



FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

Wednesday 21st October 2026



Barraba resident, musician and composer, Paul Headon aka Dreamscapist, will be performing at the Playhouse Hotel on Saturday afternoon, 24th October at 2PM. This concert will be a culmination of 3 days of videoing there for his YouTube channel, "paulsdreamscapes".

<https://www.youtube.com/user/paulsdreamscapes>

There will be no admission charged for this performance, and all are most welcome.

Many thanks
Paul Headon



BARRABA RSL & RECREATIONAL CLUB LTD

Phone 67821379

For the information of members and guests.

THIS WEEK

THURSDAY 22nd October
BINGO

First game starts at 6pm

FRIDAY 23rd October
MEAT RAFFLES

Tickets on sale from 5.30pm
Membership Draw \$1200

SUNDAY 25th October
ANGLER CLUB RAFFLES

Membership Draw \$1100

BISTRO HOURS

Phone 0427330808

DINE IN OR TAKEAWAY

DAILY BLACKBOARD SPECIALS

PIZZAS MADE TO ORDER

MONDAY/TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY: **CLOSED**

THURS/FRI/SAT: LUNCH 12-2PM

DINNER FROM 6PM

SUNDAY: 12-2PM





Senior Citz News

We have had our AGM, all positions were declared open and voting was done.

Results are:

President – Kim Hill

Vice President – Beryl Jobson

Secretary – Charlie Lumby

Treasurer – Carol Lewis

We handed out four Life Member Certificates – Judy Brady, Joan Currell, Kath Belcher and Dorothy Cox.

We are going to hold a Melbourne Cup Day on the 3rd November 2026 at the Senior Citizens Hall, starting with Bingo at 11am. There will be prizes for Best Dressed, Best Hat and a Lucky Door Prize. Everyone is welcome, please bring a plate of food to share with a coffee and tea.

We will not be having our Christmas Concert this year.

Don't forget, if you want a stall for our Twilight Market, on 5th December 2026, please let us know by 7th November 2026.

Secretary

Charlie Lumby

Letter to Editor

Hi Everyone at Barraba and surrounds. I wanted to ask if you would direct me to someone who could help me with some family history please. My 3rd Great grandmother had children John Yule/ Brown and then with George Page. She was not the Isabella MacDiarmid from Scotland though. Her daughter Mary Yule was born to her and George Page. She is my 2nd great grandmother. Mary took the surname Yule as she detested her father Page. So, the story goes. I have been told she was an Aboriginal woman. This would be my missing link if I can work this story out. I thank you for your time.

Thanks Lesley Pitt

Phone: 0424 332 773

Email: Lesley167@hotmail.com

Barraba Civilian and Military Rifle Club AGM

Saturday 7th November 2026

Barraba Rifle Range. 11.30am

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN



Have your say on the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The plan outlines practical actions to help remove barriers, improve accessibility, and create a more inclusive community for people living with disability. We encourage people living with disability, their families, carers, and service providers to review the draft plan and share their thoughts. There are still a number of drop-in sessions being held around the region for anyone looking for more information, or for help submitting their feedback. Visit trcnews.au/DIAP to view the draft document, drop-in session times and provide your feedback. Submissions close 4pm Wednesday 21 October.



PET SCAN WIN FOR LOCAL PATIENTS

Tamworth's Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanner has now been upgraded to allow local patients to receive diagnostic prostate and Neuroendocrine imaging closer to home.

A PET scanner is a nuclear imaging test that uses a tracer to diagnose a variety of conditions including cancers, heart and brain conditions. Health is now producing a special diagnostic substance that enables prostate and Neuroendocrine imaging in Tamworth. Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson said he had been campaigning with the community to upgrade the PET Scan and was grateful for the extended service. "PET Scanners are an essential diagnostic tool for doctors, helping diagnose and treat a range of health conditions, including cancer making it an essential tool to treat patients locally," Mr Anderson said.

