

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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



Are you prepared?

On 13 November, the Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service responded with two fire trucks to a 000 call reporting a bushfire at South Ballina in an isolated area south of the caravan park. The fire was burning fiercely in thick melaleuca — banksia scrub. A bulldozer that was called in to create a firebreak had to be called off, when it almost sank in soft peat and sand, in case it got trapped by the fire.

Reinforcements came from Alstonville and Newrybar Brigades. Measures were put in place to ensure that the caravan parks and houses were protected but the soft sandy terrain would not allow the four-wheeled drive fire trucks to get at the heart of the fire. Containment lines were prepared

and patrolled throughout the night and fire trucks positioned to protect houses and agricultural buildings. Locals said there had been no uncontrolled fires in the area since 1971 and that was evident in the depth of leaf litter and tree debris.

The next day a water-bomber and a helicopter were called in to assist and they did a great job. But it was the volunteer firefighters who were the front-line troops in the protection of life and property. More crews were sent in from the Far North Coast team under the direction of Fire Control and Group Officers. The photo above shows a firefighter containing the fierce fire threatening property at Keith Hall.

To prepare your plan for this coming fire season, go to: <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area/planning-for-bush-fire-protection>

**Wardell Progress Association Meeting
Wednesday 14 December at 7.00 pm.**

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**Pre-Christmas Meeting - Please bring a
plate. Kerry Turpin 0414 899 247**

The Highway is Coming!

On 2 November, Mr Matthew Wilkinson, the Project Manager of Pacific Complete and his staff held an information seminar in the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall. They advised residents of the area on the plans and progress of the development of the new Pacific Highway between Woodburn and Ballina. Work is proceeding now. The project team is already on site and there is to be increasing construction activity all around. Information about the work and about the conservation plans for affected wildlife are all available at:

www.rms.nsw.gov.au/pacific



Eyes down - Look in!

Conservation of history

On the right you will see a photograph of a canoe tree that grows in a farm paddock on the outskirts of Wardell. Probably before the arrival of European settlers in the area, the bark was cut and removed to make a canoe.

According to the Australian Museum, canoes were made using ground-edged hatchets and wooden mallets. The bark was softened with fire and folded and tied at both ends with plant-fibre. Today, distinctive scars can be seen on trees from which bark was removed for canoe construction. These are known as 'canoe trees'.

The Project Manager of Pacific Complete is well aware of this and other historical sites that will be protected during construction of the Pacific Highway upgrade.



Australian & NSW Government Notice September 2016

The Ballina Koala Plan and the Koala Management Plan have been approved, allowing work to start in the area known as section 10 – between the Richmond River at Broadwater and Coolgardie Road. Work started in September 2016 and for the next three months, weather permitting, will include:

- Installing environmental controls, dust gauges and nest boxes
- Undertaking building condition surveys
- Installing boundary fencing
- Minor clearing for utilities diversion and ground investigations
- Relocating electricity and communications utilities
- Removing residential structures
- Planting koala food trees
- Collaring trees to encourage koalas to relocate to suitable habitat off the project alignment
- Predator control activities
- Monitoring groundwater
- Undertaking threatened flora translocation
- Upgrading local intersections at Carlisle Street and the Pacific Highway and at Carlisle Street and Bath Street, Wardell.
- Establishing the project site compound

Work hours

Work will be carried out from 7am to 6pm on weekdays and on Saturdays from 8am to 5pm. You will be notified in advance if any work needs to be done outside these times.

For more information

If you have any questions, please call the Woolgoolga to Ballina project toll free line on 1800 778 900 dial 1, email W2B@pacificcomplete.com.au or visit the project website rms.nsw.gov.au/w2b.



Wardell Public School Fete 2016



All the
fun of
the
fair!

Clockwise from above: 'King of the Castle' Wardell Public School Principal, David Owen, makes sure that the youthful vitality of users of the jumping castle is exercised safely. Ron Rosolen, the Senior Deputy Captain of the Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service, which had attended five bush fires that week, encourages potential future recruits. The three children of Russell and Lora Krampe, Lydia, George and Ned, would sign up now if they could! On the right, Superwoman student Kate Wilcox stands ready to save the day!

