

# THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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## The Urgent Need for a Pacific Highway Upgrade



Early in July, the Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service was called upon to attend yet another fatal accident on the Pacific Highway. On a seemingly straight road in busy traffic, two vehicles met head-on. One driver was seriously injured, the other critically injured and evacuated by Westpac Rescue Helicopter. One passenger died, another had to be cut out of the vehicle while two young children were taken to hospital in a state of shock. Two injured dogs were taken by police to the Evans Head Veterinary Clinic.

Serious accidents are not uncommon on 'our' stretch of the highway. The scene of another fatal accident is shown below.

The Pacific Highway upgrade is one of the largest road infrastructure projects in NSW. It connects Sydney and Brisbane, and is a major contributor to Australia's economic activity.

In November 2004 the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program was outlined by the State Government and the Roads and Maritime Services invited all residents of this area to join the CLG or



Community Liaison Group to give input into the planning of the route. Many meetings were held ten years ago and the proposed Ballina to Woodburn section was approved. It is now subject to advice to the Government by Professor Mary O'Kane, the New South Wales Chief Scientist and the Koala Expert Advisory Committee. Lets hope work starts soon. It is due for completion by 2020.



# Wardell P&C Disco Night

The Wardell Public School P&C ran a disco at the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall on 25 June for about 45 children from the local schools. The event was from 6 to 8 pm with dancing competitions and a lucky door prize. Phil Eckersly was the DJ who organised a great evening of entertainment with a laser-light show, fog machine and bubbles.

Russell Krampe, the President of the P&C thanked all the volunteers who made the night a success and all the parents and children who came and supported the Wardell Public School P&C.



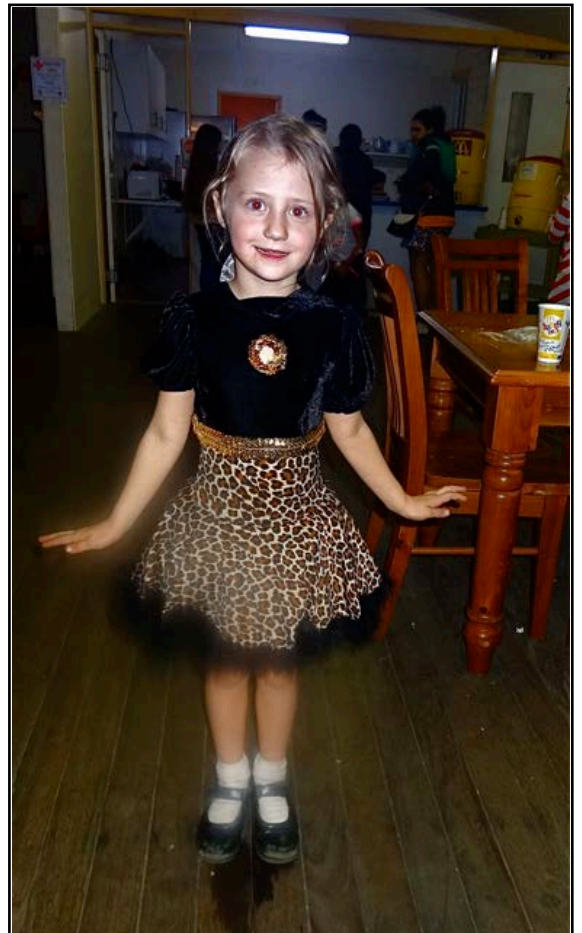
Fiona Lochrie, Prue Gray and Cheryl Wilson did the work!



On Wednesday 15 July, Ian Webster the Local Area Manager for Team Telstra, set up a mobile information office from 12.00 noon to 6.00 pm in the grounds of St Patrick's Church to enable users of the internet to ask questions about their future on-line activities with the roll-out of the NBN.



