

# THE BLACKWALL BUGLE

PO Box 53 Wardell NSW 2477

Issue # 31 August 2014

[blackwall-bugle@bigpond.com](mailto:blackwall-bugle@bigpond.com)

Telephone 02 6683 4561

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



**Wardell Red Cross Branch - First World War**

Back Row: Misses Elder, C.Law, B Brown, S. Lumley, U. Lumley, Mesdames J. Brown, J. Barrow.

3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Miss T. Smith, Mrs W. Larkin, Misses Keeping, R. Taylor, M Payne, L. Lumley, W. Walsh, Mrs J. Ford,  
Mrs Mitchell, Miss Olga Esgate.

2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Mesdames P. Walkins, J.Law and infant, McLeod (hon Treasurer), W. Payne (President), J. Elder,  
Mrs P.J. Meaney (Vice President), Miss F. Bartlett.

Front Row: Mesdames H. Vardy, J. Sadler, C.T. Lumley (hon Secretary), F. White, H.Bartlett.

## Supporting our Heroes

The Wardell Branch of The Australian Red Cross was formed on 4 September 1914 just 5 weeks after Britain declared war on Germany.

the  
power of  
humanity



| 100 YEARS PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE 1914-2014





### Wardell Red Cross 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday 1989

Back Row: Joan Griffith, Bev Attawell, Doris Campbell, Elaine Holland, (Zone rep.) Pat Spillsbury, Ruth Partridge, Silvia Sportom, Marie Lovett.

Middle Row: Sue Wardrobe, Ivy Carter, Shirley Geary, June Lane, Barbara Mitchell, Dos Frankham, Joyce Dimsey, Sally Morgan.

Front Row: Mildred Bryce, Isuelt Bryce, Daisy Bryce, D. Watkins, Jean Gibson, Joan Wilcox.

The Wardell Branch of the Red Cross is one of the oldest continuous branches in Australia. From a peak of one hundred members, the branch has declined in numbers but not in enthusiasm. It has always had enough dedicated members to remain active and is ready to expand to meet any major emergency.

On 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. A week later, the Australian Red Cross was founded and three weeks later, on 4 September 1914, the ladies of Wardell formed the Wardell Branch of the Red Cross.

During the war, clothing was made for the troops and extensive fund-raising was undertaken to provide some comfort to our soldiers bogged down in a bitter conflict. Clothing included scarves, balaclavas and socks, with pyjamas for the wounded in hospital. Money was raised by catering for weddings and sales at farms. The Red Cross held dances, sports days and euchre parties

Items were collected from outlying farms by pony and sulky. Parcels were made up, then boxed and shipped from the Wardell jetty to Sydney for transport to the war zone. Money was raised towards the cost of providing a travelling kitchen and a motor ambulance to the war front.

After the war, assistance was given to returned wounded veterans by the Red Cross. Then it was on to the home front with the branch helping out in the 1919 influenza epidemic and with the provision of mosquito nets and

linen for the Ballina Hospital.

In 1925 the branch assisted with the planting of the memorial grove adjacent to the Sports and Recreation Club. The club still maintains the grove as a quiet place to honour those who put their lives on the line. In 1938 the branch cooperated in the planting along Richmond Street of an avenue of weeping figs that stand to this day in memory of those who went to the first world war. No sooner had these projects been completed than World War II broke out in 1939 and it was on again just like before. By September they were back into the war effort with Mrs Lumley's house, Mayley, used as a Red Cross receiving depot.

Cabbage Tree Island held monthly fund-raising events and donated the proceeds to the Prisoner of War fund to which the Cane Growers' Association also contributed.



The **Blackwall Historical Society** intends to prepare a display of photographs and memorabilia of servicemen and women of the Wardell district who served their country in time of war - from The Boer War to Afghanistan. Great care will be taken of photographs and documents which will be copied and the originals returned. Please contact: Margaret - telephone 6686 0027

[blackwall\\_history@yahoo.com.au](mailto:blackwall_history@yahoo.com.au)





Back row: Sue Wardrobe, Monica Vomiero, Paddy Goff, Ros Walsh.  
Front Row: Vicki Turner, Daisy Bryce, Gayle Baker, Sue Cechner-Simmonds, Ruth Partridge.



