

THE BLACK WALL BUGLE

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We Were the Champions!

Dennis Magnay was born at Kyogle in 1934, raised at Collins Creek 'At the bottom of the Helmet' and went to school at Horseshoe Creek. When his dad enlisted in World War II, the family moved to Ballina. Dennis later also joined the army and became an instructor in unarmed combat and gymnastics. He had started boxing as a 15 year old and continued his passion for the sport in the army.

On leaving the forces, Dennis got married, had two boys and was looking for somewhere to open a youth club. The RSL was building a new club down by the river and they gave the use of their old building, where the Ballina Post Office now stands, to the youth club. Dennis was the first 'Superintendent of Instruction' for jujitsu, gymnastics and boxing at the club.

A Wardell plumber Kenny Adams had opened a youth club in the Wardell War Memorial Hall. Dennis, who then lived with his family at South Ballina, started instructing boxing and gymnastics at the hall in 1980 and such was the quality of the youth of Wardell and the great enthusiasm of the parents and supporters, that the boxing team became known throughout the eastern states of Australia.

In the Wardell hall Dennis used a training ring with padded canvas on the floor and four steel corner posts. The posts had pins that slotted into holes in the floor. The pinholes are still there. Guy ropes secured the posts to the wall and just one ring rope was used for training. For competitions a full size boxing ring

was erected. The top boxers, Dennis says, were probably Gavin and Wayne Lane, Noel Mathews, Glen Carney and Rodney Leeson. But, he says, there were so many good boxers in the district that people would come for miles to pack the hall and cheer on the combatants. At that time the population of Wardell was about four hundred people. One of the smallest towns had the strongest club in New South Wales.

The Wardell club was the first boxing club to break away from the Amateur Boxing Association and form the New South Wales Boxing League which then joined

with Queensland to form League Boxing Incorporated. Dennis Magnay is the President of that and it all started here in Wardell.

Dennis took the Wardell team to Queensland many times, to Sydney and to far west New South Wales. Several of the boys would bring their girl friends along to training and they would join in. But they were disappointed that girls were not permitted to box in New South Wales. So Dennis took them to Southport in Queensland where female boxers were allowed to compete. Since 2008, female boxing has been recognised in New South Wales as a legitimate sport.



Far North Coast Champions - Wardell 19 September 1991
Noel Mathews, Richard Donnelly, Michael Donnelly,
Craig Ison with Trainer Dennis Magnay

Boxing in Ballina.

Near where the Big Prawn now stands, there was once a large hangar that was owned by the father of one of Dennis' boxers. Dennis never charged a fee for his training because he said many of the kids that came to him for training had no money at all. So the offer of free use of the hangar was something he couldn't refuse. It was ideal. He could set up a ring and training equipment and he didn't have to pack it away at the end of the day.

Cabbage Tree Island.

Dennis really enjoyed coaching his boxers at Cabbage Tree Island. He started in an old hall that was later condemned. He coached under a couple of high-rise houses, then in an old tin shed and he never charged for boxing training. The boys repaid him with enthusiasm and dedication and the Cabbage Tree Island boxers went on to win many a championship.



Darryl Leeson



Dennis Magnay - August 2014

Dennis continued the Wardell Boxing Club for ten years until his young boxers grew up and moved on to get work. The era came to an end. He said that he would never forget the welcome he was given in Wardell and the support he was given by the community in general and by Allen Lumley, the President of the Hall Committee, in particular. Dennis continues to train boxers in Ballina and is the National President of the Global Amateur Boxing Organisation, Australia. He has been a trainer and a sports administrator for 52 years.

A couple of years ago he almost died. He was refereeing a boxing match when he collapsed in the ring onto the canvas. He had had a heart attack. Fortunately one of the boxers was a trained medic who quickly discarded his gloves and gave Dennis cardiac massage until a defibrillator was brought in and Dennis was zapped. He woke up in hospital. They gave him heart surgery and fitted him with a permanent defibrillator which will kick in automatically should he ever need it. Looking at him now, you would think he could pull on the gloves and do a few rounds with no trouble at all.

Dennis takes a very active part in the community. He is the founder of WATER, which stands for Water Access to Encourage Recreation. So if you are planning any new development that might restrict the access of the public to the rivers, lakes and beaches to which they are accustomed, you might be hearing from Dennis Magnay the boxing and unarmed combat instructor.

Mike Rushby

Boat Cruise on the Richmond Princess

New one-way trips offered!

