

THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

PO Box 53 Wardell NSW 2477

Issue # 39 December 2015

blackwall-bugle@bigpond.com

Telephone 02 6683 4561

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

**Drive Safely this Christmas.
Don't finish your journey in a helicopter!**



The Wardell Brigade of the Rural Fire Service was called out twelve times last month. Two incidents were fires but the majority were motor vehicle accidents. The occupants of several vehicles never made it home and there will be some vacant seats at Christmas tables this year.

Speeding increases the risk of being involved in a crash and of being seriously injured or killed. Speeding is **not** just driving faster than the speed limit; it is also driving too fast to suit the road, traffic,

visibility or the weather conditions.

Alcohol is absorbed quickly into the blood and travels rapidly to all parts of the body. It affects the brain's ability to make judgements and process information. It also impairs your consciousness and vision.

No amount of coffee or soft drink will sober you up – only time can do that - (*NSW Centre for Road Safety*) Not everyone is guilty of drink driving, speeding or lack of concentration. Some are innocents just going about their daily life or heading home from work.



Pacific Highway upgrade? We can't wait. This photo is of just one of the vehicles that came to a sudden stop on 'our' stretch of the highway last month. To see how things could be, click on the URL below:-
<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/northern-nsw/woolgoolga-to-ballina/video-gallery/04-new-italy-ballina-bypass.html>



This is not a scene from the Pacific Highway - old or new. This was a single vehicle roll-over accident on Patches Beach on a beautiful Spring morning. Always drive carefully wherever you are!

Our Hall

The Wardell & District War Memorial Hall has long been the centre of our universe. Wardell itself, once called Blackwall, played a major part in the development of Ballina Shire with two flourishing sawmills and another at Bagotville to handle the large volume of red cedar and other timbers that brought prosperity to the district. Complementary to this was the fishing industry and dairy farming which gave way to sugarcane plantations that employed many itinerant workers and brought new blood and social stability to the area.

The centrepiece of all this activity was the community hall. For many years the hall was known as the 'School of Arts' and housed in an old building where the Royal Hotel now stands. It flourished in the years before World War I with a well patronised library, billiard room and card rooms. But during the war, when so many young men went away to serve the nation, membership slipped. After the war there was a revival of interest in the hall and a new committee with S Johnson, W Leeson, A Coban, G Lovett, W Mitchell, P Lumley and M Reardon was formed. They decided to deconstruct the building and reassemble it in its present location retaining the excellent timber that is a feature of the hall.

Professional builders were used supported by teams of volunteers. The hall was reopened on 18 May 1927 with a fancy dress ball and 'a first class supper.' The Ballina Jazz Band supplied the music.

World War II

During World War II the hall was a training base for the VDC or Volunteer Defence Corps. It was also used as a venue for parties to farewell soldiers heading off to war and a place to welcome them home when they returned.

The Wardell Branch of the Australian Red Cross, which last year celebrated its centenary, used the hall to prepare gift parcels of necessities to forward to service personnel in prisoner of war camps overseas.

The hall was blown off its foundations by a cyclone in early 1950. During the reconstruction, the Diggers Room and the room now occupied by the Blackwall Historical Society were added to the building.

A Wardell plumber, Kenny Adams had opened a youth club in the Wardell War Memorial Hall and Dennis Magnay, who then lived with his family at South Ballina, started instructing boxing and gymnastics at the hall in 1980. 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.

The Richmond Cane Festival

Wardell Public School Principal Ian Lockton and his wife and fellow teacher Helen were instrumental in creating the Richmond River Cane Festival which ran for many years from 1969. After Ian transferred to Ballina he returned to Wardell for many years to organise and manage the annual Cane Festival. A dignitary would open the festival - in 1970 it was the Minister for Primary Industry Mr Doug Anthony. In other years, Mr Bruce Duncan the MLA for Lismore did the honours. Much of the activity was carried out at the Wardell Sport & Recreation Club for the benefit of the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall. The programme would include a Festival Princess Competition, tug-o-war open class and light-weight divisions, a 'Head of the Heath' event, a cooking competition and a demonstration of mechanical cane harvesting. Cane toads would race from the centre of a

4.5 metre circle and there would be a cane billet-throwing competition, tractor backing, lifting the heaviest bundle of cane and a fertilizer bag race.

