



A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS

# TALKABOUT



Volume 22 No 2

September 2019



Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Choir 1956



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A month's delay in this issue of *Talkabout* while Lesley and I took an extended tour through Europe, including a wonderful Uniworld river cruise from Amsterdam to Bucharest.

Prior to the cruise we loved meeting up with Maggie Harris (née Ward 1966-67) in London and Lizzie Tuttlebee (née Mertens 1960-61) in Amsterdam. Both of them filled us in briefly about their interesting and different life stories since College days.

Our final few weeks in Northern Italy were super as our son, Peter, was our very capable guide.

In this way we celebrated our golden wedding anniversary. It's good to be home but sad to see the terrible drought effects.

**Bruce Forbes**  
President



Maggie, Bruce and Lesley - London



Bruce, Lesley, Lizzie and husband  
Amsterdam

## EDITOR'S NOTE - Brian Powyer



Welcome to the second edition of *Talkabout* for 2019. Thanks to all the contributors for taking the time and effort to submit their articles for this edition. The stories and memories you have provided about your time at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College further enrich the background and inter-

actions that occurred between those who remained friends and colleagues long after their College days.

In this edition I have attempted to catch up on the backlog of articles received over the past year or so. To those who may be a little disappointed in that their article is not included I will endeavour to include it in the next edition.

It is pleasing as editor to have a continuing supply of articles and I again remind all members that we all have a memory, a story or just an opportunity to reach out to others that you can send to us for inclusion in *Talkabout*. Photographs, both current and of yesterday, help add to your article and the appeal of *Talkabout* for the reader.

## ACROSS THE SECRETARY'S DESK - Lesley Forbes



It continues to be a joy to receive emails and calls from members and whilst we have taken a short break I

have passed on messages to the editor for inclusion in *Talkabout*.

It is great to be back in Oz, so please keep in touch and let us know what you are doing, especially if there are any plans for

your session or small friendship groups getting together.

Enjoy the current edition and continue to send in articles, for without them there is nothing to *Talkabout*.

## THERE WAS NO PIANO - Jennifer Brack (Snodgrass) (1950-51)

When I say my years at WWTC were 50/51, I only spent one semester in '50'. Ours was one of two truncated courses. In June, instead of setting out on my long journey from my hometown of Mendooran to Wagga Wagga, I was in hospital having my appendix removed. When I finally arrived at the College, I wanted to

do the Infants training course, but was refused because I couldn't play the piano.

My first appointment? Mendooran Public school – three teachers only and I had K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes, 51 students and seating for 50, Oh dear!! And it didn't matter that I couldn't play the

piano – there was no piano.

As I am given to writing doggerel every now and then, I'm sending one I wrote about an incident in 1954 - *True Friendship*. I hope it makes you smile – and no, I couldn't make him throw away his friend's property so we wrapped it in some paper.

### TRUE FRIENDSHIP

John was the son of a local G.P.

Bob was the son of another

Very good friends they happened to be

More like little twin brothers.

John would play with Bob's Hornby train,

Bob would ride on John's horse.

They played in one house on days of rain

And shared everything of course.

Now in school these two buddies were kept apart

For they talked too much you see.

John was put into 2A for a start,

And Bob was put in 2B.

Now one fine morning about ten-thirty

Young Bob was caught chewing gum!

'You know I think that habit is dirty.

You know I think it is dumb

Now just you throw it in the bin

And stay in at recess.

Make sure that none of it sticks to you

I'm cross with you I confess.'

A tear runs down our hero's cheek,

After all, he's only seven,

'Please, Miss. I can't! It's John's you see,

And he wants it back at eleven!'

## ON BEING A JUNIOR SECONDARY TEACHER

**Sue Edmondson (Rankin) Jnr Secondary English/Social Sciences (1965-66)**

I have sometimes wondered if the experience of Junior Secondary students was somewhat different to that of primary students, so I have indulged in a reflection.

I found myself at WWTC in English-Social Sciences Junior Secondary in 1965 on a sort of 'get out of jail free' card after failing first year at ANU. I had signed up to 9 years on a teachers' £ scholarship to university, including a 5 year bond, for which my father and another had to sign a £1000 surety as guarantors, which was hugely embarrassing, and with no information as to how it would be discharged if I defaulted at any point.

A letter arrived before Xmas offering me a place at WWTC but we would be required to pay the first year's board and I would receive no allowance until I passed first year. With about as much joy as I might have felt going to a home for unmarried mothers I arrived at College, father with cheque book ready for the unspecified fee. (From what I saw it was modest). He was immediately recognised by Mr Fone, when we went to the dining hall for a cup of tea, from their time in the M and D Society in Forbes years before. I felt no better.

There were 16 of us and a few less in Maths-Science. We would go out into high schools where we might be a year older than the Year 12's in the playground, though we were only meant to teach to Year 10. There was no mention of the fact that all curriculum would have changed since we were in school

and that we would be required to assess, if not teach, to 4 levels, in every subject.

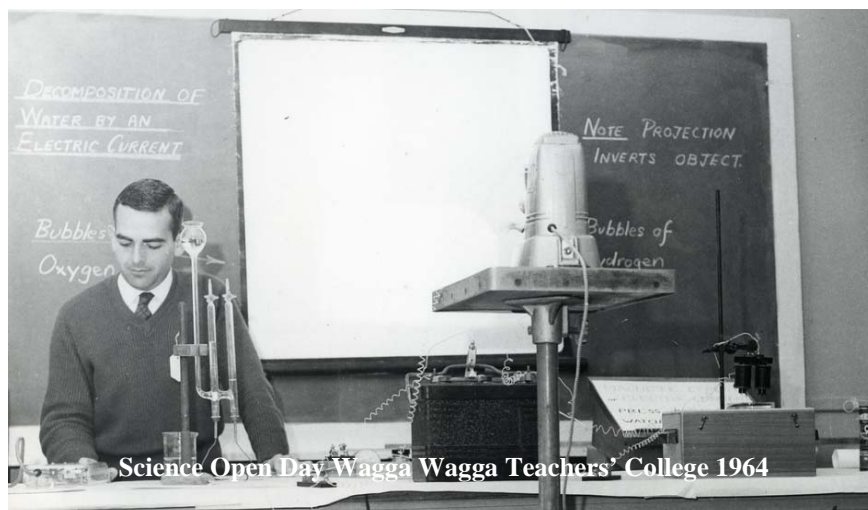
In most high schools Commerce or Business Principles was a staple for those who left at Year 9 or 10 and in the Geography-Economics Department, but there was no mention of it. In fact, there was no mention of curricula at all, or of programming, or of day books, or even an example of 'teaching notes' – sometimes asked for in exams. In fact, exams, to me, had become an exercise in 'guess what I am thinking'.

