

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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On Thursday 16 May 2013, the Biggest Morning Tea was held in the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall. It was an opportunity for friends, family and workmates to come together and share

a cuppa and some delicious food, whilst helping those affected by cancer. The event was coordinated by the Wardell Knit n' Knat Group. The hall was beautifully decorated by Jeff Leeson and guests were welcomed by Sue Steele and Therese Lumsden.

Guest Speaker, Alan Brown, was a very active Councillor with Ballina Shire Council and the chair of the Ballina Bypass Action Group that lobbied for more than 10 years to have the bypass built. He was the driver of the first car to travel on the newly opened road. He told us that this was the 20th year of the celebration of the Biggest Morning Tea around Australia and that so far \$110 million has been raised to help beat cancer.

Alan contracted several types of life-threatening cancer and at first didn't want to know about it. But he set his sights on survival and, once in the healing system, he met many wonderful caring people. He will be ever grateful for the treatment he received. "I'm a survivor," he said. "Anyone who needs support or advice on surviving cancer should contact:

<http://www.nswcancersurvivorscentre.org/>



Alan Brown - a survivor

The Survivors



Guest speaker Daphne Reilly, of Evans Head, with MC Sue Steele.

Having had a bad back for several weeks, Daphne was diagnosed with cancer on 14 May 2010 and within a very short time she was confined to a wheel chair. She was told that she had stage 4 cancer, she would most likely never walk again and she was given 18 months to 2 years to live. But, despite the acute discomfort of chemo and radio therapy, she would not give up. "This is my world," she said, "And I don't plan leaving it." She worked hard with her nursing staff and physiotherapist. "Never give up and retain a sense of humour," she said. She is walking unaided again and she gets out into her beloved garden. "There's always a light at the end of the tunnel," said Daphne.

Sponsors and supporters of The Wardell Biggest Morning Tea include Larry's Wardell Pie Shop & Takeaway, Wardell Post Office, Sue Cowan's Simply Fashion & Beauty, Phill & Ann of BP Wardell, Alstonville Bottle Shop, Sister Larelle of the Mercy Centre, Wardell Red Cross, Blackwall Historical Society Inc., Wardell & District Progress Association Inc., Wardell & District War Memorial Hall Committee, Wardell Sports & Recreation Club and Wardell Golf Club.

My trip from Ballina to Wardell return on Saturday 13 April aboard the Richmond Princess was the actual day of my 79th birthday. We saw the advert in the local weekly *Advocate* and agreed this would be a great way to spend the day and get to know a little of the history of the river and people who lived and worked on it. We had a great day out even though it never stopped raining. The company and staff aboard the Princess were great and the commentary was very informative so, all in all, we had a great time. The catering was 4 star and highly recommended. Best regards,

Roy Brining.

A Pommie brings the boat home



Some of the members of the Wardell & District Progress Association at their Annual General Meeting. They were joined by Mayor Cr David Wright and Councillors Keith Johnson and Paul Worth. Cr Ben Smith is a regular visitor.

WARDELL & DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

The AGM of the Wardell & District Progress Association was held on 17 April 2013. Pat Carney, in his President's report, said that Wardell had received a grant from the State Government's Better Boating Programme of \$148,000 towards the cost of the new boat ramp at East Wardell. Work on the ramp is starting this month.

Pat thanked Ron Rosolen as Trustee of The Wardell & District War Memorial Hall for being instrumental in preparing for the future ownership of the hall and Mike Bardell, for the management of the hall over recent years.

The newly elected committee of the Progress Association is: President Pat Carney, Vice Presidents Rex Farrell and David Judge, Secretary Nicole Eldridge, Treasurer Russell Krampe and Publicity Officer Rose Leeson. Mike Rushby is the Public Officer.

Ownership of the hall is yet to be determined with the current owners - The School of Arts - relinquishing responsibility at the end of the year. The Wardell & District War Memorial Hall Committee President, John Stead, has called for quotations for the refurbishment of the Diggers' room, the kitchen and the toilets with the intention of smartening up the hall to make it more useable and accessible by members of the community.