Ray Collyer found out that he would be able to sign up for a wireless broadband connection. Most rural residents outside the Wardell 50 km speed zone will be able to apply for a wireless connection. Those living within the village may have to wait a few years but will be able then to have a fibre-optic cable connection that will bring even greater capacity and speed. If you missed the Wardell presentation, you can go to the Telstra Store at Ballina Fair for a briefing on your personal NBN situation.



Lydia Krampe did the dancing!.

Wardell Public School P&C photos contributed.

Community members are encouraged to join the Wardell Public School Parents and Citizens Association which is involved in a variety of school activities from policy to financial planning as well as tuck-shops, fundraising activities and school functions. Contact:- P&C President Russell Krampe - Telephone 0458 421 412

# Your future is in your hands!

Ballina Shire Council recently held meetings over three nights in the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall to advise residents of possible future developments in Wardell and to ask residents for their advice. Information and a survey form was forwarded to all residents and an electronic survey was available on line. For more information or to contact your councillor, go to [http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/cp\\_themes/default/home.asp](http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/home.asp)

## 1.5.1 Background to Vision Statement

A vision to guide the development of Wardell in the period 2015 to 2035 will be developed following community consultation and feedback as part of the process of developing the WPES. (Wardell Planning and Environmental Study)

In 2003 the Wardell community nominated the following factors as being important as Wardell developed:

- *Maintenance of the friendly and peaceful lifestyle.*
- *Provision of opportunities to increase the population of Wardell.*
- *Enhancement of the town's links to the river, both physically and aesthetically.*
- *Preservation and promotion of the natural assets of Wardell.*
- *Ensure opportunities exist to access basic services and to enhance the local economy and provide local employment.*

## 1.5.2 Community Consultation and Future Vision.

Prior to the WPES being finalised a community consultation process will be undertaken. This process will incorporate the following elements:

- \* Survey and information being forwarded to every household and property owner within Wardell Village. Refer Annexure 4 for a copy of the *Residents Survey*.
- \* Electronic survey to be available on Council's web site.
- \* The draft WPES being made available on Council's web site to inform and guide community discussion.
- \* Appointment of an independent facilitator to chair community meetings and workshops.
- \* Weekday evening consultation workshops with local residents. A workshop with the owners of properties within SUGA designated areas. (Strategic Urban Growth Areas)

In addition to the above, interviews have already been undertaken with some business operators located within Wardell Village and the Principal of Wardell Public School.

Comments received will be used to further develop the WPES and develop a vision statement for Wardell Village which will be used to guide future decision making related to the village.

Wardell Village has an area of approximately 1.5 square kilometres and in 2011 contained 272 private dwellings which provided housing for 648 people.

## 6.3 Economic development opportunities for Wardell

The Pacific Highway relocation is anticipated to create a better living environment within Wardell Village with an expected reduction in noise levels and an increase in air quality. In addition a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists is anticipated when through traffic is largely eliminated.

Concerns raised by the public at the open meetings included :-

- \* An urgent need for a safe cross-town access for children, the elderly and the disabled.
- \* A need for a police presence in town.
- \* Dual occupancy of rural house blocks.
- \* Growth of the town should encourage house-ownership by young working families.
- \* Development of the town should be within a short walk of the existing 'Old Town'.

These were the main points raised at the meetings. They were not necessarily the opinion of all except that the subject of safe cross-town access was presented unanimously. The meeting was informed that Ballina Shire Council supports the route of the new Pacific Highway as approved by the RMS.

On 25 June 2015 Pat Carney, as President WPA, made a deputation to a full General Meeting of Ballina Shire Council on the subject of connective mobility within Wardell.