The lecturers seemed to feel that the lecture method, (but without the balance of tutorials), would maintain academic status for a lowly teachers college, despite its lack of any educational justification. We were a group of students any teacher would die for – good size, compliant, and with enough spark, drive and goodwill to make a more active workshop approach work brilliantly, but we spent 2 years passively in a tutorial sized group (even when the education subjects were shared with Maths-Science), and rarely, if ever, were engaged in discussion, or

presentations. No wonder an inspector's report said 'she will become more innovative with experience' - a quiet classroom was the message!

The formality of Miss and Mr did not help us relate to each other or the staff, and for the women it was a loss of the more comfortable (but proper) relationship we had with male teachers in school. Girls were socialised to be quiet and the men were mostly quiet by nature and any move to break the male-female seating order or mores would have been very conspicuous in such a small group. The men were mostly from Sydney and the women mostly from regional Australia, so that when a couple of the men took the lecturers on, as they regularly did, (and sometimes to the death), I felt they were more sophisticated than I was. I wonder now if it was not more a matter of who was the number one male in the room as much as new ideas challenging the old and it may also have been that certain lecturers simply got right under their skin!

There were no women lecturers for us but there were in Maths-Science, where a friend became



quite engaged with the beginnings of computers and Biology for the first time and more. She married into the Riverina, kept Maths alive in various country schools and now has a key role in their most innovative farm, identifying new plants in central Australia as a hobby and leading in land regeneration.

We were, however the group which had an excursion to the Snowy! We waited in our bus for a man to speak to us about leaving a town now inundated (but he wouldn't come out of his house), we experienced the greatest relief in Australia, were told that Mt Kosciusko was not the highest peak by a local invited to address us and hiked the most awful uphill climb. The question posed as to whether Sir Edgeworth David was right in his views on glaciation in Australia is one I still have to pursue (but I have read the biography of his wife). In case you wondered, nothing happened.

The History course was cut short by the death of the lecturer whom I believe took up History after the Fall of Rome. The replacement was a social scientist who was allowed to wing it. We touched on ethnomusicology and the Ming Dynasty. Class presentations were proposed but did not eventuate. The whole of college Australian Studies in second year was a godsend – Donald Horne and others! Who would have thought! Someone should have been congratulated, as it was just the kind of stuff to inform your teaching (as well as get you in touch with current debate!) It did not however include Indigenous Australians.

Mr. Swan took that up though, taking us one foggy Saturday

morning to a kitchen midden in a river bank near one of those typical verandahed houses along the Murray and Murrumbidgee. Mr Sale's slides took us to North America and Mr Durband came from the school Paul McCartney attended and introduced us to a form of functional grammar, excellent for a few prac lessons but mystifying to my final supervisor, a primary lecturer, who also found fault with my chalkboard writing. Would it have hurt the budget if we had been allowed chalk to practise over the 2 years ?

The principal at Gundagai then let us off the last afternoon and took us aside to inform us some of the things they omitted tell you in teachers college'– don't use 'Dear X' in a Departmental memo, never be in a room alone with a student or touch a student, join the union (particularly if you forgot the rules) and never criticise the work of the previous teacher of your class. It was very thoughtful.

Along with Sex Advising, a nod to student welfare, when we were allocated a Section Advisor, a total stranger to me, for advice on what I am not sure, since he did not appear to have any of our work or results, or any kind of idea what to do, I was also referred mid-year for Speech Remedial, with Mr Cambridge. We circled the circumference of the classroom whilst he tried to present a plan. It appeared to come from a prac comment 'she must learn to roar, but not like a dove'. A primary prac was an option, which may well have helped. Nothing happened.

On my first prac Mr Trewin, hearing my former French teacher at full voice, (and I know how

she got there!) said very firmly 'you must never end up shrieking like that!'

We saw the end of rissoles with a noisy walkout at Saturday lunch. Something was happening. A petition was circulated secretly in duffle coat pockets and a union representative appeared one evening on the back of a ute with a loud hailer. Not everyone turned up. We saw a change in the rules that extended curfew by an extra hour but with fiendish intelligence Mr Hale won as our fellow students had to police it and dob in their mates! Baked chops, a recognizable dish, appeared on the menu along with a few changes. A couple of second years were sent a long way away for their first appointments!

The introduction of Sciences into our course, consisting solely of Trewin's Maths, (apeing UNSW which had a science unit requirement in an arts degree to give a more rounded degree for a modern age), was brilliant for a couple of us at least as it gave us leverage into maths. My choice of learning to use audiovisual equipment as an option also proved invaluable: I could use a Bell and Howell along with the best and the Gestetner became my friend (and long into the night at exam time).

On the second last day I had a lapse of concentration and was late for a lecture for the only time, arriving as another lecturer was making small talk to the group and his fellow lecturer as he passed by. It provoked an invective from him heard by all including 'this College is wasted on people like you' and recognising this was quite out of order, I backed off until it stopped.

There was an element of truth there, but I had realized by then that if 'teachers were made and not born', I at least had a fighting chance to qualify for that Teachers Certificate and get my ticket out of teaching.

Out of 15, 3 of us got Conditional Certificates, 1 resigned in the first year, one died and one was called up and did not teach. Our Mature Age student went back to the army. Of the others I know little. So for a small group, the

return on investment was not high, but I guess those CC's made a point for someone.

