

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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Wardell Sporting Recreation Club

**We wish all residents and visitors to the Blackwall Area
A happy, healthy and prosperous New Year**

Telephone 6683 4437

Local identity Ken Threlfo produced the ideal New Year's present in the form of a spectacular fireworks show on behalf of the Wardell Sporting Recreation Club. In the photo on the right, the lights of the club can be seen just above the P of 'Photo'.

What a year it has been, with a farewell to the Wardell Uniting Church and a farewell to the Wardell Community Centre! We didn't know how much we would miss them until they were gone! The excellent walkways and cycle paths and the Wardell jetty have been in good use for over a year now. Watch this space - there is more good news to come as Ballina Shire Council turns its attention to the board-walk and the East Wardell boat ramp.

John Felsch, whose story appears on the back page, said recently, "I have very many friends, lots of acquaintances and there are some with whom I disagree, but I have no enemies and everyone is welcome at my door!" - a good philosophy for the New Year.



Fireworks: Ken Threlfo

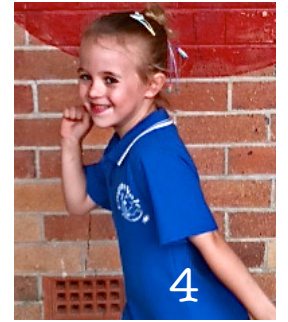


Photo: Blackwall Bugle



Empire Vale Public School Celebrating Our Success

When it comes to reaching student outcomes, we are right on target.
Here are a few student highlights of our 2012 academic year.



1. Carley - finalist in the North Coast National junior cooking category.

2. Jason M - State Debating Silver Medalist.

3. Kirsty GJ, Jade T, Laila S, Jesse B, and Jason M - made it into the 'Mathletics' Hall of Fame.

4. Zarli C - broke running records at our combined Small School's Carnival.

5. Kindergarten students - all took part in the '100 Nights of Reading Programme'.

6. Laila S - finalist in the North Coast National Bundjalung Art Prize.

7. Jesse B and Amanda M - Small Schools Spelling B champions.



8. Victoria P - broke the discus and shot put records at our combined Small Schools Carnival.

9. Kirsty GJ, Abbey GJ, Bindi H, and Tom H - competitors in the State PP5 swimming relay.

10. Ming Xia B and Bindi H - Finalists in the North Coast National photography prize.



11. Jessica H - finalist in the North Coast National - Tursa Art Prize.

12. Some of our Senior Soccer Team which was ranked 8th in the State of NSW.

Karen Rantissi

Knit n' Knat



Every Thursday
9 am -12 noon
Wardell Memorial Hall



Knit for charity and enjoy
the companionship of others.

Wardell Knit n' Knat was formed in 2004 to knit and crochet squares for rugs, beanies and scarves for community organizations within Ballina Shire, including all nursing homes, the Salvation Army and the Lismore and Ballina Hospitals. We support East Ballina Lions Cub, which distributes to the Ballina Soup Kitchen, the homeless and the women's refuge.

A supply of wool, knitting needles and pattern books is on hand for beginners for these projects. Donations of any 8ply 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 Digger's Room of the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall.

The group will be hosting the **Big Morning Tea** for Cancer in May 2013

For further information contact Rose Leeson 66 834 277.

Jimmy Jimmy's Sawmill at East Wardell

I have another sad and awful event to record, the consequences of which has occurred in the sawmill, with which I am connected. A young man of the name of Thomas Clifton has lost his life under circumstances the most horrible, his avocation at the time of the accident was engine-driver, and in the performance of his work, it happened he was assisting to put a belt on a wheel, somehow, the belt broke and one end remained on the shaft, the other part, revolving round and round, striking Clifton two or three times and he, holding his arm up to protect his face, the belt seized him by it and in an instant drew him onto the shaft, and whirled him round several times finally wrenching the arm from the body, when he dropped on the ground lifeless, and terribly mangled.

The deceased was supposed to be 28 years of age, He had never known father or mother, and had been brought up among strangers, parentless, friendless; and with no human ties upon this earth, he has passed away from among us, and now is acquainted with the great secret of the hereafter, which the greatest philosophers and scientists have been unable to fathom.

Extract from *The diary of Ernest John Miller* (sawyer) written on 5 April 1882. Jenny Taylor.



