

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

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Wardell walkabout

Those of us who attend the bi-monthly meetings of the Wardell & District Progress Association will be well aware of the importance placed upon the construction of a boardwalk to join the eastern and western halves of the village divided by the Pacific Highway. True, there is a footpath from the Fire Station to the convent, but it is only for pedestrians. Other users with wheels — school children on bicycles, mothers with prams, kids with scooters or skate-boards and invalids in wheel chairs, have either had to risk crossing the highway or face the busy traffic of Bridge Drive where there is no footpath. Fortunately, the persistence of the Progress Association's President Pat Carney and the cooperation of Ballina Shire Council has resulted in the construction of a boardwalk leading from Bath Street under the Pacific Highway to the Wardell jetty. What a great achievement for all of us!



Carlisle Street has always been a busy thoroughfare with traffic from the hinterland to join the Pacific Highway and for locals to travel to Alstonville and Lismore. Now, with increasing traffic associated with the development of the new highway, the need for a safe pavement for pedestrians became clearly evident.

The *Blackwall Bugle* arrived on scene just as a concrete mixer came to deliver its load and, for the Ballina Shire Council construction crew, it was all hands on deck until the load of wet slurry was transformed into a smooth gleaming pavement. The construction crew work very well as a team and it seems they enjoy working here because everyone they meet appreciates what they do. Byron Street footpath is now underway!

Once again, it must be recognised that Pat Carney pulls above his weight to get things done in this place and he is ably assisted by Deputies John Stead and Paola Rickard, Secretary Kerry Turpin and Treasurer Ronda Thomas. Ballina Shire Mayor Cr David Wright attends almost all meetings of the Progress Association and our Councillors join us whenever they can. General Manager Paul Hickey is a frequent visitor so Wardell has a very good working relationship with Ballina Shire Council. We hope to see you at the next Progress Meeting.



RMS Artist's impression of the new Pacific Highway bridge over the Richmond River looking North from Broadwater towards Laws Point. The Federal Member for Page, Kevin Hogan, named Lendlease as the preferred contractor to deliver the new one-kilometre-long bridge.

Wardell and District Progress Association

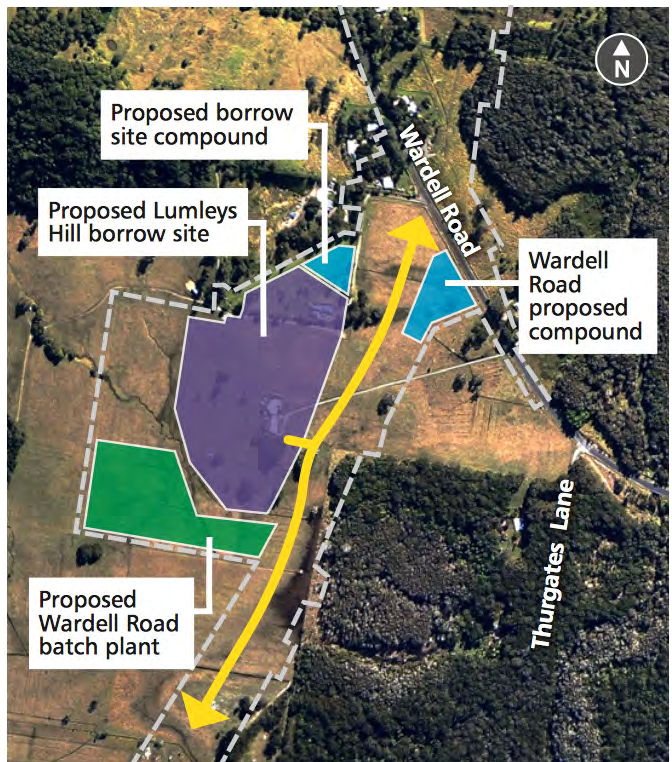
Meetings of the Progress Association that are held bi-monthly at the hall, are the place to be in order to get the latest information on the local area, the new highway developments and the activities and plans of Ballina Shire Council for this area. You can listen to the visiting experts, raise your own questions and help your community.