Each of us can now tell our story...

*To be continued next edition*

## LESLIE GORDON YOUNG - Mervyn Keith Olsen (1963-64)

Gordon came to Wagga in 1948



believing that God had called him to be a History lecturer at the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. Gordon says he "was keen to be the very best lecturer possible, to stand strong for God and let the chips fall where they may".

He worked hard over the years whilst at Wagga to improve his own educational qualifications. In 1951 he gained a Master's Degree from Sydney University for his dissertation about Governor Bourke. Then in 1955 he completed the studies necessary to gain the Diploma of Religious Education from the Melbourne College of Divinity.

For his first fifteen years at Wagga Gordon spent a great deal of time reading. He claims to have been as widely read as probably anyone in Australia.

He regarded it as his duty to be paid, not to be a slave at giving lectures, but at knowing what

was happening in the world.

Gordon made this effort because he believed strongly that every part of human knowledge is a part of God's world and that we can learn of God in action in the writings of atheists as well as in learned commentaries.

The following comments by some of Gordon's colleagues show that he certainly enjoyed his lecturing and at the same time was ever provoking his students to think about life and evaluate their own reasons for living.

A student once said to Dr Paul Whiting concerning Gordon: "He makes you think, doesn't he?" Paul, reflecting on this, says "I think that was always Gordon's aim as a lecturer. He was deliberately provocative, his views often tendentious, and students either loved him or hated him for it. He certainly enjoyed lecturing when I knew him - and I believe it was both the opportunity to present the material from his considered (and often distinctively Christian) perspective and the opportunity to challenge students about their attitudes and aspirations that appealed to him".

Mr David Dillon Smith puts it this way:

"As to his lecturing, he was very much in command of his subject

and also ready to see the current import of historical studies in present day society and its relevance to Christian thought. He was, therefore, one who tended to drive a fairly sharp division between students who were ready to think and also respond to (or at least consider) the important things of life and those who rejected or avoided any commitment".

Mr Michael Smith says that Gordon "liked the students to respond and to become involved in a discussion in which they had to take a position and defend it with facts or evidence".

Because he desired student participation Gordon protested when mass lecturing was introduced at the College. He much preferred working with students in groups of thirty or fewer.

"Nevertheless", says Michael Smith, "he was able to ensure that as many as two hundred students were fully involved all the lecture hour. He would nominate as many as five students every few minutes to summarise, or respond, or tell of their reading (which was required to be done before the lecture). No student went to sleep".

I think Michael Smith makes the point well when he says of student feeling towards Gordon: "Some students thought he was

too rigid in his attitude and behaviour, tracing this to his well-known religious views and strong participation in his church”.

That sums it up well. Almost everyone, students and lecturers alike, came to link Gordon with his religious faith and fervour.

### **HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES METHOD**

The following story illustrates well the intense desire Gordon had to communicate his message, and how much he gave of himself in doing so, as well as the clever way in which he frequently caught the attention of his students. Paul Whiting recounts the event:

"I well remember meeting him one afternoon as he came out of the large lecture hall. He had just given what he called 'My annual lecture to first year students on Australian society'. He claimed he was going home to bed, so much had he given of himself in that lecture. As part of the lecture he had read from a brown paper covered copy of the Living Bible version of Romans 1 as a possible description of contemporary society. When the students agreed that it was a pretty good description, he removed the cover and revealed the source.

Perhaps one of the things that many students still remember (including the present author) is the questionnaire given out to students in their first year concerning their priorities in life and their reasons for wanting to be teachers.

One student tells of how, several days after doing this exercise Gordon expressed to the group his utter scorn for one of the stu-

dents who had placed sport at the top of his list of priorities.

Perhaps the following comments by three students of different eras summarise the general feelings of students towards Gordon's lectures.

Mrs Fay Bevan, a student in the 1954-55 session, says:

"Gordon's history lectures were informative, comprehensive, presented sometimes dramatically and sometimes with satire that was not always appreciated by all of the students. Some considered him very radical in his viewpoint".

Rev. Bob Thomas, presently the Editor of "Presbyterian Life", who was a student in the 1962-63 session, puts it this way:

"Students either loved or hated Gordon Young, in roughly equal proportions. He was quite overbearing and most of us respected him, even feared him. I, for one, would not go unprepared to his lectures, for he had an uncanny knack of striking those who were least prepared. His opening shot was to ask some hapless student to stand before the class and tell the history of the world in two minutes. Few could manage it, least of all myself. His lectures were intensely practical and designed, it seemed, to strip away a student's inhibitions, reasoning that if we would eventually stand before a class, we must first be able to stand before our fellow students".

Rev. Paul Falconer, now a Baptist pastor, who was a student in the 1967-68 session, says:

"I was impressed with his command of subject matter, his ability to keep attention (even if it was because of fear of being caught out) and his over-riding concern that the subject matter

was always subordinate to the process of reasoning and formulation of opinions".

To illustrate this last point Paul tells how he received two essays back from Gordon with words to the effect..."Mr Falconer, you do not have to agree with the lecturer to achieve high marks -11/20". Then, 'Excellent essay, Mr Falconer. I didn't agree with a word you said - 19/20".

There's no doubting that Gordon continually sought to develop the powers of critical thinking in his students. John Buckle is probably accurate in saying that he "treated the students as thinking adults rather than as 'super-high' students".

In response to the claim that his style was 'overbearing' Gordon says:

"All lecturers must develop a style, if they are to impact students with more than intellectual impressions. I chose to be forceful, weighty, even crushing knowing that it brings out the most in a student, especially the most attentive and if it frightens a few into paying more attention to what I hope is truth, so much the better. I had a job to do - for God, for the world, for children and last but not least, the hapless student who needed to be kneaded or needled into an active reaction to what was the best I had to offer them. If I was totally committed to as total a transmission of truth as I could give, the least the students could give was full attention.