Sawmill owned by James E. James (Jimmy Jimmy), Wardell

Photograph from the N.C. Hewitt Collection, courtesy of The Richmond River Historical Society (No. 823A)

Pimlico News

Telephone 6683 4384

There was a big crowd of happy supporters for the final charity afternoon of 2012 held by the Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation. Margaret Paul of Ballina won the two main prizes of baskets of goodies donated by members. The West Ballina Chemist generously donates prizes every month and their December gift was won by Lexie Stacey of Ballina. A presentation was made to Bart Henderson, our happy bus driver, who has looked after us all year. Nance Walsh was welcomed back after a stay in hospital. She is a regular supporter, having attended our first meeting in 1950.

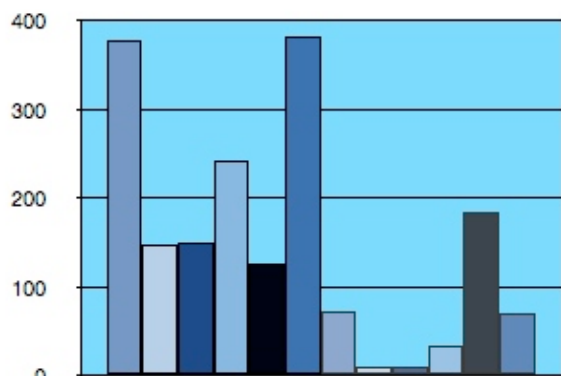
Our well-stocked stall was strongly supported, thanks to all who contributed. Jill Lock's pickles are always well received. Following a delicious afternoon tea of home cooking provided by PLCO members, the Annual General Meeting was held. Gwenda Shinner was re-elected as President for the 10th year. Jill Lock was re-elected as Treasurer for the 6th year. Elaine Coleman is off sick but hopes to resume her duties as elected Secretary early this new year. Olive Creighton previously held the position of Secretary for forty years and she and her daughter Colleen have taken over the duties until Elaine returns.

Betty Fernance, who has been publicity Officer since the PLCO was formed in 1950 had a visitor over Christmas - her Grandson Brent Walsh who lives and works in China.

The next meeting of the PLCO is to be held on the first Monday in February 2013 at 1.30 pm. for the benefit of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. Everyone is welcome.

Betty Fernance.

Unofficial rainfall Wardell 2012



Total Rain 1806 mm

Jan - 377	Feb - 147	Mar - 149
Apr - 243	May - 127	Jun - 382
Jul - 73	Aug - 10	Sep - 10
Oct - 33	Nov - 185	Dec - 70

Sue's Kitchen



Nasi Goreng _ Indonesian Fried Rice

Ingredients:

½ red onion
2 cloves garlic
1 or 2 small red chillis (seeded)
1 shallot
red cabbage approx. 1 cup
2 poached eggs
2 cups cooked rice
2 tblspn Kecap Manis
1 tblspn tomato sauce
salt & pepper to taste
approx. 1 tblspn olive oil

Method:

Cut up finely - onion, shallot, chilli, and cabbage & crush garlic cloves.
Poach eggs and set aside.
Heat frying pan, add olive oil.
Put in shallot, chilli & garlic and stir for approx. 2 mins then add chopped cabbage.
Cook for another 2 minutes.
Add cooked rice, stir in other ingredients and then add Kecap Manis and tomato sauce. Stir well.
Chop up poached eggs and add to other ingredients. Season as desired.
Left over lamb, pork or bacon may be used but only use a small amount.
Enjoy.

A Balinese family was holidaying with my family during the festive season and I closely observed the mother cooking this delicious dish.

Kim Toft Silk Art raffle

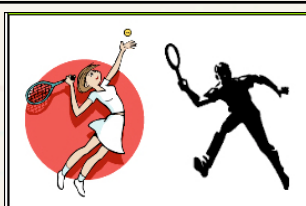
Suzie Melcchior, the Secretary of the Empire Vale Public School P&C Association, is pleased to inform us that the winner of the raffle for the Kim Toft silk art painting is Bill Bugg of Empire Vale.

Sue Felsch enjoys the view from her verandah across historic Bingal Creek to the Richmond River. This calm, deep pool is where many young people have learnt to swim over the years. But be warned, Sue's neighbour caught a young bull shark there just on Christmas.



