

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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Wardell Art Show



Milly Zavatarro, also known as Milly Love Knuckles, is a very well known local artist who chose The Wardell & District War Memorial Hall as the venue for her latest display of progressive art. She showcased over ten local artists.

Milly, whose French grandfather was a renown oil-painter who came to Australia after the second world war, is the owner of the 'Rock of Ages' tattoo parlour at Lennox Head. In Wardell, there was a glass of champagne, a grazing table, lucky door prizes and the opportunity to purchase some of the artwork.

The Wardell & District Hall is becoming the centre of our community.



Above: Milly welcomes visitors to the Art Show while left, Narelle Antonioli admires a piece of artwork.



"Light up the Hall"

Barry Cremin and Kev O'Brien fed the hungry crowd of revellers who gathered at the Wardell Hall for the turning on of the Christmas lights. We were all entertained by the Wardell Public School choir with a cheerful rendering of seasonal songs.



With the fall of night, on came the lights that had been prepared by Barry Cremin, Russell Krampe, Milly Love Knuckles and Jimmy Croft. Master of

Ceremonies, Pat Carney said, "The hall is at the heart of our community — a place to live, laugh, learn and connect."



Photo: Wardell Community Connect

Kevin Hogan MP, the Federal Member for Page, had much pleasure in handing over a cheque for \$7,740 which, together with a grant from Ballina Shire Council, will be used for the re-decoration of the interior of the Wardell Hall. To receive the cheque were Ken Threlfo; treasurer of the Hall Committee, Paola Rickard; Vice President of the Progress Association, Ronda Thomas; treasurer WPA, Kevin Hogan MP, John Thomas and President of the Wardell & District Progress Association, Pat Carney.

A Big Cheque for the Hall



It must be Sunday!

The only day the construction work stands still at the junction of Old Bagotville Road and Montis Road appears to be on a Sunday. Everywhere we look, the new Motorway is going ahead to the benefit of us all. It is bringing work to local residents and income to local business. Soon we will be able to hear the laughter of our children or that classical music. The inconvenience will be forgotten!



What we will also miss is the frequency of head to head collisions on the highway — like the one on the left outside the Broadwater Public School, or the one below at New Italy.

Pacific Highway Upgrade Notice.

Major earthwork is taking place in the Richmond River to Pimlico section of the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade. Please refer to the [Richmond River to Pimlico notification \(PDF, 415Kb\)](#) for more information.





Photo: Ron Rosolen

It's a Hard Life Being a Firefighter.

Members of the Wardell Brigade are all volunteers. When their pagers sound to summon them to action, they are often unaware of what lies ahead. Usually it is for a grass or bushfire, or it could be a traffic accident — sometimes with serious consequences! Occasionally it is something quite different, like a call to help ambulance staff carry an overweight patient down a steep and narrow staircase. In the lead-up to Christmas, the Wardell Brigade was called to rescue a kite entangled in powerlines.

Never fly a kite near power lines! If you are careless enough to get your kite caught in a power line, **DON'T TOUCH THE LINES OR THE KITE!** Power lines can carry well over 7,000 volts and the electricity can easily travel down your kite line to you, regardless of the type of line you are using.

Here you can see Michael Heugh - a very experienced firefighter, bringing the kite safely to land near Sneesbys Lane East Wardell.

