

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

Issue # 28 February 2014

PO Box 53 Wardell NSW 2477

blackwall-bugle@bigpond.com

Telephone 02 6683 4561

http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-RCW-54-46-21&c=162

Wardell Rural Fire Brigade

Whilst most of us have been enjoying a well deserved holiday at this time of the year, the volunteers of the Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service are having one of the busiest summers on record. Firefighters' goals are to save life, property and the environment. Because they are often the first responders to people in critical conditions, firefighters provide many other valuable services to the community such as vehicle rescue, community disaster support and search and rescue. All volunteers receive full training and supervision.

During the first four days of this year, the Brigade responded eleven times - with six lengthy patrols around the clock at the



Wardell RFS tackle a fire in the National Park at Bingara.



Captain Ray Collyer congratulates Deputy Captain Jo Heber for the successful reassessment of her first aid qualifications.

Country Fire Service. More members of Wardell Brigade will follow.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at the Wardell Fire Station at 7.00 pm and anyone over the age of eighteen is welcome to apply to join. All recruits receive full training and supervision. They soon graduate to become fully fledged firefighters who can take part in the protection of fellow citizens and the great environment in which we live.

For more information, telephone 02 6683 4311

In case of fire, **always** telephone 000

Lennox Head peat fires, fires at Coolgardie, Pimlico and Alstonville and a serious motor vehicle accident on the Pacific Highway at Whytes Lane. Every time there is a callout, the responders are faced with a new situation. Occasionally, crews are sent away to assist other agencies in other places, like the Blue Mountains fires late last year. This provides good training and experience and we know that if ever we need extra help in this area, it will come.

As this 'Bugle' goes to press, Ray Collyer and Jo Heber, pictured left, have been flown down to South Australia to relieve exhausted members of the



Jo Heber

The recent fire at Lennox Head was contained with the help and expertise of many Wardell volunteers over the New Year.

Knit n' Knat



Every Thursday
9 am - 12 noon
Wardell & District War Memorial Hall
Knit for charity and enjoy the
companionship of others.

Wardell Knit n' Knat was formed in 2004 to knit and crochet beanies, scarves and rugs for community organizations. We support the East Ballina Lions Cub which distributes them to the Ballina Soup Kitchen, the Homeless and the Women's refuge, or wherever they are most needed.

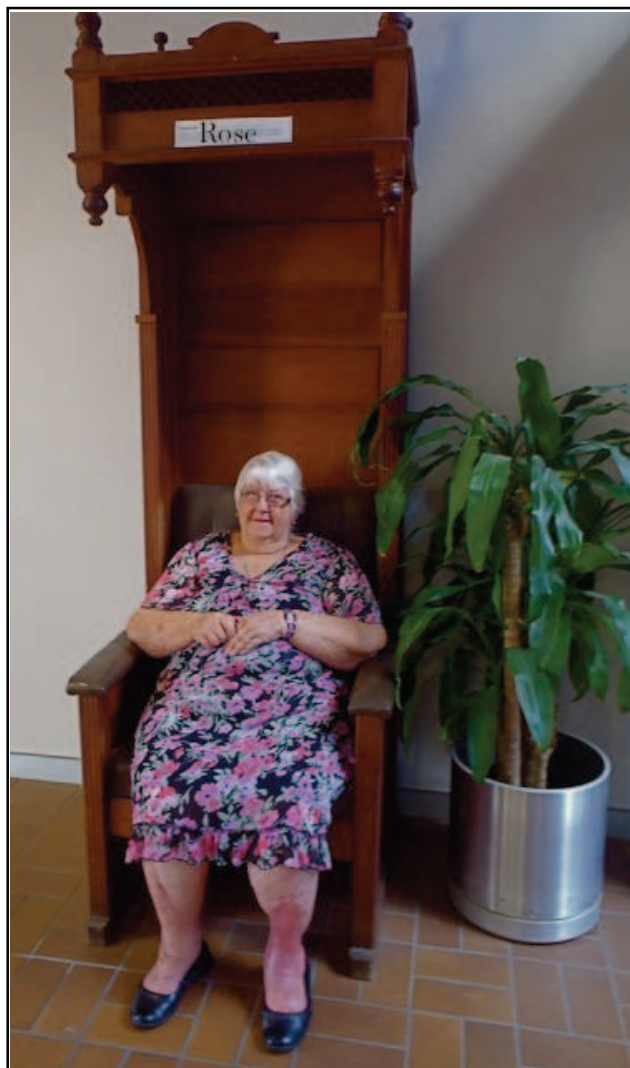
A supply of wool, knitting needles and pattern books is on hand for beginners for these projects. Donations of any 8 ply wool scraps will be much appreciated. Bring along your knitting or your chosen craft for an enjoyable morning with good company, a cuppa and a chat. The group meets on Thursdays from 9am to 12 noon in the Diggers' Room of the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall.