Saturday 25 October

8.30 am - 3.00 pm (approx.)

Enjoy our river and find out some of its history.

8.30 am Ballina to Wardell

12.30 pm Wardell to Ballina

Return Trip \$55. with lunch provided

One-way Trip \$40. with coffee/tea & scones

Book with Sue at Wardell Post Office
or at The Ballina Visitor Information Centre
or telephone Pat Carney at 6683 4360

Sponsored by the Wardell Progress Association
and Blackwall Historical Society.

*Those travelling one way need to organise
their trip home.*



....and the
winner is....
**Poppy
Larry**

Larry Endres and his Chef Prue Gray created and presented ten flavours of ice cream at the 2014 Royal Queensland Show - the Ekka and they won ten medals! They were up against very experienced competition including Aldi, Woolworths and major ice-cream makers from Queensland and New South Wales. Winning

one gold medal would have ensured entry to next year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. Larry and Prue won six gold and four silver medals including the highest scoring ice cream in the whole show. You can taste it here in Wardell!



Prue Gray

The story on the next page is by Keith Mullens, pictured here at school standing far right.



Meerschaum Vale Public School 1946

STUDENTS at Meerschaum Vale Public School in 1946 are, from left, back row, Jean Collyer, Ella Payne, Carmen White, Elvie Reedman, Ann Lumley; 3rd row, Brian White, Len Coombes, Colin Roder, Graham Dellett, Bert Lumley, Keith Mullins; seated, Peter Kelly, Avis Reedman, Lorna Jacobsen, Allene Hoskins, Barbara Dellett, Wendy Kelly, Russell Clifford, Adrian Dellett; front, Stephen Gahan, Allan Stamp, Bill Davis, Graham Clifford, Vincent Gahan, Kevin Molyneux. The photo was taken by the headmaster at the time, Clarrie Goldthorpe and submitted by Bert Lumley of Ballina.

The Northern Star



It's in the Bank

Keith Mullens speaks with Mike Rushby.

"How things have changed and keep on changing. I went to put a cheque into the St George Bank in Lismore the other day and I didn't have to go into the bank. You go to the ATM and put your credit card in and the ATM tells you which buttons to press. Then a slot opens, you put the cheque in and it comes up on the screen, "Is this what you want to do?" You say, "Yes!" The machine asks, "Do you want a receipt?" You say, "Yes!" It spits out a piece of paper with a photo of the cheque and the new balance of your account! I didn't have to speak with anyone.

"The Queensland National Bank opened in Wardell in the new brick building in 1922. It had formerly operated from a wooden building on the waterfront before that building burnt down. It ceased full-time operation as a bank in 1949 but continued as an agency of the Ballina branch of The National Bank operating three days a week. I started work in December 1951 as a fifteen-year old. My Uncle Arthur Payne used to play bowls with Langley Loveday who was the manager of the bank in Ballina and who came out to Wardell three days a week. My Uncle Arthur said to me, "You go out to see Langley tomorrow and he'll get you a job." He always called him Langley. So next day I waltzed into the bank as a fifteen-year old and said, "Hello Langley! My Uncle Arthur said" He interrupted me and said, "**Mr** Loveday to you son!" Since that day I have always been respectful by calling people Mister!

"When I started in Ballina I was known as The Junior Clerk. At the start of the day I would go and get the mail then make sure that the blotting paper out front was clean and the inkwells were filled. I would call everybody Mister or Sir! The manager, Mr Loveday and I would come out to Wardell and spend the morning here and on Fridays we would go to Broadwater. Mr Loveday lived in the Bank Manager's house in Oak Street and he drove a Ford Pilot car. Coming out from Ballina with the cash, I had to sit in the back seat with a pistol. I don't know who was going to use the pistol – but it was there. I don't really know if I sat in the back seat as an escort to the cash or because that was considered to be my place in the world.

"On one occasion on the old road near the Coolgardie

turn-off, the manager decided we should have some pistol practice. So we got out of the car and he tried to fire the pistol but it would not work. I got back in the car. The manager was a bit cranky with the pistol so when he got in he said, "I knew the bloody thing wouldn't work!" Then BANG! It went off! Fortunately the shot went out of the window. Sixty years ago and I still remember that!