Since it was installed in 2024, more than 1,000 patients have used the scanner. Now with the introduction of prostate and Neuroendocrine imaging, Mr Anderson says even more patients will be able to be treated locally. "Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men. Around 1 in 6 men are likely to suffer from the condition in their life," Mr Anderson added. "Having access to the tools and treatment options locally is critical so that local men do not have to travel to access treatment. That's why I was pushing to have the capability to diagnose prostate cancer in Tamworth, and I'm thankful that our community's voice has been heard."

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From Brendan Moylan's weekly newsletter –

VETERAN COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM OPEN

The NSW Government's Veteran Community Grants Program is now open for applications. Funding is available for projects that support the wellbeing of veterans and their families, while helping to preserve and promote our military history and heritage.

Applications must align with and be submitted under one of the below category descriptions:

1. Local history, heritage and education

Projects that help inform and educate the wider community about the service and sacrifice of local veterans and their families, including the conservation and display of memorabilia and artefacts, research towards online or print publications and educational activities.

2. Public commemorative events and commemorative spaces

Events that honour or mark military anniversaries and pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of NSW veterans, or the creation of commemorative spaces. Please note, Anzac Day events are ineligible for funding.

3. Provide support to members of the NSW veteran community

Activities such as excursions, milestone reunions, and training and development to assist with the health and wellbeing of the veteran community.

4. Infrastructure and equipment

Projects that improve facilities, infrastructure, and equipment to strengthen the delivery of services and activities for the veteran community.

Category 1-3 projects can apply for maximum \$3,000.

Category 4 projects can apply for a maximum of \$10,000, with a total of \$100,000 allocated for Category 4 funding.

Applications close at 5pm, **Wednesday 11 November 2026**, with outcomes advised in late January next year. The online application form for the 2026 Veteran Community Grants Program is available at

<https://veteransnsw.smartygrants.com.au/VCGP2026>

History Notes – Barraba Businesses

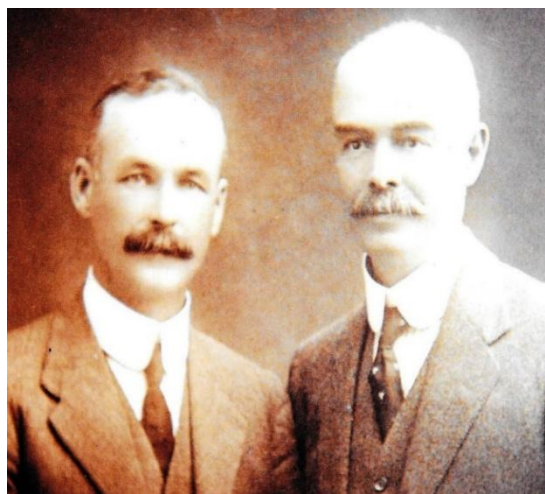
134 Queen Street

This was owned by Excell & Malcom in 1900. They owned only half the present building. This was the end closest to the Commercial Hotel. On August 6, 1900, the founders of the firm, Messrs. W. H. Dean and J. G. Smith decided to strike out in business on their own. Both gentlemen had formerly been in the employ of J. Richardson, Ltd., of Armidale. They bought the general store known as Excell and Malcom. The value of the stock at the beginning was £2000. There were three employees. From the beginning, the firm grew as the result of the energy thrown into it by its founders. Part of the current site of the store was originally occupied by Otto Rabe, tobacconist, and A. J. Doring, saddler.



In 1905 Dean and Smith replaced these shops, building commercial premises with ornate art deco parapets and gables. Between 1909 and 1910 Dean and Smith rebuilt the store, extending it to its present length. It outgrew its original premises until in 1925 its total floor space exceeded 14,000 square feet and its annual turnover was £76,000. In 1936 the store was taken over by M. C. Mackenzies Ltd of Glen Innes. It was the main store in Barraba and a major employer in the town, employing up to 58 people.

