

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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<http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/blackwallbugle>



Someone knows how the fire started. With virtually no rain in August and September and dry warm winds in October, when the fire took hold it became an immediate threat to houses, farms, livestock, wildlife and of course residents.

Wardell Brigade responded to the call and Captain Ray Collyer knew immediately that he needed back-up. In addition to the two Wardell fire trucks, crews from throughout the Ballina and



Bagotville on fire



Byron Shires responded to the fire and worked around the clock to get it under control. Locals say the area hasn't seen a bushfire for thirty years so there was plenty of fuel. There had also been sand-mining in the area many years ago so there were many treacherous traps to bog the unwary fire-truck driver. Fire was burning on peat that was floating on ground water.

On the first night, fire jumped across containment lines and burnt five paddocks of standing sugar cane. A track leading from Back Channel Road to Old Bagotville Road was selected as the control line but at 2 pm a massive wind change took place and more cane and grass paddocks were engulfed with flame as the fire roared down to the southern end of Back Channel Road.

Photos supplied by Wardell RFS Senior Deputy Captain, Ron Rosolen.

At one time, all known tracks had fire burning on either side. Captain Ray Collyer and Group Captains at the fire had to keep careful control of the deployment of firefighters on the ground. Ray said that he was very impressed by the standard of training and the dedicated commitment of the volunteers.

Several houses were under direct threat from the fire and needed close protection. Within three days the fire was under control.



During the fire, Senior Deputy Captain Ron Rosolen was asked by this carpet python for a bit of help. Ron helped him find a way to safety.

You could need help too! Go to www.rfs.nsw.gov.au to plan and prepare for the next fire that may come your way!

Wardell Public School Sesquicentenary

I have been having a wonderful time updating the last 25 years of our wonderful little township's history for the book we will be releasing for the sesquicentenary celebrations. I have spoken to many of our long-time residents who have been associated with the School and it has been a pleasure to reproduce their stories for publication.

Time is flying as this event for the School gets closer and closer with 21 October only a blink and it'll be here!

The School will have a memorabilia display set up in the School Art Room on the day. We have found the 'Punishment Book'; it lists those who got the cane and why they got it. We have many old photos from the days of students attending Wardell and look forward to finding names of the students in the photographs. Please come and help us fill in any blanks of names you may remember. There will be much more to view as well — take a trip down memory lane! In the Library we have a continuous video display of past end-of-year concerts and events at the school. You can sit and watch for as long as you like and spot your family members! We will have one of our classrooms open so you will have the opportunity to see how children learn at school today. Have a go at our interactive whiteboard; it is like a huge computer



on a blackboard — the possibilities for learning are endless! There are new robotics at the school for our children to learn computer programming. At such a young age they can change our future completely! Education may be different, but it is equipping our children for a very different future! Come along and see how!

At 12 noon, the School Fete will begin and there will be fun, food, rides and entertainment for the whole family. This event is a huge fundraiser for our School and will bring our community together in a wonderful way. We would love to see you there. You will be able to purchase the new book for the 150th Anniversary, along with coffee mugs, tea towels, pens, balloons and so much more to commemorate the event.

Jodi Wilcox



Wardell Public School 1947. Photograph submitted by Harry Law.

Back Row: Roy Collyer, Bruce Edwards, Warren Lumley, Lyle Lollback, Colin Leeson, Harry Law, Neville Leeson, Jack Batchelor, John Kendrick.

Fourth Row: Maurie Rudgley, Max Keevers, Gordon Singh, Neil Leeson, Ron Paterson, Keith Mullins, Geoff Attewell, John Collyer, Brian Lumley, Keith Leeson.

Third Row: May Rudgley, Delma Gray, Clare Randle, Margaret Patterson, Irene Patterson, Gene Lumley, Kathleen Clifford, Ruth Rudgley Mary Edwards, Janet Grey.

Second Row: Miphawny Thomas, Elaine Keevers, Margaret Batchelor, Leona Leeson, Marie Kendrick, Ron Mullens, Phillip Clifford, Shirley Rudgley, Rhonda Gibson, Phyllis Edwards, Valerie Attewell.

Front Row: Warren Everson, Errol Lollback, Les Wilson, Noel Wilson.

Mr Bongers was the only teacher. He taught the 44 students in six different age groups and was responsible for their administration, discipline and welfare whilst they were at school. Harry Law says that he was a very good teacher and the students are indebted to him for his ability.