Building on the Floodplain

At a Ballina Shire Council C Ward meeting on 10 November, the President of Wardell & District Progress Association, Pat Carney, requested that C Ward councillors investigate amending the floodplain management plan.

This plan requires rural blocks to be filled to a substantial level before a building can be constructed and adds considerable cost to housing.

If amended along the lines of Wardell, it would be possible to build on rural blocks with houses on stilts with 50 Sq m of garage on ground level.

Light up the Hall

Russell Krampe is once again organising a team of volunteers to dress the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall with Christmas lights. The lights will be switched on after a sausage sizzle and carols by our School Choir. To be part of this happy occasion, be at the hall about 7.00 pm on Thursday 1 December.





You will find in the Wardell Public School mural, stories to fit the ages — from cane fires to mullet runs. The painting includes one of the many soldiers who never returned home from war: one of the first aboriginal occupiers of the land who is reaching out to guide students of today. There is a crow that is symbolic of ancient wisdom and sacred law and a pelican that typifies balance of thought and emotions.

There is the big scrub that was here long before us. There is the bridge that joins the two parts of our community and forms an essential link in the main artery of the East Coast of Australia. There are fish in the river and fields of cane to ensure we will never starve and there are woods and houses to give us shelter. Then to top it all — there is a full moon — symbolic of peace and serenity.



Sam Wortelhock

Sam Wortelhock the Artist who has Painted the Mural at Wardell Public School

I am a professional artist and have been painting for twenty-five years. Most of my painting started because I wanted to help children reconcile with their community. I wanted white kids and aboriginal kids to appreciate aboriginal culture. I have done a lot of painting at Cabbage Tree Island School, Ballina Public School and many other schools.

With this painting at Wardell Public School I want to get as much historical reference as I can in the mural but I want it to be in simultaneous time and space so not all the village will be there. I want some of the village as part of the painting but also I want the big scrub there. I want the local children included but I also want the servicemen that never came home from war and most important for me, I want the aboriginal history included.

Thanks to Brian Roberts, whom I met spontaneously the other day on the wharf, there will be the mullet run happening in the river. It should give people something to think about! That's the idea! That is why I paint. I like to bring the wilderness into the city or to re-connect and make people think or demystify culture.

Sam Wortelhock

<http://www.breakawayart.com.au>

Pimlico News

Telephone 0439 488 510

The 2016 sugar cane harvest should have come to a close by the time the Bugle goes to print. Apart from small patch up jobs on the ratoon paddocks, the planting has been completed and all crops are looking for a drink, as are the water tanks of those still drinking Mother Nature's drop.

It is now local knowledge that Pimlico Ladies no longer

has the numbers and wherewithal to continue to look after the Pimlico Hall and Ballina Shire Council has gone to the local people to gauge public feeling about the hall via a survey form. All survey forms should be back to Council by now and the fate of the Pimlico Hall is in the hands of Ballina Shire Council.

Pimlico Ladies Christmas Hoi is on Monday 5 December. There will be many prizes in both the lucky door and the raffles as well as a home-made afternoon tea. Come and have a fun afternoon.

The Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation wishes everyone a Merry Christmas, safe travels over the holidays and the very best for 2017.

Jill Lock

A letter to the editor:

Dear Mike

Whilst reading Phill Read's autobiographical article (in Blackwall Bugle #43) I noticed a couple of inaccuracies. He stated, "The propellant in the smoke grenade was hexachlorophene gas. Adolf Hitler could tell you more about that !" Hexachlorophene is an inorganic compound often used in soaps & toothpaste as an anti-bacterial agent. I think Phill means hexachloroethane. Smoke grenades, called hexachloroethane (HCE) smoke or HC smoke, utilise a mixture containing roughly equal parts of HCE and **zinc oxide** and approximately 6% granular **aluminium**. These smokes are toxic, which is attributed to the production of **zinc chloride** ($ZnCl_2$)" As far as Adolf Hitler is concerned, the gas used to kill undesirables was carbon monoxide and then, more famously, zyklon B (pellets when exposed to air formed cyanide gas)

Also, the assertion that, "these grenades had been banned worldwide for 25 years", is also inaccurate. The same basic formula is still manufactured today.