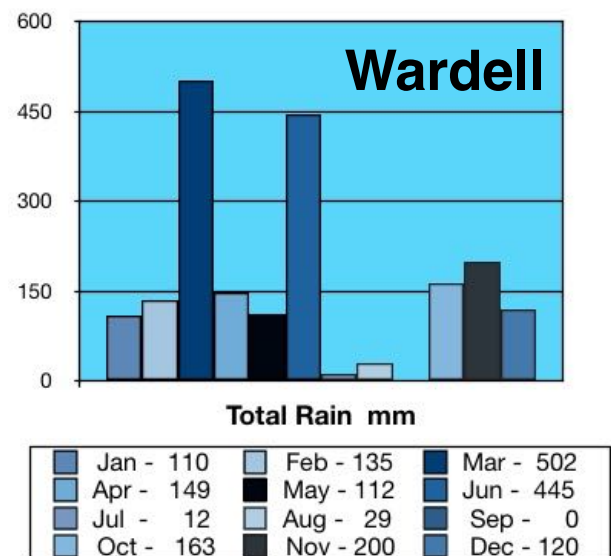
In the week following the kite incident, the Brigade was called to extricate a car from the koala fence just north of Wardell, and remove from Patches Beach a large red industrial cylinder that had washed ashore. There was a car fire at Uralba, a grass fire at West Ballina, a truck fire on the Pacific Highway, and a head-on collision of two cars at Broadwater with oil on the road. For the firefighter there is always something new around the corner!

Help save water!

Catherine Jost, communications Officer with Ballina Shire Council has released a vibrant new animation series and is asking the community in the Richmond River catchment to "Love it or Lose it."

The thought-provoking animations are a collaboration between local Richmond River catchment councils. To watch the animation series visit:

<https://www.loveitorloseit.com.au>



Unofficial Rainfall 2017 - 1977 mm

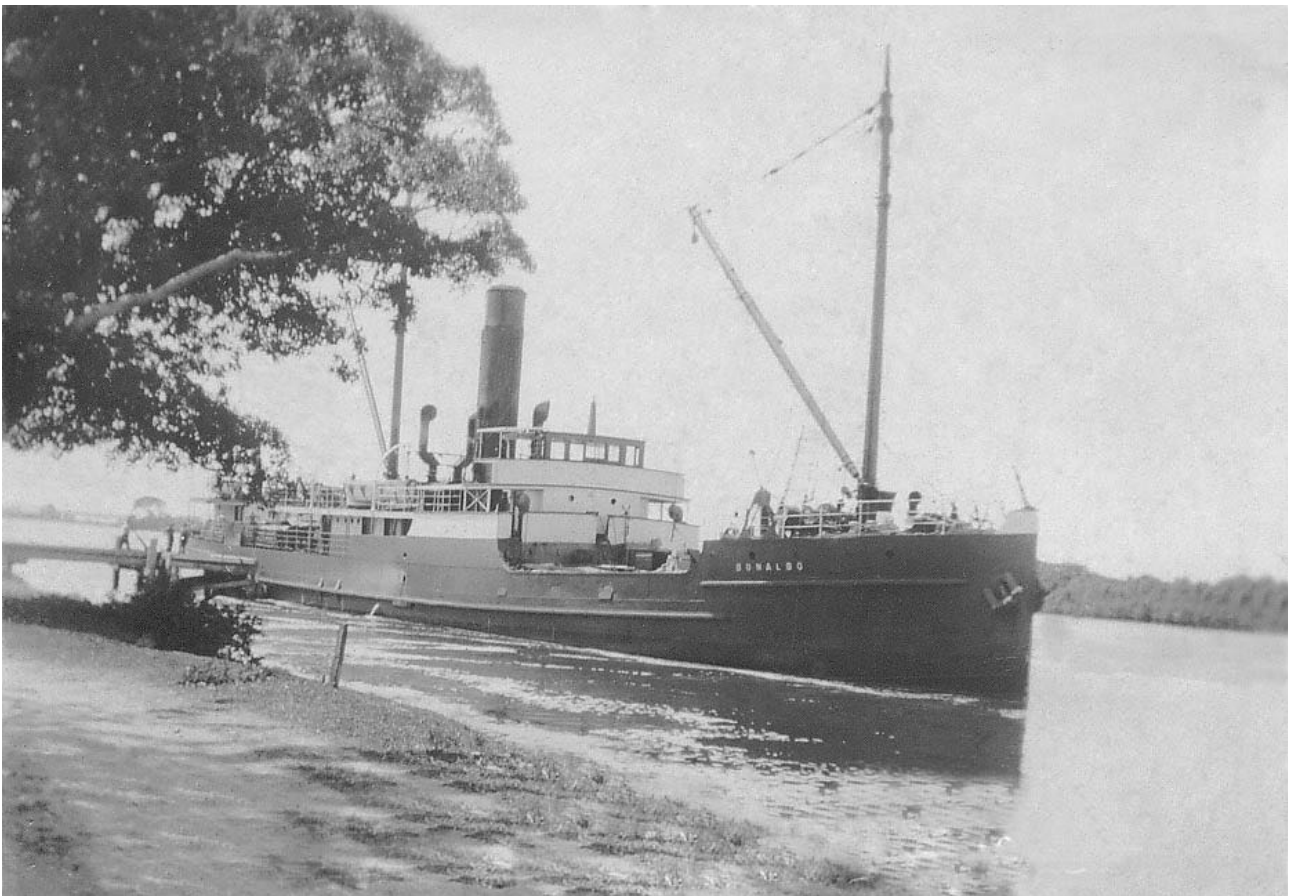


How Things Change

Keith Mullens was born and raised in Wardell. He went to school here and got his first job at the Wardell Bank. So it gave him much pleasure to return here recently and take the photograph on the left of the new Wardell boardwalk. Where he was standing to take the photo was once the sight of his family home. It had to be moved to make way for the Wardell Bridge.

Keith's brother, the late Ron Mullens, was a keen photographer with an extensive collection of photos. One of them was taken at almost the same spot and shows the Steamship Bonalbo unloading at the Wardell wharf.

There was a lot of shipping on the river in those days. Bagot's mill was very busy with logs and sawn timber. Then there were the cane punts and tugs that supplied Broadwater Mill. Boats would come up from Sydney to be serviced at Riley's Hill while York Marine used to build good boats at Swan Bay.



Burns Point Ferry planned maintenance 5 – 18 February 2018

The Burns Point Ferry will be put into dry dock for its two-yearly maintenance from Monday 5 to Sunday 18 February 2018.

It is necessary to put the Ferry into slip to carry out major mechanical and welding repairs plus give the ferry hull a sandblast and repaint.

The slip dates are prearranged to coincide with suitable tides around the Wardell Bridge.

The ferry will be closed to traffic for the duration of this work. Council apologises for any inconvenience this will cause.

Road users are advised to use the alternate route of the Pacific Highway and River Drive, Wardell.

For updates on ferry operations visit MyRoadInfo.com.au

Enquiries: Paul Busmanis, Manager Engineering Works,
Ph 1300 864 444.