The group will be hosting the **Biggest Morning Tea** for Cancer in May 2014.

For further information telephone **Sue Steel 6683 4944** or just turn up at our meeting. You will be welcome.



The AGM of the Blackwall Historical Society is to be held in the Diggers' Room of the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall on Thursday 6 February at 7.00 pm. **Kerry Storton** - Secretary



A Lady in her right place!

Alfredo Visco

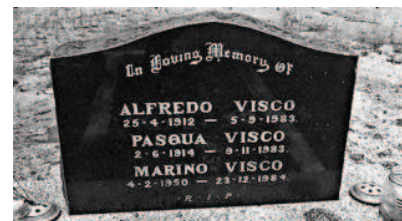


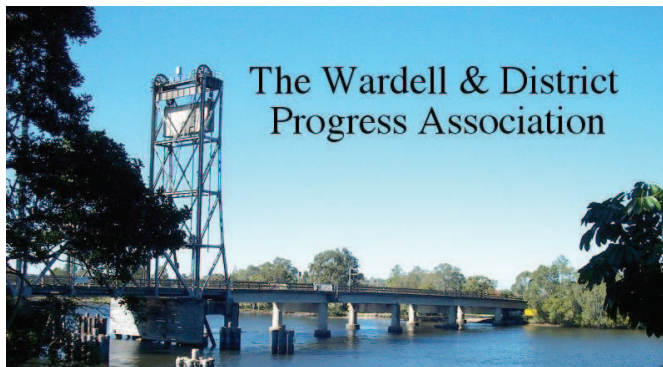
Alfredo Visco was born in Italy in 1912 and in early adult life became a successful wine grower. He married Pasqua, whose family were neighbouring wine growers. In his late twenties, Alfredo was drafted into the Italian Army and posted as a soldier to the desert in Somalia during World War II.

He was captured by the Allies and eventually sent to Australia as a Prisoner of War (POW) to work. Along with a number of other Italian POWs, Alfredo came to the Northern Rivers where he was allocated to a farm at Meerschaum Vale and then, later, to a farm near Lismore. At the end of the war, Alfredo returned to Italy to be with his family. In 1949 he was sponsored by the family he had lived with near Lismore to return to Australia. Like many other returning POWs, he brought his

family with him – his wife Pasqua and five children. They made their home at Jiggi and grew bananas like many other Italians that came to the Lismore area after the war.

In 1950 they moved to Coolgardie where they farmed bananas on the hills, sugar cane on the flats and ran a milking herd of over two hundred cows. Alfredo died suddenly in 1983 at the age of 71. Two months later his wife Pasqua also died. They are buried in Wardell Cemetery. Their descendants have enriched our local society.





The Wardell & District Progress Association

A report by President Pat Carney.

In the past few years, much was done to improve the street lighting in Wardell, to create the walking/cycling paths and to build a quality jetty and pontoon. Good improvements were made to the playground and the BBQ area. But very little was done in 2013. In anticipation of the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall being taken over by Ballina Shire Council from the School of Arts, the Diggers' Room of the Hall has been redecorated. Over in the playground area, the toilet block has been upgraded and modernised following representations by Councillor Paul Worth.