Cheers, **Mick Sly**

Note: Thank you Mick! It was an oral presentation by Phil and the editor might have got it wrong!

Commemorative Grants Team
Commemorations Branch
Department of Veterans' Affairs

To: Wardell & District Progress Association

To the Wardell and District Progress Association

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is pleased to confirm the receipt of documents that have been submitted in order to acquit the grant of \$2,622 awarded under the Government's 'Saluting Their Service Commemorations Program.' Thank you for commemorating the service and sacrifice of Australia's servicemen and women through your participation in the Saluting Their Service Commemorations Program.

Yours sincerely
Amanda Wilson
9 November 2016



OO Heaven Event



Jo and Bob

Joanne Gannon of Wardell who has been travelling the world, recently returned to Australia from America where she studied film making and digital illustration at the California State University.

She is holding a presentation of two of her films at the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall on 3 Dec 2016. The first film is about graffiti art and is open to all. The second film is about prostitution and is rated for viewers aged 15 years and above. There will be a professional child worker to care for those aged under 15 years during the screening of the second film.

2 pm	Film 1 "Spray It Global"
3.30 pm	Graffiti Demonstration
6.30 pm	Film 2 "I Am Me"
8 pm	Question and Answer
9 pm	Whores and Saints Disco

Tickets at the door — \$10 single or \$20 family.
Telephone 0411 308 870 for details.
<oo.heaven@yahoo.com>

A Community Open Day was held at The Wardell Preschool

on 29 November
Everyone was welcome and I hope you were there because it was a lot of fun and the Preschool is such an important part of our community.



A Dog's Tale.

My name is Fred and I'm a dog. That's me on the right. My bloke Mike arrived here in Wardell about twelve years ago from a cattle farm in Kyogle. He brought his two working dogs with him - Ella, a cattle dog, and Paddy a Kelpie. Ella was quite old and died soon after she came here. Then Mike befriended a little Shih Tzu cross bitch called 'Fries' whom he met on an Empire Vale cane farm. He adopted her and brought her home as company for Paddy. They travelled everywhere on Mike's ute. But then Paddy died when he turned fifteen and Fries was left all alone. So Mike started looking for another mate for Fries; he checked the papers and spoke with Animal Rights and Rescue and Pet Rescue and put the word around.



Paddy and Fries



But then one day Mike was driving along the Old Bagotville Road to visit a cane farm when, about two kilometres from the nearest civilisation, he saw me. I was hiding behind some grass beneath a wattle bush because I was lonely and scared. But he saw me and he stopped and knelt in the dust and talked to me until I was no longer afraid. Then he picked me up and took me home.

Next day he took me to the Ballina Veterinary Hospital where they scanned me but I had no microchip. The Vet said I was a Foxy cross about five months old. I ended up in the Ballina Shire Council Ranger's Pound. I was only a little bloke and could squeeze through the bars so the Ranger put me in a cat cage where I was all alone for three weeks.

Nobody came to claim me so Mike was allowed to adopt me after I was fixed up by the vet and registered with Council. So now I belong to a family and Fries is my best friend. I love riding around town in the ute and going for long walks and helping Fries to dig Mike's garden!

Parting company

If ever you need to part company with a pet because of changes in your personal circumstances, contact your veterinarian or speak with Trish of Northern Rivers Animal Services
Telephone 6681 1860
She might well be able to find a caring new home for your companion.



Albert Biggs

Cane Farmer - Community Leader -
Family Man
Speaking with Mike Rushby

I was born on 3 May 1932 in Claremont Private Hospital in Ballina the only child of Ettie and Jack Biggs. My birth weight was under two pounds fully clothed and I was about the length of a loaf of bread. Reportedly I spent some of my early days being carried around in the bosom of a very buxom nurse who kept me warm while Mum was asleep!