Some Wardell Identities in 1947

Policeman : Jack Clifton
Post Office : Davey Overall
Hotel: Mr Bulmer
Paper shop - Cafe: Mr & Mrs Meany
National Bank: Mr Loveday
Cane Growers Office: Horrie Rudgley

Bus Run: Mr Tait
Grocery Shop: Miss Bartlett & Mrs Lumley
Tinsmith - Plumber: Bob Axford.
Butcher: Paddy Walsh.
Baker: Johnny Lumley
Shop over River: Alex Fisher
Church Bell Ringer: Tom Gill

Extract from a letter from NSW Roads & Maritime Services to the Editor The Blackwall Bugle,
dated 29 August 17.

Pacific Highway upgrade

The project team will be working with identified contractors through the procurement process to minimise the duration and number of heavy and light vehicle movements on local roads.

The opportunity to construct the haul corridor within the project alignment, therefore directly minimising impacts to local roads, has been identified and will be recommended to the preferred contractor at the point of award.

In instances where direct access to the project alignment is unable to be achieved, material excavated from the two borrow sites (Gibsons borrow site and Jali borrow site, Bagotville) would be hauled along Old Bagotville Road, onto Back Channel Road and then either divert onto Carlisle Street and then onto the existing Pacific Highway or onto Bath Street towards Wardell Road. This haulage route has been utilised previously for the operation of quarries in the area including during times of the supply of material for other Pacific Highway Projects including Alstonville Bypass and Ballina Bypass. It is estimated that at peak construction, up to 600 heavy vehicle movements and 100 light vehicle movements would use this route during the early operation of the site for approximately four months, prior to the opening of the construction corridor.

It is noted that the use of this haulage route may coincide with the cane harvest season. The project team understand the importance of maintaining working relationships and information sharing with local stakeholders, and meet regularly with local cane growers and mill operators to discuss traffic management considerations for this area. The additional haulage vehicles on the road network would be considered during the preparation of specific management plans as required.

Driver behaviour and safety training and toolbox talks would be provided to all drivers on the project to ensure they are aware of all obligations and safe driving practices enforced by the project. All haulage vehicles used would be fitted with IVMS trackers to monitor speed limits and routes travelled by project vehicles. In addition to vehicle tracking, the project

team has implemented project vehicle speed limits through the local road network, with all project vehicles not to exceed 80 km/h. This system is monitored to ensure compliance.

The following upgrades and maintenance measures will be carried out within the vicinity of the borrow sites and the township of Wardell. It is intended that this work will be completed in advance of planned access to the borrow sites:

- Old Bagotville Road and Back Channel Road intersection - The replacement of signage and line markings will be carried out by Council prior to haulage of material for the project along this route.
- Old Bagotville Road - the current road condition will be assessed prior to haulage of material to ensure the route can safely operate under the increase in traffic movements. The management measures that could be considered include but may not be limited to sealing the road, grading and the use of water carts to reduce the generation of dust.
- Bath and Carlisle streets intersection - this intersection will be upgraded to improve safety for truck movements.
- Pacific Highway - northbound acceleration lane out of Carlisle Street will be implemented to assist with merging northbound traffic.

For more information about the project, please contact the Woolgoolga to Ballina project team on 1 8 0 0 7 7 8 9 0 0 (p r e s s 1), email W2B@pacificcomplete.com.au or visit the project website at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/w2b

The plan for the new bridge over the Richmond River at Broadwater can be viewed at the Wardell Post Office or at Ballina Shire Council at 40 Cherry Street, Ballina during normal office hours.

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Wardell Progress Association Inc.

Presidents Report August 2017

The past year would have to be the most pleasing for our association since I have been President. In the past year we have been successful in obtaining grants to improve our hall with painting and toilet improvements taking place. However this year our efforts to have our boardwalk completed, along with two footpaths in Carlisle Street and Byron Street must be our most pleasing result which can be appreciated by our whole town and visitors alike.

Our thanks to Ballina Shire Council for finally completing this part of our town upgrade which was first put forward in 2007.

However we must give ourselves a pat on the back for pursuing these upgrades with submissions to Council on a number of occasions over the last few years. I believe that without our Progress Association input, many of the improvements would not have occurred.

It is hoped that by this time next year, the hall will be painted inside as Ballina Shire Council has given us a grant of \$7,000 and we have applied for a Federal grant for a similar amount.

On other matters we have approached Ballina Shire Council to reinvestigate our flood-fill heights for residents in the town as well as pursue possibilities of alternate structures in the rural areas for building on the flood plain.

The association once again held our Christmas 'Lite up the Hall' which is very popular. Our thanks go to Russell Krampe and his team without whom the festive occasion would not occur.

There are so many people I need to thank this year. Mike Rushby for producing the popular 'Blackwall Bugle' and those who sponsor it with their generous contributions. Mike is also our Public Officer and a member of the Hall Committee. Thanks go to our two treasurers, Ronda of the Progress Association, and Ken of the Hall Committee. A special thanks also to our Vice President Paola who has made submissions to Council in regard to flood issues and kept us up to date with the latest RMS issues and the bypass.