The festival balls at the hall were very popular. In 1969 a queue formed outside Attewell's Store on the waterfront to buy tickets to the ball on 12 October. A capacity 230 tickets sold out in six minutes!

Reports in the River Town Times of January 1991 tell of a Christmas Tree spectacular coordinated by Rose Leeson and Roslyn Walsh that raised \$1200 towards the cost of painting the hall. That was a lot of money in those days and shows just how much the local community cared about their hall and continues to care.

In recent years the hall has operated under a committee. It was Allen Lumley's baby and he was assisted by Frank Harvey, Dave Delaney and Barry Clifford. When Frank and Allen died, Ron Rosolen stepped in as Trustee and from 2007 until 2013 he and Mike Bardell were the hall managers.

Ron says that Mike spent a lot of time renovating the hall on his own. He applied for grants to cover ongoing costs. He hired out the hall to benefit the community and to raise funds for running expenses. He dealt directly with the Lands

Department. He got the hall redecorated and re-stumped and he tackled a white-ant problem on his own.

Mike Bardell recently retired from the committee to support a seriously ill member of his family and John Stead, the President of the Hall Committee, told a meeting of the Wardell & District Progress Association that Mike is to be applauded for all he has done for the hall.

In 2012, the Lands Department advised that the School of Arts would no longer be an entity. In order to save the hall for the community, Ballina Shire Council took over ownership on 24 October 2013.

continued page 4



Judging cane at the Wardell Cane Festival are the manager of the Broadwater mill Mr D Williams and President of the Cane Festival, Harry Law.

Photo: Summerland News Pictorial.

Our Hall

Continued

Ownership of the hall was accepted by Ballina Shire Council on the understanding that a responsible committee would administer it. The Hall Committee is a sub committee of the Wardell Progress Association Inc.

At the election for volunteers John Stead (a newcomer to the area and trying to keep a low profile) was sitting on his hands when his wife called out his name. At the inaugural committee meeting he was elected into the Presidency.

Rose Leeson suggested that toilets with a disabled facility were top of the list for attention to make the hall more viable.



The Wardell & District War Memorial Hall



The new Ladies amenities



Christmas Light Up the Hall.

On Wednesday 2 December, a Community get together for the family will be held at the hall with the children from Wardell School singing carols. There will be a chocolate wheel and a ham raffle and there will be a free sausage sizzle for all.

Be there between 7.00 and 8.30 pm.

John redesigned the existing area and was able to incorporate a disabled toilet. Rose's research found a NSW Community Grants Fund and a grant of \$23,000 was accomplished. Ballina Shire Council also granted us \$15,000 and our thanks go to Mayor David Wright who always shows great interest in our community. Local builder Matt McKinnon did a good job with quality workmanship.

The modern toilet facilities have been completed and the Red Cross and the Empire Vale School have recently held fund-raising nights in the hall.

There is still some money left in our funds so, early in 2016, the front of the hall and the foyer will be painted in traditional colours.

The hall is available for public and private rentals. It is equipped with a large kitchen, plenty of tables and chairs and a new, very good PA/Music amplification system (so there is plenty of sound for all to hear what's going on).

For your next function why not try out the hall?

The hall is managed by an active committee which is eager to see the hall being used. They do however need extra people on the committee - a treasurer and someone to take care of bookings. If you can help, contact:-

John Stead, President, Telephone 0400 322 499

Jodi Wilcox, Secretary, Telephone 0428 881 798



John



Jodi



The Wardell Branch of the Australian Red Cross and the Wardell & District Progress Association have together agreed to purchase an Automated External Defibrillator or AED.

The Red Cross state that the best chance of survival for those experiencing cardiac arrest is effective CPR combined with early defibrillation. The next issue of the Blackwall Bugle should tell you where the AED is to be located. It will be a great life-saving asset to this place and we need to look after it.

In the meantime brush up on your CPR or Cardiopulmonary resuscitation which is an emergency procedure performed in an effort to manually preserve intact brain function, until further measures are taken to restore spontaneous blood circulation and breathing.