At the last meeting, the Senior Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Officer for Pacific Complete, Debbie Brown, gave the meeting an update on the highway upgrade from north of Broadwater to Ballina. The Mayor of Ballina Shire, Cr David Wright is almost always in attendance at meetings of the Progress Association and very willing to answer questions raised by community members.

Meetings are never dull. The opinions of residents are always welcome. Matters raised at the last meeting included: construction of a public accessible toilet, possible rear to kerb parking at the cafe/post office, the cleaning up of town and the possible upgrading of the hall kitchen. A new constitution was adopted, as recommended by NSW Fair Trading.

There was discussion on land-fill requirements for building sites. The WPA agreed to write a letter to Council seeking approval for building on rural blocks being allowed on stilts to above the current flood level and that this approval be extended to all parts of Wardell.

The next meeting of the Progress Association will be held at the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 19 April 2017.



The proposed site compound, batch plant and borrow site at Lumley's Hill, Wardell. Work has already commenced and there might be speed restrictions on Wardell Road for the safety of motorists and wildlife.

Yoga Classes at the Wardell War Memorial Hall



Tuesdays 9.00 am. Thursdays at 6.00 pm.
Judy Collins is a Personal Trainer and Hatha Yoga teacher who has been teaching in Australia for the past 10 years. Hatha practices are designed to align and calm your body, mind and spirit.

Please contact Judy Collins
Mobile: 0404 994 702



Australian
Red Cross

Branch President Ros Walsh
Meetings 1st Wednesday of the
month at 5.30 p.m.
Wardell & District War
Memorial Hall
New members always welcome.
Telephone 6683 4111

On Wednesday 12 April at 5.30 pm, the Wardell Branch of the Australian Red Cross is to hold an education session on the life-saving defibrillator at the Wardell Hall. Lisa Skinner will be the instructor. There is no charge for members of the public to learn to use the defibrillator or to update their skills.

A movie night is to be held on Monday 8 May at the Ballina Cinema. "Going In Style" is a comedy film with Morgan Freeman, Michael Caine and Anne Margaret.



These ground orchids grow just by the side of the road in Bath Street within inches of the bitumen. They can be seen in many other places in Wardell. They are protected by law and cannot be removed from the wild. In any case they are fungus dependent throughout their life cycle and seldom survive transplantation. Just enjoy their natural beauty.

Drinks will be at 6.30 pm followed by the movie at 7 pm. Tickets are \$20 at the Wardell Post Office, or on the night. All proceeds will go to the Red Cross.

The Red Cross is having a parade and display of dresses and bridesmaid dresses in late June. Ros is looking for wedding dresses to borrow for the parade "*Brides Through The Ages*". Models will be provided. If gowns are too frail to wear, they can be for display only, along with details of the weddings. It will be a great afternoon with entertainment and the parade, followed by afternoon tea. If anyone would lend us a dress, all care will be taken of the gowns.

A Country and Western Night is planned for the Wardell Sports Club on Saturday 29 July starting at 7 pm.

For further details, phone Ros Walsh 66834111.



Wardell
Tennis Club
Pat Carney 6683 4360
Bill Davis 6683 4306

Social
Tennis

Social tennis is played at the Wardell courts on Monday evenings at 6.30 pm. Play begins around 6.30pm and finishes at about 8.30 for the small cost of \$5. All ages are WELCOME!



Putting their money where their heart is!

Graeme Antonioli's ancestors first came to Australia with the survivors of the ill fated expedition by the French Nobleman, the Marquis de Ray. Graeme and his wife Narelle were living on a rural property at Caniaba when Narelle, who was working in Wardell twenty years ago, fell in love with the beautiful riverside fishing village. Graeme, who is a very keen fisherman, needed little persuasion to move here.