Unfortunately the anticipated boat ramp did not go ahead as planned last year, due to the breeding habits of the pair of Ospreys that occupy the nearby nesting site. Ballina Shire Council assure me that progress on the boat ramp will be made early this year but, until the project is completed, we will not know how much funding will be available for other projects.

What I would like to see happen in 2014 is the construction of the board walk to join the two halves of Wardell. Ballina Shire Council has planned it and costed it. Its construction will enable children, the disabled and cyclists to pass safely from one side of the Pacific Highway to the other. It will run from opposite the Police Station, then under the highway bridge between the river and Bridge Street to the Wardell jetty.

Our progress meetings are well supported by the Mayor, Cr David Wright, Deputy Mayor Ben Smith and Councillors Keith Johnson and Paul Worth. In the next few months I hope to see General Manager Paul Hickey and Engineering Works Manager Paul Busmanis at a meeting once again so that we can let them know that although much has happened over the past six or seven years, progress has come to an apparent halt. The capital works spending in our town has not been very significant at all.

I would like to see the entrance to the town made more attractive and inviting. I would like to see the tourist route turn off the highway, not down Carlisle Street, but past the BP Service Station then down past the church to the village shopping centre and the river, before heading west towards Alstonville.

I think the greatest asset of this town is the laid-back, carefree, safe, atmosphere where the people know one another and look out for one another. I can only think that the by-pass, when it comes, will be to the great benefit of this place. Some businesses need to be more proactive. We need to make more of the attractiveness of the river. Wardell is quite different from anywhere else in Ballina Shire and if we make the most of that difference, we will attract the tourists and potential new residents who would like to benefit from this special historic rural destination.

The next meeting of the Progress Association is to be at the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 19 February. The Member for Page, Mr Kevin Hogan, MP, has accepted an invitation to attend.

Pat Carney

A well-earned rest from the West

A leading feature story of the *Land Magazine* for January was all about Megan Baker. This little corner of Ballina Shire seems to produce more than its share of high performers. Having spent her childhood at Patches Beach and after attending school at Empire Vale and Ballina High, Megan graduated from the University of New England - Armidale and began her career as a casual school teacher in Ballina.



She then volunteered for a position at Balranald Central School in far west NSW and for a while was a relief teacher at several schools, with a weekly round trip of about 1000 km. Last year she was appointed Principal of Clare Public School which is one of the most remote and isolated schools in the state. She loves it and the students and their parents appear to love Megan. She is deeply immersed in community affairs in the outback, but she is here for a Christmas holiday with relatives and friends including her Mum and Dad - Gayle and John Baker of Patches Beach.

Pimlico News

Telephone 6683 4384

The last meeting for 2013 of the Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation was held in December with proceeds covering the annual costs of running the Pimlico Hall. There were many prizes to be won by visitors from all over the district but the main prize of a hamper donated by members, was won by PLCO Secretary Jill Lock. President Gwenda Shinner wished everyone a Merry Christmas and looked forward to their continuing support in the New Year.

At the Annual General Meeting of the PLCO, the presiding officers were re-elected - Gwenda Shinner as President, Jill Lock as Treasurer and Colleen Lowry as Secretary. Colleen is following in the footsteps of her mother Olive who held the position for forty years. Betty Fernance is the Publicity Officer and Adrienne Doust was welcomed as a new member. After the meeting, members attended a luncheon at Wardell to celebrate another year of friendship and success.

The first event of this year will be our meeting on Monday 3 February when everyone is welcome to join our activities for the benefit of the Rescue Helicopter appeal.

The Curran family, who have owned several cane farms in the Pimlico district for many years, recently held a luncheon party for 30 guests on their property to celebrate the birth of Aiden Francis Fuguno Curran who is the first of the sixth generation of Pimlico Currans. Aiden is the son of Alex and Joy Curran of Hong Kong and the first grandchild of Sydney barrister Frank Curran.

Betty Fernance



Ballina Shire Council staff have removed the old Bingal Bridge.