And there is more! In pioneer days, the bodies of the dead were rowed up Bingal Creek to be buried at the Wardell Cemetery. It has been reported that at night the ghostly corpse of a woman in a coffin floats up and down beneath the old Bingal Bridge!

BINGAL CREEK



Wardell Tennis Club

Pat Carney 6683 4360
Waunita Lindsay 6683 4141

The Wardell tennis club will resume in early February.

Like most sporting bodies, we need more members and in particular junior members. The club offers tennis to most abilities and the fees are probably the cheapest around.

Tennis is played on either Monday or Tuesday night beginning at 6.30 pm and finishing around 9.00 pm. Anyone interested should please turn up on a Monday night at 6.30 pm.

During the holidays, Wardell club junior Jessica Tickle performed extremely well in the Lismore and Ballina summer competitions.

On a sad note our oldest member Charlie Hannah, aged 95, passed away in early December. Charlie played tennis in Wardell for many years and still played at 92.

Tennis can be a game for life - so come along and enjoy!

Pat Carney

The Wardell Sporting Recreation Club. Telephone 6683 4437

We can now proudly announce the winners of the Club's golf championships; they are Al Sheather for A Grade and Bob Taylor for B Grade. The competition was held over two weekends comprising of 3 times 18 holes. It was a good, tight and close competition and all who participated had a fantastic time.

The Club had a new event this year - the New Year's Eve fireworks which were set off between 8:30-9:00 pm and were spectacular. It was a fantastic afternoon and evening with everyone attending enjoying themselves immensely.

Our first "Seafood and Roast" night of 2013 will happen on Saturday 9th March starting around 6:00pm. The cost remains the same at: \$30:00 for adults; \$18:00 for high school students; \$10:00 for primary school students - preschoolers eat for free. Please telephone the Club on 6683 4437 for further information.

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 for meals on Friday nights, meals are served between 6:00-8:00 pm and the Club is open from 3:00 pm Monday to Friday and on Saturday afternoons. Golf is played Sunday mornings.

Kerry Storton

Over the past few weeks, Wardell Brigade of the RFS has sent several teams to fight the fires at Coonabarabran.

A whole tree is consumed by the fierce fire on the first night of the Wardell deployment. By morning the tree, one of many thousands, is reduced to a pile of intensely hot ashes. If the ashes in anyway threaten unburnt country, they have to be cooled and made safe before the wind can disperse them. Below, Captain Ray Collyer and Joel Clarke, who is a mechanic with Ballina Shire Council when not fighting fires, black-out the remains of a tree.

Other members of the Wardell Brigade that served at Coonabarabran this month included Victor Bridges, Andy Collins, Paul Gillett, Jo Heber, Karl Hearn, Michael Heugh, Kylie Trueman, Rex Farrell, Rex Kemp, Rodney Cameron, Ron Rosolen and Mike Rushby.