My Grandfather and Grandmother both came out from England with my father's Uncle Bill and his wife on a sailing clipper the *Thermopile*. They landed at Sydney and came up here and settled at Teven. Dad was the third eldest boy after Dick and Toby. He also had a younger brother and three sisters. Dad was named Harold but was always known as Jack.



My grandparents shared the farm with my Grandfather's brother Bill and his wife but found that the farm, which was cane and dairy, would not support two families. So Bill and his family moved to Proserpine in Queensland. Grandfather worked the farm at Teven until he passed away. He was a member of Tintenbar Shire Council and later became President of the Shire Council. When he died, my other Grandfather took over as Shire President.

Dad, when he grew up had a farm at Keith Hall. He married Ettie Robins whose father was Duncan Albert Robins and her mother Ada Ellis of Empire Vale.

My primary school years were spent at a little one-teacher school on the banks of the Richmond River at Pimlico. I spent a lot of time swimming in the river in the school's shark-proof enclosure and can remember a blue certificate hanging on my bedroom wall that said, "This is to certify that Albert Biggs has this day swum a distance of 440 yards." I was eight years old. I went there for six years and then on to Ballina High School which was a seven miles each way journey on the bicycle every school day. I was still at school when the war ended and as a member of the School Cadets, I carried a .303 rifle over my shoulder on my bike to school every Friday for drill practice.

I had a cousin Robin Young living in Ballina and I would sometimes go to the Saturday matinee with him to watch cowboy movies. I have a friend Barry Thompson who was the son of the School Teacher that was at Pimlico when I was born. He was a little bit older than me but we have been friends now for eighty-four years. I just rang him to wish him a happy birthday and I hope to go down and see him for his next birthday.

That first year I left school, we had a tractor but didn't then have any implements to go with it so we were still using draft horses to cultivate the cane. But once we got the tractor, for the first year we used the same old cane planter. But then we got a whole stalk planter in which we loaded the whole stalk which was then automatically cut into set lengths. Then the trash planters came in which saved stripping. From there we went onto billet cutting where the harvesters cut the sets and the farmer just put it straight into the ground. The planter was one of the best inventions ever together with the Toft Loader and Mechanical Harvester. They saved so much time and labour.

We acquired more implements and more powerful tractors to do the work. The tractors got bigger and bigger as we went on.

One year I was a bit restless and decided to go down to Sydney and pick up a job. In Sydney I stayed with my Aunty and Uncle who had a grocer's shop in Hurstville. My future wife Jean's father and mother ran a fruit and vegetable store nearby. They were both good businesses and they used to deliver. Jean's Dad had a block on which he grew his own vegetables and he built up a reputation for fresh vegetables. They had lived at Collarenebri until a fire burnt down their home when Jean was only five years old and they had to move to Sydney and settled at Hurstville in the same area as my Aunty.

My Aunt decided that I couldn't go out and around Sydney without someone to go with. "The Green Grocer has some daughters!" my Aunty said. When I met Jean she wasn't too keen to go out with me. But once we got to know one another, the romance started. But it became a long distance romance because I was back here on the farm. Maybe once a year I would go down to Sydney and once a year Jean would come up here.

Jean and I got married in April 1955 and lived on the next door farm. She always jokingly says that she married me to get out of Sydney which she hated. Our son was born in July 1956 and in 1959 our daughter was born.

Our daughter now has three girls and our son who is still on the farm, has one daughter. So we have two children, four grandchildren and now five great grand children.

When I came back home to work on the farm, we had bought the property next door from Bill Sneesby. For a few years I went cane cutting. That was a job that I never ever liked but I did it until I was able to make the farms work. Dad and I worked the farms between us and cane cutters would come in at harvest time. Cane farming, like all industries has evolved over the years from working with horses and cutting cane by hand, to the planting and harvesting of cane with modern machinery. Jean and I have lived and worked through all these phases.