The Supervisor, Robert Hunter, began his apprenticeship 24 years ago working on the then new concrete bridge over Bingal Creek.

For many years the bridge carried pedestrians, horse-drawn carriages and later motor vehicles to Bagotville, Cabbage Tree Island and Laws Point. It also carried the water-main to Cabbage Tree Island. Beneath the bridge, river boats transported the bodies of deceased residents from all over the Wardell area to the cemetery and many a ghostly apparition was reported by the bridge late at night.

Despite the occasional visit from a bull shark, the creek in the area used to be a popular swimming spot.

Trevor Monti said that one dark and moonless night, he and a friend were fishing from a dinky in the middle of the Richmond River on the incoming tide and they became completely disorientated. It was only the rattle of the loose boards on the bridge, as a vehicle went over, that enabled them to work out where they were.

Site Manager Tony Webb said that eighty percent of the old bridge timber was to be recycled by the Bunjum Aboriginal Cooperative. Ten percent would be used to help landscape the area and only ten percent would be lost.



Where's Wally? Above is a snap shot of a small part of the happy crowd that gathered at the Wardell Hall for a sausage sizzle before the Christmas lights were turned on. In the 'Wally' beanie is organiser Russell Krampe. Everyone was pleased with the lighting display which Russell believes will only get better each year.



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

We Have a Champion

Sixteen year old Jade Lewis Cook of Wardell attends school at Lismore High, trains hard with his boxing coach Arthur Maloney at the Sports and Aquatic Centre, Goonellabah and has set his sights on a career as a professional boxer. But first his aim is to represent his country at the Commonwealth Games and the Olympic Games and he has made a good start.

Jade has been boxing for four years - often against larger opponents. He is the grandson of former Olympic boxer Aubrey Roberts. Last year Jade won the National Golden Gloves bantamweight title at Acacia Ridge. Last year he also won gold medals at the South-East Queensland Boxing Championships and the New South Wales Championships.

Jade Cook has a good future ahead of him. He recently completed a school work experience for Larry Endres at the Wardell Café. His supervisor, Megan Towns, said Jade is quiet, polite, cheerful and industrious. She enjoyed having him work there. But, when Jade pulls on those boxing gloves and steps into the ring, he is a dedicated athlete.



Richmond River Cane Growers' Association Ltd

The 2013 Crushing Season for the Broadwater Mill area was completed on 15 November 2013. Of an estimated 629,000 tonnes of cane, there was actually 558,549 tonnes of cane crushed. The variations in estimates and yields are attributed mostly to the difficult conditions of the previous years which have resulted in highly variable yields even within paddocks, and estimates have been particularly difficult to make accurately this year.

Of the crushed cane some 490,308 tonnes, around 87%, was two year old cane. A high proportion of two year old cane is a key feature of the NSW Sugar Industry, with most cane in Queensland being harvested at one year old. In the Broadwater supply area cane is harvested by one of eight cane harvesting machines, and transported in a fleet of trucks.

This year cane fires were slightly more difficult to conduct due to an early start to the very high fire rating period but the cane firing of some 6,100 hectares of land was conducted over the crushing season with very little incident, largely due to the low risk nature of a cane fire due to good farming practices.

The targeted sugar cane supply for Broadwater Mill is one million tonnes of cane, so whilst 2013 and 2014 will be a long way short of target, the area planted in the 2013 will result in a vast improvement in 2015. Overall, wet weather at the start of the season brought about some difficult harvesting conditions, but generally the harvest went well given the variable yields.

Monica Poel, Manager



The Kidd returns to Wardell

Bernadette Trotter was photographed recently on Pat Carney's private jetty with Pat and her husband Peter Trotter. As Bernadette Kidd, she first arrived in Wardell in 1950 as a three year old daughter of Constable Roger Kidd. Whilst living in the Wardell Police Station, she attended St Patrick's Convent School until 1960.

Bernadette wrote a very interesting article about her childhood for the Blackwall Bugle #13 which can be downloaded from the Ballina Shire Council website.