The Progress Association receives strong support and encouragement from Ballina Shire Council. What the Association needs is good input from all residents of the area. You can make a difference! The next general meeting is to be held at the hall on Wednesday 19 June at 7.00 pm. Everyone is welcome. The Hall Committee will also be looking for volunteers to help with the redecoration of the hall to bring it up to the standard that this community deserves.

Best Mates!

Henry hangs out at the Wardell Servo - and sometimes checks out the village to make sure no one is getting up to mischief. He loves to say "G'day!" and to have a cuddle.

Phill Read, of the BP Service Station, met Henry about seven years ago at Patchs Beach. Henry came and sat on Phill's beach towel and guarded it while Phill was swimming. Then he wouldn't leave. Phill spoke with the only other people on the beach - a couple of young lovers and a pair of elderly fishermen. They said "He's a lovely dog and he's been here all day. It's like he's lost!" Phill took the dog home to Meerschaum Vale and called him Henry.

Phill and his wife Ann searched the papers daily for news of a lost dog but Henry went wandering around Meerschaum Vale and was savaged by a pair of pit bull-terriers who left his mangled body in a drain. The Reads took him to the vet at the point of death but he pulled through.

"He has been microchipped," the Vet said, "By a breeder in North Queensland. But he is not registered anywhere." A few weeks later the Reads approached Ballina Shire Council and the Ranger said that they could register him - which they did. So Henry is a registered canine member of our community. He is over eight years old. He has a lovely nature and he adores children. Many tourists call back to Wardell on their way home because their kids insist on stopping to say "G'day Henry!"



Henry with his good friend Lawrence.

The Eagle has Landed!



Michael nursing an injured eagle - all in a day's work.

Michael Nemeth, who is a serving Detective Senior Constable with the NSW Police Force as well as a volunteer with the Wardell Brigade of the RFS, made an arrest whilst returning from a recent call-out with the Brigade to the Meerschaum Vale area. A young wedge-tailed eagle took off from its perch on a farm fence but, through illness or injury, was unable to fly and crashed into the long grass.

Michael, who has completed a wild-life carer's course, knew what was needed. He stripped off his firefighting jacket and threw it over the eagle. Then he bundled it up to keep it calm, rang WIRES on his mobile phone and took the eagle to Coraki. He was met there by a raptor carer from Casino. The eagle will be checked out by a Vet and released back into the wild when it has recovered.

Keep this date free!!!

Wardell Village Fête

On Saturday 15 June 2013

The annual fête, which brings visitors from far and wide, will be held in the grounds of St Patrick's Church. All the usual stalls will be there and BBQ breakfast will be served from 8.00 am. Devonshire tea under the trees with friends is an ideal way to spend the morning.

Donated items in a saleable and safe condition are very welcome as they will be sold to raise money for the pastoral care and assistance of needy members of our community. Any items remaining unsold at the end of the day will be donated to reputable charities.

We have no storage space for heavy items, or large quantities, which should be brought to St Patrick's on the morning of the fête when there will be plenty of volunteers to receive them. For further information, contact:

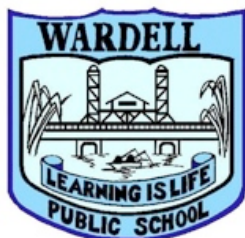
Rex Farrell - telephone 6683 4743 or

Sister Larelle - telephone 6683 4642



Just a bundle of rags on a pile of leaves? No, it is a real life and death struggle as a carpet python devours a wallaby joey behind the sand-dunes at Patchs Beach. Long time resident and President of the Patchs Beach Dune Care Group, Peter Lacey, witnessed the event recently and recorded it on his iPhone.

Peter is pleased that the conservation activities of the Dune Care Group have helped to make the area a haven for wild-life. He would not intervene in the course of nature. It was, he says, an awesome experience. The event took a good ten minutes and the mother wallaby remained there with her joey until the end.