Thanks go to John and Wendy Stead who are unfortunately moving on. Their contribution to our town has been great and we thank them for their input into obtaining a grant for the painting of the hall, the new toilets and the update of our War Memorial. (not bad for new residents)

Thanks to our Councillors who attend our meetings regularly and help with our issues; Ben, Eoin and David, we are most fortunate to have you as our Councillors.



Pat Carney

Finally to Kerry, who puts so much time and effort into the running of the association and the Hall Committee. As I stated last year, it would be difficult to find a more dedicated and talented secretary who has a passion to improve the town.

Kerry, like John and Wendy are new residents and it would be great if other new members of our community could be involved to keep pushing to improve our town even further.

It has been a good year for Wardell and with more community effort we can make it better.

Patrick Carney

President, Wardell & District Progress Association Inc



Frederick Harold Jones, who worked for Wardell butcher Clarence Lumley, gave his life for the Empire at Gallipoli August 9 1915 aged 21 years 4 months. Clarence Lumley was killed in action at the Battle of Menin Road on 20 September 1917.

Sisters of Mercy

All members of our community were invited to attend a lunch at the Wardell Sports and Recreation Club on Sunday 17 September, to farewell Sisters Larelle and Grace Laverty. After 26 years of community service, following distinguished careers as educationists, they now reside in Crowley Village.

Sister Larelle taught teenagers in district Catholic high schools including a decade as Principal of St Mary's College Grafton, then Principal of St Mary's High School at Casino. She then started her own 'Kids in Crisis' centre in the old Wardell Convent.

Most of the furnishings of the Crisis centre were donated by Wardell residents who also organised a very successful annual fete to support the Crisis Centre.

Sister Grace was received into the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy as a postulant in 1957 and professed in 1960. She became a primary school teacher and taught at Grafton, Yamba, Westlawn and Maclean before being appointed Principal of Clarence Valley, St Patrick's Dorrigo and St Patrick's



Macksville schools. She then ran a Grief and Loss programme throughout the Lismore Diocese from the Queensland border to Laurieton.

Ballina Shire Mayor Cr David Wright thanked the sisters for their devotion to our community and Pat Carney gave a memorable presentation which will be repeated in the next issue of the Blackwall Bugle.



Ros Walsh, President of the Wardell Branch of The Australian Red Cross, presents to Daisy and Alan Bryce a certificate of appreciation for organising such a successful fund raising event for the Branch.

The Branch meets at the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall at 5.30 pm on the First Wednesday of the Month. For details, telephone 6683 4111

Wardell Red Cross

What a great night we had at our first Country Music Night! It was held by Wardell Red Cross on Sat 29th July, at Wardell Sports & Recreation Club. The club was at capacity with over 160 people in attendance. The artists all gave their time free, and entertained all present. They did a great job and everyone had a great night. The supper lived up to the high standard set by Wardell Red Cross. We raised \$2440.00 to go to local charities. Our special thanks go to all the artists, Wardell Sport & Recreation Club, and to Allen and Daisy Bryce for organising the event.

Ros Walsh
President Wardell Red Cross.

Athol & Catherine Sneesby

speaking with Mike Rushby

"I was born at Coraki on 12 October 1947," said Athol Sneesby, and grew up on the cane farm at 'Banks Estate' Broadwater. My father Bertram Simeon Sneesby had come over to the Richmond from Calliope on the Clarence in 1904. Bertram was the fourth child of John William and Mary Eleanor Sneesby nee Phelps. His grandparents Joseph and Sophia Sneesby nee Papworth had arrived from England in 1855.

I was the youngest in my family with three sisters. I went to Dungarubba Primary School then on to Lismore High School. I received my Intermediate Certificate in 1965 when I was offered a bank teller's job in the Woodburn branch of The Bank of New South Wales. But I couldn't see myself in an office so helped my father on the cane farm. In 1967 I started cutting cane by hand in a gang led by Percy Powell.

The first six weeks I couldn't cut enough cane to sugar my tea — then I got the knack of how to do it. Other gangs I cut with were led by Bill McElligot, Frank Peate and Warren McDonald. They were good days. I cut for eight seasons, worked hard and loved it. All my working life I have been a 'Jack of all Trades'. When I was on the farm I supplemented our income by painting houses, cutting broom millet, cutting cord wood for the sugar mill, and growing corn on share farms. I bought the family farm from my father in 1972 and in 1989 I sold it because it was not viable.