Whether they agreed or not was their responsibility before God, but if I stirred heart, mind and conscience of at least some, their response was consonant with their own personal gut reaction to life.

If I brought out or speeded up their personal philosophy, that was good. To get them out of their rut and comfortable conformity, I am glad to have appeared 'overbearing' and still would. But behind that there was and is my conviction that truth is love in action and if I battered unwilling minds or revolted sensitive souls, I accept that, as James Dobson says, "Love must be tough".

What would hurt me would be these accusations: (i) I never cared if I hurt; (ii) I never meant to help students when I hurt them; (iii) I was careless about the truth; (iv) I was out to win arguments for their own sake. The truth is, I want to win for the sake of truth and for the sake of God".

Mr Bob Drummond recalls one incident that highlights the fact that Gordon did not stand for nonsense in his lectures. On one occasion some students were hastily attempting to consume a cinnamon bun in back seats during Gordon's lecture. "They were soon put in their place", says Bob - "Outside ! ... with a severe tongue lashing".

Some students have noted that Gordon's lectures were frequently lacking in the transmission of facts and data. One's lecture notes for Gordon were generally much less than those for other lecturers. In response to this point Gordon replies:

"My giving less data per hour than others, I defend, is by the hope that my students gave more (in data, emotion, effort and expression) than most other lecturers in the 'wordy' subjects (such as English and Education) extracted".

It is certainly true that Gordon's lectures were dramatic as well as lively and interactive in style. He was a really good-humoured lecturer and enjoyed sparring with his students. The great ambition of some students was to achieve a 'victory' over him in debate. A "V.Y." (Victory over Youngie) was awarded to anyone who was fortunate enough to get the better of him in argument. This was duly recorded on the blackboard.

Perhaps the thing many students of all eras would most remember that has proved to be practical in their teaching is Gordon's idea of 'palm-card summaries'. It was normal practice to have to prepare a palm-card summary of the previous lecture and be ready to give it when asked at a moment's notice.

Gordon had a unique way of getting his point across. For instance, he would deliberately enter the lecture room one day menacingly, stiff, rigid, steely; and the next day bouncingly, cheerful, rollicking. As he did this he would check the reaction of his students. On the first day they stiffened, looked dull, and were ready to work only out of duty. On the next day, however,

he would find that his students were relaxed, felt free and smiled. Gordon would get the students to analyse why they reacted as they did. In this way he was endeavouring to prove the point that teachers unconsciously give important clues to their pupils about what they expect. Mrs Margery Bonsor recalls Gordon saying, "The lesson starts when you walk into the room". To reinforce the point Gordon would sometimes have the students practise walking into the room confidently".

Mrs Kath Johnson writes: "I really learnt much about class discipline from Mr Young and remember to this day his dramatic portrayals of sarcastic, aggressive and emotional teachers' behaviour in a classroom. He would pick up a chair and pretend to swing it at a student, throw a duster, or shout across the room at a student. He looked ridiculous and we quickly realised that self-control was important if we were to be good teachers".

More than most lecturers, Gordon was really practical in the lecture room. He realised from sore experience that teachers need to be able to relate confidently and lovingly to their pupils and so he did all he could to prepare his students in this regard.

*To be continued next edition*

## **TWO OF THE BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE - June Werner (1951-52)**

After many years of 'wanting to' and 'knowing I should' I have finally put pen to paper to say, 'thank you to WWTC for two of

the best years of my life'.

Coming from Albury High School I commenced College in 1951. So

many others I knew came too, so it was like a continuation of school, with friends already made. College life needs no explanation.

It was just amazing and after so many years it remains so clear with names and experiences never forgotten.

Briefly, I have had a wonderful career. Commencing with three and a quarter years at Thirroul followed by 8 months in London, backpacking, sightseeing, just too much to cover.

Back in Australia, I spent a term in Holbrook, then Barham where I met Bob Werner!!

Both of us then went to Carinda, which was a real eye opener. Then onto Macquarie Fields in Sydney West.

This was followed by Hazelton in Northern British Columbia accompanied by our two little boys, aged 6 and 4. The large school was on an Indian Reserve overlooking the great rivers, Skeena and Bulkey with the Rocher de Boule Mountain looking down on us. Amazing!

The next year we were off to Kamloops. I went to 'Arthur Hatton' and Bob to 'A.E. Perry'. Another great year going home via Canada. Rail across Canada, ship to U.K., campervan and home by ship.

On my return I was appointed to Wyalong then West Wyalong – a great town. Here we had two more children, Kim and Craig. The school was great, the town was great, as was tennis.

Broken Hill followed, Bob went to Railway Town School, as Teaching Principal and I went to Alma. The whole family loved Broken Hill and its experiences.

Next move, Bob was appointed as Principal of Macksville. It was great to be near the Coast at last. I taught at Urunga, Nambucca Heads and then to the new Frank Partridge School. Macksville grew so much so Bob demoted himself and took deputy position at Urunga. He loved going back teaching and retired

there after 15 years.

We then built a house at Valla Beach and started a huge garden, whilst continuing our travelling. I did lots of casual teaching to fund our travelling addiction.

Bob began to have serious skin cancers and we came to Canberra to be near 2 of our children. He recovered for a while but developed lung cancer and died at home on 9<sup>th</sup> June last year, 2018.

We consider we lived very fortunate lives. We did not always travel together. I went to Antarctica, then Bob went to Machu Pichu and so on. We both trekked in Nepal and Morocco and had many wonderful trips and cruises.

We both loved teaching and enjoyed moving to new schools and new places; often difficult with 4 children but no regrets.

Now I need to plan how will I spend my next 5-10-15 years?

## **OUR MATE BURNSIE -Tom Richmond OAM (1958 - 59)**

When Ron Burns, aged ten, marched in the Sydney May Day procession, carrying a banner pleading for the release of his father, few would have guessed about the future that lay in store for him. When he came to WWTC in 1958, few of his dormitory mates in Ipaai would have known that he was the son of William "Billy" Burns, the last person in Australia to be gaoled for sedition.

