



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

TALK ABOUT



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July 2005

A PRESIDENTIAL INVITATION

"Are you coming?"

..... Well, are you?"

I refer of course to the reunion at Wagga Wagga on 30th September to 3rd October, 2005. It is, in many respects, the warm-up exercise for our 60th Anniversary in 2007.

We conducted a similar exercise prior to our 50th anniversary in 1997 and found it to be helpful in planning for that most successful time.

At this 2005 event we have initiated responses from the City of Wagga Wagga via the Museum of the Riverina where a special ceremony will be conducted to officially open the display of material recognising the existence and influence of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College, not only on education but on all aspects of the city.

This should serve as a prerequisite for the City of Wagga Wagga to be more heavily committed to the 2007 anniversary.

I feel that it is important that we have a good attendance at the display opening as we have donated \$2,500 towards the cost of display cabinets and other equipment.

The other aspect we need to expand is the involvement of the Charles Sturt University. We already have tentative plans for this to happen and we are encouraged by the support that is forthcoming.

It has been pointed out in an interesting article in this issue that the history of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College is littered with not always pleasant times and those who suffered as a consequence should be acknowledged and a healing process available through our reunions.

The opportunity exists for the expression of ideas, and hopefully the offer of services from alumni to make our 60th anniversary a truly remarkable gathering.

Perhaps 2007 will be the last major opportunity for us to ensure that the valuable contribution made by Wagga Wagga Teachers' College will be enshrined for future generations to wonder at and admire.

I believe that a healthy attendance and input from the 2005 gathering is important for that reason.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Bob Collard,
PRESIDENT.

The Scholarship Fund is over \$44000.

LETTERS PAGE

GEOFF O'BRIEN (1949-50)

Dear Ann,
Many thanks for your effort in locating me and thank you for getting the flow of "Talkabouts" moving again. I do appreciate receiving them. Did you play tennis with me when we made a social visit to the small community of Mangoplah?

MY HISTORY

TEACHERS' COLLEGE 1949-50
Truncated Session - Small Schools Section.

First appointment T.I.C. Stony Crossing (Travel Instructions "Train from Greenthorpe to Albury, Murray Valley Coach to Swan Hill, Mail Truck to Stony Crossing") It was the most god forsaken place in the middle of a drought and a rabbit plague. I spent three years there.

T.I.C. Bowman Upper located in the mountains east of Gloucester. Spent five years there and completed eight units of a B. A. Degree. Used my Recorder skills to form a Band.

Transferred to Secondary and moved to Grenfell. Taught mainly Economics, Geography, Commerce, Social Studies. Also took on Sportsmaster, Choir, produced a musical named Zurika the Gypsy Maid. Married during these years and first son born at Grenfell.

1963-65 Took transfer to Taree High and what a change from Grenfell's 300 pupils to Taree's 1500. Second child, daughter, born here. Gained List 2 and the next year went to Young as Commerce Master. Spent a lot of my "spare" time doing a Diploma in Educational Administration. Helped with the Cadet Unit and got left holding the baby when the other two officers transferred. Gained list 3 and moved on at end 1971.

1972- 74 Accepted Deputy Principal at Warialda Central School. Really enjoyed life in Warialda. Started a brass band with the help of a town citizen. My only claim to fame was the ability to play the dreaded "Recorder".

Then came List 4.

1975-76 To Tamworth Regional Office as "Professional Assistant to the Regional Director" who was Merv Wasson. It was a fantastic change in experiences.

Principal of Glen Innes High for 11 years. Once again dabbled with music. Found School and council rooms with unused brass instruments. The kids were all beginners so we had to weather a lot of rough sounds at the beginning. B Flat and E Flat instruments were playing the same music. We gradually improved – played at every town gathering and when two music teachers were appointed things got more professional.

Retired at the end of 1987 aged 56. Stayed in Glen Innes for another 14 years. The first eight were occupied on Municipal Council as Deputy Mayor. Finally retired to Forster in 2001 and we think it is PARADISE.

One of the Talkabouts you sent me had the report on the passing of John Bourke. I spent a lot of time with "Bourkie" and have been trying to find him for years.

First I sat beside him in class in 4th and 5th Year at St. Patrick's College at Goulburn, roomed with him at Wagga in Dorm 9, then had a bit to do with him while I was at Stony Crossing and he was at Boomanoomana.

In my latter years my health has played up. I have had Parkinson's Disease for 17 years. Fortunately it has not been very severe until the last couple of years. However, I have had a lot of trouble following a hip replacement. Had an operation in March, 2004, A week later fell and broke my femur on the same side (whilst in hospital) and two weeks after that the whole lot was massively infected. As a result I spent about 35 weeks in hospital, variously between Forster, Taree, Wingham and Sydney — and there are still a lot of difficulties. I can only walk with a four wheeled walking frame.

Regards,

Geoff O'Brien (1949-50).

Geoff enclosed a photo of a group on the way to a picnic in the Stone family truck, outside Betty Stone's home. With the help of a few of his peers, we have been able to name all 17 of the group. Ed.



*Peter Carey, Pat Dalton, Don Hatch, Peter Jacobs
Barbara Hennings, Bessie Horner, Beth Sandry, Betty Stone, Pam Georgeson, Jill Venables
Shirley Poole, Shirley Morcom, Geoff O'Brien, Janette Urquhart, Kevin Tye, Lew Crabtree,
Trevor Felsh*

From Ann's Mailbag



It is only three months now until the combined reunion for all sessions will be held on the 30th September. The first flyer was in the March Talkabout. Further flyers will contain lots more detail and should soon be sent out.

If you do not get the second lot of information please contact Michelle Fawkes on 02 6338 4629.

Next week I am going to our Luncheon to be held at 30 Pitt Street down near Circular Quay. Last time **Lyn Walker** and **Bev Hamilton** from 1962-63 were going to come but both ended up in their doctor's surgery. Have you ever thought of attending?

Ring John Riley on 02 9525-5304 for details.

I do not have a lot of names containing news so I would appreciate some for the November issue. **Charlie Ferris** 1951-52 has been in hospital very ill but he is now back home with treatment back at hospital each day. He is not giving up. Charlie is very knowledgeable with computers and helps all of us.

Merv Wright was awarded "Holroyd Citizen of the Year". His wife **Cecily nee Brownlow** has had to go into a nursing home permanently. Both came from the 1948-50 session.

Do you know of any member who received some type of award? We would like to know some details please. We need some short items and some longer articles.

Jamie Martin 1969-71, promised me that he would write something for Talkabout.

Someone told me that our artist **David Rankin** is married to **Lily Brett**. He encouraged her to rekindle her writing career. One book is "In Full View" as

well as poetry. They have three children and live in America, but where?

Vernon Lilienthal 1966-67 lives in New Zealand. I sent a letter but did not receive a reply so I do not know if I sent it to the correct address.

Thanks to **June Mathews** 1955-56 for telling me that Wondalga is near Adelong. Her daughter lives there. June also informed me of the death of **Malcolm Haskew** 1956-57.

Neil McPherson, also from 1956-57, married a German lady. They have two little girls.

This was told to me by his cousin **Merle Rector** 1961-62. Are you receiving Talkabout Neil?