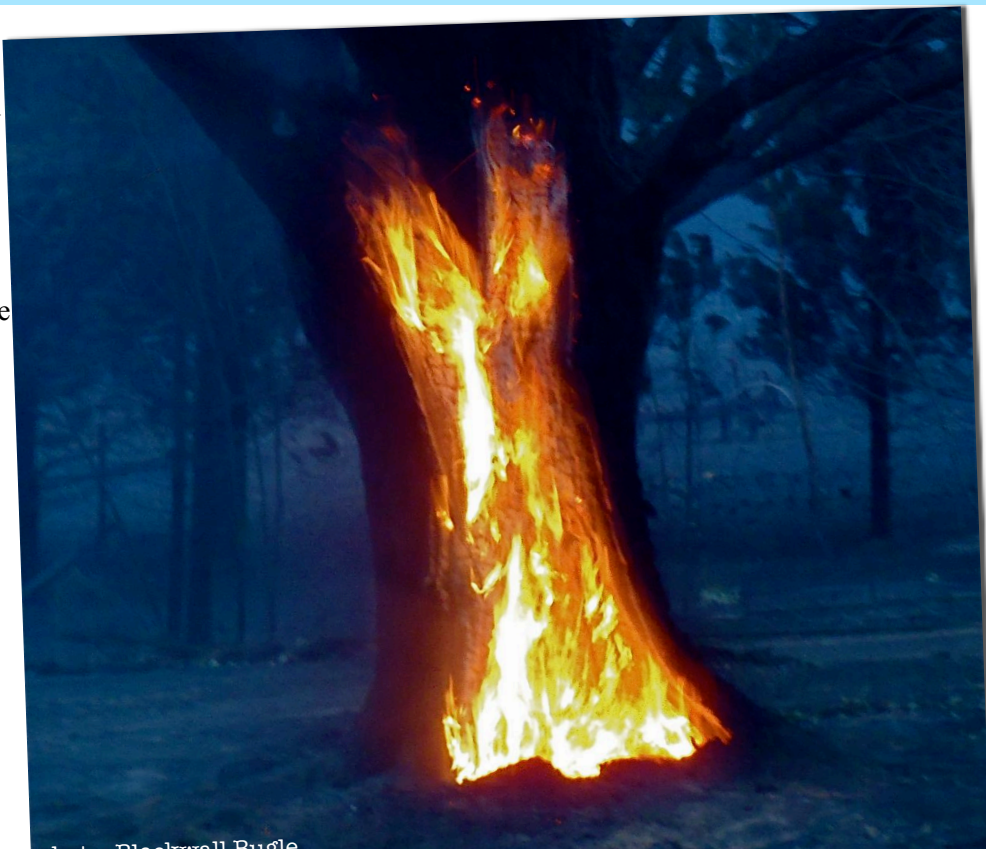


photo: Blackwall Bugle



The Warrumbungle National Park fire destroyed at least 33 homes and burnt over 500,000 hectares before being brought under control with a 100 km front. *The Australian* reported that on Monday 14 January, 770 firefighters and 208 trucks were deployed to tackle the fire in conditions of extreme heat. Wardell Brigade was among the first teams in action. The utter devastation, the destroyed property and the dead live-stock and wildlife, reminded us all of the need for vigilance and preparation during the fire season.

Before anyone can participate as a firefighter in such operations, they need to be fully trained. Volunteers are always welcome. They can come along to the monthly meetings held at the Wardell Fire Station on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.00 pm, or telephone 0437 895 572 for further information.



Australian
Red Cross

Branch President
Ruth Partridge 6628 5751
Meetings
1st Wednesday of the month
Wardell Memorial Hall
9.30 a.m.
New members always welcome.



World Day of Prayer on Friday
1st March 2013 at Wardell
Catholic Church, beginning at
9.30am. The theme 'I was a
stranger and you welcomed
me' - a beautiful theme. Cuppa
in the hall beside the Church
after the ceremony. All most
welcome. **Sister Larelle.**

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My father was the Captain of the Volunteer Defence Force for the Northern Rivers. Had the Japanese invaded, he would have given the orders for everything to be destroyed. I have his Volunteer Defence Medal.

When I went to Ballina High School I was elected class prefect and I joined the Cadet Corps at the age of 13 and rose through the ranks to just below under-officer. We used to travel around for the Carney Cup to Kyogle, Ballina and Mullumbimby. I made life-long friends from those inter-school visits. I had a fairly good run through school, then my Dad got me a job with the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney. I was fifteen and a half.

I sold Ford Tractors for Dick Trevan for one year from 1967 to 68. They were a new line and they were good tractors. I sold 16 in a year. Then I become the aqua ammonia contractor for fertilizer. I took on something I never should have touched. I burnt my lungs out. Breathing it every day and every night. Fourteen years I fertilized I reckon two thirds of the sugarcane industry of this river from 1968 to 1982.

Then, CSR sold a milk farm and sugar plantation here. That was about ten farms and two house blocks. I acquired the two blocks and four of the farms and my cousin Graham Ellis acquired the other blocks.

My then wife Rhonda (nee Strong) and I kicked off the macadamia industry at Alstonville. I had a five-acre horse paddock at Rous behind the school. My Dad and I went to George Shultz at the Glass-House Mountains to buy three hundred grafted macadamia trees. You know they are still the three most popular brands of macadamia. The trees are still there. The Department of Agriculture was helping me push macadamias. I was going to buy all the land around my five-acre block at Rous. But the farms didn't come on the market like I thought they would. But the farms around here at Keith Hall came on the market so I bought cane farms. With my wife Rhonda, I became the biggest single producer of sugar cane in 1979-80-81 on the three rivers. The Dory family produced more, but there were ten of them.