Miss F Bartlett and her sister Mrs CT Lumley were foundation members, having joined the branch on 4 September 1914. Mrs Lumley was foundation secretary whilst Miss Bartlett became treasurer in 1923. They each served for 50 years. Both held two bars to their long service medals, and were both awarded the Red Cross *Laurel Wreath*.

Mrs Lumley's husband Clarence Thomas Lumley was a successful butcher in Wardell employing many workers. He had meat delivered by a horse-drawn cart around the district and by boat up and down the river from Burns Point to Broadwater.

He was a Councillor with Tintenbar Shire. He enlisted in the 9th Infantry Battalion on 24 January 1916. He was killed in action at the Battle of Menin Road, Belgium on 20 September 1917. He was 33 years old. So intense was the artillery barrage that the bodies of many who were killed could never be recovered for burial. CT Lumley has no known grave.

*Information and photos from records held by Mrs Lumley's granddaughter Joy Muter, c/o Roslyn Walsh, Past President Monica Vomiero and Wardell Branch President Ruth Partridge. Tele 6628 5751*



The Red Cross Art & Craft Exhibition is to be held in the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall on Sunday 3 August from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm

## Centenary Celebration

On Saturday 6 September, The Wardell Branch of the Australian Red Cross, which was founded on 4 September 1914, will celebrate its centenary with a scrumptious morning tea in the Wardell & District War Memorial Hall from 9.30 am.

**Everyone is welcome!**

Deanna Mannix has a Facebook page for Wardell called, "Wardell Community Connect, NSW 2477" <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wardell-Community-Connect-NSW-2477/232610930155884?sk=timeline>





On 12 June 2014 the Knit 'n Knat group, which meets at the Wardell hall every Thursday morning, handed over 42 handmade blankets to the East Ballina Lions Club.

**Left to right standing:** Sister Larelle, Merryl Dory, Afra van Baarsen, Rhonda Barnes, Judy Cocomozzo, Sue Steel, Rob Sword, Sister Grace, Dawn Sword. **Seated:** Lorna Dory, Ivy Carter, Shirley Strangman, Jeanette Rushby, Sue Cechner-Simmonds. Apologies from founder member Rose Leeson and Therese Lumsden.  
For details about the Knit n' Knats, telephone Sue Steel on 6683 4994

The Wardell knitting group, a bunch of friends known as the "Knit n' Knats", meets weekly to make woollen blankets and clothing for people in need. Bob and Dawn Sword of the Ballina Lions Club recently visited the group and were presented with 42 knitted and crocheted blankets and 12 knitted scarves.

Dawn thanked the Knit n' Knat group for the beautifully presented articles and said, "We have a family refuge in Ballina where families arrive with nothing, having left home. They are counselled, they are taught how to manage their lives and when they leave, they take with them their blanket. There are quite a few homeless people sleeping rough around Ballina for whom the "Soup Kitchen" provides a substantial meal. For them, a blanket is not just a

necessity in winter but a spiritual connection to those who made and gave it. Every now and then we get someone coming to the soup kitchen who is living in their car with their children. During this winter it will happen and I will keep a few blankets in reserve especially for them. I would also like to keep a couple for a raffle. At the moment we need thirty-five thousand dollars to buy a wheel chair for a little two-year old girl who has muscular atrophy and is unable to crawl. This chair, for which the family has gone deeply into debt, will enable the little girl to stand or, if she chooses, to go right down to the ground to play on the floor. You have no idea," She said, "Just how many people are going to benefit from the love and skill that has gone into the preparation of these items."

## Pimlico News

Telephone 6683 4384

Fifty four years ago the Pimlico Ladies Charitable Organisation (PLCO) was formed. The latest meeting was in support of Camp Quality that helps children with cancer. It was the school holidays and our meeting welcomed many children who had a great

time. Maureen Thomas represented Camp Quality. The raffle of the day was won by Colleen Lowry, the PLCO's new Secretary, who took over the position from her mother Olive who was Secretary for over 40 years.

The next meeting is to be held on Monday 4 August in aid of 'The Riding for the Disabled.' Then in late August, a garage sale is to be held at the Pimlico Hall. That is something for everyone to look forward to!

**Betty Fernance.**

**Kylie Trueman** of Wardell just can't resist volunteering to help her community. She is seen in the photo on the right late at night, in the bowels of the Broadwater Sugar Mill, having responded to a fire alarm as a trained firefighter and part of a team from the Wardell Fire Brigade.