Ron Burns, BA (ANU), Dip Teach (WWTC) and holder of the Australian Sports Medal graduated with us in 1959 and in 1960 became the Teacher in

Charge at Glennwarrin Public School, which is situated well west of Port Macquarie. In 1962, he accepted transfer to Bellangry Public School, again as teacher in charge. This was a little further north but equally isolated. From 1962 to 1968, he was an assistant at Laurieton, in the Port Macquarie area but closer to the coast.

In 1969, he transferred to Downer Primary School in the ACT. The school, at that time was part of the NSW system. In 1973, Ron became a senior teacher and in 1976 was promoted to Deputy Principal.

In 1977, he became Deputy Principal at Macgregor Primary School, a position that he held until 1986. In 1987, he taught in British Columbia, before returning as Deputy Principal to Macgregor in 1988. In 1989 to 1990, he served as Principal of Macgregor Primary.

Ron made a tremendous contribution to school sport, especially in the ACT. From 1981 to 1986 and from 1988 to 1990, Ron was President of the ACT Sports Association. From 1982 to 1986, he was President of the Australian Schools Primary Sports Association. From 1983 to 1986, Ron



was Vice-President of the Australian Schools Sports Council.

Ron's sports administrative career blossomed rapidly and he took leave without pay to become the Director of the Masters' Sport Project in 1991-2 and a Mature Aged Sports Consultant to the Australian Sports Commission. He left teaching and from 1995 to 1997, held the position of Deputy Chief Executive Officer for the Confederation of Australian Sport, which is the national peak body for sport in Australia.

From 1998 to 2001, Ron was General Manager of Sports Industry Australia and from 2001 to 2003, he was the Chief Executive Officer for the 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Masters' Games. In the years 1995 to 2003 he delivered courses in Sports Administration, Sports Management and Event Management in a private capacity for the International Committee's Olympic Solidarity Program through the Oceania National Olympic Committees. In 2004, he became Senior Project Officer for Sport and Recreation, ACT and in 2005-2006, he was Training Advisor to the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

From 2006 to 2009, Ron took on the General Manager's position for the Pacific School Games, where he delivered a highly successful event.

Honours came to Ron through his involvement in school sport. In 1984, he was awarded Life Membership of the ACT PSSA and in 1986 he was awarded Life Membership of School Sport Australia. In 2000, he was awarded the Australian Sports Medal.

We all recall that Ron was an enthusiastic and talented sportsman in his WWTC days. Since leaving College, his participation rate has been strongly maintained. He played cricket for Burrell Creek in 1960 and 1961, for Wingham from 1962 to 1968 and for Canberra Teachers from 1973 to 1980. He played basketball with Wingham Rouges from 1960 to 1961, with Camden Haven from 1963 to 1968, with Bank of NSW (Canberra) from 1969 to 1980 and with Wests Rugby Union Canberra Masters from 1981 to 1986. He played soccer with Wingham in 1960 and 1961 and made a comeback with Canberra Teachers from 1981 to 1985. He played rugby league with Beechwood in 1962 and for Camden Haven from 1963 to 1968.

From 1962 to 1968, he was a member of the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club. From 1975 to 1986, he played squash with West Belconnen. While in British Columbia, he played softball with the Teachers' Club. From 1964 to 1968, he played golf at the Camden Haven Club and from 1978 to the present has played the sport at Belconnen Golf Club.

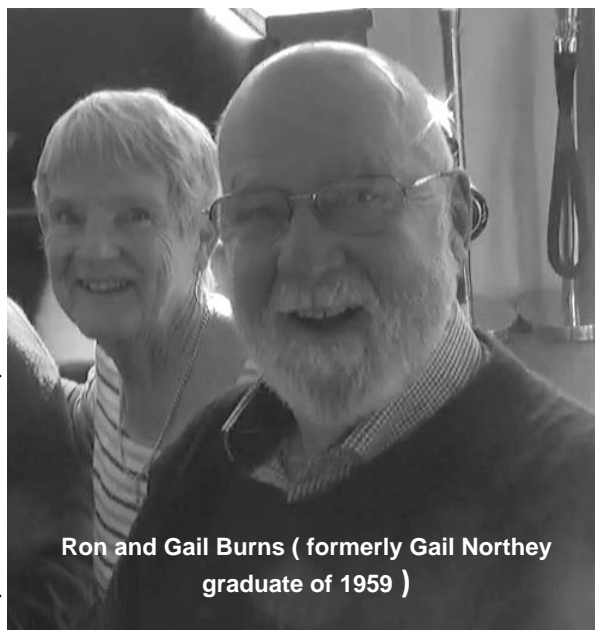
As well as playing many sports, Ron was active in sports administration outside the schools systems. Following his retirement, he took on broader positions. From 1995 to 2000, he was President of the ACT Chapter of the Australian Association of Sports Administrators. From 1996 to 2000, he was Education Director of the Australian Society of

Sports Administrators and from 2009 to 2018, he has served as a Director of ACT Kidsafe.

Over his career, Ron was heavily involved with coaching. From 1962 to 1968, he coached Laurieton junior Rugby League teams. From 1970 to 1990, he was coaching Downer and MacGregor teams in North Canberra competitions. From 1978 to 1980, he coached ACT PSAAA teams in the Australian Championships. He coached Softball at the Boomerangs Club, including three world masters teams.

Today, Ron retains his interest in sport and is season ticket holder for ACT Brumbies. He is a season ticket holder for Canberra Theatre and Australian Opera and enjoys film, travel, reading, music, bushwalking, cycling (recreational) and gardening. He is a passionate observer of the political scene. Ron lives in Bruce, ACT with his wife, Gail (Northey) in a relationship that started at College.

His old Ipai mates are proud of his achievements as an educator, a sports administrator and a great bloke!



Ron and Gail Burns ( formerly Gail Northey graduate of 1959 )

## WWTCAA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2019 - Chris and Jenny Blake

Two WWTCAA scholarships were awarded this year to Patrick Harris from Wagga Wagga and Mandy Reid from Grenfell.