I had 25 years of marriage with Rhonda Strong of the big milk farm family of Alstonville. I joined the Ballina Municipal Council in 1971 and I never looked back. After six or seven years I

got a State executive position with the local government association. I was non political. I strived for everybody. I had a great run in local government with twelve years on the executive. Then I lost my seat in Ballina by 150 votes. That put me out of the executive for four years '87 to '91. Then I came back for another sixteen years – a total of thirty-two and a half years – that's on the bar of my medal.

When that economic depression came on here in 1981 following England's walk out of the Commonwealth market, instead of sitting around here getting home support, I went to Sydney and looked for a job. I walked the streets.

I walked the streets for two weeks. They told me I would never work again at forty-five. "You are just for the trash-heap mate! Take the dole and go and enjoy the rest of your life!" Not for me! Not after cutting sugarcane for seventeen years. I couldn't back down so I kept looking. I tried to sell non-alcoholic wines but it didn't work. I applied for a job with a pâté manufacturing industry - oh boy that would have been a minefield. I would have poisoned everybody! Pretty delicate work – making pâté! Eventually I found a bloke sleeping in a limousine, which was a big old white 'mudguard' Ford. He was an Indian man named Rodney. His feet were hanging out into Pitt Street and he was sleeping across the car's front bench seat. I touched him on the knee and he jumped up. I asked, "How do you get a job like this?" and he said, "Mate, up at the Sebel Townhouse they are looking for a driver. One crashed last night and wrote a car off and he's in hospital. They overworked him and he went through a red light."

I had a nice new Mercedes that I bought just before we felt the pinch. I got the job. I went to work at the Sebel Townhouse. For my first job I got 80 bucks driving Joni Mitchell four nights at the Opera House. I'd drive her down, go and listen to her show and then bring her back to the Sebel Townhouse. The Sebel Townhouse was voted the 'Hotel of the Month' every month, it never failed. That became my second home. The boss made a stretch limousine whilst I was there and he let me drive it at weekends. I was making a thousand dollars gross and half was mine. I was getting five hundred dollars a week for driving for five days and then another five hundred for driving the stretch two and a half days over the weekend.

I never turned a job back in all my chauffeur days. Dolly Parton became a

client and we became great friends. I've got photos in my albums of all these stars and directors and entertainers signing autographs for other people. The General Manager Russell Simpson had built the first stretched limousine. He said, "We are making so much money out of this car." So I asked him if I could get another stretched limousine built. He agreed. I rang up my bank manager and he lent me forty-five thousand dollars to buy a car and get it stretched.

The company sold out to Bob Ansett so I started my own company 'John Felsch Stretch Limousines' with two loyal drivers and me. It was very tough on your own in Sydney. It's dog eat dog and I learnt how to eat dogs! I worked Murray Tours and I did all the tourists from the visiting cruise ships. I worked the top twenty restaurants and the top ten hotels in Sydney and that kept me busy. Amongst my regular clients were Englebert Humperdinck, Duran Duran, Stevie Nicks, Stevie Wonder and the Two Ronnies. Dizzie Gillespie and I were friends for years and a particular friend was the American Ambassador Bill Lathe and his wife.

I was tied up with local government in Sydney. I helped start up the Water Advisory Council for the State. I helped start up the Tourist Advisory Council for the State, I got into the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, I was in the Water Safety Council – which is where I met my partner Therese – she happened to be the chairperson when I joined from local government.

I kept my local government career going and rarely missed a monthly meeting in Ballina. I would travel up overnight by VIP bus then jump on my tractor and help work the farm with the two boys. I did that regularly. Sometimes I flew if I had to get to an urgent meeting. I was flying in once and from the air saw my cane burning. It had been struck by lightening and was out of season and not covered by insurance. I lost two or three years production. It did cripple me a bit, but I got over it.

This is the most beautiful part of the world. My thanks go to God that my grandfather chose this area. And I thank God that my father and mother stayed here. That house that my father built my mother, my mother gave it to her youngest son and I gave it to my youngest son and he will give it to his youngest son. And I built this house! I love my family, love my friends and I love this place.

John Felsch

A Man For All Seasons

John Felsch

speaks with Mike Rushby

John Felsch, in his early days, was a battler but never more so than now as his once robust health is under threat. He is supported by a loving family and by many friends from all walks of life - farmers, business entrepreneurs, film stars, local government officers, diplomats and old school friends. "*A man for all seasons*" is a play by Robert Bolt. The title rests easily on the shoulders of John Felsch.