At last we have some of the 1971 (last session) finding their friends or indicating that they would like contact.

Russell White indicated that he was pleased to contact **Robert Tulloh**. Other names mentioned are **David Box**, **Andrew Robertson**, **Ruth McIver** and **John Huxley**. Do you know any of these people **Peter Keeble**? lecturer 1968 to end of 1971.

Does anyone know the address of **Peter Talbot Hamilton** who is/was in France? Does anyone keep in touch with him?

I believe **Ross Hosking** 1960-61 is organizing a reunion to be held next February at Broulee on the South Coast. They hope to have a "Graduation" for the members who never had one.

Elaine Saunders 1962-63 went to a 90th surprise birthday party in Brisbane and was talking to **John Roberts** 1964-65. She had known him for some time but was surprised to learn that he went to WWTC. He was not getting Talkabout so I sent him an Enrolment Form. He had moved about six years ago but had never sent us the details.

"Where are you now?"

Yes, your Talkabout came back. It had the reunion details in it.

Helen Saunders nee Kaye 1961-62, **Christine McCaffrie** nee McGrath 1965-66, **Greg Ellem** 1961-62, **Robin Cantrill** 1950-51, **Valma Hillerman** nee Challenor 1961-62, **Roma Hodgson** nee Hinten 1947-49, **Margaret Hindmarsh** nee Bastion 1956-57, **Cheryl Langfield** nee Townsend 1966-67, **Ida Blunt** nee Myers 1951-52, **Margaret McIntosh** 1949-50, **Ken Porter** 1963-64, **Joan Reynolds** nee Jenkins 1958-59.

The usual reason for being taken off the mailing list is that the article was "returned unclaimed" after posting. Please keep us up to date with your address.

Did you know that I send a Sympathy Card to the family of any deceased member if I am told the person's name. The card was designed by **Lindsay Budd** (1950-51) and people who have received it tell me how much they appreciate it. The photo on the front is the Rose Garden and was taken by **Ray Osmotherly** (1957-58). **Ken Gilbody** met his wife near this garden.

Thank you to those who informed me of the passing of those alumni listed below. It is sad that this list is getting longer all the time.

Ann Smith

In Memoriam

Warren Cupitt 1960-61
William Edward Drennan 1953-54
Malcolm George Haskew 1956-57
Donald John Hammond 1960-61
Barry Desmond Jackson 1948-50
Dorothy Dawn Meicklejohn 1953-54
nee Harris
Mervyn Geoffrey Osmond 1959-60
John Patrick Rath 1949-50
John Michael Rose 1963-64
Beverley Carol Raward 1971 nee Burrows
Karen Northy Worsley 1971

AN OLD MYSTERY

I went to WWTC in the 1951-52 session. At the end of the year, as you all know, there was a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta performed. After the 'season' we had a party. At this party I was given a package from an anonymous 'admirer'. It was a grouse foot with a cairngorm set into it. I let out a yell when I saw it and the person who gave it to me must have lost what courage they had and to this day I don't know who gave it to me. I kept the grouse claw for more than 30 years when the gradual process of decay caught up with it. The cairngorm I still have somewhere. Is there any chance that I might find out who the giver was?

Gretel Ayre

HALL OF FAME

DOUG BOUGHTON
1961-62



Dear Ann,
Congratulations on the fine work you are doing for the WWTC Alumni. I have completed the form you sent me. You asked for information about what I have been up to. It is a rather long story as Wagga was 42 years ago so I have included a copy of my NIU web page and a short vitae so you can pick out of that anything that you think might be interesting to Alumni. Most of it would probably be irrelevant to alumni readers so I won't be offended if you don't use any of it. As you can see I only lasted a couple of years as a primary teacher and most folks I graduated with probably went on in careers as teachers in NSW.

I was always interested in art and art teaching so ended up as a teacher educator in Canada in the '70's, then returned to South Australia for 20 years at the University of South Australia. In late 1999 I decided to take up a position at Northern Illinois University on the edge of Chigago.. There is a lot more action in my field in the States than there is in Australia. My life as an academic is both busy and interesting and, happily, has brought about invitations to speak in many different countries through Asia, Europe, North and South America, as well as Australia, New Zealand, and The USA. (A consequence of publishing a lot I guess). Most recently (last week) I spoke at an Asian Regional Art Education Congress in Beijing and had

the privilege of being hosted by the Capital Normal University in that city.

You asked in your letter if I knew a David Rankin who lives in the USA. Sorry I don't.

I would be pleased to continue to receive "Talkabout". Thank you again for the excellent work you are doing to facilitate this communication.

Yours sincerely,
Doug Boughton
Professor of Art and Education

"Dr. Doug Boughton is Professor of Art and Education at Northern Illinois University. His research interests include assessment of student learning in art, portfolio assessment, and art curriculum policy. He is currently World President of In SEA (International Society for Education through Art), has served as Chief Examiner Art/Design for the International Baccalaureate Organization, was Foundation Director of the National Art Education Research Council of the Australian Institute of Art Education, and Consulting Professor in Art Education to the Institute of Education in Hong Kong. He is a member of the Council for Policy Studies in Art Education (USA), is a Distinguished Fellow of the NAEA (National Art Education Association), is an honorary life member of the Australian Institute of Art Education and the South Australian Visual Arts

Education Association. In 1997 he won the *Studies in Art Education* Invited Lecture Award presented by the editorial board of *Studies* for consistent contributions through published literature to the direction and scope of the profession.

Dr. Boughton has published in excess of seventy articles and book chapters, a monograph, and three co-edited books on the topics of art education curriculum policy, assessment, and multiculturalism (including articles published in Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and Slovenian languages). He has given keynote addresses and invited lectures in various cities throughout the world including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, Singapore, Taiwan, and the USA. He has been the recipient of several research grants, and has worked as project consultant for research projects in Australia, Canada, and the United States. Most recently he has worked as co-researcher on an NEA grant investigating assessment of student learning in art partnership contexts.

Dr. Boughton has wide experience in education having taught art at elementary, junior high, and secondary school levels in both Australia and Canada. He currently teaches graduate courses in assessment and research at Northern Illinois University."

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HALL OF FAME

HOLROYD CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Merv Wright (1948-50) was presented with the Holroyd Citizen of the Year award at the Australia Day awards ceremony at the Holroyd Centre in January 2005.

Holroyd Mayor John Brodie said "Merv has made a significant contribution to the community, demonstrating commitment to the betterment of the quality of life of others. He is an inspiration and role model."

Merv is married to Cecily (Brownlow 1949-50) and they have a son with cerebral palsy.

Merv has dedicated his life to empowering disabled people by encouraging them to play sports with able-bodied peers.

He is president of Wentworthville Leagues Club which was one of the first clubs to allow disabled people to play lawn bowls in a mainstream setting. In 1977 he co-ordinated the Far East and South Pacific Games for the disabled.

He has also been the Australian Blind Bowlers Association's president and is a member of the Holroyd Disability Services advisory committee, comprising councillors and community members who recommend solutions to the concerns of disabled locals.

LEW MORRELL REMEMBERS MERVE AT COLLEGE

Many of our Alumni are unaware that W.W.T.C. competed in the final of the Group 13 Northern Zone in 1949 capably coached by Norm Donnison, our lecturer in Craft.