Bernadette now lives in Tasmania where she taught English and History at Hobart College. Peter recently retired from the University of Tasmania where he was an Associate Professor of Mathematics.

In early December, Bernadette paid a return visit to Wardell with Peter. She was able to catch up with some childhood friends and visit again her church, her primary school and the Wardell Police Station.

The Wardell & District War Memorial Hall

As of 31 December 2013, Ballina Shire Council owns the hall. About 12 months ago, the trustees were advised by the Lands Council that the custodian of the hall, the School of Arts, was to be abandoned and would no longer be an entity, so we were instructed to find someone else to take over the hall. This just happened to coincide with the closing of the Wardell Access Centre and Ballina Shire Council put forward the idea that they could take over the hall so that the community based events, that were held in the access centre, could continue to be held in the hall.

Until recently I was a Trustee of the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall with Dave Delaney and Barry Clifford. I took over when Frank Harvey died about 1995. Allan Lumley was the President of the hall committee. The hall was his little baby.

The committee under Allan Lumley worked well. Then it lapsed until Mike Bardell stepped up and took on the whole project as a personal challenge. He spent a lot of time renovating the hall. He applied for grants to cover ongoing costs. He hired out the hall to benefit the community and to raise funds for running expenses. He dealt with the Lands Department and was very diligent about administering the hall. For the whole period from 2007 until the recent formation of the new committee, Mike looked after the hall pretty well on his own. He got the hall redecorated and re-stumped and he tackled a white-ant problem on his own. If anyone needs to be thanked for maintaining the hall for the community it is, in my opinion, Mike Bardell.

It costs about \$2000 a year for insurance for the hall and there are electricity bills and ongoing maintenance costs that need to be met, so the interest shown by Ballina Shire Council is much appreciated.

The hall has to remain as an ongoing entity. Even though the Council owns it, it always remains the Wardell Community's property. I will hand over the papers of transfer to the Wardell & District War

Memorial Hall Committee at their first meeting of the New Year, then my task as Trustee will be complete.

The President of the Hall Committee is John Stead whose telephone number is **0400 322 499** and the office bearers are Jodi Wilcox, Mike Bardell, and Mike Rushby with committee members Lois Cook, Pat Carney, Sue McCowan, and Trish Tindall. It's now up to the committee to ensure the Council hold up their end and it is also up to the committee to hold up its end.



Ron Rosolen

Ron Rosolen



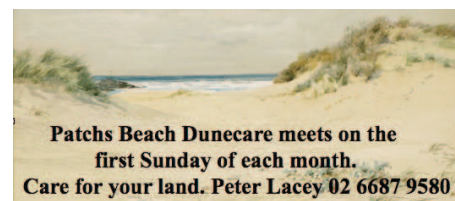
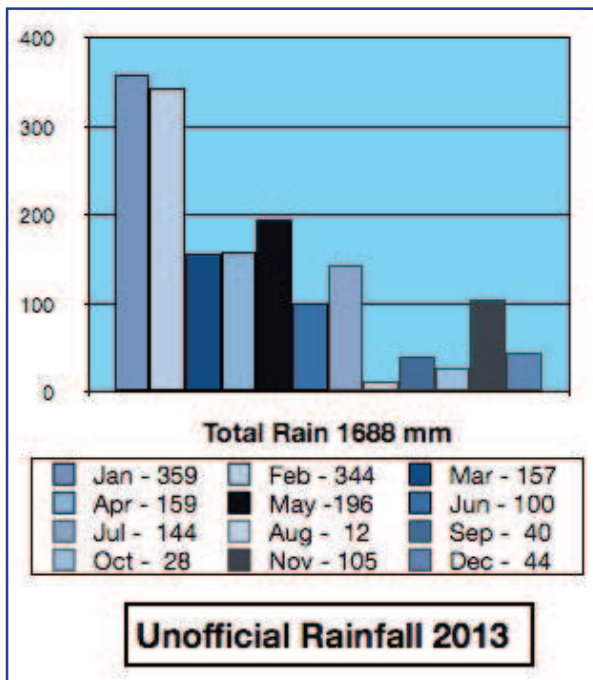
Wardell Sporting Recreation Club
Club Telephone 6683 4437

Welcome to 2014 and may it be a great year for you. The Australia Day Breakfast went well and we look forward to seeing you there again next year.