You can learn basic CPR by reading about it and practicing it on a pillow at home with friends. A much better plan is to undergo a first aid course. You could even join the Wardell Rural Fire Brigade with whom you could get first aid certification updated every two years. It is very important that the priority in a case of cardiac arrest is that **you** commence CPR straight



away whilst someone else dials 000 and calls the ambulance and another goes and gets the AED. When the AED arrives, don't be frightened of it. It will instruct you how to use it. But keep the CPR going as the AED is prepared for action. If you are alone with the patient just keep the CPR going!

The Wardell & District Progress Association.

Meetings of the Wardell and District Progress Association are lively and informative occasions. Ballina Shire Mayor Cr David Wright and 'our' Councillors are almost always in attendance to bring us up to date. Reports were presented at the last meeting on the condition of local roads, the costs of printing the 'Bugle', the NBN rollout for Wardell, graffiti under the bridge, the construction of the boardwalk to connect Wardell, the possible renaming

of a lane, Wilson Street drain blocked by logs, and future construction activity between Whytes Lane and Pimlico.

There is always plenty to talk about.

President Pat Carney congratulated John Stead on his outstanding efforts designing and managing the project to renovate the hall toilet facilities.

The next meeting of the Progress Association is to be held at the hall at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 16 December. Please bring a plate for a bit of Christmas cheer!

President Pat Carney Telephone 0408 834 362
Secretary Kerry Turpin Telephone 6687 9710

Wardell Waterfront

From the memoirs of the late AW Ford

"Bartlett's Store was a landmark in Wardell from my earliest recollections. It stood on the riverside two hundred yards downstream from the present bridge. The 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. I think this wharf was owned by E.Bartlett. 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.



"I recall Jimmy Bartlett building a very fine fish trap in his bulk store at the rear of his shop. It was greatly admired by all, but when completed would not go through any of the doors and one had to be greatly enlarged to get it out. As quite a crowd was present one Saturday morning for the official launching, the event proved quite hilarious.

"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. Most kids learned to swim in varying degrees, as there was no organised instruction. There were too many for one teacher to do more than keep an eye on all of them."

AW Ford

The Blackwall Historical Society



Cabbage Tree Island Public School

There is no doubt that school athletics gives opportunities for students to contribute to the community. In doing so they develop teamwork and social skills as well as a sense of discipline, confidence, self-esteem and caring. Cabbage Tree Island school once again has a winning formula. Last year their 4x100 metres boys' relay team won the New South Wales Schools Sports Association Championships at the Sydney Athletic Centre. Acting Principal Chick Edwards said that this year the team of Malaki and Desmond Ferguson, Cyril Bolt and Thomas Bolt Anderson was joined by Reshawn Anderson who represented the school in shot put. It was his first year in competitive sport and his first trip to Homebush. They trained in their own time and at their own school although wet weather at the time made track use difficult. Delia Rhodes of the school



Left to Right: Thomas Bolt Anderson, Cyril Bolt, Desmond Ferguson and Malaki Ferguson.

staff said that coach Peter Stevenson of Ballina was once again a great help to the athletes who were strongly supported by staff, parents and fund raisers.

This year the 4x100 metres athletes came first in the zone and first in the Lismore regional championships. They were then selected for the State Championships at Homebush where they

won every heat and the semi final. Then, in the final of the 4x100 metres, the team came fourth. In a team event it only takes one hiccup to come undone. But that in itself is a learning experience. The athletes learnt to be gracious and to congratulate the other teams, to learn from their mistakes and not to make excuses - although no excuse is needed to come fourth in New South Wales!

Our community congratulates the Cabbage Tree Island School athletes. We are proud of them!



Shot-putter Reshawn Anderson

The Wardell Sporting Recreation Club

Telephone 6683 4437

Recently the Club held its AGM and the following were elected to the Board: Col Rixon – President; Bobby Taylor – Vice-President; Sue Steele – Treasurer. General Board members are: Stan Sillitoe, Greg Kingdom, Ross Standing, Russell Clifford and James Kingdom. Russell Clifford was made a life member of the Wardell Sporting Recreation Club for his services over the many recent years.

We have had a good year with many events including: a motor bike "Show and Shine"; three seafood nights and a "Christmas in July".