After this wonderful achievement, the Principal, the late George Blakemore, did not approve of College competing in the Group football which he regarded as "professional football" and so College was relegated to the Blake Cup competition.

The Daily Advertiser reported:

"Wagga defeated Teachers' College by 20 points to 18 in one of the finest Rugby League matches played in Wagga for years."

The paper went on to report :

"There were many outstanding players but probably the best of them was College full-back Merv Wright.

Wright has given many splendid displays this season, but yesterday he easily surpassed any of his previous performances.

His handling and running with the ball were excellent; but the highlight of his display was the way that he moved into the three quarter line to join in passing movements and make the extra man.

On one occasion he flashed up to join in a passing movement that ultimately resulted in one of the most magnificent tries scored at the Wagga Cricket Ground for years."

GOOD ON YOU MERV!

Lew Morrell (1949-50)

As PROMISED at the dinner in Canberra in January, 2003, a reunion is planned in Tweed Heads in 2006 for ex-students of the 61-62 session.

As if by magic a committee has been formed to assure all participants a wonderful weekend of fun and frivolity.

We plan to have an early bird get together for those arriving Friday, activities for Saturday culminating in a Dinner-Dance and farewell gathering on Sunday.

Tweed Heads is situated at the southern end of the Gold Coast where accommodation ranging from budget to many stars abounds. November 10 - 12 has been selected as the weekend and we are seeking expression of interest over the next few months.

Arrangements will be finalised next year but if you could make contact as soon as possible, we will endeavour to give you a great time in what we hope will be a weather perfect season.

The committee comprises :

Barbara Deece (Todhunter), Bill Quantrill, Keith Wood and Estelle Hammond (Willak). Please contact Estelle on 0755366748 or stell10@bigpond.com if you are interested in attending.

POTTED BIOGRAPHY

Wendy Hyett 1967-68

Dear Lindsay,

Ann Smith sent me two copies of "Talkabout" and a form to notify the Alumni Office of my whereabouts. I really enjoyed reading Talkabouts, especially the "Potted Biographies" so I am enclosing a Potted Biography of my career.

1969- Adelong Central, Parkes East and Forbes North - all in the first four weeks of Term 1!

At the end of Term 2 I was transferred to Portland Central, replaced by a married person.

1969-70 Portland Central - snow, coal fires and cement dust.

1971-75 Heathcote East - Choral Concerts, Drama Festivals.

1976 Adviser Relief, Dubbo District - replaced teachers doing consultancy work for one or two days - schools such as Nyngan, Marra Creek, Warren, Peak Hill etc.

1976 - Term 2 - 1988 - Dubbo West - a school on two sites - snow excursions, District Commissioner of Girl Guides - building new hall, opening Brownie pack for girls form Westhaven SSP.

1979 - Diploma of Teaching RCAE.

1988 -89 Appointed as first Itinerant Support Teacher Behaviour in Dubbo District - covered Years K - 10 in schools such as Bourke, Louth, Gilgandra, Wellington, etc.

Placed on List 2 while in this role.

"Outback Children's Spectacular - 1988.

1990 - 2004 Sussex Inlet - ET then AP. Trained as LOTE Teacher - Bahasa Indonesia. Moved into brand new school buildings on a new site in 1993. Like all executives I became very proficient at school maintenance - unblocking sinks, identifying termites as they crawled out of the hall stage (twice), etc.

The school was fortunate to survive the 2002 bush fire with minimal damage.

So was my house!

A terrifying time.

I retired in May, 2004 and I live in Sussex Inlet.

Wendy Hyett 1967-68

TEACHING MEMORIES

EXCHANGE TEACHING IN LONDON

(In the March Talkabout John Cassidy wrote of his experiences as a volunteer teacher in New Guinea.

In this edition he describes what it was like to be an exchange teacher in a Catholic Junior School in London. Ed)

Late in December, 1979, I flew to London to teach on exchange at St. Francis De Sales Junior School in Tottenham, London in the Borough of Haringey. I went from an Australian summer to a British winter. When the plane landed at Heathrow at 7.00 am, it was pitch dark and two degrees. I spent New Year in Brighton with relatives and then travelled to Muswell Hill (London) where my English counterpart lived. (We had already agreed to swap flats for the exchange.)

St. Francis De Sales School or “St. Frantic’s” was directly opposite the Hotspurs football ground in Tottenham. As well as teaching, I was in charge of “Boys’ Games” – which meant taking the boys in the Soccer team to their matches and coaching them. What I knew about Soccer would have fitted on the back of a postage stamp but I was already reading a book of the rules of the game.

This was my first experience of teaching in a Catholic school. We started the day with prayers and also had prayers before and after each break. I was to teach Third Year Juniors, the equivalent of Year Five in New South Wales. The children in my class were chatty but seemed very friendly – there was one little group of rather wilful girls referred to by the relief teacher as “the coven”. On the first day of school, Monday, 7th January, 1980, one of the girls asked me to say something “in Australian”. I think my reply was a disappointment.

For my first stint on playground duty at recess I wore my overcoat, a cap, a scarf and a pair of gloves. There were a number of games of soccer in progress and it was a good idea to watch where the balls were going. People hired by the Borough did playground duty at lunch time.

The children were served a hot meal at lunchtime in the dining room.

Teachers were able to have a hot meal each day in return for taking a turn on dining room supervision. On my first day after the first course of the lunch, a boy at my elbow said, “Sir, do you want afters?”

I answered in the affirmative and a plate of dessert duly appeared in front of me. The ladies in the kitchen quickly decided I was a starving Antipodean and started giving me a double helping of dessert. This went on until one day when my dessert was the standard size. When I commented on this, a lady said in a refined voice, “Well, Mr. Cassidy, with all the cuts the government has now decided to make, obviously the first thing that had to go was your second helpings”.

In the afternoon on my first day at school, the Welfare Assistant (Teacher’s Aide) brought me a cup of coffee at 2.30 pm. This was most welcome. (Apparently there used to be a break in the middle of the afternoon and the union had negotiated an agreement that included a “cuppa” for everyone).

One of the subjects I taught the children was Religion. It was fairly easy to follow the Religious programme that was set down. Looking back through the program, I could see that the children had done some work on the Reformation. I looked at one girl’s book and she had written, “King Henry VIII closed all the monasteries and all the MUGS had to leave”. It may not have been an accident as I gradually learned that the girl concerned had a nice sense of irony.

The first Soccer match the boys played was after school one afternoon. It went well enough. There were no fights or tantrums and someone told me when to blow the whistle. I returned to school to find that the gates had been locked. I climbed over the gates in my overcoat and “wellie” boots and then found the door locked. I banged loudly on the door and the Caretaker came to let me in. I said I had been at a Soccer match and was locked out. He said, “You didn’t tell ME you had a Soccer match after school”. I made a point of telling him every time after that. The

Caretaker was a force to be reckoned with. When we had a Parent/Teacher evening scheduled to conclude at 9.00pm., the Caretaker started switching off the lights right on the dot because he was only being paid until then. In the middle of a concert one night, there was a long pause because the Caretaker had to be summoned to unlock the piano. He arrived with a large bunch of keys and walked right across the stage. I noticed he was minus his teeth. When the staff toilets were out of action for three days, the Caretaker managed to convey the information to each person and simultaneously accuse him/her of being the culprit. He took leave in order to join the picket line outside the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton and even showed us a placard before he left. Many of the schools in the Borough had been closed for weeks the previous year because the caretakers went on strike and the headmasters were not prepared to cross the picket line. The Caretaker told me off one afternoon for letting a child have a bottle of milk.