Kylie is also a well trained volunteer member of WIRES  
(*The NSW Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Service Inc.*).  
She is frequently on call to rescue wild animals in distress.



## The Volunteer

What would you do if you found a snake in the engine compartment of your motor vehicle? You would probably telephone WIRES on 6628 1898.

Kylie was in class at the Lismore Campus of TAFE New South Wales where she studies Certificate III in Captive Animals. Her mobile phone rang. It was WIRES asking her to respond to City Toyota at 259 Keen Street where a mechanic had found a live carpet python on the engine block of a car he was servicing. He couldn't continue work until the snake was removed.

Kylie's tutor had left the classroom to take a phone call, so Kylie took it upon herself to respond. She visited the garage and carefully recovered the snake without harming it. The mechanic took the photograph above. It was a difficult job because the snake was agitated and defensive. Kylie checked the snake over and it was fine. She returned to her TAFE lessons with the snake in a sack.

The tutor said, "What a coincidence, while you were away, **my** mechanic, who is servicing **my** car, rang me to tell me there was a snake on **my** engine block!"

It was the same car, the same garage; the same mechanic and the very same snake! The carpet python was returned to Knockrow from where it came and released unharmed..



Jeff Leeson was at Shaw's Bay, East Ballina, a week after his father Errol's funeral. He took this photo. Could there have been a message? The story of Errol Leeson will feature in the next issue of the Blackwall Bugle.



## The Wardell Fête 2014

After weeks of dry weather and bright sunshine, it rained on the Wardell Fête. Everyone blamed Sister Larelle but quickly moved the venue to the Wardell and District War Memorial Hall. Pat Carney said later, "We could not have done it without the Tongans. They were fantastic! They helped move all the stuff from up at the church hall down to the Memorial Hall at 6.00 am. They helped load cars and carried some of the heavy gear. They were magnificent!"

Pat continued, "I think this was the twentieth year of the fête which was originally initiated by Wal Felsch and Steve Flately who ran the fête until Wal died. This year it was run by all the ladies on the organising committee with help from Rex Farrell and me. Sister Larelle used to run a Mercy Centre where she looked after a number of teenagers. The money raised enabled her to buy food and necessities for the care of the teenagers. Now the fund is used by Sister Larelle for community pastoral care.

"We have changed from being part of the Ballina-Wardell Parish to the Alstonville-Wardell Parish, so we had a connection this year with Alstonville that we never had before," said Pat. He continued, "Most of the goods that are sold at the fair are bargains. At these markets, people like their vegies and their home-made cakes at a good price. There are also some things at a give-away price. The church grounds probably have a better atmosphere in good weather up on the hill but under the prevailing conditions on the day, everybody seemed to be happy to be in the hall. There was a good steady flow of happy people all day.

"The Wardell community was helped financially by Phill and Ann at the BP Service Station, by Larry at the Wardell Café and by John Curran at the hotel. That made it a village thing and not just a church event. John Joblin provided prawns at "the right price" for the chocolate wheel raffles which were very popular. We appreciate the contribution of those people to the success of the fair. The Pippo boys and the Tabib girls were also a great help in getting the show on the road."



The throbbing beat of African drums drew an enthralled crowd into the hall and out of the rain. The drums were traditional *djembe* and the rhythm South American. The players were students at St Joseph's School Alstonville directed by their teacher Peter Slattery. "Absolutely brilliant!" was the consensus of opinion. The students showed enthusiasm, discipline,

coordination and teamwork. Quite clearly they were enjoying themselves.

Peter Slattery said later that the band was a mixture of talented children with rhythm and students who benefitted from the discipline of involvement with percussion. The band programme, he said, was just one of several cultural creative programmes at the school.



# Nancye Walsh

A gentlewoman of Wardell speaks with Mike Rushby

"I was born over in Murwillumbah in 1926 and came here in 1936. My grandfather Christian Andersen had come to Australia from Denmark and my father worked on dairy farms in the Murwillumbah area before he decided to buy a farm at Keith Hall. I walked daily from Keith Hall to South Ballina where I went to school. Mr Irons was the teacher who taught all grades up to 6<sup>th</sup> Class. I then went to Ballina High School for three years. I travelled to that school on the bus, which in those days crossed the river on the Burns Point ferry.