There was an Italian migrant gang of cane cutters and other gangs I knew and worked with were led by Gordon Harvey, Bill Sneesby, Neil Miller, George Giggins, Eric Perry, Charlie Handley and Neil Jones.

The haulers who hauled the cut cane to the mill included: Clarrie Garrett, Kelvin Kaye, Bob Middleton, Jimmy Weller, Frank Wunch, George Giggins and Roy Garrett.

The Fernance's were our next door neighbours, then basically we had Roy Creighton, Bill Sneesby and the Rodgers families as other neighbours. The Curran's used to be down on the river bank and going back a long way was Doug Pickering until he sold out, Then there was Page Simpson, Joe Jackson, Walter Leeson, the Hancocks and the Garret family, That was our small community and we worked together and cooperated not only at harvest time with cane fires and by helping out with equipment. We formed a group to help one another so we became dependant upon the support of one another during the season. We would be out every night or every second night burning cane.

In the early days, there was this chap who had come back from the war. Unfortunately he had been wounded. He had been shot in the head whilst serving in Greece. He returned home and came cane-cutting. He had bought himself an old Harley-Davidson motor bike which he used to ride from Pimlico back to Lismore at weekends. But, for some unknown reason, he was likely to get up in the middle of the night on a Thursday and kick his motorbike

over to see that it would work ready to take him home on a Friday night. Of course he would wake everybody up in the barracks! You know what a racket an old Harley Davidson would make! He didn't quite realise what he was doing!

I used to be a volunteer with the Ambulance Service in Ballina. We had to do our first aid courses and we would help out the Station Officer.

My Dad had been involved in the Cane Growers Association as had his father-in-law. They were both Presidents of the Richmond River Cane Growers Association. Dad was President for about twenty-one years. Later on when I retired and passed the farm over to my son, I got involved in the running of the Bowling Club. I was on the board of the bowling club for about thirteen years and Chairman for about two and a half. I used to do a lot of umpiring for many years and then took up coaching bowls for a number of years. There are still players around that I coached.



My wife Jean

I have stopped playing bowls because of my back injury. I was coaching for a while but I couldn't get down to deliver the bowl. Every time I went down I would catch my back. Then I was at a loose end and one of the chaps that played croquet said, "Come and have a go!" So yes I went and had a go and found that there was a little bit more to the game than I thought. So eventually I took up playing croquet full time as a sport. There are two clubs in Ballina and we play in the Cherry

Street club which is the sub-club of the Bowling Club. There are two shared lawns and we have a third lawn up behind the bowling club. Like my Mother and Father before me, I am a life member of the Ballina Bowling Club. My Grandfather would have been very close to being a foundation member of the club which was started up by Heugh Gibson. In a roundabout way we are related to the Gibsons because Dad's brother and Dad's sister married Gibsons.

My daughter is Jenny Bordin. Her husband's family came out from Italy. His father was a cane-cutter and also worked on the banana farms. Then he and his brothers got into trawlers and he was a prawn trawler fisherman for many years working out of Ballina. Jenny's husband Gary was a bricklayer at the power stations at Eraring between Newcastle and Sydney. His job was to line the chimney stacks with fire bricks. He decided then that that was enough. He came back and bought himself a small boat and went spanner-crab fishing.

Our son Ken, after leaving school went to work for Telecom in Brisbane and The Gold Coast. He didn't like working up there so much and after a few years came back home to help me on the farm. He and his wife Zita are still there.

Some of the organisations I have belonged to include:

- 10 years as an Honorary Ambulance Bearer.
- 2 years in the CMF or Citizen Military Force.
- 5 years as a Scout Master.
- Secretary of a cane harvesting Co-op
- 13 years on the Board of Ballina Bowling Club with 2½ years as President.

For 72 years I lived and worked at Pimlico, then 12 years ago Jean and I moved to St Andrews Village in Ballina where we are happily retired.

Albert Biggs

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