Coming up is our Christmas Kids Party, complete with a live band and a 'special visitor'. All this will be on Saturday 12th December. Keep an eye out for further information in the form of decorative posters and fliers around the village.

I have decided not to stand on the Board this year, so this is my last contribution on behalf of the Club. A new correspondent is likely to be appointed by the Board and I eagerly anticipate seeing who that is. I thank the community and all those associated with the publication of "The Bugle" for their support over the last five years.

Kerry Storton



Wardell Sporting Recreation Club





Ken Threlfo

Ken Threlfo speaking with Mike Rushby



My family name Threlfo originates from Wales. Two brothers came to Australia and settled in the Hunter region. I used to say to Dad's sister that I had scars around my ankles but she insisted that my ancestors were 'free settlers'. A relative did a family tree investigation and found that one of the brothers was deported from England for stealing a loaf of bread. My mother's side of the family - the Leasons - came from Ireland. My father was born in Raymond Terrace. He was a baker by trade and baked in Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah but then he took up dairy farming at Meaney's Lane and later the family farm at Tuckurimba. He had a carrying business from Pimlico to Lismore before the late Jack Clark began his Wardell trucking company.

There were three boys in our family - first Leon, then Bob and then me. I was born in Claremont Hospital in Ballina. The hospital later became Cavill's Private Hotel but the building has long gone and the block opposite the Catholic Church is now vacant.

I started school at Tuckurimba but only did a few months there before I went to Pimlico School on the river bank. The school is no more but the school house is still there. I then went to Ballina High School. My father insisted that I get a trade and the sugar mill seemed a good thing as my eldest brother Leon had done his

trade there. I started by doing the trade theory by correspondence and used to go to Sydney every year to do the practical part of it. One of the engineers at the mill used to teach us at nighttime.

I started my apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner in 1958 and I left the Sugar Mill in 1964. The trade skills have been very handy throughout my life. When I left the mill I went to Kingscliff to work in the sand mining industry. There is a lot of difference between refining sugar and mining sand! Zircon was extracted for use in the manufacture of paint and rutile for use in welding electrodes and spacecraft. I was a maintenance fitter working on pumps usually replacing bearings and rubber liners. I was involved in the move of the Star 10 Dredge from the southern end of Coolangatta Airport to Pottsville. In those days there was no bridge over the creek and we used to drive across the creek in an ex-army four-wheeled drive Blitz truck with all the blokes and their tools on it. I would go on shift work and if they called up on radio for me to do a job or for tools or a spare part, I would go out, sometimes in the middle of the night and they would row across in a boat to meet me.

I became involved in the sand mining at Jerusalem Creek when I was working at Woodburn. Nowadays you could go out to Jerusalem Creek and not know

where the mining took place. The mining operations had nurseries where they grew trees and all the mining sites had the topsoils put back and the areas levelled and replanted.

I left the trade for a while and worked in Casino as a travelling salesman for small goods but then I went down to Wollongong in 1969 where I spent ten and a half years as a fitter and turner maintaining overhead cranes for Australian Iron and Steel. After six months they appointed me leading hand.

I met Lorna Lumley when I was working up here in the Wardell area. She then went down to Sydney to complete her third Nursing Certificate about the time I moved to Wollongong. Then, when she finished her third certificate, she got transferred up to the Casino Baby Health Centre. She was living on the family farm at Lumley's Lane so there was many a trip between Wollongong and Wardell.

When Lorna and I first married we lived in Wollongong itself. I had already purchased a block of land at Lake Heights and we built a house there until I moved back to Wardell in 1979. We moved back because we had the opportunity to buy the Lumley farm of a hundred and forty acres at Lumley's Lane. It had been in the Lumley family for five generations.

Lorna started with the Girl Guides at Wardell and continued at Wollongbar. She did twenty years with the movement and was presented with the Baronia Award. I used to drive the bus that took the guides sometimes to Port Macquarie or up around the Nambour area.

I found my trade training most useful when I took up farming. I could do most technical work around the farm without having to get someone in to handle the machinery. Lorna's father Allan had changed the farm from dairy to cane at the time road transport of cane from the farm to the mill became available.