Wardell Public School

An article by students Izaak Devine-Davey and Kate Wilcox

The students and staff from Wardell Public School recently went on a Wardell History Walk, accompanied by members of the Wardell Historical Society; Mike Rushby, Margaret Kennedy, Pat Carney and Trevor Monti.

The students enjoyed learning about their local community and were able to retell some extremely interesting facts they learnt along the way.

St Patrick's Church was given the name St Patrick's as the very first church service held there was on St Patrick's Day.

Community members who did not have a telephone at home were able to visit the original Post Office to make a phone call but they needed to make an appointment first.

The Police Station did not have cells to hold the prisoners so when needed the prisoners were chained to a tree near the river. This happened in all kinds of weather.

There was more than one Hotel in Wardell, the one that exists now was originally attached to the Wardell Memorial Hall. The Memorial Hall was used as a movie theatre and is now used for Community events such as the Wardell Public School Christmas Concert.

The current Wardell Bridge was built in 1964. The bridge is called a draw bridge and is able to open to allow large boats to pass under it. The bridge is opened once a month for testing to ensure it is in good working order. On top of the bridge there is a house where the controls used to operate the bridge can be found.

Near the Wardell wharf is the original diesel engine which was used to power the ferry which was used for crossing the river before the bridge was built. If people trying to cross the river had horses, the horses were tied to the rear of the ferry and had to swim across.

The old bank building closed about 12 to 13 years ago and has been renovated and is leased out for people to live in. It still has a lot of the original décor, including the bank vault.



Some budding historians on the steps of the Wardell Bank.

Wardell Red Cross

The next meeting of the Wardell Red Cross will be held in the Royal Hotel Wardell from 5.30 pm for 6 pm meeting on Wednesday 5 June.

June. Wardell Red Cross is holding a charity golf day at the Wardell Golf Course on Sunday 23 June from 7.15 am. \$25 per player, morning tea and lunch included. Bookings desirable but not essential. Get your team together now.

Great prizes to be won.

All enquires telephone Vicki Turner 6683 4098

August. Wardell Red Cross is holding its annual Arts and Craft Show on Sunday 4 August from 10 am -1.30 pm in the Wardell War Memorial Hall. There is a variety of stall holders from which to purchase homemade crafts.

Morning tea and light refreshments available. Everyone welcome

Come along and support this International Organisation.

All enquires telephone Monica on 6687 9620



Australian Red Cross

Branch President

Ruth Partridge

Telephone

6628 5751

New members are always welcome.

The Wardell Tennis Club has 16 players on a Monday night with games commencing at 6.30 pm and finishing about 9.00 pm. At \$5.00 per night, it is a good way to get exercise and meet new friends. You are Welcome!

Pimlico News

Telephone 6683 4384

The Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation hoy afternoon in May was a success despite the wet conditions. Our Ballina visitors were undeterred. They are a loyal lot and enjoy their afternoon at Pimlico. Proceeds from the afternoon are going to 'Biala' which is a school in Ballina for children and young adults with special needs. At present there are 16 'high need' students there and Wendy Playford, the CEO for Biala, who attended our meeting with several members of the association, thanked the PLCO for donations over many years.

Many prizes were presented throughout the afternoon with the main prize being won by Lynn McNally of Evans Head. This was the second month in a row that the raffle has been drawn by the winning ticket holder!

PLCO member Olive Creighton made several dozen buttonholes for presentation to the mothers. She had grown the chrysanthemums and ferns herself and has been doing this for years to celebrate Mothers Day.

The June afternoon will be held on the first Monday commencing at 1.30 pm. The usual bus from Ballina will operate and the afternoon will benefit The Ballina Hospital Auxiliary.

In the last edition of the Blackwall Bugle I told readers about the wild storm that blew my garden shed away. About three weeks ago cane farmers Garry and Jim found the shed still intact in Garry's cane. They cut it up and brought it out of the paddock. I was sad to see my shed leaving after thirty years, but the cane harvesters will be pleased to know that that the shed won't be interfering with the harvest next season.