"I was the youngest of the family and the only girl. I had six older brothers. After school I would come home and milk cows on my parent's cane and dairy farm. Then I got a job carrying bricks! It was hard work in those days. When the war came my father was in the VDC or Volunteer Defence Corps at the lighthouse at East Ballina – spotting for submarines. He saw a couple of boats go up. Mum and I stayed at home and milked and fed the cows. When my Dad wasn't spotting for the VDC he was hauling cane. I helped Dad haul cane. I used to go out in the morning with a horse and slide and cut a load of saccaline (which is a form of forage sorgum) then come home and have lunch. Then Mum would put the saccaline in the feeder and I would hand-chaff it. I would put a kerosene tin full of feed in the cattle chute and when we finished milking a cow, we would open the gate and let it through. It is strange how each cow knew which stall to go to. All the cows had names of course. We milked by hand and never went in for mechanical milking – we couldn't afford it. We were as poor as church mice! We were not alone. Everyone was in the same boat. No one had much money.

The Ellis girls had a tennis court on their place and we used to go over some times to play a bit of tennis – a hit and a giggle. So tennis, bike

riding and dancing on a Saturday night were the only recreation we had. We were pretty well self-sufficient with our own vegies and chooks. We never killed our own meat. Lester Lovett used to bring our meat. That's how long I've known Lester! He was then working for Paddy Walsh, the butcher, who was not related to us. We got our meat from him.

"Our farm was at Keith Hall. You went right down the lane between the sand hills and turned right. Mum and Dad later sold it to Harry Johnston. He died and I don't know who took the farm on. When Mum and Dad bought the farm it cost about two thousand pounds for about a hundred acres. Today I expect it would be worth two or three hundred thousand. The farm ran right back to the beach. I used to take the horse-drawn cane trucks through the sand hill at Keith Hall. The cane-trucks had no breaks and I had to take off the chain that connected the four horses to the truck to let the truck run freely down the hill. I would then walk the horses down and re-hitch at the bottom. I was scared stiff that I wouldn't get the chain off before the laden truck ran down the hill into the back of the horses. They were hard days. You wouldn't get anybody to do it today. In those days everything to do with cane involved manual work because there were no machines to cut or load cane. Cane was loaded by hand onto buggies that ran on rails. The rails had to be carried by men and laid next to the harvest then later picked up and moved and laid again. The buggies were pulled by horses.

"During the war I stayed at home and milked the cows and helped with the cane. Three of my brothers went to the war. My youngest brother went all though the Middle East then came home and went to New Guinea. A second brother went all through New Guinea and Chris



was in the Air Force. I think he was up in Darwin. My six brothers are all gone. I'm the only surviving family member of my generation. We didn't do a lot in those days because we were all poor. Everybody was in the same boat. We stayed at home and worked. That was our life – we worked the farm. Girls from down there had bikes and on a Sunday we used to take a picnic lunch and go somewhere for a ride to Evans Head, or Marshall Falls, or South Ballina – anywhere. We used to go to the Masonic Hall in Ballina every Saturday night for the dances and over Christmas we used to go to the waterfront. GP Harris and his band used to play. We used to dance. I loved dancing!

"I think we were always happy in what we were doing. No one knew anything different. We didn't hear much from those who went to war. There were no telephones or emails in those days and letters didn't always get through. Letters were censored and they used to wipe out anything that shouldn't have been said. Anyway the three came home from the war and we were lucky in that respect. But Chris died of cancer when he was only forty-two and the other two were restless and moved on.

"In the early days there was petrol rationing so we couldn't do very much. I bought my bike from Charlie Brewer in Ballina and paid it off at two shillings and sixpence (25c) a week. I got all the calf money from the farm, which was only five shillings (50c) a calf in those days! We used to go to the pictures on a Saturday night and it cost us two shillings (20c) to go.

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"Grandfather Tom Walsh had been a hotelier at Lochinvar near Maitland and came up from there to Wardell by horse and dray. He bought twenty acres at Boundary Creek at a place now called Walshs Lane. Each year they acquired a bit more land. He and his wife had two children – Martin and Jack. Martin married and had two children Tom and Mary. They lived where I now live and Jack lived next door where Alec Pring now lives. Uncle Jack had eight boys in his family.