# A Cane-grower's Life

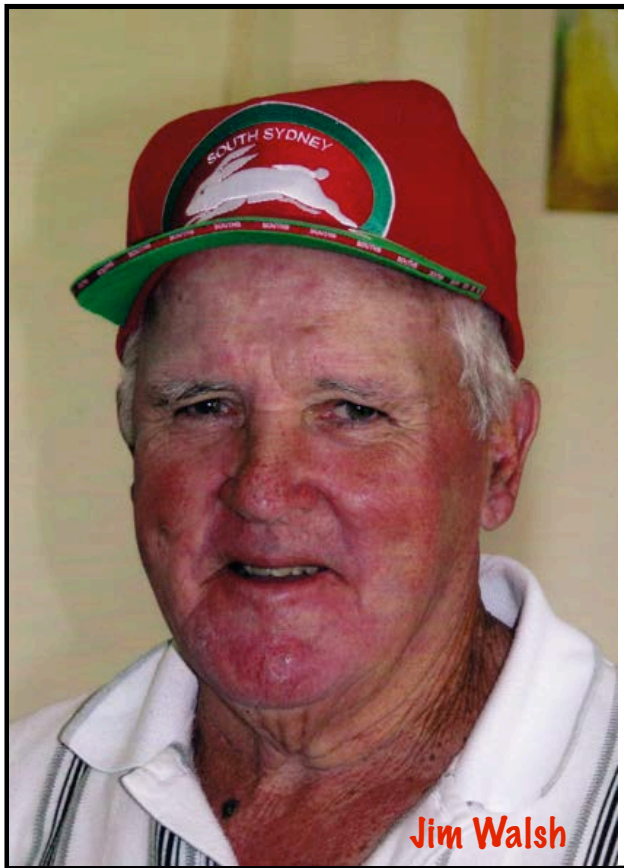
by Jim Walsh

I am often asked the question. "How long have you been in the cane industry?" and I answer, "Generations!" My great great grandfather Kempnich grew cane on the Clarence in the 1850s. He had his own little mill and processed his own cane and that of some of his neighbours. On the Richmond, my great grandfather Jim Kirby grew cane at Pimlico and the house they lived in is still standing.

My father, Maurice Walsh, as a young boy lived out at Thurgates Lane and attended the Wardell State School. Later the family moved to Teven and ran a dairy farm.

My father married Helena Kempnich and the family set up home at Carneys Lane where the four of us children grew up. Dad share-farmed a cane farm and today the sixth generation is still working the original land plus more that we have purchased as the years have passed.

From 1945 to 1954 we experienced a number of severe floods. Our home was flooded and we were taken in by neighbours, the Carney's, whose home was on higher land. We also experienced a very severe frost that wiped out the cane for a season.



In the mid forties our family moved into the Tyler's house on the old Pacific Highway. It was here that I lived with Mum and Dad and where my father died in 1964. In 1969 I married Therese and built our new home beside the old family home. We were blessed with three great boys. We lost Maurie early in his life. Damien and Bernard are married. Both have four beautiful children and are now working the farms with a little help from me and from our eldest grandson, Eric.

As a young boy I attended St Patrick's School in Wardell. As we live on the south side of the river we needed to cross that river to get to school. We did that on the old punt or sometimes we were rowed across by the ferryman in a small boat. We were taught by the Sisters of St Joseph - the Order founded by Mary MacKillop. My two sisters Dympna and Joan are members of this order. My brother, Father Maurice Walsh, spent most of his time in Tasmania as a Marist Father.

One of the big events of my school days was the Parish Picnic out at the Recreation Grounds on 24<sup>th</sup> May. We marched to the grounds. The mothers prepared the food while the men organised the sporting events. Mr Frank Meaney Senior was responsible for collecting donations and handing out the prize money - sixpence for first place and threepence for second. Some of us managed to gain some pocket money that day.

Some of my memories of cane harvesting season were the 'sign-on days' when each run vied with other runs for the best team, the best cook, the best hauler and the best derrick hand. In the early days I felt sorry for the cutters who lived in tents for the season. Later there was an improvement by the building of tin barracks. It must still have been very cold.

A lot of people would not know why there is a little hook on the back of the cane knife. It is a little monument to the men who cut cane in the leaf. The little hook was used to wipe the thrash off the stork after it had been cut.