Betty Fernance

Sue's Kitchen

Creamy Custard



Ingredients:

1 Litre of warm water

1 cup Full Cream Milk Powder

2 flat tablespoons Custard Powder

2 flat tablespoons Sugar

1 egg

Vanilla Essence

Put aside 1 cup whipped cream

Method:

Whisk all but cream together, cook in Microwave on high for approx. 5 minutes Remove and check for consistency with a wooden spoon.

Cook again in microwave at one-minute intervals until custard will just coat the back of your wooden spoon. (Probably no longer than 2 extra minutes)

Allow to cool first and then add the one-cup of whipped cream.

Sprinkle with nutmeg if desired.

Delicious.

Sue F



Your Community Needs You!

Our community is on the move - looking to develop a heart and soul. There are those of us out there who want to belong, who want to share, who want to give, who want to learn! What can we do as a community? How do we get started?

The Wardell and District War Memorial Hall has a new management committee and has received the support of Ballina Shire Council. The hall needs to be refurbished and improved. It needs to live again to the sound of music, laughter, theatre, hoi, gymnastics or anything that will bring people together to share knowledge, or experience, or companionship. The community needs ideas and volunteers. Sue Wardrobe, at the Wardell Post Office, is a tireless enthusiast but she has a full time job and she needs your help. Please give generously!

To paraphrase the late President JF Kennedy, "Ask not what the community can do for you, ask what you can do for your community!"



Empire Vale unleashes the Beast!

The classrooms at Empire Vale Primary School are currently being transformed into active theatre workshops as students bring the classic story of 'Beauty and the Beast' to life. The school is abuzz with students learning scripts,

choreographing dances, singing songs and creating special effects in preparation for this year's school performance.

The story of 'Beauty and the Beast' reinforces the importance of treating others with kindness and respect, whilst highlighting how our personality and attitude are our most attractive qualities.

The students will perform two shows, a special matinee for families with young children or family members who cannot be exposed to the cold of night, on Tuesday the 25th of June at midday and an evening performance on Thursday the 27th of June. The evening performance will start with a P&C fundraiser BBQ at 6.00 pm, with our performance starting at 7.00 pm.

This year's school play aims to be an awesome night of entertainment. We hope to see you there.

Karen Kantissi.



YOU LITTLE BEAUTY! Ellie and Jae enjoy exploring their stage characters during play rehearsals.

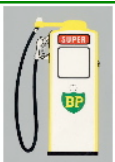
Phill's Philosophy.

"If you're going through hell, keep going."
~Winston Churchill~

Wardell Service Station
for all your fuel, newspapers, take-away
foods and convenience store items.

Cooking until 7.00 pm

Phillip and Ann Read. Telephone 6683 4252



Rose Leeson

This is a little thumb-nail photo of a big-hearted woman who is the inspiration and driving force behind many of the activities in our community. She is full of energy and ideas.

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I started cutting cane before I was seventeen. I worked cane farms with Bill Carr who lived almost next door to us. From the age of twenty I cut cane for about sixteen years. For the last five or six years I had my own gang. It was good income and we would make about three times as much as a bloke working on the council. But when the industry became mechanised, there was no call for cane-cutters.

We had a cane-cutters' day when all the cutters would sign on. The publican would always rub his hands together on sign-on day but on sign-off day when everyone was cashed up, there used to be a lot more money going around. I cut most of my cane around the Empire Vale area and I did a couple of seasons around South Ballina with a top gang. After South Ballina I worked with another good gang at Carrs Lane. I cut there in 1966 and that season went right into the end of January - early February 1967. Then the next season I had my own gang at Pimlico for two seasons. It was the biggest run for one gang on the Richmond River for two years. Then for four years I had a gang at Sneesbys Lane.