In 2003 they bought a large block on the riverbank in Richmond Street. The block was empty bar for a horse that grazed there. They first built a shed and then their house. Then they subdivided but, due to flood height restrictions, they were unable to sell the sub-division because of the ever increasing costs which deterred potential buyers.

However Graeme, who has been in the earthworks business all his working life, built up the height of the land himself and engaged Metricon Homes to build a brand new set of units. They were eagerly sought after as rental property.

Graham and Narelle then decided to build another set of units on the land adjacent to the first ones.

However, in the mean time, the minimum fill level had risen once again, creating additional costs. After much deliberation and frustration, and with the support of local friends, the project went ahead and

has finally been completed. They now own their own home and four units each with three bedrooms and a study. The units have been fully let.

Several local craftsmen have been employed by the Antoniollis, including Stone Mason Joel Towner who designed and built a finely crafted rock wall in front of the new units.

This development of quality units has set the pace for future growth within Wardell. The

property is ideally situated within walking distance of village shops, the river, churches, pre-school and primary school. Patches Beach and the South Pacific Ocean are just fifteen minutes away and Ballina and Alstonville less than half an hour's drive.

We believe that with the completion of the Pacific Highway by-pass, Wardell will become one of the jewels in the crown of Ballina Shire. Graeme and Narelle Antonioli have set a new standard adding charm, character and style to the village they love.

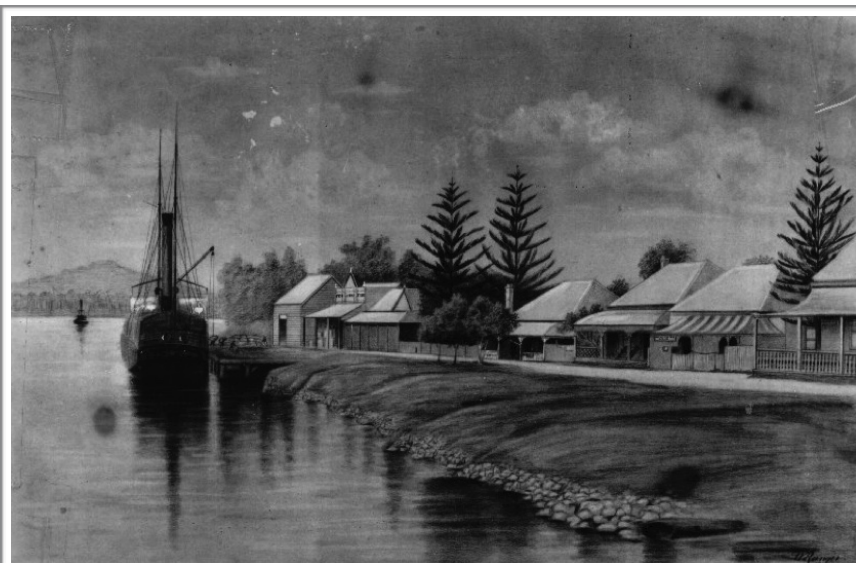


A little bit of History.
From the memoirs of
AW Ford.

Painting
 "The Waterfront at Wardell in 1900"
 by W. Ranger.

Donated by Mrs C.T. Lumley.

The 'SS Tomki' loading sugar from Rous Mill. Buildings left to right - Mill Shed, Bartlett's Store, Doctor's residence, Australian Joint Stock Bank, Post Office, Police Station.



Bartlett's Store was a landmark in Wardell from my earliest recollections. It stood on the riverside a couple of hundred yards downstream from the present bridge. The present roadway separated it from the riverbank. Directly in front of the store was the wharf onto which the ocean steamers discharged the stores for the shop. The goods were taken across the road into the bulk store. Anything from a needle to an anchor was sold there. The weekly orders were delivered around the countryside by spring carts: usually a weekly delivery.