We have many activities planned for 2014, the first being a **Seafood Night** to be held on Saturday 15 March at the Club on Bath Street, Wardell. We will have our normal fare of crabs, prawns, oysters, crumbed calamari and cold meat and salads. The prices are: \$35 for adults; \$18 for high school students; \$10 for primary school students and no cost for pre-schoolers to attend. The doors open at 6:30 pm and everyone is welcome.

Please remember the Club is available for bookings and hire for any – and all – events. We can cater if required, or a kitchen is available. The Club is open from 3:00 pm Monday to Friday and on Saturday afternoons. Meals are served between 6:00-8:00 pm on Friday nights. Golf is played on Sunday mornings.

Kerry Storton - Secretary



Patches Beach Dunecare meets on the first Sunday of each month.
Care for your land. Peter Lacey 02 6687 9580

.....Continued from page 8.

"Belinda's husband had obtained a degree in script writing for television over in America. In the two years he has been here he has obtained an education degree and starts a new job at the Brisbane Boy's College after Christmas teaching English, theology and drama."

"I started my nursing training in Brisbane. I did two years there and then moved to Ballina where I completed my training as an enrolled nurse. I worked ten years at St Andrews and then I worked twenty years at Carroona until I retired a couple of years ago. We had two girls at Uni in Sydney and we had to feed them and look after them in Sydney so we had to work and make some sacrifices because cane wasn't all that good in those days. We battled through"

"Back here on the farm," said Ray, "my father ran a few cows and some cane and then went into all cane. That's where I started. Then I bought the farm where the killing yards are from my uncle. We bought one of the first Ferguson tractors to work the farm. I've still got it out there in the shed. To plant cane we used to have to strip the cane, and then we loaded it onto the back of the machine and fed the full length stalks in one at a time. Earlier my father used to cut them up by hand and then sit on the planter, which had a bit of a plough blade. He would then drop the short bits in one at a time. I've been through it all from the hand harvesting to the mechanical side.

"In 1974 our group moved over into mechanical harvesting. We couldn't get enough men to cut the cane. For some time we had been scratching to get a team of men together to harvest the crop. If you had a good gang and you looked after them and they came back the next year, you were all right. But if a better job came up, a few blokes would leave. In 1975 we formed a farmers' co-op and bought our first harvester.

"As a Cane farmer, you take the bad with the good. When the return from labour isn't good, you just keep at it. Cane is a two-year crop. If I didn't bother growing it or planting it this year, in two years time when the price comes good, I'd miss out. You just have to stay with it. I've known people to go out of cane into cattle. By the time they got settled into cattle, the cattle price had dropped but the cane had come back up. The farm comes first. You buy your fertiliser and essential farm equipment but you forgo holidays and personal things. The new car or new tractor will come when the good times return."

Roslyn said, "I returned to work when the times went bad. I spent forty years working when my daughters were old enough to manage without me. When I went to work at St Andrews, it was to get us through a hard time. We did what we had to do to get through. We would plant soybeans in our fallow ground just to make a quid. Sometimes we lost them, sometimes we



made a bit. We never gave up. Whatever we needed to do, we did it.

"So long as you are in front and making a living off it you stick with it. It's a life-style choice. We've been married forty-five years next June. If you look back over forty-five years, four children have been educated and have done well. They have done what they have chosen to do. We've got a nice home. Ray is seventy-three now and we have never ever claimed a pension or anything, so what more could you ask for in life? We've had our bad times but you don't swap and change. You plan your course and stick with it. You work your way through the bad times and the good times come back again. That's when you update your machinery and do all the things you want to do. Once you make the lifestyle choice, you make the most of your choice.

