you could get weighed. Well, I stood on this thing and to my surprise, it spewed out a ticket with how much I weighed and I was seven stone twelve!

"We came back after a week away and all the money that Eric had in the world was one hundred pounds (\$200). I had simply nothing. Well, we came to live at Pimlico in a little one bedroomed house out along the riverbank. The house is not there now. It belonged to the Curran family. They lived in a big house just nearby. I thought they were the richest people in the world because they had a fridge! Nobody else had any fridges or phones or anything. They had a fridge and a phone and I thought they were the richest people! Anyway, we lived there for ten shillings (\$1) a week rent, but we never paid rent because Eric worked for Frank Curran senior every second Saturday for one pound (£1) and that paid for our rent. We lived there for about a year and it was lovely with plenty of fresh fish and oysters. Eric had been working in a banana plantation. He used to ride his pushbike to work and he got eight shillings a day (80c). Later on it went up to twelve shillings a day (\$1.20).

"The war was on then in 1945 and Eric got a letter to say that he had to go cane cutting because everybody was at the war and they were short of cane-cutters. So he went cane cutting and our wages really rocketed from twelve bob a day. Anyway, one day Eric went to work as usual real early about six o'clock and, about half past nine, I heard this hullabaloo! I looked out of the window to where they were cutting cane and everybody had gone and Eric was rushing home on his bike.

**Continued Page 7**

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