We got paid every fortnight when we cut cane. Within a gang we all shared equally in the proceeds. Cane-cutters were a really rough and tough mob and you had to be tough to survive. They would get down to the old Royal Hotel on pay night and there would be a brawl of some sort by the end of the night. You could have a blue with a cane-cutter on a Friday night and by Monday morning you would go to work and it would be all forgotten.

When I started there were no front-end loaders. You cut the cane and put it into little heaps, then you had to pick it up on your shoulder and put it onto these little steel trucks that would hold between one and one and a half ton. Contractors would haul it out to the river using a team of four horses. Then they would put it onto the barge for it to be taken to the mill at Broadwater. Later they got front-end loaders, which were a bloody pain. It didn't matter how you cut it then because it would be dumped all twisted into big heaps. Then it would rain and the front-end loader couldn't work and we'd have to pick up this twisted cane, which the loader would have picked up and hand stack it onto the buggy.

We would harvest twelve to fourteen tons a day per person. Probably my best day we worked seven hours and cut nineteen and a half tons each person.

The first year I went cutting, the cane knife we used was called a 'giraffe'. It had a blade of about fifteen inches with a little square hole cut into the blade, so you could hang it up on a nail and a handle about six inches long. You just couldn't cut as much cane as with the modern cane knives. After the 'giraffe' knife came the 'Spear and Jackson' knife. They were made in Sheffield, England and they had a bigger blade and a longer handle. We would put a bend in them instead of having a straight blade. Sometimes we would get the blacksmith to make little ingots of steel with a slit in them and we would put one or two of them on the end of the blade to give it more weight and more momentum when we swung the knife.

Saw blades are made of much better steel and cane knives I use nowadays are hand-made from saw blades. We used to break the blades on those 'Spear and Jacksons'. My last cane knife was made from a saw blade. It had a hook so long that when you were topping the cane you would bring it up and the hook would grab your hat and pull it off. It was a monster of a thing. I've still got it. I cut four seasons with that knife and it probably wore the blade down an inch and a half. That's the difference between a 'Spear and Jackson' and a saw-blade knife.

One person I should mention was famous. He was rated as probably the champion cane cutter of all time for the Richmond area. His work was so neat! He always cut the cane perfectly. His name was Raymond George Gooley and he was famous for a lot of other reasons too. He was a perfect gentleman when he wasn't drunk. But when he was drunk, he was the greatest nuisance you could ever come across. He was getting on in years but still able to keep up with other cane cutters. He lived in the cane barracks, where we went one morning to pick him up. He had a long necked bottle half full of beer and a plate of cornflakes with no milk. He poured the half bottle of beer over the cornflakes and ate them for breakfast.

In the slack season I had a variety of jobs, apart from going away and picking fruit. I drove the taxis in

Ballina. I used to drive the Burns Point ferry as relief for Laurie Clifford when he was away. Laurie and his wife used to go down to Mildura every year with other friends. One slack season I worked at the experimental farm at Perrys Hill - the fruit farm. They were just experimenting with hydroponics in those days and they had these fruit trees growing in sand with water going through to which minerals and fertilizer were added. They are just some of the things I did in the off-season. A bit of variety: I've cut cane, picked fruit, driven taxis and a ferry boat - I drove a tip-truck for eighteen months on the Ballina sewerage job doing restoration work. I worked at the experimental farm and, one slack season in 1977, I worked at the Ballina Slipway where the Ramada Hotel is now. I was a painter and docker but a lot of the work was sandblasting and painting steel ships.

I worked at the Broadwater Sugar Mill for 33 years as a full time employee and retired at the age of 72. I started at the boiler station as an unskilled fireman. Then I got a boiler ticket after three years and was appointed an Assistant Boiler Attendant. In 1988, when they started four shifts, I ended up as a Boiler Attendant - the chief bloke on the shift. Then in 2003 they combined the boiler station, the powerhouse and driving the mills into one job. I did the whole lot from one room - the computer room - and I had one offsideer downstairs on the mill and another on the boilers. That was the highest job in the mill without being on the staff and it was mine until I retired.