My Soccer adventures were to continue as the year went on. I found that it often started to rain just as the match was starting and continued to rain for the rest of the game. I remember standing on the sideline and wondering just how cold it had to be to get frostbite.

I was the only male on the staff, apart from the headmaster. I think several of the ladies on the staff were quite shocked when I said it was not unusual in Deniliquin for a child who had been sick to bring a note from their parents explaining that he/she had been “in bed with a wog”. It was quite common for a child at St. Frantics to arrive with a note saying that he/she had been “under the doctor” or “under the hospital”. One child arrived with a note saying that he had been away with diarrhoea and that it had been “running in the family”.

There was an amazing array of fixed gym equipment in the school hall. When the children were going to have a P.E. lesson, they would all get changed together in the classroom. Some children would tie jumpers around their waists – lap-lap style – at the front and the back before getting changed. One

TEACHING MEMORIES

girl who sat in front of a cupboard would open the cupboard doors and then stand in front, partially closing the doors so that she was mostly hidden from view.

Early in the year the school had a visit from the Mayor. The headmaster said there was to be no fuss. He would “simply be greeted with an archway of flowers, a massed choir, a long red carpet and bouquets of flowers being thrown as he passed.” It turned out to be very low key.

The children were fiercely loyal to the Hotspurs football team. One of my Irish boys (who seemed to attract trouble wherever he went) came in one day crying and dishevelled. It turned out he had been given a hiding by the senior girls because someone told them he was an Arsenal supporter.

One day when I was having a haircut at Muswell Hill, I told the barber I was teaching at Tottenham. He said “Now what do you want to go and do that for?” It was usual to tip the barber. He had a Mercedes parked outside and I had just got off a bus. There was a Chinese takeaway just around the corner from my flat. I noticed they had their Mission Statement on the wall. Whenever I walked in, the man would look straight at me and say “One Chicken and Sweet Corn Soup, one Beef Curry and one Fried Rice”. Several of the shops at Muswell Hill had signs in their windows saying, “Please give correct change due to national shortage of money”. I saw a fireplace shop called “Amazing Grates”, a lighting shop called “The Light Fantastic”, a clothing shop called “Stark Naked” and an antique shop called “Going for a Song”.

The headmaster sent me to visit a very progressive school in the City. I knew I was in the right place when I asked a child where the headmaster’s office was and he said “Oh, Henry’s room is over there. Please follow me and I’ll show you”. After a short talk with the headmaster, I was taken to the staff room. Everyone was sitting on the floor and very casually dressed. I was wearing my usual school garb of coat, collar and tie etc.. Someone disappeared and got me a chair. I felt a bit ridiculous

perched on my chair but I knew, from bitter experience, that sitting on the floor would give me a sore back. After speaking with the teachers for a short time, I walked around the school which was set out on an open plan basis. The children went to whichever learning area they wished for a set period of time and then moved on to another learning area. There was obviously a lot of parental support and involvement. It would not have worked at St. Frantic’s.

After the long summer break, I took over a new class – Year 2 Juniors. They were all nice kids and a pleasure to teach.

I asked my next-door neighbour why the dustmen (garbage men) had not called one week and she said “They do when they feel like it. They’re all PIGS and our lot are the laziest in the whole depot”. I would not call that a vote of confidence. The dustmen usually came very early in the morning. I was amused when one of them knocked on my door shortly before Christmas to collect the “Christmas tip for the dustmen guvner.” The guy had a little notebook and a pen, no doubt to record how much each person gave.

When my neighbour found a wasp nest on her back wall, she arranged for someone from the Borough to come and remove it. In the meantime I found that I had a wasp nest outside my bathroom. She asked the Borough men if they could do both wasp nests and we would share the cost. Their reply was that they only had enough powder on the truck for ONE APPLICATION –(perhaps it was a toy truck) – so they would have to make another visit for me. We both had to pay.

I was able to attend the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey, the Queen Mother’s 80th Birthday Service at St Paul’s and a Garden Party at Lancaster House. I visited the Lakes District, the Scottish Highlands and the Isle of Skye. In the summer vacation I did a whirlwind tour of Europe (“If it’s Tuesday, this must be Belgium”). I went to the Passion Play at Oberammergau and became so ill when I reached the top of a mountain in Switzerland that I

snapped one photo and immediately took the next cable car down.

I spent all my spare money going to musicals, plays and operas. I went to Covent Garden one night to an opera. I asked the old lady sitting next to me where the Queen usually sat when she came to an opera. She gave me a very sympathetic smile and said, “Oh, I am sorry, pet. I’m afraid she’s not coming tonight”. I went to a concert one night. My seat number was thirteen. I found that the side row ended at twelve and the middle row started at fourteen. I walked to the back and found myself to be a part of a group of dejected-looking “thirteens” who had to be “re-located”, to quote the manager. The same thing happened another night and everyone moved along one for me – I don’t know how the problem was resolved at the other end.

I sometimes wondered if Martin’s arrival in Deniliquin was more of a culture shock for him than my arrival in London was for me. At the time that I was in London, classes were being conducted for the wives of American businessmen to help them cope with the culture shock of coming to Britain. One American tourist told me that she thought the shop assistants in London were assistants “only in as far as they are present in the shop”.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at St. Frantic’s and found it went very quickly. At the final assembly before Christmas the headmaster said “Mr.Cassidy very sensibly is going as far away from St. Francis’s as it is possible to get. He is going back to Australia”.

John Cassidy (1963-64).

LETTERS PAGE

ISOBEL CORIN (POPLE) 1954-55

Isobel Corin (nee Pople) succumbed to cancer in December 2003. Ann mentioned her passing in the last Talkabout but had no details. Her daughter Michelle contacted Ann and said that she had a letter her mother had written to the Armidale High School early that year and was happy for it to be published in Talkabout.

I'm sure those who knew Isobel will enjoy reading her story. Ed.

13 March 03

My brother Graham and I were both born in Armidale. I was born on 4 August, 1936. Our older sister, Marjorie was born in Sydney (Ryde) to where the family moved at the outbreak of World War II when my father enlisted and my mother had the benefit of living relatively closer to her parents at Strathfield. We rented at Beecroft where there was easy access by train and then bus to my grandparents.

When my father returned after the war he was appointed Divisional Engineer of the PMG in Armidale so the family returned to live in Armidale. He cherished the idea of self-subsistence so that when a farm on the outskirts of Armidale was for sale, he bought it. The fact that there was no electricity or town water was a minor point. He, at least, had acreage and he became a weekend farmer. We kids were thrilled that it was a two-storey house with cellar and pantry — no bathroom, though Dad soon built one off the landing.

We used aladdin lamps for lighting until electricity was installed. Shortage of water was always a problem — we had an underground tank and a storage tank off the outbuildings. He had purchased two cows — Molly and Gypsy and so it became the task of the kids to milk them!