When I came back from Wollongong and bought the farm at Lumleys Lane, I also learnt to fly light aircraft with the Northern Rivers Aero Club in Lismore. I learnt to fly a Piper PA28, which is something I always wanted to do. One day my wife said, "Well why don't you go and do it?" So I did! It was a very interesting experience. On the very first day that I went on my own, the instructor did a circuit with me and pulled up and opened the door. He said, "Right you are on your own!" He got out, shut the door and left me thinking, "Hell there is only me and the 'plane!" I did a couple of circuits and came back and he was quite happy. I kept flying for a while and got my unrestricted licence to fly Australia-wide in daylight. I flew cross-country over to Wagga from Lismore then on to Swan Hill in North West Victoria and back via Wollongong. But flying started to get too expensive.

When I got a share farmer to join me in running the farm, I used to drive the school bus from Wardell to Lismore. It started off as a twenty-seat express service.. Then I ended up driving the big bus full time for twenty years. When John Ison, who owned the business, decided to retire, I retired too.

I have one daughter and one stepdaughter who both live in Western Australia at the moment. Meaghan is not married and Suellen has three children.

As a child I had grown up on my father's pineapple farm at Pimlico. When the Wardell bridge was built, the then new Pacific Highway was pushed right through the middle of my father's farm. That spelt the end of the farm. Seven years ago I lost my wife Lorna after a long illness. That knocked me about a bit. Now it is all happening again. The planned new Pacific Highway will slice straight through my Lumleys Lane farm. It would not be economically feasible to work the two remaining bits, as there would be no access from one side to the other. With the relocation of the new highway I was given no option by The Roads & Maritime Services. We cut the last crop of cane off the farm a fortnight ago and it will be replanted with trees, so that will be the end of a productive farm. The lifestyle on a farm is completely different from any other way of life. It was a good life and all the neighbouring farms seemed to be able to work together and help one another – especially at harvesting time. I miss the farm but I go out and help other farmers whenever I can.

I was born in 1942 and I am semi-retired now but I keep active. I have been involved with the fireworks industry for about thirty-five years. Many years ago they had a cane festival on the Recreation Ground at Wardell. The chap doing the fireworks had a schoolteacher Ian Lever to help him. It was very wet that day and we were rushing around putting down the fireworks and the pyro technician was coming along behind us lighting the fireworks. Ian said to me, "I don't want to do this anymore, do you want to do it?" So that is where I started. I am now with a company based at Redland Bay, Brisbane, called 'Mr Fireworks International' and they treat me like family. When my wife Lorna passed away they attended the funeral. Their home is my home and I can walk in there any time and be made welcome. It is now a fourth generation fireworks company.

I got a load of fireworks yesterday for a display at the Alstonville Show and I'm doing the Woodburn

River Fest this weekend and have been doing it for quite a few years now. They started off with a thirty-year celebration of the bridge and have continued since as 'The River Fest' with water skiing and other sporting events finishing with fireworks off the bridge.

I also do private events like weddings. I'm preparing for a wedding in Casino shortly and just a few weeks ago I did one for a bloke's fortieth birthday at Byron Bay. I love my fireworks. I do quite a few places now – the Gold Coast, Ballina, Alstonville, and a wedding reception place at the back of the Gold Coast which has become a regular setting for fireworks. I've done a few weddings now at Ballina and Lennox Head and New Years Eve on the Lennox Head Beach. I do the Ballina 'Carols by Candlelight', Brunswick Heads markets on New Year's Eve and Alstonville also on New Years Eve. Rouse School is a big one which I have been doing for many years. I do the Woodburn River Fest and the Catholic School at Woodburn which puts on a special fireworks evening.

Seven years ago I lost my wife Lorna after a long illness. That knocked me about a bit. Then I got a phone call one afternoon from a lady who gave me her name. I didn't recognise her name so she gave me her maiden name. I said "Oh! Where are you?"

"In Ballina she replied." "Would you like to have a coffee?"

"Yes, why not?"

So we met up and coffee made way for afternoon tea. Six years later Gloria and I are still friends. And a funny thing, fifty years ago Gloria and I used to court one another - then we went our individual ways. Then she lost her partner and I lost mine. Now we can talk about the same things and we have separately gone through the same sort of trauma.

Ken Threlfo

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 email distribution agent.