There is a wonderful story associated with Patrick Harris, one of the two students to receive The Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Scholarship this year.

Patrick represents the third generation of his family to study Education in Wagga Wagga and is a descendant of a Teachers' College graduate from the 1950's.

Patrick's grandmother, Pam Harris (nee Abberton), came from Canowindra to attend Wagga in 1957-58. She is now a Wagga resident. Pam's daughter-in-law,



Kerrie, Patrick and Pam Harris

Kerrie Harris (nee Wooden), from Temora, studied Education at The Riverina Murray College of Advanced Education in the 1980's and is still involved in Teaching in Wagga.

This year Kerrie's son, Patrick, who has a degree in Commerce from Macquarie University, has returned to Wagga and Charles Sturt University to train as a teacher. What a family history! Three generations representing three of the stages of development of Education training in Wagga.

Mandy Reid is a mature age student from Grenfell, having already studied Nursing at CSU. She is a mother of four who is

actively involved in many organisations in her community. We feel she will make a valuable addition to rural education in Grenfell.

It was a great pleasure to meet with both families at the scholarship presentation in Wagga.

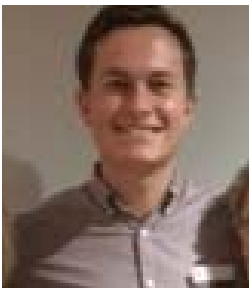
Both recipients were very appreciative of the contributions of the alumni to the scholarship.

### Chris and Jenny Blake



Chris Blake, Pam Reid, Jenny Blake

## APPRECIATION WWTCAA SCHOLARSHIP 2019 - Patrick Harris



Dear WWTCAA, I would like to sincerely thank you for selecting me as a recipient of a WWTCAA Scholarship for the 2019 calendar year.

I cannot begin to describe how much this will assist me through my studies. Knowing that there has been so many successful teachers graduating from the college, makes this scholarship an absolute privilege to receive. My greatest aspiration now is to continue the legacy that the Wagga

Wagga Teachers College has created through my own future teaching. I would also like to thank my Grandmother, an alumni of the Wagga Wagga Teachers College, as she is a major reason why I want to become a teacher and provide the same quality education that she provided for all her students.

Being awarded the scholarship will provide significant financial assistance for me during my full time study of a Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) and allow me to work reduced hours during work placements, as well as ensure I can purchase all the resources I require for my study.

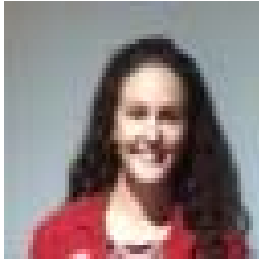
Having a rich background in teaching with my Grandmother and Mother both being teachers, I have strong aspirations for my own teaching to provide a quality and equitable education for all my students.

With my Grandmother as an active alumni of the Wagga Wagga Teachers College and my Mother being an alumni of the Riverina CAE I have strong ties to CSU.

Thank you all again for selecting me as a recipient for the scholarship.

**Warmest Regards,  
Patrick.**

## APPRECIATION: WTCAA SCHOLARSHIP 2019 - Mandy Reid



Dear WWTCAA members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank

you immensely for your support during my last year of study. I acknowledge the significant investment that you, as alumni, have made towards my future. There are not enough words to describe how grateful I am of your support.

As you would be aware, this is my last year of university, and perhaps the hardest year of all. I have taken a while to complete the course as I could only enrol in as many subjects as my family and I could manage. Some semesters that was only one subject and others I managed two subjects, I have even completed some subjects over the Christmas holidays to try and get it done. I had put off the two work placements until this final year

as I was not sure how I would cope having so much time off work without pay.

It was during my current role as a teacher's aide that I realised that I wanted to finish this course, I wanted to have my own class. I have gathered so much information and different ideas that I want to implement with a class and I knew that I could not do that from my current role. That is why I have enrolled in my final 5 subjects over 2 semesters, this is the largest study load I have taken so far. I was determined, yet still worried, to finish this year.

Then I was given the news that I had been selected as one of your scholarship recipients. Your support has given me that little extra incentive that I need. You will help me to reach my final goal of becoming a teacher. For that, I will be forever thankful.

Your monetary support will

firstly allow me to buy my very own laptop. I do have an old desktop computer that has proven to be too slow and outdated for university work and I have been borrowing my father's laptop when I needed to complete an assignment. It will also provide much needed financial relief when I take time without pay from my current job to complete my two separate work placements. These work placements will be away from my home town of Grenfell and I will need to pay for childcare for my youngest child.

I would also like to say thank you to Chris and Jenny Blake. My phone interview was very relaxed. They were so easy to talk to, that it just felt like I had known them all my life.

I am looking forward to meeting you at the scholarship ceremony in Wagga in May and personally thanking you for making such a lasting impact on my life.

## VALE: ROBERT HENRY [BOB] COLLARD, M.B.E. (1948-50) Debra Collard (daughter)



My Father, Bob Collard, was a member of the Fresher's year of 1948-1950, where he met and married his dearly beloved, Olga

on the completion of their training. Bob passed away on the 19 December, 2018, at age 91 years.

His first school was Drinane, 27 miles NW of Dubbo. From there he spent time at Warren, the schools of Dubbo and Eumungerie. From there he went to the Newcastle Area at Mayfield East and Tighes Hill Central, and in 1954, studied remediation with Professor Schonell at Queensland University. He returned to Newcastle as the itinerant remedial teacher - the first of this na-

ture in a country area and was attached to various schools for the next 8 years.

In 1963, he was appointed Assistant Principal of Nelson Bay Central School and in 1967 transferred to Cartwright P.S. in Sydney's SW as Principal. From his next appointment at Lansvale East he went to Chester Hill North. Matthew Pearce P.S. was Bob's final school before retirement.