M.C. Mackenzie & Sons took over from Dean and Smith and in Barraba's heyday, had 64 people on their staff. After Mackenzies left, Barry and Betty Shields had the business. It was then purchased by Karl Letzner and Diana Simms in April, 1989. They sold to Harold and Margaret Marshall in August, 1997 who sold out to John and Sophie Hopkins. It has changed hands a number of times since and is now IGA.



J.G. Smith and W.H. Dean

Mr. W.H. Dean was a valued member of the Barraba community. He was President of Barraba Parents & Citizens Association and was instrumental in achieving the construction of a Manual Training room for the Barraba Public School in 1933, which was named "The Dean Room" in his honour, and which is now part of the Museum. He was also a member of the Lodge, Barraba.

Other Businesses

In the early days, Indian hawkers used to come around in a horse and wagon selling their goods.

Jack Garske, Ted Garske's father, had a meat cart for some time. He did his killing on his farm, Box Hill, and delivered around town. This was in the early part of the 1900s. For many years, Jack Garske had a Clydesdale stud at Box Hill. Each horse was sold with the understanding that if it didn't pull, you brought it back and got one that would.

Aubrey Brett had a Scrap Yard at his house. The original house was pulled down and replaced with a brick house. This house was right at the end of Edward Street. There used to be a road that ran from Queen St. over the hill and joined up with Edward St. Bert Robinson lived in the house on the top of this hill.

Phong Suey had a market garden across the river from Barraba Rural Traders. This Hardware business was started by David York and Ken McCusker and then taken over by Karl Letzner and Diana Sims. It is now run by Trent and Lanie Hartwig.

Rupert Myers had his undertaking business on the corner of Fitzroy and Maude Streets across the road from the Anglican Church. His father ran the business before Rupert. Fletcher's now run an undertaking business at the top end of Edward St.

Other Items of Interest

There was a suspension bridge across the river in Cherry Street. It crossed the river at the bottom of Edward Street. The present bridge over the river was built in about 1935. There was a wooden bridge which was situated to the left of the present bridge. The brick abutments on each bank where the old bridge was, were still in place about 2003.

Where the Medical Centre is now was the Police paddock. The remains of the stables were pulled down to make way for the Medical Centre. The Police Station was for a long time behind the Court House. There were old buildings behind the new Police Station which were used as garages but could have been old stables.



Here is an overview of outcomes from the Ordinary Meeting of Tamworth Regional Council held on Tuesday 13 October 2026.

- Tamworth Regional Council will contribute \$3,500 to the Country Music Association of Australia to support further research to update the 'Valuing Australian Country Music 2025' report. The research, led by CMAA Chairman Dobe Newton aims to provide a comprehensive national profile of the current state-of-play of country music in Australia and will seek to confirm the anecdotal evidence that country music, both domestically and internationally, has continued to experience significant growth in popularity and market performance. Being able to statistically verify these observations provides powerful evidence to drive policy and regulatory support with State and Federal governments.
- As smart glasses, which are eyewear fitted with cameras capable of capturing images and recording video, become increasingly prevalent, Councillors received and noted a Notice of Motion from Cr Brooke to investigate the legalities of banning them in Council facilities. The motion calls for a future report to be presented to Council into the privacy, child safety and accessibility implications of smart glasses and other wearable recording devices, including the feasibility of introducing restrictions in Council-operated facilities.
- A total of \$48,500 will be shared among 18 property owners across the region this financial year through the Heritage Assistance Grant. Councillors endorsed the Tamworth Regional Council Heritage Working Group's recommendations for the allocation of the funding. A total of 26 applications were received between 16 June and 19 August 2026, with a diverse range of projects including flooring, roofing and guttering, painting, and maintenance.
- Councillors resolved to request that the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure amend Schedule 5 and associated Heritage Map of the *Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan 2010* (TRLEP 2010) to remove the heritage listing of Item I513, "Lost Boy's Grave (Bantry)", from 8 Den Mountain Road, Watsons Creek. The decision follows investigations and a site inspection which confirmed the grave of local boy Kenny Northey, who passed away in 1925, is not located on the property currently identified in the TRLEP 2010. Council's investigations found the grave is located on nearby Crown Land reserved for the 'Preservation of Graves'. The amendment will correct the administrative error, and a future planning proposal will consider updating the

heritage listing to provide the correct description at its confirmed location.