"Many kids joined banks in those days. It was considered that if you were leaving school at fifteen, you joined a bank or the railway or the Post Office. I worked at the Wardell branch for a couple of years and moved on. At the time the Wardell Branch closed, the staff working there were the manager Langley Loveday, the accountant Jim Tippett and the teller who was a bloke called Vaughan. He wasn't a local and stayed at the hotel. Jacqueline Stewart was the only girl working there. Her family had a cane farm at Sneesbys Lane.

"All accounts were hand written in ledgers 10 cm thick. Jim Tippett the accountant became my friend, but threats were made that if you made too many mistakes adding up the ledgers, you would be kept back after work and made to add up columns of the phone book! There were then no computers or adding machines. All calculations were done using mental arithmetic. I can still add things up in pounds shillings and pence.

"Out of my wage of £6 per week (\$12), I used to pay £1.10.0 board per week in Ballina (\$3.00) and I saved something like a pound or one pound ten and blew the rest. I think our wages went up every year.

"There were three banks in Ballina then – The National, The Commonwealth and the Commercial. They all had between five and eight or nine staff. Once a day the three 'kids' from the banks would meet and swap over the cheques from the other banks. Once a week the tellers would have to go through their notes and take out what they called 'mutes' which were notes showing signs of wear. Once a week I would take them down to the Commonwealth Bank and swap them over for new ones. I would march up and down River Street with a leather bag in my hand and everybody knew what it was but nobody ever got robbed in those days. I was in the banking business for about twenty years."



The bank building is now a private residence but the interior remains unchanged.

A dog named 'Reg'

A friendly dog named 'Reg' always turned up at Pimlico hall every hoy afternoon and we would give him little titbits which he always enjoyed. He wasn't there at the last afternoon. I missed him because I always patted him and talked to him whilst slipping him the odd piece of sandwich or cake. He always showed his appreciation with a wag of his tail.

I found out he had gone to that doggy heaven in the sky. I was sad. He is buried in a grave near the hall. I will visit that grave whenever I am nearby. We all miss Reg!

Betty Fernance



Edwin Wilson and Trevor Monti

Two men with much in common! Both grew up on Wardell farms. Both were raised in tough circumstances. They share a love of the land and its trees and animals - especially the birds. They are both family men.

When Trevor, as a teenager, started work and began to save to buy his first farm, he worked for Edwin's uncle Jack 'Peenah' Wilson derricking cane at Walsh's Lane, East Wardell. Trevor and his family now own a farm and quarry at Bagotville and several farms at Empire Vale.

Edwin Wilson, son of Tidge Wilson, learnt to draw before he could read or write and he collected wild orchids. He left Wardell to complete his schooling at Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah. He then went on to Armidale Teachers' College and graduated in science from the University of New South Wales. He was appointed to positions at The Australian Museum and Royal Botanic Gardens.

The above photo was taken recently outside the Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, where Trevor went to experience an exhibition of paintings and poems by Edwin. Trevor joined a happy band of enthusiasts who were enlightened and entertained by Edwin as he shared stories and poems about his childhood. The exhibition runs until 12 October.

Edwin's book 'The Mullumbimby Kid' and his New Collected Poems can be viewed and downloaded at

www.edwinwilson.com.au



Telephone 6683 4437

The golf competitions are going well and there are many satisfied people as a result. (Although some are more satisfied than others!)

Membership is due again from the end of September and reminders have been sent out with a newsletter and with raffle tickets for the Melbourne Cup. Please contact the Club if you haven't received yours as yet.

Some up-coming events.

- 1) Seafood night on Saturday 11th October – prices remain the same:- \$30 adults, \$18 high school students, \$10 primary school students and pre-schoolers no charge.
- 2) The AGM will be on Sunday 19 October at the Club at 11:30 – all are welcome to attend. Nomination forms are available from the Club.
- 3) Our Kids Christmas Party is on Saturday 6 December.

The Club is open Friday evenings and for meals. We are looking at changing the menu soon, so please come in and check it out. Please consider us when you have your next function.

Kerry Storton

Pimlico News

Telephone 6683 4384

The September Hoy afternoon held by the Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation was a success and raised funds for the Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service which does great work for the community. Amongst our visitors were Narelle and Trevor Stoker who now live in Lismore but continue their support of the Wardell fire brigade which they joined in 1974.

The PLCO has now been functioning for fifty-four years with only three original members left. Visitors enjoyed their hoy and the afternoon tea provided by the members. Our variety stall did a brisk trade and the fresh fruit and vegetable stall, stacked with produce grown by Jill Lock, was very popular.