I later married Martin's son Tom whom I met at a dance. I came to Wardell from Keith Hall sixty-eight years ago and I've never left. We had two boys and two girls. I've now got sixteen grandchildren and twenty-six great grandchildren. At one time we would go to Mass in Wardell and when we came out we would stand around the church and talk because we knew everyone. But now there are only a few hands around that I know. That's how much this place has changed. I was in the Red Cross at Wardell and used to meet at the Wardell Hall. I have a twenty-year badge from the Red Cross and another from the View Club in Ballina. We had Red Cross meetings and raised funds. During the war we sent hampers away to soldiers.

"Our income came from the farm where we had cane, cattle and bananas so, whilst the children were away at school, I packed bananas. There are a lot of things you learn to do when you have got to! In the '54 flood, we had bananas on the Wardell side of the house and they just went over like matchsticks in the gale. It would make you cry! We had to cut the main stalks off and let them sucker but it was a couple of years before we were back in production.

"We had four children - two boys and two girls. My two boys went to Woodlawn for five years and my two girls went to St Mary's in Grafton as boarders. They are all around the district. Patricia has been a nurse in Casino for thirty-eight years. Jenny has been a

doctor's receptionist at Woodburn for thirty-three years. Tommy is cane farming and he lives in Woodburn and works my farm. Garry lives in Lismore and has driven trucks all his life.

"We used to go down to the beach on the tractor to go fishing. When my Mum died, Dad came to live with us and he would go down to the beach and come home with a bag full of fish. The boys would have to clean them. So he wasn't very popular! A fellow told us once that he went fishing with Dad and whilst he himself came home empty-handed, he said, "That old so and so could catch fish in a tank!" One day my Dad and Reg Pring were fishing down at the beach. They each caught a decent sized bream. Reg said, "I think mine is bigger than yours and it feels a bit heavier." Dad said, "When we get home we'll weigh them." When they got home, Dad stuck a few sinkers down the throat of his bream, took the scales and went up to Mr Pring's and weighed the two fish. Of course Dad's was the heavier fish – wasn't it! He said, "Well I wasn't going to let that old pommie beat me!"

"I used to throw a line into the river at my place and tie it to a tree with a piece of steak as bait because that was hard to pull off and I caught a lot of fish there. I kept Tom in fish. I quite liked fishing and Tom didn't mind. We used to go out on the tractor late in the evening and the kids would light a fire on the beach and we would fish. That's where we got our fun.

"My grandsons want to keep the farm in the Walsh name so that is what will happen. If I were rich or won the lotto I would buy Alec Pring's farm because that was part of the old Walsh estate too.

"I go to the View Club in Ballina. There was a table that we always used to sit at with about fourteen people and there are only three left now of those fourteen people. I was eighty-eight the other day and I was told 88 is a lucky number. I said yes I'm lucky I've got this far! I go to Pimlico on the first Monday of every month.

"I'd say the happiest days of my life were when I was raising my four children. Lester Lovett made sure they had a pony out the back and they would go out and ride

their horses. They made their own fun - there was no tripping around the country and things like that. When they got older they went surfing and played football.

"My Mother died when she was only sixty three and my Dad died when he was seventy. I always tell my daughters to keep together because when my mother died I felt like I was out on a limb all by myself. Every Sunday we had gone out to see Mum and Dad at their dairy farm at Coraki. We worked all the week and Sunday morning we would go up to Mum and Dad's. When Mum died it left a void in my life. I didn't have a sister so I've told my daughters to always keep together so that when I go they will still have each other.

"Lester Lovett's wife and I were closer than sisters. After our children got off our hands the four of us used to go out together to the balls and out to dinner. I still have old friends that I meet at the Evans Head RSL Club and the Lismore Workers' Club. While I can still drive I can do these things. There are none of our old acquaintances left at Keith Hall – it has all changed. Lester and I were saying only the other day that there were very few of our old friends around any more. The post office at Keith Hall closed some time ago and when Gary Carr retires they will most likely close the Empire Vale post office too."

"I grow cane and soya beans on my farm. The soya beans were harvested in June and the cane harvest began in July. I didn't have much cane last year but I've got a good cut this year. So I'll survive.

"I have a grandson in the army and just now he is over in France for the celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D Day landings in Europe.

"I have a granddaughter Jodie in New York who is married with three children. When we were young we didn't have the money for overseas travel. Now we have the money, we are too old to go!

"But I'm happy here. Most of my family are here. I have some very dear friends and I take an active interest in everything around me.

**Nancye Walsh**

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