- Councillors tonight endorsed the draft Waste and Resource Recovery Community Service Obligation Policy for public exhibition, inviting community feedback over the next 28 days before considering its formal adoption.
 - Councillors tonight welcomed the nomination of the Jewry Street Causeway Removal project in the 2026 Local Government NSW Environmental Awards and nominated Cr Sutherland to attend the awards ceremony in Sydney this December. The project transformed a redundant river crossing into a healthier, more connected waterway, delivering significant environmental benefits for the Peel River while improving the amenity of Jewry Street Park for the community.
 - Following a review of the Register for Council's Special Purposes Committees, Working Groups, External Boards and Organisations Councillors tonight decided to endorse all recommendations made, with the exception of replacing Cr Sharpham with Cr Brooke on the General Manager's Review Panel. The full details can be found in the report on Council's website.
 - A new external member of Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, Ms Rochelle White, was appointed tonight following an Expression of Interest process prompted by the resignation of Dr Meredith Caelli. Ms White will join the committee as an independent member for a four-year period.
 - Councillors finalised the notice of motion they will put forward at 2026 Local Government NSW Annual Conference next month. The motion to be submitted is: "That Local Government NSW calls on the NSW Government to reform the renewable energy benefit-sharing framework to increase the current contribution rates by 25% in addition to accrued indexation, provide an additional 15% for First Nations priorities and confirm annual indexation from the guideline's 2024–25 base year through negotiation, construction and operation, and require periodic independent reviews."
- An additional motion was added to repeal or substantially amend the firearms provisions introduced through the Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2005. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cr North and Cr Rodda will be attending as voting delegates and Cr Brooke, Cr Sutherland and Cr Sharpham will be attending as non-voting delegates.
- Councillors were in agreement to move the Council Meeting scheduled for 1 December, to Tuesday 8 December due to Councillor and senior staff availability.
 - Councillors have approved the donation of a lawnmower to the Barraba Rugby League Club. The approximate value of

the lawnmower is \$6000 and will allow the club to continue to maintain the Barraba Recreation Ground to a high standard for community use.

- Councillors received and noted the Tamworth Region Arts Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes from 16 July 2026 and approved the recommendation to proceed with a detailed design for the Michael Ferris sculpture on the Peel River Loop.
- The Regional Academies of Sport Incorporated (RAS) Academy Games is hoped to continue to be held in Tamworth after Council approved a sponsorship funding of \$30,000 per year for 2028, 2029 and 2030, along with field hire fee waivers. These Academy Games bring roughly 3000 athletes, coaches, officials and support staff to Tamworth along with an economic benefit of approximately \$1.3 million each year. In further support for our local Regional Academy, Council has also supported a partnership arrangement with the Northern Inland Academy of Sport, through the provision of office accommodation within the Sports Hub at the Tamworth Sports Dome until December 2030, valued at approximately \$18,000 per year.

For more information, see the full reports at www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/business-papers

BARRABA UNITING CHURCH NOTICES

Sunday 25th October – 10.45am

Please note new time for the next few months.

All welcome

CATHOLIC CHURCH TIMES

Barraba 1st Sunday of the month, Saturday evening

Mass 6pm. (Note the time change)

All other Sundays 9am

All Souls Day

Fr Damien Locke will be holding a mass service at the Barraba Cemetery on Monday 2nd November commencing at 7.30am to commemorate All Souls Day.

After the service Fr Damien will do a blessing of graves.

Everyone is most welcome to attend, please bring a chair if you need to sit.