A big step in harvesting was the burning of cane which was then cut by hand and shoulder-loaded onto trucks. The next step was loading with a cane loader. This took the greatest workload out of harvesting. Trucks were still pulled on tram tracks to the river for loading onto punts. Then another big improvement was the hauling with tractors instead of horses.

River Drive was the old Pacific Highway and the trucks crossing the highway were in danger of being hit by motor vehicles. Next came cane harvesters which allowed easier and greater output that enabled cane to be grown independent of river transport.

Another great memory was the erection of the bridge. Gone was the old punt and in its place the bridge. Because it had to contain a lift span for the boats to pass under, Wardell obtained a set of traffic lights!

I'm a great sports lover and I played many sports including cricket, hockey, rugby league and squash. I played tennis on our own court on which we won the Ballina Tennis Competition for twelve consecutive years. I also enjoyed many a day on the river skiing with friends.

Wardell has changed over the past eighty plus years but I consider that it has produced some wonderful folk on whose shoulders we stand today, grateful for all they taught us and left to us as our inheritance.

**Jim Walsh**

## Knit n' Knat



East Ballina Lions Club members Dawn and Rob Sword in the Diggers Room at the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall to receive seventy hand-knitted and crocheted blankets and some scarves and beanies from members of the Wardell Knit n' Knat Group. Group members are, from left to right, Sue Cechner-Simmonds, Jeanette Rushby, Judy Cocomozzo, Ivy Carter (standing), Shirley Strangman, Sue Steel, Therese Lumsden and Afra van Baarsen. Apologies from Rose Leeson, Rhonda Barnes and from Lorna Dory. The members encouraged ninety-two year old Ivy to stand as it is her skill that weaves the magic final touches.

The Wardell Knit n' Knat is a 'close knit' group but always ready to welcome new members. The members have been meeting at the Wardell Hall every Thursday morning for fifteen years to create woollen blankets and garments for the needy. For the past five years they have invited Dawn and Rob Sword of the East Ballina Lions Club to accept the blankets at the onset of winter every year.

Dawn and Rob well know the problem. A few years ago they lost their own home and all their possessions in the Canberra Firestorm and were lucky to escape with their lives. Dawn was given a hand-knitted blanket when she had nothing else. She still has it.

Nowadays she and Rob care for the needy. Their concern is for all those who are destitute in Ballina Shire no matter what their background. Some of the rugs and baby blankets will be going to the Ballina Hope Haven Women's and Children's Refuge. Some will go to the homeless and to women with small children and babies camping out in cars this winter.

The Wardell Knit 'n Knat members feel there is a warm connection between themselves as creators of the blankets and those in need who receive them.

Sue Steel is the person to contact regarding the Knit n' Knat. Sue Wardrobe at the Post Office can put you in touch with her.



Bob Higgins - the General Manager of the Pacific Highway Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade will be in the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall on Wednesday 5 August 2015, between 2 pm and 4 pm, to answer your questions about the highway.

## New Italy to Ballina Bypass

For an armchair ride up the RMS recommended route, click on the URL below

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/northern-nsw/woolgoolga-to-ballina/video-gallery/04-new-italy-ballina-bypass.html>



## Wardell Garage Sale

How many people do you think might drive out to Wardell for a Garage Sale? And if three or four households held sales at the same time? Last year about ten families joined together for a most successful sale!

This year we hope to have twenty Garage Sales on in the Wardell area on the weekend 12/13 September. This has become an annual event and promotion of the weekend is already underway.

*The coordinator is Sue Steele who can be contacted at telephone: 0416 005 023*



We have had some events happening at the Club and on the grounds. These include:

- \* A successful seafood night
- \* A Christmas in July evening
- \* The Golf Club ran a charity day for the Pimm family, raising over \$1,500
- \* The Bunjalung community had an athletics day during NAIDOC week
- \* Included in the meat raffles is the possibility of winning \$500-\$2,000 in our lucky jackpot raffle!