A canal was dug from Bingal Creek to a slaughterhouse a quarter mile upstream. It was about twenty foot wide and two chains long through the mangroves to the higher land on which the slaughterhouse was built. It enabled the butchers' boats to load their meat directly into the boat for delivery as far as Burns Point down river, and past Swan Bay upstream. The butchers' boats were specially built of cedar for their purpose, and used skulls not paddles. My father rowed them for some time prior to going to the South African war. He said a chap named Jack McLean, who was later a World's Championship skulls contender, learned to row in a butcher's boat from Bingal Creek. At that time the roads were very poor, and most farm houses were situated on the banks of the river, thus the river was the main thoroughfare, and butchers, bakers, store-keepers and hawkers and dealers plied the stream in their various trades. My father mentioned that on the upstream journey a diversion was made up the Broadwater to Bagotville where Bagot Bros. Sawmill was in operation.

When I started school in 1912 bullock teams hauled logs from Meerschaum Vale to Bingal Creek where a log dump was situated down stream from the bridge. Bagot Bros. drogher loaded them there for transport to the mill at Fishery Creek Ballina. When Rous Sugar Mill was in operation, the sugar was hauled by bullock team to Wardell, to be shipped to Sydney. Later, cane from FJ Meaney's property was hauled by cane carts and shin-sticked into cane punts for transport to the CSR Mill at Broadwater from the same spot.

During my youth, Bingal Creek was the local swimming hole. Once a week during the summer the whole of the public school took swimming lessons. There were no dressing sheds. It was boys upstream and girls downstream in the bushes to change then all in together. The whole area from the Police Station to Bingal Creek, was infested with prickly pear, growing among the tall Cyprus Pines and what scarpers we had round that area. There were quite a few headstones, many enclosed by iron railings, situated at random in the area, and possibly many more unmarked. Evidently they belonged to an era before the Wardell Cemetery came into use.

The prickly pear was a very fleshy, very green leafed variety growing in clumps, sometimes 20 ft across and 8 ft high. The fruit were a very bright reddy-purple colour when ripe and about the size of a duck egg. We used to knock them off with a stick, rub them carefully in sand to remove the prickles and eat them. They were quite pleasant to eat, but great care had to be taken to get rid of all the prickles, as there was nothing worse than prickles in your tongue.

The hall was the venue of all social functions – dances, balls, the annual flower show, meetings, lectures, and travelling entertainments, and the weekly picture show conducted by Sidy Thomson. We had a De Dion-Bouton power plant, which roared away just behind the hall and competed, on about even terms, with the piano music which accompanied the silent pictures. Most of the seats were backless wooden forms, and many of the regulars took their own cushions and rugs in the winter.

In 1915, when I was about 10 years old, we used to send to McIlwraith's, who were then a big retail store in Sydney, for a big order. This occurred once a year before Christmas – probably when the cane cheque came — and was a great event, when the dray had to be taken to Wardell. The large crate was then slung directly from the ship to the dray then to be taken home and opened with great procedure and excitement for we kids.

AW Ford. Blackwall Historical Society

A Little Dog Bites Back!

Arthur Felsch, whose story appears on page 7, related this tale about his cane-cutting days.

There was a little fox terrier that used to sit at the roadside of the Spencer's house at East Wardell at daylight waiting for the mailman to throw out the rolled up morning paper. He would pick up the paper and take it around and place it on the back step for his master. That was his job. He loved doing it.

Arthur said that as a young cane farmer in Sneesbys Lane, the farmers used to go out and burn cane early in the morning or sometimes late in the evening. They would be standing around in a circle for a ten-minute chat before the fire. The little fox terrier, who had always turned up at a burn to chase rats and bandicoots that ran out of the fire, would also stand in the circle listening to the conversation. Vince Flood, who lived near Floods Lane, was a cranky type of bloke. He lashed out and kicked the dog in the guts. "Get out of here you mongrel!" he shouted. The dog gave a yelp and left.

The next day when the paper delivery car went past, the dog ignored his own paper but shot off down the road for about two hundred yards to where a paper was thrown out at Vinny Flood's gate. He picked up the Flood's paper and ran back to dive under his own house where he tore the paper to shreds. Henry Spencer, for whom Arthur worked as a rotary hoe operator, confirmed the story. That was 65 years ago. Arthur believed it to be true then and still believes it to be true 65 years on.