ANGLICAN CHURCH TIMES

St Laurence's Barraba

Sunday service at 10.00am

Woodsreef 11.30am, 2nd Sunday of each month



SNAKE SEASON HAS ARRIVED

Please take extra care and watch out for snakes in your local area. To discourage snakes from entering your property, ensure your garden is well maintained, clear of rubbish, and keep your grass short!

If you see a snake:

- Do not approach it or attempt to kill or capture it.
- Keep your distance, stay calm and advise others that there is a snake close by and to be aware.

If you encounter a snake, call:

Wires 1300 131 554

National Parks & Wildlife 1300 072 75



REGISTER FOR WATER NIGHT 2026 AND YOU COULD WIN!

From 5–10pm on Thursday 22 October, households across Australia are being challenged to Tap Pause, Level Up by

switching off running water and seeing just how often we reach for the tap without thinking. It's not about going without water. It's about creating a fun, memorable moment to think about where our water comes from, how we use it and why it matters.

Register your household and you'll automatically go into the draw to win one of eight fantastic prizes:

- Hisense Dishwasher (RRP \$789)
- Ninja CREAMi Ice Cream Maker (RRP \$349)
- Hoselink Retractable Hose Reel (RRP \$275)
- Amazon Echo Show 5 (RRP \$169)
- Sunbeam Compact Barista Coffee Machine (RRP \$159)
- Huawei Band 11 (RRP \$129)
- \$100 IKEA Gift Card
- \$100 Bunnings e-Gift Card 👉 Register now: <https://waternight.com.au/#register>



Gwydir Shire Catchup

Dear residents,

As many of you may have heard, the Gwydir News has recently gone into recess. To help keep everyone up to date in the meantime, we've put together this Catchup featuring the Mayor's Column and General Manager's Column.

This publication is not replacing the Gwydir News. It's simply a way for us to continue sharing important Council news and updates.

Please open the following link to view the Gwydir Shire Council Catchup:

<https://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au/Council/Shire-News/Gwydir-Shire-Council-Catchup>

Happy reading!

Kind regards,

The GMC Team

Gwydir Shire Council



Almost 40 per cent of Hunter New England women overdue for breast screening

This Breast Cancer Awareness Month, eligible women in Hunter New England Local Health District are being urged to book a free mammogram, with 39.1 per cent of eligible women overdue for their two-yearly breast screen. For women aged 50-74, a breast screen every two years through a population-based screening program like BreastScreen NSW is still the best way to detect breast cancer early, before it can be seen or felt.

Rebecca Delaporte, Acting Manager, BreastScreen NSW, Hunter New England Local Health District, said with almost 7000 women in NSW expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, it's important for women to make breast screening part of their regular health routine. "If you're aged 50 to 74, make your breast screen a priority. It's a simple appointment that only takes 20 minutes, and you don't need a doctor's referral," Rebecca said. "Finding breast cancer early can give people more treatment options and improve their chances of survival."

Almost 390,000 women were screened through BreastScreen NSW in the past year, the highest number on

record. This October, the “Be a friend. Tell a friend”. promotion will encourage conversations so more women across NSW book this potentially lifesaving appointment. A recent survey of more than 25,000 BreastScreen NSW clients found more than 40 per cent of women put off having their mammogram because they were too busy. Another 17 per cent said they delayed screening because they forgot.

The survey asked questions about women’s overall experience, care, comfort and access. It found more than 97 per cent of women would speak highly of BreastScreen NSW, almost all women (99.8 per cent) felt BreastScreen staff were polite and courteous, most women felt at ease with the radiographer (97.9 per cent), and 98.7 per cent of women rated their experience with BreastScreen, from initial contact to receiving their results, as either good or very good.