From the outset, supported by Olga, Bob was very active in the

community. Apart from his school duties, Bob spent many unpaid hours helping students achieve their potential in Maths or Language or Reading. It marked his lifetime: from teaching migrants in the Newcastle area to more recent pursuits in community education programs.

Mentoring others, be it child, colleague, cricketer or family member marked all Bob did. His children were often regaled with the mantra:

***I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show ....., let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."***

As School Principal, many after-school hours were spent counselling parents and families in difficulty. Bob demonstrated great skill in analysing an issue, getting to the fundamentals and developing a solution. This really came to the fore during the politically volatile period in the seventies "Refugee Crisis". Amid very strong community resistance and not a little political resistance, he completely opened

up his school, Chester Hill North. His approach was so innovative and successful that he was acknowledged by the Queen for his ground breaking programs and work with refugees fleeing the Vietnam conflict, by being awarded an M.B.E.

Bob valued talent, dedication and effort wherever it was found. For the Education Department he worked to establish a Non-Sexist Policy in this area of Public Service. Responding to feedback and discussion with the local high schools, he helped instigate the smooth preparedness and transition, educationally and socially, of year six students into their high school years. During this time, he and "the two Alans" as they were fondly referred to, developed the first series of mathematics books, *Signposts to Success*, which furthered this idea.

Bob's retirement from his teaching profession to the Central Coast enabled him to assist in the SRE education at Holgate Public. He taught 65 children per session, yet had them all eager and excited at his entry into the classroom. Many a private re-

quest for prayer or help was recorded in a special place in each child's book, which he faithfully and diligently addressed before the next week's lesson. These communications often took 2 hours to complete.

The Max Gardner Distinguished Service award followed 12 years of service to Prostate Cancer Research and support for sufferers. Educating Medical professionals in the field at conferences on how to treat a person, not just a disease was a particular concern.

As a WWTC/Charles Sturt University Alumni and president of that Association, Bob worked in the successful establishment of a teaching degree Scholarship Fund at that institution.

Of course, throughout his life, cricket was a constant - playing, umpiring and mentoring, for which he was also acknowledged by awards and Life Membership of CCCUA.

Bob Collard was much loved, valued and respected by colleagues, parents, students, and the communities in which he served. Although he will be sorely missed by many more than the

## **A DESIRABLE OPPORTUNITY - Ruth Geekie (Jordan) (1958-59)**

The opportunity to enrol at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in the late 1950s was very desirable for Ruth Jordan and Peter Geekie.

A scholarship which provided free training with housing on site and three meals a day, created no hardship for our parents and as well, gave us some cash to spend. At WWTC we secured lifelong friends as well as a happy marriage which is now in its 59<sup>th</sup> year.

Ruth grew up in Nowra and Peter in Thirroul on the NSW South Coast. I doubt we truly valued our good fortune in being given supervised accommodation at WWTC and a variety of lectures from 9am till 5pm, or the chance to participate in sporting activities and choral and dramatic productions.

Peter enrolled in an elective linked to the University of New England and subsequently acquired several degrees, including

a PhD. He taught in Primary and Secondary Schools followed by many years as a Senior Lecturer at Wollongong University.

Ruth taught mostly Primary classes before spending five years as the ESL and Multicultural librarian with the Wollongong Catholic Education System. Then she spent seventeen years teaching in the area of Special Needs. Ruth eventually acquired her BA and, thanks to a scholarship from the Department, a MEd from UTS.

Peter's studies took the Geekie family overseas for several periods in England and one year's residence at the Indiana University in Bloomington. Ruth attended some courses at Bloomington with the assurance that when she finally enrolled she'd be given credit for what she'd already done. Enrolment never occurred but the generosity of the lecturers is memorable.

We value our 60 year friendship

with Joycelyn Donovan (now Humphries), Robin de Brouwer (now Legge) and Lachlan Farrell who has lived in Canada for many years but returns to Australia annually. We regret that another friend, Betty Probert (Fahy) passed away recently.

We revisit the past with pleasure and are grateful for the journey that our experience at WWTC has permitted us to undertake. Recently we attended the WWTC

70<sup>th</sup> Celebrations and were delighted to reconnect with other Kumbu lasses, Carol Wayne (now Tankard) and Robin, and Kumbu chaps, Lachlan, Kelland Hardingham and Michael Bonner.

Our WWTC is now gone physically but it will always remain in our memories. Thank you, Wagga Wagga Teachers College, for the opportunities with which we were provided.

## VALE: MARGARET ELIZABETH GARDINER (1953-54) Dr Henry Gardiner

I write on a sad note to report that my beloved wife of more than 62 years, Margaret Elizabeth Gardiner (nee Claridge), of Section 2 and 7 1953-1954 respectively, passed away after a very long and difficult illness on 12<sup>th</sup> February last.

Margaret had been very frail for the past three years and because of severe walking problems was not able to leave our home or the hospital since the week-end of that wonderful 70 year Re-union Dinner. Indeed within a few days of the Dinner, she spent four weeks in Calvary Hospital Wagga and spent a large part of the remainder of the year constantly in and out of hospital until her final admission in late November 2018.

In the first weekend in January this year we celebrated our 62<sup>nd</sup>

Wedding Anniversary in Calvary Hospital.

Margaret and I came to WWTC a couple of years after leaving Griffith High School. She taught in Infants Departments in the Bankstown area before resigning to start our family in 1961. From 1967 she went back teaching as a casual, by then in Wagga primary and secondary schools, but with her brand new B.Ed from Riverina College topping off her diploma conversion.

On another sad note, my Best Man, Noel Haberecht, also 1953-1954, died in Canber-

ra after a long illness in the first week in April. His funeral was in his home suburb of Ainslie and several fellow students from our year were able to attend.

Margaret Elizabeth Gardiner 1934-2019; and Noel Ivan Haberecht, 1936-2019.