"The good thing about farming is that you are your own boss. From our point of view, the good thing is that the boys are both interested. Ray has always believed that when he has gone, he would like to leave as much land as he received if not more. If you've got land you can always grow food. I think the world is changing and we are getting back to the idea that we need to be more self-sufficient. Maybe in the future sugar won't be the crop that they are growing but the most valuable thing you can have is land.

"Forty years ago I went onto the Cane Executive," Ray said. "I am still on it. I was on the Sugar Milling Board for twenty-four years. I was a Director of the

Sugar Milling Co-op and Director of the Cane Growers' Association. I was on the Productivity Board for forty years. CSR used to own the sugar mill but when they wanted to bail out, the farmers bought the mills and formed a co-operative with three directors from each river – the Clarence, the Richmond and the Tweed. I am one of those. We try to ensure that the farmers get the best possible deal out of the industry."

Roslyn said, "A senior board member told me that Ray is just like a fox-terrier pup. He keeps biting at the ankles until they see the point of view of the farmer - which is what he was voted in there for."

Ray said, "I was Chairman of the board of the Wardell Sports and Recreation Ground Trust for 20 years. When we started there was one small sports field available but we were able to organise workers and tractors to clear and extend the grounds. Local policeman Jim Taylor was the driving force behind much of the work and David Daley played a big part. Many of us put \$100 into the kitty and called ourselves "life members" but we put a lot more personal money into the project over the years. With the approval of Ballina Shire Council, we laid the foundations of the club house and we even laid and connected the sewerage system. Picnic horse races and other events were held to raise funds for the development of the grounds. Our family is happy to have left its mark in this place we call home."

Ray and Roslyn Walsh

Roslyn and Ray Walsh

speaking with Mike Rushby

Cane farming is the major industry of this area. It has shaped the character and the economy of this place. But as much as farming is evolving, so it still needs the strength of spirit of the early pioneers.

Ray Walsh of East Wardell tells us, "My ancestor Daniel Walsh came out to Australia from Ireland in the 1873. He was single and he met his future bride Bridget Hartigan who had come out from Ireland too. They married and their three sons all became cane farmers. John, their second son, married Mary Louise Welch. They had three children. I was their third born child and I grew up to marry Roslyn Baker. The Walsh's cane farms have been in the family for over 120 years. I inherited my father John's property and I bought the farm owned by my late Uncle Patrick.

"Daniel Walsh first settled down in the Floods Lane area where he ran a few cows and, at the turn of the century, he started up a butchery. He had a slaughter yard down on the farm. Then about 1928, my uncle built a new slaughter house and butchers shop out here at East Wardell. It was pretty big business for those days. He supplied Wardell to Broadwater and out to Meerschaum Vale, Pimlico and Empire Vale. I think he had three trucks delivering meat twice a week. As an eight or nine year old kid, I used to go with the trucks and I would have the job of running into each house and putting the meat in the fridge.

"I went to the Wardell Convent School and then to the Marist Brothers in Lismore. I wanted to try working in the butchery but my uncle wouldn't allow it in case I cut myself. The cattle would come from the Lismore sales yards mostly and sometimes from Meerschaum Vale where they also had a sales yard. Uncle Pat had an old cow called 'the leader.' We would take her over on the ferry and introduce her to the bullocks, which would follow her back onto the ferry for the journey home. Then she would be separated out and put back into the old cow paddock until she was needed again.

"There was a full-time slaughter man and three butchers working here. They used to kill fifteen plus a week," said Ray. "But then, when Lester Lovett took it over from my uncle, he did the killing. It was then a smaller operation because deep freezers and supermarkets changed butchers shops. Everything was recycled, nothing was wasted. Pig's guts were made into sausage skins and the bones of butchered cattle would be cooked to make soup for the pigs. The hides would be salted and bundled and tied up. Then someone would pick them up and take them away to the tannery. Any bones left over from the soup would be dried and then bagged and taken away to produce blood and bone. Nothing was wasted.