Professor Megan Varlow Acting CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW said all women need to take the threat of breast cancer seriously and prioritise screening. “We know that more than half of eligible women are putting off their lifesaving breast screen because everyday life got in the way. I know that all women are busy, but the reality is that breast cancer can develop without any symptoms and if you put off screening, you could miss the opportunity to detect cancer early. The message from women who use the service is clear, BreastScreen NSW provides an excellent experience. I urge all women not to take their health for granted and to make time for your breast screen that could save your life,” Professor Varlow said.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women with age and being female the biggest risk factors, not a family history of breast cancer. Women aged 50 – 74 years are recommended to have a breast screen every two years. BreastScreen NSW recommends Aboriginal women start screening at 40 years.

Any woman who has noticed a change in their breasts, like a lump, should see their doctor without delay. For more information and to make an appointment at a local BreastScreen NSW clinic or mobile van, call 13 20 50 or book online at www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au. For more information about the “Be a friend. Tell a friend” promotion visit

<https://www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/breast-cancer-awareness-month/>

Screening clinic, Tamworth. Koolkuna Building Ground Floor, 34 Dean Street Tamworth NSW 2340



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LOCAL & RELIABLE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE



0415 620 960





Taste Tamworth Festival is returning from 2-11 April 2027, and we're inviting local food, beverage, hospitality and tourism businesses to be part of the festival.

We're creating a packed program of delicious experiences for locals and visitors to enjoy, and we'd love to showcase what makes your business unique.

Whether it's a special menu, tasting experience, workshop, behind-the-scenes tour, themed event or exclusive festival offer, this is your opportunity to attract new customers and be part of one of the region's most loved food festivals.

We know it's early...

We know April 2027 feels a long way off, but we're getting in early to help local businesses make the most of a unique opportunity.

With thousands of visitors already planning trips to the region, Taste Tamworth provides a captive audience looking for memorable food, drink and hospitality experiences. By securing event concepts early, we can include participating businesses in a range of promotional opportunities and start building excitement well before the festival begins.

Early event registrations will help us promote your event through:

1. The official Taste Tamworth website
2. Advertising in the 2027 Tamworth Country Music Guide under Tamworth Regional Council's Taste Tamworth promotion
3. Big screen advertising in Bicentennial Park during the Tamworth Country Music Festival
4. Festival posters and printed promotional materials
5. eDMs to our database of more than 16,000 subscribers
6. Social media and media campaigns

For ticketed events, early promotion also provides the opportunity to generate advance sales and position your event as a unique Christmas gift experience. The earlier we know about your plans, the more opportunities we have to help put your event in front of potential visitors and encourage longer stays in the region.

Tell us what you're planning

Please complete our quick form and provide as much information as possible about your planned event.

Don't worry if all the details haven't been finalised, if you can provide a proposed date, time and event concept, we can begin incorporating it into festival planning and promotional opportunities.

Knowing what local businesses are planning also helps TRC Events team coordinate the overall festival program, avoid scheduling clashes, and create a diverse range of experiences that encourage visitors to explore more of the Tamworth Region.

Please note: To be included in the 2027 Tamworth Country Music Guide, event details must be submitted by Friday 13 November 2026. If your plans aren't fully finalised, we still encourage you to submit your proposed date, time and event concept before the deadline so we can include your event in promotional planning.

COME AND HELP US CELEBRATE 138 YEARS OF ELECTRIC STREET LIGHTING IN TAMWORTH!



Did you know that Tamworth was the first municipality in Australia to light its streets with electricity, achieving this remarkable milestone in 1888, a full 15 years before Sydney? Join us as we celebrate this pioneering achievement at the Tamworth Powerstation Museum on **Sunday 8 and Monday 9 November**, with free museum entry on both days.

Experience a piece of living history as our iconic John Fowler Steam Engine is brought to life, giving visitors a rare opportunity to see how electricity was generated in the early days and to enjoy the sights, sounds and nostalgia of a bygone era. Bring the family and discover the story that helped put Tamworth on the map!

Open 9am until 3pm on Sunday 8 and Monday 9 November 2026. Tamworth Powerstation Museum, 216 Peel Street, Tamworth.



Why do cricket balls have to be so hard?