In September there will be a "Show and Shine" display of classic and modern motorcycles. Keep your eyes open for the new illuminated signage to be located at the front gate. It will be going up soon. Our AGM will be in October. Please think about attending this event and about how you may support YOUR community Club.

As always, we are open during the week from about 3:30 pm and on Fridays we have our Bistro open for meals which are served between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

If you have any queries about upcoming events, or want more information, please telephone the Club on 6683 4437.

**Kerry Storton**

## Moving on!



At the porch-way or entrance to Wardell over the last seven years, two pillars of our society welcomed visitors and sustained residents. One was long and lean and full of wit. The other's head just bobbed above the counter with a warm smile and a sympathetic ear.

Phil and Ann are moving on and they will be missed as proprietors of the BP Service Station and as a source of worldly wisdom. They will probably be taking a break at their estate at Meerschaum Vale before they venture into something new.

Local Identity Lois Cook featured in Blackwall Bugle #23 which can be downloaded from <http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/blackwallbugle>

Rose Leeson brought to our attention the television programme:

**ABC Compass with Geraldine Doogue - 'Babe In The Reeds'**

Aboriginal community leader Lois Cook's exploration of her great grandfather Bubba Jack Cook's story reveals the history of indigenous massacres on the NSW North Coast.

The programme can be viewed at: \_

<http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s4254918.htm>



# The Postmaster

The Wardell Post Office was first opened by Seigfried Sohn on the waterfront in 1875. The telegraph came in 1879 and the telephone in 1909. The old Post Office opened in 1927 and the new in 2010.

## Sue Wardrobe speaks with Mike Rushby.

I was away at a wedding and someone said, "The Wardell Post Office is for sale!" I went down and had a look at it. I ended up buying it. Then Australia Post made the decision that the Post Office had to be moved from that old historic heritage listed building. We moved it to where it is now and it is going really well.

My grandmother was from Morpeth and moved to Fairy Hill where she married and lived on a dairy farm. My mother and her two brothers were born there. My dad's family had the Casino Cordial Company. I was born in Casino in 1947 the third child of Edna and Cyril O'Connor. I have three brothers Robert, David and Keith. and we all went to school in Casino. I then became a dental nurse.

I married John Wardrobe in 1969. I met him in Casino where he was working as Assistant Manager of the GJ Coles Store. Working for Coles we moved around the state quite a bit - from Young in the South to Lismore in the North and many places in between. In fact we had seventeen moves in fourteen years which meant many different schools for our two boys.

My brother owned the BP at Broadwater and he said, "Why don't you come up and have a look at the Wardell one? Then my youngest brother got married in Brisbane and we came up for the wedding. On our trip up we called in and had a look at the BP Servo. We bought it in September 1982 off Kevin and Marie Hughes. There was no take-away. We put that on! It was just groceries and fuel with opening hours eight to five and Saturday mornings and a few hours on Sundays. We opened from seven in the morning until seven at night seven days a week. That was really good.

Just John and I ran the business with Mum and Dad coming in now and then to help us a bit. Our sons Peter, who was thirteen and Tony, who was nine, worked in the store

before and after school. Peter went to Ballina High School. He is now a music teacher in Melbourne and has two sons Jamie and Joshua. Tony went to the Wardell Public School and he now lives and works in Alice Springs.

Over the years, Jenny Mc Ilveen, Tracy Lazzarini and Tammy Lynch also worked with us in the BP Store. We bought the news-agency off Jeff and Bev Attawell when they decided to retire from their riverfront shop. Business was moving from the river to the highway and we thought it would be a good move. After our first six months in the business, we built the 'take-away' and developed the outside rest area.