I met Catherine Martin, the daughter of Selwyn and Shina Martin from Tuncester, when she was nursing at Campbell Hospital, Coraki. We have three children; Sally, Lucy and Richard and nine grandchildren for whom we are blessed. We bought a house in Justelius Road, Meerschaum Vale and then for fourteen years I worked as a roof tiler for

Summerland Roof Tiles Alstonville, owned by Barry Teece. When I hurt my shoulder, that was the end of my job, so we moved to Ballina. But living in town was not my style. I hated it! I have never had to go outside the area to work. For the last fifteen years of my working life I worked for Carlo Pippo at the Patches Beach Cucumber Farm.

I have always loved fishing as a recreational sport. My father and mother would tie me in their boat as a four year old. I first joined the Lismore Angling Club and later the Alstonville Angling Club where, for a while, I became Captain of the Far North Coast Amateur Fishing Association. I was Club Champion in both Alstonville and Wardell a few times.

Having retired five years ago, a long time friend asked me to assist with the milling of timber at a portable mill. I love working with timber. All my life I have believed that you have to do something constructive every day, even if it is only pulling up weeds out of the garden. I love everything about timber from the seedling to the finished product; from falling trees to milling the timber. I love the grain and the characteristics of the timber. My father loved timber too. I made a lot of the house furniture; bookshelves and tables and



even spools for Alvey reels."

Catherine said, "I went nursing to Coraki Hospital in 1967 as an assistant nurse. I was there for three years and I loved it. Campbell Hospital was a wonderful country hospital and now it is just an empty shell and people are vandalising it. It is so sad! That is where I met Athol. We got married and went to the cane farm. Then in 1984 when the price of cane went down terribly, I went back to work at St Andrews hospital Ballina where I worked for three years, then I worked for the Maranoa Nursing Home at Lismore for ten years then we moved to Ballina which I loved but Athol hated! My parents died and left me the house at East Ballina. One day I went to a Tupperware party at Wardell and decided to come back across the Burns Point ferry as I hadn't travelled that way in a while. I drove along River Drive and there was this house for sale. When I got home I said to Athol, "That is where we are going!" The house had a shed at the back and I thought, WOW! I've found it! A MAN HAS TO HAVE A SHED!

“Empire Vale!” exclaimed Athol. I thought she was mad! A week later we had signed up for the house and we have lived here ever since. I simply love Empire Vale!

Catherine said, “I too love it here at Empire Vale. I get on the ferry and it is so quiet. I am nearly home. I hate all the noise. I’ve lived in the country all my life. My father was a grazier. I lived at Tuncester for twenty-one years, I’m used to peace and quiet and I just like the country way of life.”

Catharine said, “I was born in Brisbane in 1948, and adopted by Selwyn and Shina Martin, who lived at Tuncester. They were my parents and I had a wonderful life. Catherine had known since she was aged five that she was adopted, but it wasn’t until Shina Martin died in August 1998 that Catherine went to England in 2000 to meet her birth mother Kathleen McCormack and again in 2001. In 2005 Kathleen came out to Australia. She died in 2013. She had been a recording star who had recorded an album with Johnny Ashcroft which went gold, and she made twenty-eight LPs and more than a million albums. She had acted in the Australian soap opera *Number 96* and had visited Australian troops in Vietnam with Little Pattie.

“I have always wanted to write,” said Catherine. I did a memoir writing course in Alstonville for three terms. Then I wrote a few bits and pieces and won a trophy from *Australian Country Magazine* for August 2016. I subscribe to a magazine called, *Positive Words*. My work has been printed there a few times and I’ve written a children’s book *Charlie the Charlossis Calf*.

“I always like writing. I am dyslexic,” she said, so writing is a hard struggle. Both my mothers, my birth mother and my other mother, were writers. I think I most enjoy writing for children.

Three of us have our own writing group. We are called The Riverside Writers. I go the children’s way, one of the other girls goes poetry, and the third girl, who lives at Kilgen and is also an artist, has just finished writing a novel. We spend an interesting couple of hours together on the third Wednesday of each month.

Athol revealed that six years ago he had to have two stents in his heart but, while he had to retire, he hasn’t slowed down and finds he is so busy doing other things he has to make time to follow his passion for fishing. At certain times of the year I just go out there across River Drive and throw a line in the river. It is a good relaxing sport. When my father died I said to Cathy, “I just want to go down to the beach and watch the ocean. It is relaxing!” I catch my fair share!

Catherine and Athol Sneesby



Rose Gardener

There was a young gardener from Empire
Vale
Tried to grow roses to no avail
The beetles had breakfast
The aphids had lunch
And the worms dined out on the pic of the
bunch.

Catherine Sneesby