*John Arnold, Senior Lecturer, Sport & Exercise Biomechanics,
University of South Australia*

*Tom Wycherley, Associate Professor of Nutrition and
Exercise Science, University of South Australia*

The game of cricket is believed to have originated in rural England sometime in the 16th or 17th century.

The earliest versions of cricket balls had no standard size, weight or stitching: they were handmade by locals and consisted of a round leather case filled with materials such as cork or wool. As there were no set requirements or construction methods, each ball was different, and this affected how it bounced, moved and rebounded off the bat. However, cricket spiked in popularity in the first half of the 18th century, which prompted consistency in the rules and equipment to ensure fairness and facilitate further growth of the game.

The modern cricket ball

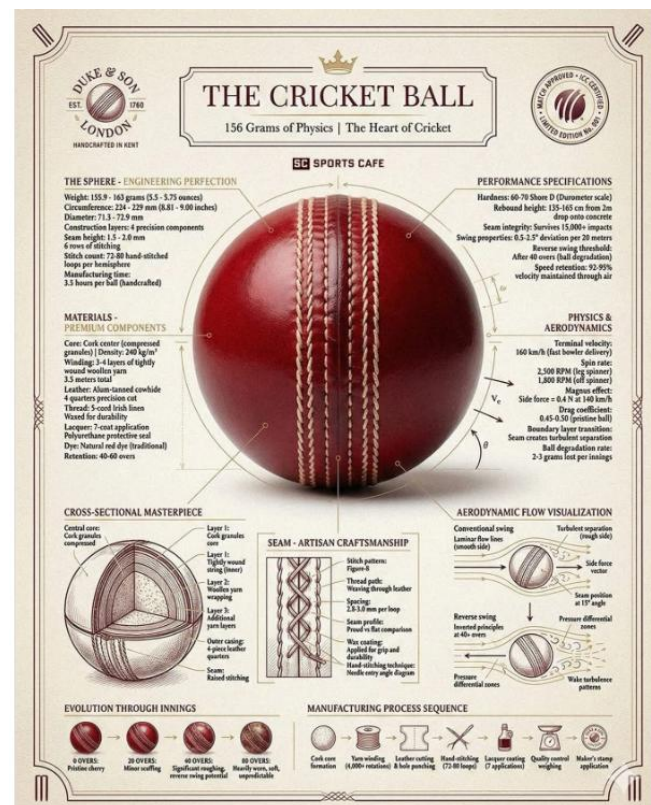
Modern balls consist of four main components: a cork and twine (string) core, a leather casing, a raised middle section (the seam) with stitching on either side and a wax or lacquer coating.

Balls are either red (for long formats such as international Test matches), white (for shorter formats such as One Day Internationals or Twenty20 games) or pink (for day-night Tests and first-class games).

The laws of cricket state that when new, the ball should weigh between 5.5 and 5.75 ounces (155.9–163 grams) and have a circumference of 22.4–22.9 centimetres.

For women's cricket, the ball can weight slightly less (140–151g) and for junior cricket (under 13) even less again (133–144g).

A set of technical standards was formalised in 1994 which stipulate the mechanical requirements for factors such as hardness, to help different manufacturers produce balls with more consistency and ensure fairness across the globe.



THE CRICKET BALL

Story

The history of the cricket ball begins with early, handmade versions made of wool or cork wrapped in leather, evolving significantly with the Duke family's invention of the six-seam ball in the 1780s. The modern era saw the introduction of white balls for night matches in 1977 and pink balls for day-night Tests in 2015 to improve visibility.

Early years to standardization

Origins: The earliest cricket balls were handmade, simple creations, with some sources dating back to the 16th century.

Materials: Initially, balls were made from materials like wool or rags wrapped in leather. By the 18th century, a cork core became standard, providing more durability and consistency.

The Duke family: The Duke family of Kent, England, are credited with making the first manufactured cricket balls from the mid-18th century. In 1775, they received a Royal Patent for their balls, and in 1780, they produced the first six-seam ball. This design became the standard for the modern cricket ball.