Part of his plan was to make his children independent and appreciative of the necessities of life so a 'Job Book' was instituted where all the jobs were listed down the side — washing up, setting the table, milking, feeding the pigs, ducks and chooks, separating, making butter etc, etc. The going rate was usually 3d with a shared job paying 1.5d each. At the end of the week we might have accrued something like 10/-. We were responsible for all of our own costs including clothing and medical expenses — I remember I was still paying off some dental bills when I went to Teachers College!

I was relatively good at sport so my main interest at High School was in anything to do with sport of any kind. I wanted to be a PE teacher so studied the leaving certificate results of older students who had achieved this and aimed to get similar results. In our final year we travelled to Sydney during the August holidays to undergo our medical tests to satisfy the requirements for general primary teaching.

That done - back to school for the exams. I then looked for a job at the Commonwealth Employment Office. An orange farmer in Uralla was looking for an able bodied person to help his wife who suffered from diabetes. I caught the train — he met me at the station — they seemed nice people. I was to sleep in the sleep-out section of the verandah which been partitioned off. Unfortunately, they didn't tell me that the previous incumbent had contracted polio — this was 1953 when it was rife — and it wasn't long before I too showed signs that things were far from right. I had an insatiable desire for oranges (fortunately there were plenty of them) and I would suck and devour 20 of them at one sitting. Eventually the farmer had to admit defeat and drive me home where I took to my bed for the next couple of months. I'm sure the oranges were responsible for the fact that mine was a mild case of polio not requiring an iron lung. And although I couldn't walk for some time, I persevered and remember even now, that joy at being able to pull my undies on!

When the leaving certificate results were published, I had achieved my minimum goal — IA and 4Bs — enough to get me into PE but unfortunately they required a further medical which I had no hope in passing!

What to do? Having already passed the general primary medical in the August holidays I applied for Wagga Wagga Teachers College and limped and hobbled my way through 2 delightful, domestic years down there.

My father had been appointed as Divisional Engineer PMG of Wollongong, so having spent 2 years away from home, I applied for local areas and taught at Primbee, near Port Kembla, my classes consisting of mainly Greek and some German kids. What a revelation that was — even calling the roll was a challenge! I chuckle when I hear the political propaganda about class sizes now — I had a combined 2nd/3rd grade of 52 pupils complicated by the mixture of script and cursive writing at these levels - but we managed. I even learnt to tolerate the strong odour of garlic when marking books after the lunch break.

I had a desire to explore our great wide brown land so applied for the MIA and taught at Leeton and Murrumbidgee (2-teacher school). Then back home again to Bulli.

There was a strong feeling of 'the woman's place is in the home' so that when I married in 1962, I resigned and set about caring for three kids. After 8 years away from teaching and a TV propaganda programme insisting that I was needed back at school, I was fortunate to find a 2-day a week teacher-librarian job at Emu Plains Primary School. My youngest (Greg) was only 2 years old, but happy to stay across the road with a neighbour and the 2 days became 3 days, then 4 and life was pretty full on.

In 1973 my husband had 6 months furlough due, so we took the children then aged 5, 8 and 10 on an O/S trip - spending time in the Greek Islands as well as in Great Britain and Europe. One magic week was spent in Edinburgh where the Commonwealth Universities Conference was being held. He was a representative of UNSW — our children were cared for, the weather was beautiful and we even attended the Military Tattoo.

Our 6 months O/S meant that we returned penniless — the child endowment providing the necessary grocery money and my job was still available for me. But we looked at Australia with different eyes. There were things done better O/S but locals had a reluctance to learn about them! The French trains impressed us, as did the tavernas on the Greek Islands and their acceptance of family members to visit them — I had a definite Charmian Clift period. Australia's physical isolation has made it desirable for Australians to travel frequently to observe the good and bad things abroad. Our daughter (Michele) travelled to Denmark as a Rotary exchange student in 1981. Her year there had a huge impact, not only on her, but on us, and her host families — I think it's one of the best ways to ensure international understanding. We have been back to Denmark a number of times and frequently host Danish visitors. Looking back on my life, I feel I have been very fortunate. I don't think I would have been a great PE teacher after all — I certainly enjoyed my years as teacher-librarian immensely.

Now, in 2002, at the age of 66, I have been diagnosed as having lung cancer — a bit hard to accept at first for a non-smoking, very active and fit person. But I'm grateful that my kids are all grown up and that cancer allows that most valuable of commodities — time. Something that doesn't happen to people involved in terrorist attacks or in accidents. I'm hoping, of course, for a miracle and am doing my utmost to think in positive terms and am deeply appreciative of each precious day.

Isobel Corin (1954-55)

LETTERS PAGE

MERLE RECTOR (MCPHERSON) 1961-62

Dear Sirs,

I've not ever thought my life story was worth publishing, but for Talkabout it is thus:

From a young age I knew I wanted to become a primary school teacher and travel to Canada. Having been born and brought up in Jerilderie, we moved to Sydney when I was nine and later I attended Hornsby Girls' High School where, on graduation, I received a Commonwealth Scholarship as well as Teacher's College Scholarship to study science at both Sydney Universities. Luckily I was able to change the Teachers College Scholarship to study at Wagga Wagga Teachers College so, at age sixteen, I headed off on the train on my own to Wagga Wagga...a chance to overcome my shyness and make lifetime friends. I lived in residence in 1961 and back at home in 1962 as my folks moved to Wagga Wagga. Then followed appointments to Junee Primary School for three years and Curtin Primary in Canberra for another two years.

When Canada was desperate for teachers, I headed off in 1968 on a six week cruise on a P&O liner to Vancouver where I landed a job a week later, teaching music and Grade 4. A few months after my arrival I met my future husband, Barry Rector, the tenor soloist of a downtown Vancouver United Church - and the rest is history as they say!! We married in 1974 and had one daughter, Shayna in 1978 and another, Heidi in 1981. Sadly Heidi passed away in 1986 so life hasn't always been a bowl of cherries! In spite of losing a daughter to cancer, we have been richly blessed and count one of our best achievements being part of a small group of people who had a vision in 1989 to open a hospice for terminally ill children which was achieved in 1995 and where we worked as family support volunteers.

Our only daughter, Shayna was lucky enough to receive a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship which enabled her to complete her Masters of Business Administration degree at Rotterdam School of Management in the Netherlands a year ago. She is presently residing in Switzerland doing consulting work.

Life has been full of surprises but music has certainly played a big part. Barry performed with the Vancouver Opera for twenty one years as well as other Vancouver companies while he held down a full time teaching position. Now he combines his singing with melodic whistling and in fact will be a judge at the International Whistlers' Convention in Louisburg, North Carolina in April 2005.

We have both been singing with the Vancouver Bach Choir for the past twelve years. It is very rewarding singing major works with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. I am now also taking organ lessons, something I vowed to do when I struggled to play the organ at the Methodist church in Junee so many years ago!!

After teaching for just over thirty eight years in fifteen schools with twenty one Principals, I retired in June of 2001. I really miss the children but not the report cards and staff meetings! I am free to pursue my hobbies, one of which is travel. I've been lucky enough to visit Australia five times since I retired. I have an elderly mother living in Wagga Wagga as well as an ill sister, Lynette McPherson, WWTC student of 1959-60, in Parkes. I have also travelled to Europe three times in the past three years to visit with our daughter and to surprise her for her latest Graduation.

