



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

TALK ABOUT



Volume 6 No 2

July 2003

MUSEUM ARTIFACTS GROW

The appeal for artifacts and photographs for the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Display in the Museum of the Riverina at Wagga Wagga has brought forth some very interesting items and it is hoped to finalise the collection after the Bathurst Reunion in September for presentation to the Museum.

The response with photographs has been good. John Riley has been responsible for categorising, enlarging and filing these and he is doing a wonderful job. If you have any photographs in your collection that you feel would be of historical value to the Museum Display please forward same to John Riley, 2 Woorak Crescent, MIRANDA. 2228.

Please make sure that your name and address and title are on the back of each photo so that they can be returned to you. To make things easier for John please list the names of those people in the photographs so that they can be identified by the observer.

In the Hall of Fame we wish to include Alumni who have contributed in any way (most teachers have) :- sporting prowess and sportsmanship, community welfare, arts and culture, entertainment, or anything that should be acknowledged as a contribution to our society.

To date we have only a few nominations for the Hall of Fame and we know that there are many who should be included in this.

Geoff Skinner (48/50) has sent in three profiles for the Hall of Fame and here is one as guide for future profiles. It contains all the salient facts.

JOHN MAXWELL STUCKINGS 1948/50 "THE RIVERINA EXPRESS"

"John played extremely successfully for Riverina at Country Week and for Wagga in O'Farrell Cup intertown challenge cricket while at W. W. T. C. During a spectacular career, he played O'Farrell Cup cricket for various Riverina towns over an extended period from 1949 until 1972. Upon his retirement, he had taken a record number of over 400 wickets. This number is still a record today.

John played successfully for New South Wales Colts in 1949/50/51/53, for New South Wales Country against Sydney (virtually the State side) in the years 1959, 1962 and 1970. On one occasion, his large haul of wickets included Test batsman Sid Barnes in each innings.

"Sluggo" played against three successive English touring teams and recalls a number of England captains among his scalps.

As a final tribute to his success and sportsmanship, he was awarded a Prime Ministers Citation in recognition of his contributions to country cricket, in commemoration of the Centenary of Federation."

The Scholarship Fund is over \$36,000.

A big thank you to all our contributors.

Our 2003 target was \$35000 and we have exceeded it with six months still to go!! Well done to everyone who helped us reach this milestone. This puts us nearly twelve months ahead of schedule.

From the Secretary's Desk.

The majority of my news during this last period has come from emails or the telephone.

How lovely it is to receive long letters like ones received from **Betty Johnstone**, a Pioneer Geography lecturer, **Bev Veitch nee Donnelly** (1954-55) and **Judith and Robert Smyth** from the 1960-61 session who now live in Queensland. **Prue Kogler nee Fox** (1969) also went to Queensland and she is still teaching. Her contact was made by me on the School Friends web-site. **Suzanne Davies** (1963) was another found in School Friends. This is a rather time consuming way of contacting. Is there anyone who is already a member who is willing to try and find details for our Data Base. Email anyone, tell them who you are and ask them do they get Talkabout. If their answer is yes, then they are on the list. If their answer is no then ask them to contact me and I will follow it through. It is good to contact the NEW ones on the list.

I heard back from **Yvonne Hough** (1953-1954) who came out from England that as a result of sending on letters she managed to meet up with **Bill and Wendy Poole nee Patrini** and **Joan Fletcher nee Limbert**. She rang **Barbara and Judy Heery**. Yvonne has been in England for forty years. **Ian Dinnerville** was contacted by **Marion Davis**.

Don Talbot (1952) contacted me to see if I could remember the P.E. lecturer's name (**Eric Hawcroft**). Don is retired and is writing a book He still travels overseas a few times a year.

Peter Howard (1951) is still writing books. He said he moves often. **Adrian Hurley** (1961) is another person who advised me that he is now retired. **Kerry Potts** (1962) and **Georgia** are using some of his retirement by visiting Central Australia, Northern and Western Australia. Also enjoying part of her retirement time is **Audrey Schaecken** (1948-1950) by enrolling in a Tafe Maths Course. **Carmel Dobbie nee Hayes** (1958-1959) is learning tap dancing. **Judy Davis nee Grimmond** (1962-1963) teaches Adult Literacy at a Tafe College in Queensland.

Les Sutherland (1962-63) is enjoying lecturing at the University of Innsbrook in Austria. After a holiday he will be going back in 2004. **Jeanne Kellie**

(1968-1970) went to San Francisco 24 years ago on a ski holiday and met her husband. She works in Video Production. **Annette Sale** (1967) currently lives in London and would love to keep in touch. **Murray Norman** (1962) wanted to contact **Jim and Kay Johnson** after he saw their photo in Talkabout. They taught together in Bourke in the 60's. **Lyn Sinclair** (1961) intends to keep her Talkabout for her children so that they will know what teaching was like when their mother was teaching. **Peter Hennessy** was trying to contact **Ralph Sadler** (both 1960-1961) to see if they can organise a reunion. **Robyn Cameron nee Morris** (1971) is in Japan. **John Riley** (1948) caught up with the news when he met **John Biscaya** (1948) in Miranda Westfield. **Margaret Shanks** (1955-1956) loves the wonderful stories in Talkabout. **Marc Griffiths** (1967-1968) lives on the Central Coast. He left teaching, did Industry and now is a laboratory assistant in a High School. He would like to contact his room mate **Saul Motingwa**. **Alan Smith** and **Buddy Leonard** both (1960-1961) play tennis together each week.