A successful garage sale was held on a very wet day but a lot of people turned up and we made good income to help pay for the upkeep and insurance of the hall which has been functioning as a community hall since 1937. Much of the credit goes towards the girls who prepared and served lunch and to President Gwenda Shinner who is famous for her scones. We are very happy to see Olive Creighton out of hospital and amongst us again.

Pimlico received 313 mm of rain in August with the heaviest fall of 160 mm on the 27th. During August last year, no rain at all fell in Pimlico.

Betty Fernance



**Australian
Red Cross**

Wardell Branch of The Australian Red Cross Celebrate their Centenary

Everyone was

welcome at the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall when the Wardell Branch of The Australian Red Cross celebrated its centenary on Saturday 6 September 2014. The hall was beautifully decorated and filled with nostalgic memorabilia. The event was staffed by members wearing period clothing and on display were nursing uniforms of the 1st World War, field hospital medical kits and photographs of local heroes long departed but never forgotten.

Amongst the many visitors were The Hon. Don Page - Minister for Local Government and Cr David Wright the Mayor of Ballina Shire.

The trees in the Wardell Memorial Park were planted on 24 June 1925 in memory of those who fell in World War 1. The park is well maintained by the Sports and Recreation Club and this year, as part of its centenary celebrations, the Wardell Branch of The Red Cross refurbished the cenotaph and added a plaque commemorating the names of locals who left the safety of this district to fight a war on the other side of the world.



We will look after you!



Errol Herbert Leeson

by Jeff Leeson

Errol Herbert Leeson (Dad) was born on 15 January 1942 at the Ballina District Hospital. He was the fourth child of Herb and Linda Leeson and his siblings were Neil, Keith, Leona and Elaine. They all lived on the family farm at Pimlico just north of Wardell.

He married Elizabeth Rose Everatt on 27 February 1965 at St Mary's Anglican Church Ballina and they resided in Ballina and then in Flatley's farm-house at Sneesbys Lane. In 1970 they moved to Pimlico Road where they built the family home and raised two sons - Jeffrey and Steven.



Errol attended Wardell Public School until he was fourteen. He boasted about how he always got the job of picking up papers and rubbish around the school yard, and he got the cane a few times.

His first job was with Aube Flick working in sugarcane, and then he worked with Ray Walsh and Russie Clifford derricking cane at Owens and Meaney's Lane wharves. In the slack they would all go down to Mildura picking grapes,

Errol and his father went into sugarcane on the family dairy

farm in 1964. The Farm - Grandma's or Auntie Linda's as it was affectionately known, was dad's pride and joy - growing not only sugarcane, but watermelons, pumpkins, grammas, cabbage, lettuce, corn, tomatoes, and spuds...loads of spuds - wheel barrows full of the buggers. Then there was his orchard which kept him busy and focused after the last cane harvest of the season. In a good way he drove us mad with his orchard - mulching, spraying, pruning, netting and picking the fruit. It was a custom that if anyone came to visit, they always left with a bag of fruit or veg.

He kept the farm in top condition and could be found on his tractor slashing the headlands and roadside and keeping the tracks in good order. He always had one eye on the weather and at any sign of rain, he would be putting in drains or clearing them with his trusty shovel.

His extended family of brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews often came to stay. Then it was full on fun times with Dad the biggest joker, stirring the kids up and teaching them how to drive a

tractor, milk cows, feed pigs, chooks and ducks or how to crush corn, make sinkers, go fishing, pick corn, collect eggs, pull fruit and dig spuds. All this provided Steven and me with the best possible adventure playground.

It is just over six years ago that Errol became hospitalized for diabetic complications. He first had his right little toe amputated. By November 2008 his lower right leg was taken off. Then by April 2010, the same happened to his lower left leg. Dad was determined to walk again and had prosthetics fitted. He was able once again to lead a normal life in getting out and about. In 2011 he had his vehicle modified to hand controls and regained his driving license which gave him independence. He was back on the open road again and he would be out all day socializing, gas-bagging and catching up on all the gossip around the district. He had a system in place with several local businesses like the Wardell Café, the BP Servo, Westower Bakery, Westower Chemist, and the Cherry Street Butcher to name a few. If they heard a horn honking away outside their shop, it would be Dad and they would pop out and serve him.