The town was great then. We ended up sponsoring football teams, touch-footy teams, cricket teams, women's basket ball, men's basketball, softball. Anything that moved had BP Wardell written on it. The community was great and we had a good time. We got involved with the sports-ground. It was all done by volunteers and a lot of work went into it. John was the CEO there when they finally got the liquor licence.

We lived at the BP service station in the two-bedroomed house at the back. We built an extra room for the boys. During our time there, John's dad came and lived with us. He would have been eighty years old.

Then we sold the BP Servo business and thought we had retired. We went to Ballina for about eight months then my brother, who owned the Cattle-Camp Hotel out at Charleville, asked, "How would you like to go halves in a pub?" We took about thirty seconds to think about it and said, "Yes!" So we went out there and managed the pub. It was great! We had about four years out there with that. Charleville is a bit like Wardell - country and you know everybody! It's a good life.

We bought the Sea Breeze Caravan Park at South Ballina. It was a big change from the Cattle Camp Hotel at Charleville! John, Tony and I



worked the park together and every few months my brother David and I would go back to the Cattle Camp to give the managers a break. They were Greg and Nancy Atherton, who also came from Wardell. It was a very busy time for us all.

I had plenty of holidays. I holidayed overseas with Mum quite a few times when we were with BP in Wardell. We went to China, Hong Kong and Thailand. She liked all the materials and the porcelain dolls. I went to America with my brother. I went to Japan with another brother. I've done a fair bit of Australia too. When we were in the pub, John went over to America on a brewery trip. We travelled around Australia on a few outback spirit tours when we were not working.

After we had done all that, my hips were pretty bad so I got new hips in 05 and 07. I thought then that when I can get up and move around without pain then I'll go back to work. When we first came here to Wardell it was a good little town.

A group of Wardell ladies and myself started a 'Lady's Day' in the Wardell Hall for the elderly and other folk in the area. We would pick up some of the elderly people and give them a nice day out. We had friends Cookie and Chris Haynes who would cook and supply meals from donated food. I think we charged two dollars for a meal. We would play bingo. We called it a 'Lady's Day' but some of the fellers came too. We had a really good roll-up.

At Christmas time we had between eighty and one hundred people there from the cane farms and around town. Some of the young ones came and helped. During school holidays the grandparents brought the kids along too.





**Peter, Sue, John and Tony Wardrobe**

On Mothers' Day we had a special do and at Christmas time. That was a really great thing for the town! I would like to do that now and get people out of their homes and meeting and mixing with other people. There are plenty of people around that can help.

At the BP we had a second division football team. I used to go and video record the matches. I come from a football family. Dad was a ref and I have three brothers that played. I loved it and still love it! Regrettably the videos got mould on them and I have not been able to convert them to digital records. People still come to me and ask if I still have those old video records. I wish I did. The Sports Club has always been a great

part of our Wardell Community and I hope for everyone's sake that it can continue to be of service to the community.

I've been here in the Post Office five and a half years now. I only set out to do three years. I enjoy working in the Post Office. I like the contact with customers and try to be helpful and look after their needs. It is a pleasant place to work and socialise with the community. My husband John works for Ballina Bus Lines as a school-bus driver four or five hours a day. Cyril, my dad is ninety-two now and lives at home with us at Evans Head.

My grandmother and her son owned a block of land on the other side of the Evans River before the bridge went in. We had a cabin down there on the

front. We've been going down there a long time.

Wardell is a great town and I enjoy it! When we first came here, the New South Wales Bank was open and when it closed we took on the agency at the BP. We were also agents for Kirkland's buses and sold tickets for people to travel to Sydney. We were agents for dry-cleaners, florists. Give a little extra and people reward you with their friendship and custom. No business has a business without customers!

We trust Wardell village will continue to prosper and remain the hub of the rural community.

**Sue Wardrobe**



**Betty Fernance.**

**50 years of voluntary service to her community with The Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation Inc.**

Her story appears in the Blackwall Bugle #26 which can be downloaded from

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

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