I have been unable to attend any of our class reunions, but maybe one day that will be possible. It was fun to receive reports and photos of our class of 1961-62, forty year reunion held in Canberra. I do still feel connected as we have been delighted to entertain in our home here in Coquitlam, a suburb of Vancouver, Canada, former WWTC colleagues namely Jeanette Paul, Joan Sutherland and Mary Rees.

Congratulations and thanks go to the Editors and contributors of Talkabout as well as those involved with the Alumni association. It is important for us to acknowledge the role our College played in our lives and careers. Those of us who have been lucky enough to teach many thousands of children over the years owe a great deal of debt to our teachers and instructors. I must say I feel privileged to still keep in contact with the Kindergarten teacher who inspired me many decades ago in her classroom in Jerilderie!!

In closing, I do have to say how fortunate I was to attend Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. I believe I had absolutely the best education and preparation for teaching, thus enabling me to not only cope with challenges, but also to excel in many teaching assignments...teaching all subjects to students from age 5 to 13, teaching special needs children, providing learning assistance, enjoying teaching choirs, bands, an elementary school orchestra, guitar & ukulele groups, Orff instruments, music appreciation, producing musicals and much more

Wishing you all the best,

Merle E. Rector (1961-62)

PAM TREWIN (KNIGHT) (1956-57)

My only claim to fame whilst attending WWTC happened in one of Gordon Young's (Youngie's) lectures. If you can remember he always insisted on a student standing in front of the class and giving a review of the previous lecture.

Each week I lived in fear and dread of being called out. I would cowardly slink down in my chair and hide behind the student in front of me. I was such a shy and quiet person, that hardly anyone even remembers me and standing before the class was like a life sentence. However, I always had the review prepared.

Of course the fateful day arrived and I heard "Miss Knight would you come out and give the review". I just about died. I replied "No". There was silence! I think I got more recognition than if I'd just gone out and got it over and done with.

He said, "You cannot or you will not!?" I replied, "I will not!". More head turning in my direction. "See me after the lecture", was his reply.

Everyone was congratulating me thinking I was bold and brave and not hearing my knees knocking or my heart thumping.

After the lecture I had to face my executioner and had to explain fully. After the interview he said, "You will present the review next week" and walked off.

You know the old story, "Cowards die many times before their death". Well that was me, because I was never called upon to do it and I think he just enjoyed seeing me stew in my own juice!

Pam Trewin (1956-57)

COMING EVENTS

Alumni Association Meeting:

at Teachers Credit Union
Homebush
on Tuesday 9th August 2005.

WWTC Alumni Luncheon:

at Icons Brasserie
Marriott Sydney Harbour Hotel
30 Pitt Street Sydney
on Tuesday 16th August 2005.
(to book contact John Riley)

TEACHING MEMORIES

MY FIRST SCHOOL APPOINTMENT

In 1957, my first appointment was to Mt. Seaview Timbers Pty. Ltd., yes, that's correct, not to a town or village, but to a timber mill. The actual Mt. Seaview was at least 20 miles away as the crow flies and there was no settlement there at that time. The mill, which cut coachwood to be used as rifle butts at Lithgow Small Arms Factory, was situated between Yarras and Yarrowich on the then unsealed Oxley Highway. This was 60 miles west of Wauchope and 27 miles from the nearest school and post office at Yarras.

Like many other small school appointees I had been unable to find this place on any map. I received my notification of appointment in Rockhampton, Qld. (where my parents then lived) only three days prior to school commencement. Arriving in Wauchope on the Brisbane-Sydney express well after midnight I was met by the Mill manager and bundled into a hotel room. However, I was astonished to discover that I had to go another 60 miles by truck at 6am in order to be at school on time on the first day.

The mill hamlet was made up of the mill, the school, nine houses and a boarding house for single men. The five small weatherboard shacks in the married quarters were painted black with sump oil. There was one Army Nissan hut made of corrugated iron which looked like a half water tank on its side. Three slightly larger shacks on a hillock at one end were reserved for the manager, the foreman and the engineer and their families. The boarding house had only basic facilities and had guests only four days a week (ie the four working days). The boarding house manager/cook and his family lived in very cramped quarters at one end of this building. The Oxley Highway ran right through the hamlet and the whole was surrounded by dense bush.

The school was conducted in an unfenced building which also served as the local hall and meeting place. The old fashioned long box-top desks in my classroom were very uncomfortable, especially for the Lower Division children. In my first year there were eleven pupils. This number included two girls doing High School correspondence courses.

The children came from about eight families who lived in the mill cottages. Incidentally, there were also about 15 dogs!

The hut provided for the teacher had no bathroom or kitchen.

It contained a single bed, a small table and stool, a kerosene heater on which one could boil a kettle and a curtain across one corner to form a wardrobe. Later, the Inspector, in a report to the Department of Education, referred to this hut as a piano box. The bathroom and kitchen were found in the single men's quarters about 60 yards distant. When there was a resident cook there were meals, when there wasn't, one had to manage as best one could, or, at times, be rostered for one hot meal a day with one of the families.

I recall that on one occasion a boarding house manager threatened to kill me because of the way I had reacted to his daughter's profuse bad language in school. He stormed into the building in front of the children shouting a stream of profanities, shaking his fist and making threats and positioned himself about an inch in front of me, in this way pinning me to the blackboard. Fortunately I remained silent and when he finally ran out of puff some minutes later I quietly enquired: "And now Mr —, would you like to hear my side of the story?" He immediately turned around and stamped off slamming the door behind him leaving both the children and myself stunned. Later that day it was with great difficulty that I wrenched my lunch plate out of his wife's hands after she had refused to hand it to me even though I had paid for it.

The mill workers worked very long hours which meant that they were there for only four days a week. They quickly disappeared on Fridays and some of the families would go away as well. When the mill was working we had electricity, so at other times we used lanterns and candles. The only telephone available for the teacher to use was in the mill office 500 yards away and there was only one mail delivery a week – on Saturdays. A bus passed by on Fridays travelling from Armidale to Port Macquarie, but always far too early to be of any use to the teacher. Its return journey on Saturdays invariably proved to be a special event. A small group of people always waited for the mail bag and the needed supplies which it brought. The nearest general store was three miles away at Ginger's Creek which was a stopping place for almost all passing traffic.



The teacher's hut

We frequently walked to this store that also sold petrol and provided rescue services for broken down vehicles especially those who were bogged in wet weather.

About four or five vehicles would pass each way each day but usually between 10am and 2pm as motorists generally chose to begin their journeys in the morning and to travel over this lonely highway in daylight. Rarely did we hear a car at night.

I used to try and get to Wauchope each weekend but remember that I frequently waited in vain to hitch hike to town on Friday afternoons as often no vehicle passed by between 3.30pm and nightfall. On these occasions I would have to try again on Saturday mornings but this could mean arriving in town after all the shops had closed at 12.30pm!