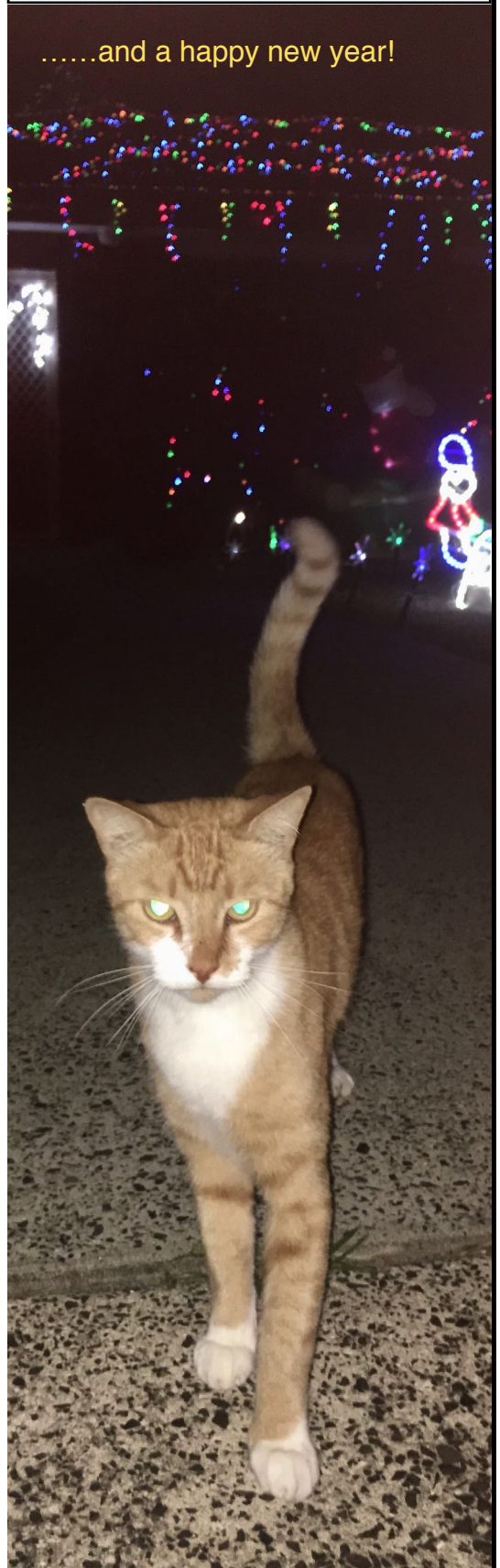


A Pair of Echidnas Face to Face.

This rare sight witnessed whilst walking on what was Harry Law's farm at Lumleys Lane, Wardell, in an area closed this month for the development of the Pacific Highway.

A young inquisitive cat goes walkabout to view the Christmas lights at East Wardell

.....and a happy new year!



John Curran

Speaking with Mike Rushby

My Father's parents - James and Margaret Curran - were born in Ireland and married in Ireland and came out to Australia in 1878. They came to Ballina where they built the first hotel in Ballina which was called, "Curran's Exchange Hotel" where the Henry Rous Hotel is now located on the corner of River Street and Moon Street. James and Margaret had four children. Their second eldest was my father Frank and Moya Flanagan was my aunt. She became part of the large group of Flanagans in Ballina.

My Father's brother Kevin was killed in a car accident in his early thirties travelling down the cutting from Alstonville to Ballina and my other Uncle - John - was a Catholic priest who was ordained in St Carthage's Cathedral in Lismore and said his first Mass at St Patrick's church which is opposite the hotel here in Wardell. I was named after him because he died shortly before I was born.

On my Mother's side there were Mick and Helena Fitzgerald who were from County Tipperary in Ireland. They had been booked to sail on the Titanic to America but my Grandmother got very bad asthma. Her doctor advised her to avoid going to America but to go to Australia that had a much better climate. They came to Australia and established a sheep grazing property out at Mungindi.

My father went on to play rugby league for Australia. He represented South Sydney in a number of winning premierships. He played for Australia and is one of only a few players from this area to have represented Australia. It is a bit of a rare thing to have a father who played for South Sydney and Australia and a brother Declan who also played for South Australia although raised here on the Pimlico riverbank. He was selected to play rugby union for Australia in 1980 against the All-Blacks and other nations for a number of years. It was a real pinnacle of achievement for Declan and Dad was very proud of him.

My mother and father got married just after World War II and set up home on the Pimlico bank of the Richmond River. Their first home is still there. It is like an old Queenslander set back about sixty metres from the road and that is where my mother gave birth to six children. I was then the seventh child but by then my mum and dad had moved into Ballina town and dad had left the land and was running a real estate business in Ballina.

My sisters went to Monte Sant' Angelo College in Sydney and my brothers and I went to Saint Joseph's College, Hunters Hill. We all then went to university. I qualified as a lawyer, as did my three brothers, and I worked as a solicitor and barrister for a number of years.

My elder sister Cathleen was unfortunately killed at the



age of sixteen in a car accident on the Pacific Highway in 1966 when we were travelling as a family back from Sydney to Ballina.

Apart from the one death, myself, three brothers and my other sister are still going. My sister married a doctor down in Jamberoo. I have a brother living in Sydney who is married with four children and a brother living up at Mullumbimby who has four children. My other brother Paddy has no children but is married and living in Maitland where he is a practicing solicitor.