My paternal great grandparents Justus Felsch and Eve Westerweller arrived in Ulmarra from Germany in 1858. They married in Grafton in 1859. They had five sons and four daughters. One of their sons, George Felsch, worked for the Davis brothers as the skipper of the logging tug "Vesta" which was based in Coraki and brought the cedar logs down to the mills. George married Elizabeth Johnson and fathered three sons and two daughters but he died at the age of 39 of acute appendicitis. My father, Justus James Felsch, was the second of the three sons and he was only seven years old when his father died. His mother was destitute when the money was cut off. In those days there was no social security to support widows with families. To keep a roof over her head she took in washing in Bridge Street in Coraki and scrubbed the wooden floors of the Coraki Council Chambers every Saturday. She later married plumber Chris McGregor.

My Dad went through most of his life thinking he was named Justice and not Justus. At eleven years of age, he was 'given' to the family of Jim Bailey who lived at Codrington the other side of Coraki. He was made to milk cows morning and night before and after school. When he reached the age of fourteen, his headmaster said he had a very promising future and should go for a bursary to go on to college. But Dad didn't understand any of that and he ran away to Pimlico and swam over to Camerons Island (now called Pimlico Island) to join up with the nephew of the family he had been 'given' to. He never went back to school and lived on the island for four years clearing the island to grow sugar cane and run cattle.

He got to cross the river to Pimlico and the old Leeson and Rodgers family liked him. They took pity on him and got him into cane hauling

when he was eighteen years old. Justus brought his brother George down to join him. They formed a team with four big Clydesdale horses. Dad was always a horseman. I love horses too. He was over on the Pimlico side of the river for a number of years and then came over to the Keith Hall side of the river hauling cane. He was the best cane hauler there was. He hauled one twelve-week season at Keith Hall on his own. He was so strong he could carry those twelve-foot tramlines on his own, day after day, through the mud! He would row to and fro across the river morning and night.

Dad fell in love with my mother Amy Elizabeth Ellis who was the daughter of the man up Keith Hall Lane - Arthur Ellis. Arthur had come to Casino with his mother from Scotland and later moved to the lower Richmond. My mother Amy was born at Meaney's Lane in 1900. They moved to German Creek in 1913. My mother's brother James was the father of my cousin Graham Ellis. James Ellis was in The Light Horse before the war and I have his carved whip handle and his big silver Light Horse cup.

Mum was 26 years old when she and Justus married in 1926. They had two sons, Arthur James Felsch and me John Burns Felsch. Arthur became a Councillor on Tintenbar Shire Council from 1965 to 1974 including a period as Deputy President of the Shire in 1970-71. I was born John Burns Felsch on 26 June 1937 in the Claremont Hospital in Ballina. My second name is Burns after Robbie Burns the poet. Two years later the hospital burnt down. Before I tell you my story, I will say that I have three loving and supportive children, David, Roslyn and Adrian, each of whom is married with two children of their own.

The O'Keefe' property was half way down German Creek Lane. The O'Keefe family - father, mother, daughter and son lived in that house. They had a worker named John Raymond Brown whom they sacked. When they went to church one Sunday morning, he came with an axe and violently murdered stable-boy Patrick Gillick as he was putting the horse away. Then on the verandah he murdered Daniel O'Keefe and Mrs O'Keefe. He then fled and they caught him in Glen Innes two weeks later. *(He was found guilty at his trial, sentenced to death and hanged at Grafton on 11 December 1906.)*

That house and farm were then available to share farming and my Grandfather moved from East Wardell down to the O'Keefe house. That was where his other daughters were born. They called it 'German Creek' in those days but when the war started in 1914 they changed it to "Empire Vale."

I didn't have a very happy time as a kid. I was shy, would you believe? I stuttered. I think my father stuttered and I think I stuttered badly in front of him. I loved my father and I loved my mother. But I was scared of them because they belted me. I was naughty! My brother was six years older than me and I always picked the fight and he got into trouble over it. We are close now, I would kill for my brother, but as kids we were far apart. Six years is a big gap between kids. But, looking back, my brother was the best thing in my life.

My brother became a Methodist lay preacher. He would preach at any church that would give him a pulpit.

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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.