With Dad's disability, Steven built raised veggie gardens so that Dad could still get out and potter. He loved watering and he would have the sump pump with the sprinklers going all day and night. He would sit for hours in his wheelchair pushing himself around the house hanging onto his hose and watering away. We had that many hoses, nozzles and connectors we could have started a shop. Dad also loved his lawn which always had to be kept mowed to perfection on a regular basis. He would spend hours on the ride-on chugging around the house until it looked perfect. Just a few months ago he got out on the mower one day and

was chuffing around when one of his bloody legs came loose and fell off, leaving Errol stranded on the mower for an hour or more, until Steven came home and was able to get his leg back on and get him off the mower.

He was always determined and if he set his mind to do something, he would work out a way to do it. He was not happy about having to end farming and sell up and he found it very hard letting his heritage go. But he subdivided off the house block before selling the farm and he could still sit out the back of his place and look over his once prized possession which eased the loss a little.

Errol Leeson began following the Ballina Seagulls Rugby League Team back in 1958 when he was 16. He would get a lift in from Wardell with his older mates. Then, when he had his own vehicle, he would be at Clement Park every Sunday when they played.

He was a good mate with the late Barry Carney, who was a Seagulls local and representative player and would take him to matches all over the district so that he could have a beer afterwards. He also used to pick up the late Jim Bailey from Empire Vale and off they would go to watch the lads. He hardly ever missed a match until he was hospitalized for all of the 2008 season.

But his good mates, George Hoskins, Tony Bell and Neil Spencer would give him a call and keep him up to speed with the scores and all that went on the field after the games. They have since taken him all over the district these past few seasons.

Errol just loved his footy at the weekend and his Friday nights at the club where a joke and a laugh was had. He looked forward to the start of the season each and every year. He enjoyed the camaraderie and just being with the blokes and watching former sons of sons playing in the first grade. When anyone asked who his footie team was, he would always say, "Ballina Seagulls".

Our family would like to thank the Ballina Seagulls Rugby League Football Club and its members, The Men of League - Tony Bell, George Hoskins, Neil Spencer and Lewis Cook for all they did for Dad - especially these past few years. Mates forever they will be!

We would also like to thank all of his St Vincent's rehab friends: Reg Baxter, Rupert and Gayle Aspery, Ray and Joy Fitness, Narelle and Peter Snerling, John and Paula Gwynne, Alice Nyhan, Louise Prosser, Margaret Musch and Nola McMahon. These very special people were his second family. Each and every month they always got together at the Goonellabah Sports Club for lunch, a good old laugh and a catch-up. At their Christmas lunch Dad would always rock up sporting a Santa beard and hat with the familiar "Ho Ho Ho!" as he walked in the club's front door.

Big thanks are also due to the Lismore Base staff, St Vincent's Ward 4 and Day Rehab staff. The rehab staff said that St Vincent's will not be the same again as Errol kept everyone happy with his antics. They would get him to see a patient that was having a hard time dealing with losing a leg or two, or a hip or knee replacement and he would go and chat them up day after day. Jason the wardsman in Ward 4 where Errol had the pent house room 413 for all his visits there, came to the funeral. The staff at John Flynn - especially the ICU staff were great. Home Care, with Sandy, Jill and Jeff, to name a few, would be there every morning to get Dad ready for the day. Dr Rohini, the Grant Street Clinic, Priceline Chemist, the Wheel Chair Taxi Service, Community Transport and also Crowley Home Care for Mum were such a great support.

The Wardell community has been so supportive - including the Progress Association, the Hall Committee, Blackwall Historical Society, Wardell Knit 'n Knat, Wardell Take Away Café and staff. Our extended families, friends, neighbours, and Jeff and Steve's mates have all been so supportive.



Errol died on 10 July 2014. For his send-off, Errol's funeral was held at the Seagulls Rugby League Club, attended by a huge crowd that filled the grandstand. Lewis Cook gave a 'Welcome to Country' in honour of his old mate. This was followed by a warm and happy celebration of Errol's life. Then pallbearers from the football club carried Errol's coffin to the hearse. Peter Walsh said after the funeral how much fun he and Errol had going to footie in the 80s and 90s when they were playing, because Pete liked a drink after footie and Errol would get him home safe and sound. He said, "I got the heavy end of the coffin, but Rose, I loved the old bastard! All the barbecue and shed parties we had together for years whilst our kids were growing up were so wonderful!"

The hearse, with Errol on board, made a full lap of the Seagulls football stadium before departing past an honour guard to the strains of John Williamson's song "True Blue."

<http://youtu.be/ceWKrsJX9N4>

May Errol now Rest in Peace in God's Eternal Garden of Life.

Jeff Leeson

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