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BRO. BARRIE THOMAS BURRILL WARD (1934-2004) NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHER

Two of Barrie Ward's more obvious character traits were his charm and sense of adventure. These qualities often worked well for the photographer, who has died aged 70; sometimes not so well.

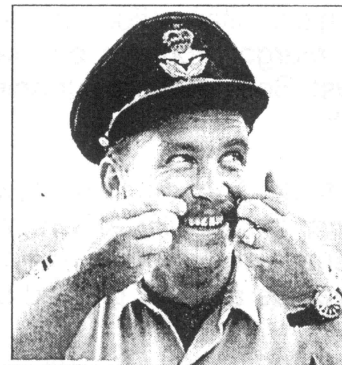
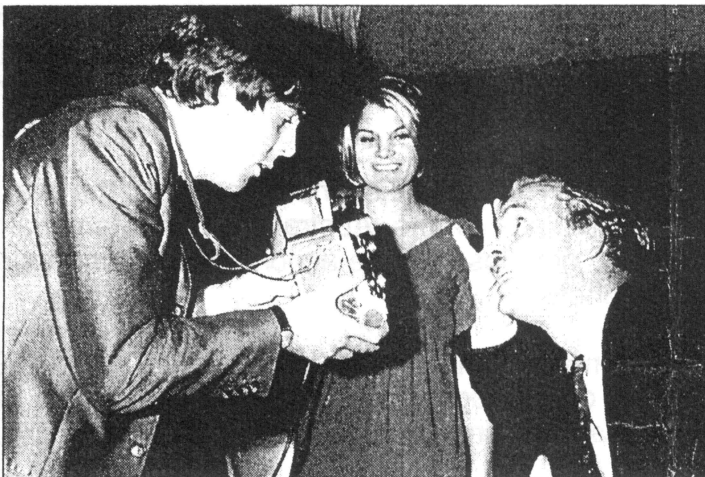
Working on the old *Daily Mirror* in 1965, Ward went to Sydney Hospital to photograph a patient who claimed police had bashed him. He entered an off-limits ward, quickly shot his pictures and made for the fire escape, ahead of challengers. He fell on the last flight of stairs and broke an ankle but a colleague, Alan Funnell, helped him to a waiting car. Rather than try their luck at the hospital's casualty department, Funnell dropped Ward at St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst before delivering the film to their newspaper office.

Ward's picture made the front page. But those were the cut-throat days of Sydney afternoon newspapers, with intense rivalry between the *Mirror* and *The Sun*.

Zell Rabin, the legendary editor of the *Mirror*, chided Funnell for dropping his mate at St Vincent's, thereby running the risk of missing an edition.

Rabin showed his appreciation later by presenting Ward with a framed photograph of the front page, with inserted type, "Barrie Ward, world's greatest photographer".

Ward's charm proved useful during the Beatles' tour of Australia in 1964. Paul McCartney turned 22 in Sydney and the *Mirror* thoughtfully selected a group of young women to attend a birthday party for him. Ward photographed the Beatles and McCartney photographed Ward.



Centre of events ... Ward's adventures brought him into contact with both glamour and war. Left, photographed by Paul McCartney in 1964.

It worked again when Ward visited Long Bay jail in 1969. Hearing a baby's cry, he discovered a child had been born to a prisoner. He persuaded officials to let him photograph mother and child, with a prison officer. The picture won a Walkley award when there was only one prize for photographers and only nine in all.

The charm failed, however, when he encountered Jackie Onassis at a United States airport. Explaining who he was, Ward asked if he could take her picture. She made it clear that he could not. He said later he had never heard such language from a woman.

Barrie Thomas Burrill Ward was born of Yorkshire and Swedish stock. His maternal great-grandfather, Peter Burrill, was a coachbuilder who left Leeds with his baby son, Thomas, his mother, two sisters and a brother after his wife, Emily, died in childbirth. They arrived in Balmain in 1885 and bought a slice of property along Darling Street - the family home is now L'Unico restaurant.

The Burrill coachbuilding business won a Royal Agricultural Society gold medal in 1905 for the best business vehicle, before motor cars took over the roads.

When Peter Burrill died in 1928 he left a third of his considerable estate to Balmain Hospital and a third to the Methodist Mission in Balmain.

The other side of Ward's family came from Gotland Island, off the Swedish coast. Settling here during World War I, Oscar Olssen skippered coastal steamers and changed his name to Ward. His son, Tom, married Dollie (Florence), daughter of Tom and Martha Burrill.

Ward, one of Tom and Dollie's three children, went to school in Ryde but left at 15 to join the *Sydney Morning Herald* as a copy boy, before gaining his cadetship. He did national service training in 1952 with the RAAF, returned to the Herald, and later worked on Canadian newspapers. When covering an American early warning system in the Arctic, he fell down a crevasse. Returning home, he worked on the *Illawarra Mercury* and then joined the *Daily Mirror*.

He never blew his own trumpet but his second wife, Judith, persuaded him to hang some of his photographs. They indicate the range of his work; the Queen in Australia in 1954 - Lord Mayor Pat Hills took her elbow without the furore Paul Keating's similar action caused 38 years later; Pope Paul VI at St Mary's Cathedral; Dame Margot Fonteyn on stage; Leo McKern on a Queensland mountain; marine scientist Bob Endean surfacing on the Great Barrier Reef with a crown of thorns starfish.

Ward took time off from newspapers in 1967 to take photographs of the war in Vietnam for the RAAF, many of which are in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. He took a gunners course to get closer to the action. His second tour of duty was as a News Limited photographer.

He covered most Olympic and Commonwealth Games for 20 years until 1990, helping to pioneer the transmission of photographs from a mobile phone. He became picture editor of *The Australian* and interstate editor for the News group. After leaving News in 1991 he worked for AAP.

His sense of adventure led him to race sports cars and to drive in a London to Sydney Rally.

He was president of the Sydney Journalists' Club and of the Australian War Correspondents' Association.

He and Judith travelled widely after his retirement. On their last trip, to the Antarctic, Ward took along the chemotherapy for his cancer.

The *Village Voice*, circulating in the Leichhardt municipality, named him citizen of the year in 2004.¹

He is survived by Judith, her two children, his two children from his first marriage, to Betty, and four grandchildren.

Bro. Barrie Thomas Burrill Ward was initiated in Lodge North Ryde No. 898, at the age of 21, on 27 June 1957. He was passed Fellowcraft on 26 September 1957 and raised a Master Mason on 22 May 1958.

His Masonic Certificate was No. 215690.

He affiliated with Lodge Denistone No. 663 on 19 October 1972 but called off from this lodge on 12 October 1974.

He became a member of Lodge Gilwell North Ryde No. 898 at the consolidation of Lodges Gilwell No. 880 and North Ryde No. 898 on 21 December 1976.

He served as Junior Warden of this lodge in 1978 followed by two terms as Senior Warden in 1979 and 1980.

He called off from Lodge Gilwell North Ryde on 18 December 1984 when he affiliated with The Balmain Lodge No. 23.

He was still a member of this lodge when he was called to the Grand Lodge Above in December 2004.

Reference:

The Sydney Morning Herald - issue dated Friday, January 14, 2005.