Noel Haberecht, Henry Gardiner, Margaret Gardiner  
Faye Davis (nee Alderman), WTC 52-51 FRS

## IN MEMORIAM

**Colin Swan** (1948-50) died on 16 November 2018. Our thoughts and sympathies go to his wife Elizabeth.

**Lesley Forbes**

**Stan Melville** passed away just before last Christmas aged 79. He loved all the news from Wagga Wagga Teachers' College and his time teaching. Also playing

Rugby Union for Wagga or Teachers' College. A very special man and greatly missed.

**Denise Melville (wife)**

## REMINISCING

Rob Hughes

As I cautiously negotiate the winding path of life,  
I trust the way will not be strewn with conflict, pain or strife.  
My efforts, through each twist and turn, are robust and sincere.  
And so far, luck and sweat have made most worries disappear.

Education, graduation, occupation, fun,  
Wondrous, worthwhile goals and tasks, great prizes to be won,  
Relaxation, recreation, procreation, pleasure;  
So much for just one man to undertake, by any measure.

Memories of school days shine with friendships and support,  
Then I studied education, and for forty years, I taught.  
Those who thrive in this vocation know it brings immense delights,  
My hard work earned promotion, and a rise to greater heights.

Alongside work in fourteen schools, I've had a thrilling ride  
As a professional musician, earning income on the side.  
A muso's life's exciting, playing dives and places grand,  
This, for me, began aged eight, in the school recorder band.

Retirement is a lot of fun. I'll not be a white elephant;  
Five years as outback touring guide; right now, a civil celebrant.  
No-one knows what lies ahead. You may guess, but you can't know  
it,  
I'm planning my next venture now... an avant-garde bush poet?

Five lively, much loved grandkids keep my wife and me awake  
When they join us for sleepovers while their parents take a break.  
For our further entertainment, new sensations and diversion,  
We enjoy good times together on a boat or van excursion.

As I reminisce on life's adventures, looking back through the years,  
I recall so many joyful times, and happily, few tears.  
You speculate in days of youth, "Do dreams ever come true?"  
My experience of life gives this assurance... Yes, they do!

**Bob Hughes**  
© 2016

## IPAI RESIDENT



### **Brian McGowan (1957-58)**

Taught at Tocumwal Primary, Shepardsdown Small School, Nowra High School, completed B.A. as External Student of Armidale University, transferred to English/History at The Entrance High School, then to History Master. Elected Member for Gosford NSW Government where he served 12 years, during which time lobbied and achieved major Public Works in infrastructure, environment and education. At the end of his Parliamentary term elected as Councillor on Gosford City Council until his death in 1994. Brian McGowan Bridge, at main entry point to Gosford, named to commemorate the work he did for the area. His widow still lives on the Central Coast.

**Margaret McGowan (wife)**

## MEETING DATES - WWTCAA

### **ALL WELCOME**

WWTCAA quarterly meetings are held at 11.00am at Teachers Federation House, 37 Reservoir St, Surry Hills.

### **Meeting Dates for 2019:**

12 February 2019 (AGM)  
14 May 2019  
13 August 2019  
12 November 2019

## INVITE: WWTCAA LUNCHES

Members of the WWTCAA are invited to join with other members on 3rd Tuesday of February, May, August and November for WWTCAA Lunch.

**Meet 12 noon ,  
at  
City Extra, Circular Quay.**

**Phone Winifred Wilcox 02 9580 5916**



# The Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association

KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE IN 2018 TO SECURE THE FUTURE



## IMPORTANT NOTICE MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

To ensure the continued financial viability of the Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association the following membership contributions and services will apply from 1 January 2019.

### a) Electronic Membership:

Receive all information and three (3) copies of *Talkabout* electronically. \$10.00 p.a.

### b) Standard Membership:

Receive all information and three (3) printed copies of *Talkabout* via standard mail.  
\$20.00 p.a.

In addition to either Electronic or Standard Membership members may choose to make additional contributions from the options below.

### c) Additional Contributions:

- i. general donation to the Alumni for ongoing projects e.g. digitise archives from \$10.00.
- ii. specific donation to the WWTCAA Scholarship Fund from \$10.00.

Opposite is a contribution slip for 2019.

## WWTCAA CONTRIBUTIONS 2019

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Former Name \_\_\_\_\_

Given Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Years at College \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Electronic Membership (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Standard Membership (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Alumni Projects \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Scholarship Fund \_\_\_\_\_

General Donation \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTION 2019** \_\_\_\_\_

Make cheques payable to:

**WWTCAA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

**Send Your Contribution To:**

Secretary WWTCAA

12 Silky Oak Rise

KEW NSW 2439

## ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER

To credit of  
**WWTCAA ALUMNI ASSOC**

**Commonwealth Bank Casula NSW**

**BSB: 062 329 A/C No: 10073789**

**Reference :** Member's First Initial, Surname and first year at college e.g. BForbes65

Please send a Remittance Advice to:

email: [bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com)

## CONTRIBUTIONS

**TALKABOUT**  
**(Including Photos )**

Please email contributions for *Talkabout*  
to

[bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com)

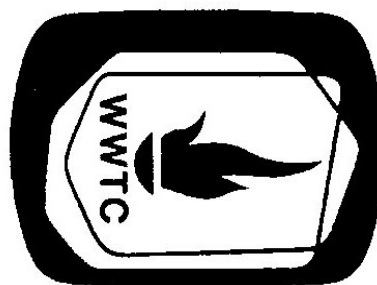
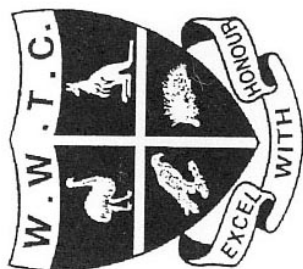
Or mail to

The Secretary WWTCAA

12 Silky Oak Rise

KEW NSW.2439

September 2019  
Volume 22 No 2



September 2019  
Volume 22 No 2

If undeliverable please return to:

The Secretary WWTCAA  
12 Silky Oak Rise  
KEW NSW 2439

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA

### **Change of Address**

If your address details are incorrect please email  
[bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com)

Or

The Secretary WWTCAA  
12 Silky Oak Rise  
KEW NSW 2439