Over the years I have owned and sold three cane farms; the one at Martin Lane now part of the O'Connor farm, the farm at Pimlico next door to the Roger's farm and a farm at South Ballina Beach Road that Barry Carney bought off me.

I still cut cane by hand when called upon, which was probably every week last year and I keep fit by being a long distance runner with the Ballina Athletics Club. I run cross country every weekend and I compete in the Gold Coast Marathon. This year I will be running from Ballina to Byron along the beach to support the Westpac Helicopter Appeal and I invite all my friends to join me.

Pat Martin

The Last Man Standing

Pat Martin speaks with Mike Rushby

I was born on St Patrick's Day – the 17th of March 1938 at the Claremont Maternity Hospital in Ballina. I was named Patrick by very proud Irish parents. My father was Thomas Martin and my mother, Mary Magdalene Camille Crowley. Her father was Irish and he loved a drink. He got on the grog the day she was baptised. He intended naming her Camille, but the priest said, "That's not a Catholic name!" So, Grandfather said, "We'll call her Mary Magdalene - that's a Saint's name!" So that's what she was named although she was always known as Camille. I have four elder sisters and two younger brothers. My father had a small cane farm at Empire Vale, which is now owned by the O'Connor family.

My Grandfather on my mother's side was an Irishman too and he was a wanderer. He roamed around everywhere. He lived at Kangaroo Island down at the bottom of South Australia, and then somewhere out in the bush in South Australia and somewhere around Hay in New South Wales. Then they settled in this area. He worked a dairy farm at Kyogle on a share basis and he was the first cream carter to bring the cream in from the farms to Kyogle. My mother came from a large family of eight kids. When Mum was only five years old, her mother had a serious health condition from which she never recovered. So my Mum was reared in Cowper Orphanage and when she finished high school at the age of seventeen, she got a job working for my father's family. That's how she met my father. My Grandfather had a farm at Martins Lane, Knockrow as well as the dairy farm at Kyogle, so my mother was probably milking cows and doing farm work about one hundred years ago.

My grandparents died in 1921 and 1923 and are buried in a cemetery at the top of Tintenbar. When my Dad lived at Knockrow, he cut cane but, when he got married, he and Mum decided to move, so they bought a small farm at Empire Vale and settled there in a brand new house on the corner of Martin Lane. The house is still there.

I started school in 1945 as a seven year old at the Wardell Convent School. I used to ride a bike about ten kilometres each way. It was pretty hard going because the pushbikes in those days were heavy old things and when it rained, which was pretty often, I didn't have a plastic raincoat. I had what was known as a tweed overcoat made of thick heavy material and, when it got soaking wet, it was heavy enough for ten men to get around! When September came with the Northerly winds, it took almost all night to ride that pushbike home again. I came over the river on the ferry. One of the ferry drivers was Tony Burns. Later on there was Jack Thompson and Bill Holwell. We kids would get in the engine room and muck around. The next minute the driver would grab me by the ear lobe and put his other hand on the spark plug. That would give me a terrible jolt! Some of the families came from Meerschaum Vale – the Slatterys and Gahans and from Wardell, Ray Walsh's family and the Flatleys. I think there was only the O'Connors and me from Empire Vale. All non-Catholic kids from Empire Vale went to the Empire Vale School. When I got to be twelve years old Ernie Chapman started a school taxi service.



There are still a few cane-cutters around, but Pat is probably the only one in the district cutting cane regularly. This photo taken last summer by Mike Rushby

On school days, after school, I would have to round up a couple of house cows and milk them, then walk half a kilometre down a lane to a pump to fill the cattle trough, collect all the chook eggs and chop all the firewood for the stove. There were no electric stoves in those days. In my teens I used to ride horses down to Patches Beach. When I was about twelve years old I used to take a month off school to help plant cane at home.

I left school at the age of 15. I did odd jobs and I went milking 120 cows on Ted Hayter's farm at Pimlico with just my brother-in-law. That was during the 1954 flood. You know what it would be like milking 120 cows in that pouring rain.

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