A New Roof for St Barnabas

Land was granted in Richmond Street Wardell for a church building in 1873. A timber church was constructed in 1879, then St Barnabas Anglican Church was erected in memory of those who died in service, or were killed in

action during World War I.

The foundation stone reads:-

"To the Glory of God and in Honor of The Empire's Defenders This Foundation Stone Was Laid on August 20th 1919 By The Right Rev Cecil Henry Druitt DD Bishop of Grafton." The church was dedicated on Armistice Day 1920.



The Church Warden, now Church

Councillor, Fay Daley, says that the old roof slats were falling off, and the roof had to be recovered. The small but dedicated church congregation raised the funds to build a toilet block and tea room a few years ago. Now they have given new life to the church, which is fast approaching its centenary. They raised the funds to pay for the new roof through their Woodburn Op Shop, and market days at Evans Head.

Deacon Kathy Ridd works three days a week for St Barnabas, and for Coraki and Evans Head churches on other days. Morning Service is at 7.30 am on 2nd & 4th Sundays. On the first Friday of the month the very popular Messy Church for children is held from 4.30 to 6.30 pm.

For all enquiries, telephone 02 6682 5226



Shirley and Arthur Felsch Community Leaders, Evangelists, and Cane Farmers

Arthur's Dad Jim was reared in Coraki and came to work on Pimlico Island with Duncan Cameron to build his house. Then he got to working in cane at Pimlico, and then came over the river hauling cane. He then met Amy and they got married. After a couple of years they were able to buy a fifty-acre farm at Keith Hall from Albert Biggs' father. Jim was the local commander of The Volunteer Defence Corps. They used to train one night a week. There was a fear of a Japanese invasion and the members from Empire Vale were trained to "man the terraces". The Rous Mill V.D.C. would man defence positions on the Blackwall Range to try and hold things until the army could get up here. They had meetings about evacuation, the use of ferries, the movement of cattle and how quickly they could get away. They had machine guns, rifles, thousands of rounds of ammunition and boxes of hand grenades in Jim's garage. Arthur used to play with the weapons and could strip and reassemble Bren guns quick time. They had Thompson machine guns and Owen guns. So when Arthur went to school at Ballina he was very keen to be in the cadets and was the first cadet officer in the Ballina Cadets. Then he went on to join the AMF for a couple of years when he was nineteen and twenty.

Arthur was born on 5 July 1931, the son of Jim & Amy Felsch of Keith Hall. He attended Empire Vale Public School and Ballina High School. He decided to leave school in April of 1947 and work with his father on the cane farm at Keith Hall and Sneesbys Lane. He received ten shillings and his keep until the age of 21. He and his father worked both properties with draught horses until 1952 when they purchased a little grey Ferguson tractor. With horses they could work an acre a day, with the Fergie they could work eight acres a day. Arthur also worked in cane cutting gangs each year except when he turned 19 years of age. He then signed a contract with the Keith Hall farmers to haul the cane for that season, to the riverside derrick, using a 3 horse team. For this he was paid three shillings and two pence per ton. The cane gang from whom he hauled was made up of 10 Polish migrants.

At the age of 20, Arthur was elected by the farmers of Sneesbys Lane to be their representative on the Richmond

River Cane Growers Association. In 1954, along with Sam Causley of the Clarence River, he represented the NSW Cane Growers at the annual conference in Brisbane.

True to his word, when Arthur turned 21, his father transferred to him the farm at Sneesbys Lane. It still carried a mortgage of two hundred and eighty-two pounds.