Colour evolution

Red balls: Red was the traditional colour for all competitive cricket, including Test matches, as the colour was considered durable.

White balls: To make matches more visible under floodlights, white balls were introduced in 1977. Today, all one-day and T20 matches are played with white balls.

Pink balls: To enable day-night Test matches, experiments led to the development of the pink ball, which was first used in a day-night Test in 2015.

Modern manufacturers

Dukes: Originally, the Duke family dominated the market. Later, the company merged with John Wisden and Co., and in 1999 introduced a white ball for the Cricket World Cup.

Kookaburra: The Australian company became a major competitor after securing a contract with the Australian Cricket Board after the second World War, and manufactures white balls used in many international matches.

SG: The Indian company, known as Sanspareils Greenlands, started manufacturing cricket balls in 1931.

So why are balls so hard?

Cricket balls are the product of centuries of tradition and the extreme physical demands of the game. They must be robust and hard-wearing, able to withstand repeated high-force impacts from both the bat and the pitch over the course of a match.

Consider the forces involved when a ball is struck by a bat. Reasonable estimates of peak forces when the ball is struck by the bat are about 17 kilonewtons (the weight of 1,700 kilograms) – enough to lift a 1.7 tonne car off the ground.

The ball also repeatedly impacts the pitch at high speeds, experiencing shear forces that gradually wear its surface. On deteriorating pitches, this wear is even more pronounced.

In Test cricket, a single ball can be bowled up to 480 times (80 overs) before the fielding team is allowed to request a replacement.

While cricket ball construction has evolved over the past 300 years, its main elements have remained largely consistent.

The introduction of the seam – the raised stitching that runs around the ball’s circumference – and the practice of shining one side of the ball to create swing are fundamental aspects of match play.

These features allow bowlers to generate movement in the air – challenging batters and shaping the strategy of the game.

The materials, construction and physical characteristics of the ball – including size, mass and density – determine its mechanical properties and influence how it bounces, spins and interacts with different surfaces and equipment.

These properties are central to cricket’s nature and style – changing them would fundamentally alter the way the game is played. Tradition and the physical requirements of the game have ensured this construction is tried, tested and fit for purpose, creating the ball we know today.

Is the ball dangerous?

Bowlers vary their deliveries to deceive the batter and gain a tactical advantage. This can include changing the speed or where they aim the ball.

A specific strategy fast bowlers may use is to aim to bounce the ball directly at a batter’s upper body or head (referred to as a “bouncer”). This can be used to intimidate the batter and/or force them to make a mistake.

Perhaps the most infamous example of this was the 1932–33 Ashes series, in which the English cricket team controversially used a consistent “bodyline” delivery approach to contain Australian batting legend Don Bradman.

Various rule changes since the 1990s have limited the number of bouncers that bowlers can deliver, making the game safer.

At the elite level, cricket balls are commonly bowled at speeds of 130–150 kilometres per hour. Occasionally, fast bowlers can exceed 160km/h. At amateur and recreational levels, bowlers commonly still reach 100km/h.

When a person is struck – whether it be a batter, fielder or umpire – the ball hardly rebounds and the momentum is absorbed by the body. The force is also concentrated in a small area, making serious or even fatal injury possible – particularly if contact is made directly to the head. The exact force depends on the timing, location and angle of impact. But there’s no doubt the combination of a small, dense ball moving at high speed and stopping almost instantly makes cricket-ball injuries potentially deadly.

There have been fatal incidents, albeit rare. The most high-profile such incident was the death of Phillip Hughes in 2014, who was hit on the neck in a Sheffield Shield match and died two days later from a vertebral artery injury.

The number of deaths has declined significantly in the past 30 years, most likely due to widespread use of enhanced safety equipment, especially helmets, by batters and close-in fielders.

So, while a layperson may view cricket as a non-contact sport, the truth is batting and fielding require great courage, considering the hardness of the ball and the speeds it can reach.

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Thanks to Terry Threlfall
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