I still have a lot of cousins living out at Mungindi and Moree where my grandparents on my mother's side settled.

I started running the Wardell on the River Hotel in 2008. The connection with the hotel is a long story because when my grandparents had the hotel in Ballina there was an Irish saying, "One Irishman is too many and twenty are not enough". My grandfather took too much of a liking to the dreaded drink and my grandmother put pressure on him to sell the hotel and move back to Pimlico and the farm. But Grandfather's need for alcohol could not be cured. My father asserts that his father used to make him ride his horse from Pimlico to the Wardell Hotel to get him a bottle of whisky. When I was down in Sydney studying law I became friendly with a couple of hoteliers and I became keen to purchase a hotel. We still had the family farm at Pimlico and I used to come as a young man to Wardell to visit relatives who were living here. I have always had a tie with the Wardell community. When the hotel came up for sale I thought I would

give it a go. I purchased the hotel in 2002 and had it under management until 2008 when the global financial crisis occurred and I was compelled to step in and take over from that time.

They say that running a hotel means that you are your own boss but you end up with a hundred bosses sitting in the bar and giving advice about the hotel. Everyone wants to give their input into it. I have had a few personal hurdles because of a separation from my wife. It's like any business, you spend money to make money. I've been slow in doing something with the hotel but I really hope to do some renovations in the next eighteen months. If that goes into print I'll be under more pressure to make sure I bring home the bacon.

I do own some property here in Wardell and in the district. The Ballina Shire Council seems very confident that Wardell is one of the last pockets that is part of a growth corridor that is likely to have a big population increase. I have already noticed over the past four or five years that instead of the usual migration north, of people coming up here from Sydney for holidays and getting holiday rentals and purchasing holiday accommodation, there is now a distinct increase in the number of people coming from the north of here — particularly from Queensland because of the development and overcrowding up there. They are coming down for less crowded places like Wardell and Patchs Beach. They can have a more enjoyable holiday and not be subjected to the urban sprawl and all the influences that come with it — overcrowding and traffic problems and so forth. It will be a mixed blessing for Wardell. We don't have traffic problems, we have a lot of wild life and a lot of wide open spaces.

We have a lot of fishing and crabbing. There are wonderful opportunities for riding a horse on the beach or going four-wheel driving on the beach — it really is a part of paradise up here as opposed to places like Sydney which is becoming less and less

attractive because of overcrowding and traffic. There are going to be more people wanting to migrate into the Wardell area. I have noticed particularly in the last twelve months that many people are downsizing from Byron Bay, Suffolk Park and even Lennox Head. People can get a very significant price for a house there and move to Wardell with a lot more money in the bank and a better life style without the crowding and the commercial overdevelopment they left behind.

Places like Wardell will benefit considerably by being bypassed by the highway. You won't have that through traffic that can be noisy and disruptive. Wardell will become more of a destination that people will visit to enjoy rather than just a stop-over on the highway. It will benefit like similar places such as Bangalow.

I love my dogs. We had pets growing up in Ballina then I had pets in Sydney. When I moved back up here it was a natural progression that I bring my blue heeler up here. It is a proven thing that there are more households in Australia with pets than there are households with children and there is a very high percentage of dog ownership in Australia. There are a number of beaches where you can take your dogs. I was at Patchs Beach today and there you can see how excited people are to be able to share the beach with their pets.

I do miss the law. I still do not dismiss the thought of returning to the law in some capacity. I miss the stimulation of it, the camaraderie of people with legal problems and other solicitors. But, at the end of the day you have got to have your headlights on and your interior lights off. Whether you are in the legal industry or the hospitality industry you have to be outlooking and be concerned about other people. It's a key to being happy in life that you do make a contribution to the community and think about other people because that is the most important thing that we be concerned for one another. Then we are going to have a very happy and fruitful society.

John Curran