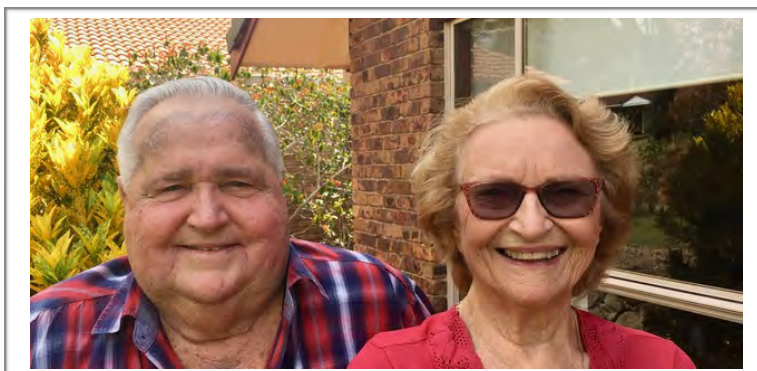
Shirley McCarthy was born in January 1933 to Dick & Vera McCarthy of Manildra. She was educated at several small country schools from Parkes to Dubbo, finally completing her School Certificate at Orange High. Shirley was then employed by the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney as a Junior, soon becoming a Ledger Keeper. After five years she was transferred to the Ballina Branch as Senior Ledger Keeper. Arriving at Evans Head by plane after the 1954 flood, she travelled through stinking mud covered countryside to Ballina without her luggage. It took three days for the Bank to locate the luggage.

As a committed Christian, Shirley attended the Methodist Church which was next door to Cavils' Private Hotel where she was boarding. She was appointed Youth Group Leader of a large young people's group which was attended by young people from several other Churches in Ballina. Shirley became engaged to Arthur in June that year and they were married in the Baptist Church in Orange in February 1955. Having come from the West, Shirley really enjoyed surfing and sailing on the river with the local club. In September 1954 they were able to purchase a 40 acre

cane farm near the Empire Vale School from Alan Spencer. Their son Peter was born in March 1956 and their daughter Janine in May 1960. Both attended the Empire Vale Public School and Ballina High.

In December 1965, Arthur was elected to represent C Riding on Tintenbar Shire Council and later re-elected for an additional two terms.

He received a Long Service Certificate in 1974. (42 years ago). This hangs on his study wall. During his time on Council, he served one year as Deputy President and six years on the Flood Mitigation Council. Those years saw the construction of Browns Creek car park and pumping station and associated levy banks to protect the City of Lismore. From 1965 to 1974 he represented Tintenbar Shire on The Summerland Tourist Authority including three years as Chairman. Jim Tully was a very capable Tourist Officer and we saw the Motor Rail Service introduced and also Kirklands Bus licence for a Ballina to Sydney service. Arthur also represented the Shire on the Richmond Tweed Regional Development Committee. He was Deputy Chairman to Gordon Blair then elected twice as chairman until the government changed the system and appointed all



He did not seek re-election to the new amalgamated Council with Ballina because, as a member of the NSW Cane Growers Council, he was very involved in the "life and death" struggle for the survival of the sugar industry. The C.S.R. Company had given notice that they were leaving NSW. After many meetings and negotiations with the Government department and banks, Arthur became a foundation board member of The NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative. He remembers signing a cheque for over \$1,000,000 for the Stamp Duty on the purchase of the Mills. From the month of purchase there was a miraculous turn around in the industry's prospects.

Arthur was re-elected as a Richmond River representative for eighteen years. When Bill Sneesby retired, the Board elected Arthur Deputy Chairman. Arthur was a member of the three man team that negotiated an alliance to form a joint venture with Dick Honan of Manildra called "Sunshine Sugar". This joint venture constructed the Sugar Refinery at Harwood Mill with distribution centres in Sydney and Melbourne. The cane grower's \$15,000,000 investment was repaid in three seasons.

Arthur's grandparents were the first to be married in the Empire Vale Methodist Church about 1890. Arthur used to attend that church as a boy and it was in that church that he first began preaching.