"My friends in those days were Steve Flatly who lived just around the corner, Wally Felsch, and the Moylans from

Empire Vale. We used to get around together on our pushbikes. A lot of people around here did a little bit of dairying and cane. The cream carriers would call around and pick up what cream they had. The slaughter yards ran quite a few pigs to put through the butchers shop but farmers would only have a backyard pig to raise for Christmas. Separated milk would generally be fed to calves that were being raised. My Mother used to milk about ten cows just to put her kids through school. I used to help her. But it wasn't all work. I used to muck around with my mates. We used to swim the river. If we missed the ferry we would swim the river. We were probably a nightmare to the ferry driver. We would get on the ferry then, half way across, we would jump off and swim back.

"When the ferry wasn't running, you'd cross the river by rowboat. Even in the big floods, the rowboats would go across. The boats had two sets of oars with two blokes rowing in rough weather but on a normal day if just the ferry had broken down, one bloke would row. Sometimes, if there were just one person, instead of taking the ferry across, they would row over. The ferry master would do the rowing but, if you were good enough to row, you could give the ferry master a spell.

"My uncle bought me a bike when I was about twelve. I rode it around on the North side and rode onto the Government Wharf where I put my foot down on the rail to wait. But I missed the rail and me and the bike ended up in the river. I had to tell my uncle that I had lost my bike. The publican from the hotel dragged it out. Another thing we used to do; we would put a parcel or a purse on the road with a bit of fishing line attached. Then we'd hide in the cane and when someone stopped to pick the parcel up we would pull it in. We had to make our own amusement. Nowadays you can go anywhere and there is something to do. In those days we had to make our own amusement.

Roslyn said, "When I was nursing I can remember if someone we knew had come in the night before as a patient, we had to get a urine sample off them. We would often put some Mecuricome, which is a dark red topical antiseptic containing mercury and some dexal into the urine bottle which we would hand to the man saying that we needed a sample from him. Of course as soon as he peed into the bottle it all frothed up a bright red foam. We would be standing behind the curtain waiting for it. That's the sort of thing we would do to brighten the day.

Ray said, "When I was twelve to thirteen, we used to ride our bikes to Ballina and back to see a show. We used to go to East Ballina where the shows were held in the open air at the old shell. I think Roslyn and I first met at the old concert shell or it might have been at the Lobster Pot hotel where they used to have Sunday afternoon band shows.



Roslyn and Ray with their latest granddaughter Sienna.

"My best friends from my school days include Steve Flatly, Donnie Gibson, the Moylans and Michael Slattery who drowned off one of the last barges on the river. The Slatterys worked a farm at Tuckean Swamp. We would work together here during the cane season then we would all go to Mildura fruit picking. Then we would go to Sydney and get a job there for a while. Anyone from up here would be picked first for a job. Then we would come back for the cane season.

"I got interested in water skiing so I built my own plywood boat. We did a lot of waterskiing behind the pub. Three boats used to go all day Sunday. There was our boat, Billy Lovett's and Bobby Gibson's. People would come out and ski and we would probably make enough to cover the cost of our petrol. We had a slalom course between rubber tubes in the river and we had a lot of fun. Then every night after other jobs were done we'd be working on the boat getting it ready for the next week.

"I was nursing in Ballina," said Roslyn, "and I met Ray in Ballina and we got married in 1969. We've had four kids and our eldest son Michael is now on the farm and taking over from his father and our second son Peter is a butcher. Family history is coming through again. Our two girls live in Brisbane. They are both married and both have academic degrees. Shannon has a double degree and is a microbiologist and a science and math teacher in high school. Her husband is a Professor of Physics at Queensland University and travels all over the world. Our second daughter, Belinda, worked in Los Angeles for ten years and she met her husband in the USA. They got married here in Ballina a couple of years ago. I think they think it is a better lifestyle here than in America. **continued page 7**

The Blackwall Bugle is produced by a voluntary community working group. Ballina Shire Council takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the content and acts only as copy editor and printing agent.