The return journey to my school after a weekend away was one I came to dread – even to hate! It was a nightmare! It was necessary to leave Wauchope on Sunday evenings at 6.30pm in the mill truck. The mill manager and the accountant were always allowed to sit in the cabin with the driver but the rest of us sat in the back under a canvas canopy. The benches ran along the sides of the truck and the floor space was taken up with equipment and supplies. This meant that we could not face the direction of travel and that on the many bends we were thrown first one way and then the other. They always stopped at the pub at Long Flat for 'refreshments' and, when everyone was feeling happy, resumed the journey. The driver usually was reckless and we lurched from side to side over that badly corrugated gravel road. Worst of all were the thick clouds of dust which enveloped us, especially on the bends or when we passed traffic going in the opposite direction. Soon we all were chocolate brown in colour with

TEACHING MEMORIES

matted hair and eyebrows whilst nothing was adequate to prevent the dust penetrating our eyes, noses and throats! Clothes became filthy, talking was impossible and the whole journey sheer misery! Invariably someone would be sick and I recall that on a number of occasions I helped in a search by torchlight as we walked back down the road looking for somebody's teeth!

If I didn't take the Sunday night journey the only alternative was to rise between 3am and 4am on Monday and hurry to the outskirts of Wauchope. Here I would hail passing timber jinkers heading for the bush to bring a load of logs into town to other mills. The drivers soon got to know me and readily picked me up. In this way I had a comfortable ride in the cabin and was at school by 6am. I grew to prefer this mode of transport but one had to watch the weather closely because the timber jinkers didn't go out if it rained!

At that time my parents were going through serious economic hardship (through no fault of their own) and I was doing all I could to send money to them. For this reason I was unable to have my own transport. And, for the first few months I didn't even have a radio! I remember how excited I was the day I had enough money to buy my first portable battery-electric radio in Wauchope (I remember how heavy it was!). In my second year I was able to buy a second hand AJS500 motorbike. I had some hair raising journeys on that machine but that is quite another story!

The Inspector of Schools didn't visit me until almost the end of my first year, complaining when he did that I was so far from Kempsey – in fact, I was the last school in his inspectorate. However I desperately needed his encouragement and some reassurance that I was doing things in the right way! I wished he had come much sooner! Had he been more communicative I would have applied for a transfer at the end of that first year but I assumed I had to remain there to complete my country service! It dawned on me at a later stage why the school had had three teachers during the previous year, each staying for only one term! However, 45 years later I was to learn why I had had to remain there for a second year!

In my second year (1958) there were only nine pupils and the school was threatened with closure. So, the shopkeepers, three miles away, offered to bring their four and a half year old son to school each day in order to keep the school open. This year proved to be a happy one for me although I was often

lonely – there being no one around of my own age or interests.

Nearly 20 years later, in the mid 1970s when I returned after spending almost ten years in Peru, South America, I took my wife and two small sons up the now sealed Oxley Highway to see my first school. I remember being surprised at how many of the bends had been taken out of the road when they had put down the bitumen. However when we arrived at the site I discovered that both the mill and the school had closed long before and that it was very difficult to work out where the school and the teacher's hut had even stood. There was no trace of the mill either. The whole area was overgrown with bush. I therefore thought that I would never hear of that school again.

Imagine my surprise then, when in 2002, the year I retired from teaching, my phone rang, and male voice asked: 'Is that Hugh Varnes?'

I replied in the affirmative.

He then gave his name.

I said, 'Oh, Mt. Seaview Timbers Pty.Ltd.!'.

He said: 'You remember?'

I replied: 'How could I forget?' I then realised that the caller was affected emotionally by my response.

This turned out to be the boy who at four and a half years of age had been brought to the school in my second year in order to keep the school open. He had had no idea that the teacher he had apparently revered had been only 20 at the time! Not long after we met I turned 65 and a few months later he celebrated his 50th birthday!

His had been a colourful life but in many ways a traumatic one as well. He reminded me of the garden plot each pupil had had and of the art, music and scripture classes – and even of a school play we produced, all of which had apparently made a deep impression on him. He had become a very successful major-domo, chef and florist with skills in interior decorating, landscape gardening and a thorough appreciation of art. To my amazement he traced all of these things back to his experience in his first school – even his cooking which he said he practised in the plasticine tray!

What touched me most was that he said he had first known love, passion and inspiration in his life, at his first school. He stressed that it was the inspiration and the passion which had remained with him throughout his life. I learned that he had tracked me down through some quite remarkable circumstances but that is his story! I now at long last knew why I had been at that school for that second year!

This man, Warren Hannah, has been extremely kind to me. One example I must share with you is that the walls of the Department of Housing bed-sitter I occupy in my retirement are adorned with a magnificent painting of Narrawallee Beach and four valuable framed etchings by Pamela Griffith, the well known Australian artist who is also one of Australia's foremost etchers. These have been lent to me – indefinitely – by my former pupil!

In this totally unexpected but wonderful way, I am reminded every day of the years I spent so long ago at my first, now totally unknown, small school.

Hugh C.Varnes (1955-56)



Hugh (left) with Warren Hannah in 2004

LETTERS PAGE

A LETTER OF INTEREST

Dear "Talkabout" Committee,
First let me congratulate you all on your publication and your energy in getting old colleagues together again after, in many cases, 4 or 5 decades. It's heartening to see that people want to remember significant parts of their lives and those who made up these personal epochs. Your scholarship is also an excellent bridge between the alumni and today's students. It is important however, if this reflection is to be of true value, to remember the not so wonderful along with the wonderful. I was a student at W.W.T.C. in 1968/69 when it was an institution of extraordinary conservatism and narrow mindedness. One can live with this of course but sadly it forced out some potentially excellent teachers and damaged many of those who saw their course through to the end.

Another very unfortunate side to this was a palpable Christian chauvinism actively expressed by a number of the staff who unashamedly peddled their views in class and not infrequently challenged, quite threateningly, the views and morality of non Christian students. There was little or no recognition of the power relationship that exists between a 17 year old student miles from home and a mature teacher with the power to fail or pass. There were however, courageous, insightful and supportive teachers who were bent on preparing young adults for a worthwhile and rewarding career in teaching and spent the whole time concentrating on that.

I remember with great affection and gratitude the work of Brian Fone who introduced us to an approach to teaching that not only respected the students' intellectual and emotional integrity but gave us real tools for igniting the imagination and energy of our students that have served me well throughout my various careers. Brian was not only a profoundly human individual but years ahead of his time. There were others also, such as Peter Keeble, Mr and Mrs Sale, Jack Thompson and the art teacher, who never taught me but understood where I and many others were coming from.

My point here is that when you are remembering all the past friends and experiences at the big reunion later this year have a drink for those who didn't make it and for those teachers of extraordinary integrity who had to constantly swim against the current, which at times became a tsunami, in order to simply do their job professionally. Cheers,
Philip Porter.

*Dear Philip,
Thank you for your letter to the Editor. I will pass it on for you.*

I have met many W.W.T.C. students who have spoken of the hard times they experienced while at College. These unfortunately seemed to be consistent throughout all the years from 1947-74. At a reunion last year of the 1963-64 group there were a number of people who had experiences which left them saddened and hurt by their time at W.W.T.C. The reunion went a long way towards healing some of the hurt.