After about 3 years of marriage, Arthur and Shirley accepted the position of Methodist Pastors of the Mid Richmond Circuit which included Churches in Coraki, Woodburn, Evans Head and Broadwater. This involved preaching 3 times on Sunday and 6 or 7 school scripture classes per week. Shirley was the leader of 2 Ladies Church Aids. A highlight of their Ministry was the concert and fair held in the Woodburn hall. Many artists from Ballina Church performed to a packed house compared by Walter Ellis. Shirley was also involved with the Christian Women's Convention International serving for 10 years as Chief Hostess. This involved managing annual week-end and day conventions for hundreds of women.

Arthur and Shirley were both involved in leading Beach Missions at Evans Head, Brunswick Heads and Ballina over a period of approximately 20 years. In more recent years they were members of the Mission and Education Committee of Lismore Uniting Church Presbytery. They organised special day events for four years.

Shirley headed up a committee organising the Ballina Uniting Church Family Camps for 14 years. These were held mainly at Mount Tamborine in Queensland where 70 to 100 people travelled from Ballina for an inspiring and fun week-end on the Queen's Birthday each year.

Always very supportive of all school activities, Shirley also negotiated successfully for Richmond Christian College to locate and purchase their present site on Gallans Road just North of Ballina. She also conducted the Ballina Methodist Church library of books, videos, and DVDs (especially for children) every week for many years. Both served as Elders of Ballina Uniting Church, and as interim Pastors of the Lismore Methodist Church in 2013-14. Shirley loved her tennis and travelled to Alstonville each Wednesday in order

to play in the ladies' competition. They enjoyed holidays at Binna Burra Lodge where Shirley learned to abseil at the age of 62. They both enjoyed "treading the trails" for many miles of bush walking around the Lamington National Park.

Businesses that Arthur and Shirley established were (1) Summerland Air Conditioning which became Sumacair. (2) Richmond Farm Equipment in Ballina, Casino and Maclean. (3) Maclean Motor Cycles, (Yamaha) and Summerland Suzuki at Casino. (4) Casino Mini Storage.

At a local government conference in Nowra in 1972, Arthur heard an address on cooperatives as a business structure. The next year the NSW Sugar Industry resolved quickly to introduce mechanical harvesting because there were no longer sufficient numbers of men wanting to be cane cutters. At a meeting of the Lower Empire Vale farmers he proposed the formation of a harvesting Co-operative to purchase equipment and operate it for the 1974 season. This proved to be a very successful operation to this day. He also proposed the same venture to the Upper Empire Vale farmers who couldn't come to any agreement. Arthur then offered to be an independent contractor to harvest their crop. This was agreed, and Arthur and Shirley operated this business until 1981 when they sold it to Garry Neilsen.

Pat O'Connor was the Chairman of the LEVH Co-op with Arthur the Secretary and Noel Carr the Manager. The C.S.R. Company had to do major modifications to Broadwater Mill to receive cane from road transport as well as river barges or punts, as they were known.

Shirley and Arthur's son Peter had completed The Higher School Certificate at this stage and commenced a C.S.R. Cadetship in Mechanical Engineering at Pyrmont. He loved it until, after about six weeks, the union went on strike and all the apprentices (including Peter) were not allowed to spend time on their studies but were required to stand all day beside the silent machines. He drove his old Chrysler home on three consecutive week-ends, asking his parents permission to leave and drive a haul-out for their harvester operated by John Flick. They agreed. After some years, John MacDonald followed as harvester operator until the sale to Neilson. Peter went on to do Construction Engineering at St. Lucia University in Brisbane and later an MBA in the University of La Verne in California.

Shirley and Peter's daughter Janine and her husband live in Margaret River in Western Australia. Janine is Chief Financial Officer of an Import - Export company and Craig is the Manager of a winery there.

As supporters of Reverend Fred Nile MLC and Mrs Elaine Nile, Arthur and Shirley manned polling booths at each election and in 2001, Arthur stood for the Federal seat of Page as a Christian Democratic Party candidate. He didn't win but he and Shirley are winners in life — now retired and living at Wollongbar.

Shirley and Arthur Felsch

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