I will make sure that at the Open Reunion we certainly raise our glasses for all those "who didn't make it and those teachers of extraordinary integrity who had to constantly swim against the current".
Cheers,
Michelle Fawkes,
Alumni Relations Officer.

EDITOR'S NOTE

To those of us who were in the early sessions of College (47, 48, 49, 50 and 51) "palpable Christian chauvinism actively expressed by a number of staff who unashamedly peddled their views in class and not infrequently challenged, quite threateningly, the views and morality of non Christian students" is surprising but not unexpected. Students of the early years were not all 17 year olds, miles from home. The young student ranks were bolstered by ex-servicemen and older students who had left the workforce to pursue a career in teaching. The lecturers were enthusiastic and outstanding practitioners seconded from classrooms to teach students the art of good practical classroom teaching.

The ex-servicemen were scattered throughout the residential college and had a maturing effect on the younger students. There was also a rapport between the ex-servicemen and the lecturing staff (many of the lecturers were in the same age group). The Principal (the late George Blakemore) and staff realised that the student body was not one group of 17 year old students and so the student body was treated accordingly. The ex-servicemen had some extra privileges but all students were respected and treated in a like manner. In the early days "Christian chauvinism" was attempted but George Blakemore read the riot act to those participants and this was squashed under his leadership.

Lew Morrell.

HI FROM CANADA

Hi Ann,
I received the March edition of Talkabout here at Sauble Beach, Ontario earlier this week. Thank you and thanks to my old mate Paul Gunning for giving you my address. I will forward my annual contribution through Paul. I graduated from WWTC in 1966 - spent a year and a term at Gubbata in a smallie before being lured to Canada through the prospects of travel and adventure. I intended to return but never did. Canada has been very good to me - I am a dual citizen now and can't imagine two finer countries to be connected with!. I spent my teaching career with the Peel School board in Mississauga (west of Toronto) - retiring in 1999. My wife Marlene and I spend our summers here at the beach and on our sailboat and travel in the winter. Thanks again for mailing me the copy of Talkabout - you can send future copies by email to save postage. Cheers,
Ian Rasmussen (1965-66)

IN MEMORIAM

WARREN CUPITT (1960-61)



Warren was born in Coraki in July 1942. His father was Marmion, his mother was Ruby, and he had an older brother, Darryl. After less than a year at Coraki, Warren's father left for the war. At this time Warren and his mother and brother went to live at Wardell, closer to his mother's parents. In 1948 the family moved to Macksville where Warren's father had a barber's shop. In 1954 Warren's parents decided to move to Sydney for the children's benefit. Warren attended Parramatta Junior Boys High school, where he was a senior prefect, an early recognition of his leadership qualities. After school he attended Wagga Wagga Teachers College in 1960-61. His first teaching appointment in 1962 was to Wolleroobie in the Riverina. It was there he met Myra. A succession of country schools followed: Ardlethan Central School and Dunedoo Central School. Dunedoo often figured in Warren's stories. The years there were important to him. He and Myra were married during their time there and eldest daughter Carolynn was born. Four more years in a Central school at Tottenham were to follow, where Julianne was born. In 1974 Warren won his first appointment as principal to Mangoplah Public School, where he served until 1978. During that time Matthew and Janelle were born. After further promotion he came to the North Coast as principal of Brunswick Heads Public School. Warren was transferred as principal to Bexhill Public School in 1983 where he remained until his retirement in 1999. Family and friends would know that you cannot avoid the overwhelmingly important reality of Warren's life over the past 14 years or more. In 1990, when Warren was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, an incurable and fatal cancer of the bone marrow, he was told that his life expectancy could be as short as six months. When he received this diagnosis, he determined to face his illness boldly and to fight it bravely.

Warren never deluded himself about the inevitable consequences of his pernicious disease. He drew upon his deep faith and trust in God, and confirmed his commitment as a Christian. Warren's strength of character and refusal to succumb early to the ravages of his disease won him sufficient reprieve to see himself through to retirement, to see all four of his children settled in their professions and to ensure the security of his dear wife. His brave acceptance of his death was a great act of faith and hope in God. It was also his final great gift of love to Myra and their family.

Bob Corkill.

MICHAEL WILMOT (1954-55) (3/6/1934 – 16/12/2004)



In one's lifetime we meet many people and make many friends but there are some who because of their depth of character, personality, stability, generosity of spirit and genuineness stand out and with whom we feel a special affinity – a close and comfortable relationship. To me Mick Wilmot was one of those. We first met in 1949 when our family moved to Canberra. Although a couple of years ahead of me at Canberra High, Mick and I became lifelong friends. In 1954 we were both awarded scholarships to Wagga Wagga Teachers College (Mick had worked in the Public Service for 2 years first). We became room-mates with John Rudder. Mick was a natural teacher - articulate, personable, innovative, unconventional and firm but fair and had a quirky sense of humour which he used to advantage in the classroom. He left College with a top teaching mark and the 1955 Apex Prize "for the Student who promises the greatest Service to the Community". In 1956 we were both appointed to tiny one-teacher schools and we corresponded, sharing our experiences in the big wide world. Mick was sent to Mullengrove via Wheeo, via Crookwell while I was sent to

Beargamil via Parkes. However these were not your usual addressees. Mick would write to me as the Beargamil Basher and would sign off as the Mullengrove Kid. While at Mullengrove Mick decided to teach the kids to swim by damming the nearby creek. This worked only for a short time as a delegation of irate irrigation farmers further downstream soon arrived at the school to demand the dam be removed. So much for innovation in teaching. From Mullengrove Mick was appointed to Griffith Primary (ACT) where he met up with the love of his life, Pamela Hunt. Pam was a Canberra girl also and had been at College a year behind us. I was privileged to be Best Man at their wedding in December 1959. They went to Canada by ship for their honeymoon and taught there and later in the UK. On return in 1961 Mick taught in Canberra, completing a B.A degree part-time at the ANU. In the mid-60's he resigned from the teaching service and commenced a varied and successful career in the Commonwealth Public Service, serving in senior positions in the Department of the Interior, National Capital Development Commission, the Department of Education (where he helped establish the Canberra School of Art), and even for a time for ASIO! He also served as Private Secretary to Governor General Sir John Kerr. In 1988 Mick retired on invalidity grounds and immersed himself in his hobbies and community activities. During his working life he qualified as a real estate agent and auctioneer and gained certificate qualifications in bricklaying welding, spray-painting, fitting and machining. These were put to good use during his retirement. Mick set up a magnificent workshop and helped found the Canberra Society of Model Engineers (of which he was President for many years) and the Australian Model Engineer magazine. Over the past 40 odd years Mick built several garages, a full-sized yacht, an historic scale-model steam engine, several working clocks and restored a TF model MG car. In 2004 Mick's health deteriorated and he was diagnosed earlier in the year with Motor Neurone Disease and sadly passed away quite suddenly on 16 December 2004. We will miss his unique sense of humour, his strength of character, his wise counsel and unconditional friendship. When I rang our daughter Jenny to tell her of Mick's passing, she said "Dad, whenever you mentioned Mick Wilmot, I couldn't help smiling". He had that effect on people. We extend our deepest sympathy to Pam, their children, Richard, Penny and Geoffrey and their partners and their grandchildren, Jake and Giselle.

Don Whitbread (1954-55)