The following meet together about twice per year. They are **Stephanie Barlow nee Andre**, **Robyn Cook nee Ingersole**, **Sue Reilly**, **Genevieve Hook nee Keane** and **Ashlyn Miles nee Burgess**. They are from the 1971 intake (the last one before being changed to **RCAE**).

Janet Porter nee Perry moved up to the mountains to be near her daughter. "What a learning curve that was in many ways." **Cliff Cudlippe** (1951) **Les Farey** (1951) and **Stephen Rossiter** (1965), **Ivan Caldwell** (1966-1967) **June Hadley** (1950) **Ray Osmotherly** (1967) and **Malcolm Hanratty** (1951) all have new addresses. Please remember to let me know if you or any of your college friends have a different address. If your Talkabout is returned to the University you are automatically taken off the posting list.

Congratulations to **June Hadley** (1948-1950) and **Meredith Regan** (1969-1971) for being awarded the Order of Australia medals. June's was for writing the history of View Clubs and Meredith's for her contribution to education and the Darwin community. **Leon Turley** (1961-62) was the only

married student whose first child was born right at exam time. He made a bassinet for him in craft as his major project and it is still being used for his grandson – tenth to use the bassinet and still going strong. He is back teaching after doing many things since he left college. During 14 years in the navy he learnt Indonesian and this is what he teaches.

Good wishes go to our friend **Charlie Ferris** (1951-52) who has not been well lately. **Lindsay Budd** helps us all with our computer problems. How about hearing again from some of our quiet E-group members.

Thank you to those people who sent memorabilia to me for inclusion in the Charles Sturt Archives, the Wagga Wagga Museum or kept for reunion display. I hope these people have received their note of thanks. Among the donors are **Malcolm Hanratty**, **Fernanda Taylor**, **Margaret McGowan**, **Mary Maurer**, **Joan Stanyer**, **Peter and Wendy Dobson**, **Bob and Olga Collard**, **Robin Mckinnon**, **Jenny Briggs**, **Dorothy Judd**, **Elvi Cornell** and **Margaret Goulder and Hazel Mann**.

John Riley is organising the photos and he is looking for any Historical Photos of the College. Can you help?

Thank you for the early numbers of the present Talkabout series. I now have two bound copies for Wagga. John is also interested in receiving copies of Talkabout from the years you were at college. Single copies or a number will be gratefully received, as well as any more MEMORABILIA.

ADDRESSES

If you sent me an address and that person did not receive Talkabout, please send again.

There have been so many "found" that it is possible some have missed being entered. My apologies.

REST IN PEACE

Since our March Talkabout I have been informed of the following deaths: **Neville Donald Davies** (Pioneer) died 6th March 2003.

Helen Leaney nee James (1962-1963) died in December 1998.

Dianne Hogan nee Goldthorpe (1970-1971) date unknown.

Neil McPherson (1956-57) lost his dad **Alec McPherson** on 17th February 2003.

Ann Smith

2003 Wagga Teachers College Alumni Scholarship Award

**You'll feel smarter
after you read this...**



The 2003 Alumni scholarship has been awarded to Blair O'Meara, a final year student in the BEd Technology and Applied Studies course. All of the short-listed applicants were interviewed by Henry Gardiner ('53-'54) and Chairman of the Riverina Trust of the University Foundation), Jim Tweddle ('52-'53) and Karen Jamieson, Secretary of the Riverina Trust. Blair was considered by the panel to be the most worthy recipient of the WWTC Alumni Scholarship for 2003.

Blair is a mature age student who has rarely scored less than a High Distinction for his subjects since he first enrolled in 2000 and who has been judged an outstanding teacher by each of his in-school supervisors. Prior to enrolling at Wagga, he worked in retailing, both in Australia and overseas. In 1999 he obtained the TAFE Small Business Enterprise Management Certificate with Distinction, and also holds the TAFE Certificate of Proficiency, retail Operations (Sales) from his 1997 enrolment.

Since embarking on his teacher preparation which will qualify him to teach secondary students in the new Technology and Applied Studies, he has concurrently successfully undertaken a selection of TAFE trades courses in manufacturing and engineering to enlarge his knowledge base for the teaching of VET subjects which are now offered at many high schools. Blair has also undertaken work in the

Rivcoll Union kitchen, which has given him industry experience towards the Hospitality strands of VET. Last year he undertook the Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. He is also competent in basketball and soccer, two popular school sports always in need of teacher-coaches and referees.

At the same time as all of these extra-curricular activities, Blair has twice been placed on the prestigious Dean's List for Outstanding Academic Performance in his university work. The Course Coordinator notes that this student has often been seen in the computer labs in his own time unobtrusively assisting other less computer literate students and that he is usually the emergent leader in student work groups. In the unanimous opinion of the members of the Scholarships Selection Committee he should be a remarkable teacher when he enters the Service and a pleasure to have on one's staff.

Unfortunately, during the period of the Scholarships Awards Ceremonies in mid-May, Blair was stationed out at Urana School for his practicum and was unable to be get back to Wagga Wagga to join the over 110 other scholarship and prize-winners and their families at the official ceremony. (This year more than 60 students shared the \$149,000 worth of University Foundation scholarships, of which the Wagga Teachers College Alumni's \$2,500 was a not insignificant part.)

Henry Gardiner (1953-54)

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure." —Bill Clinton, President, USA

"We are ready for an unforeseen event that may or may not occur." —Al Gore, Vice President, USA.

"Traditionally, most of Australia's imports come from overseas." —Kep Enderbery.

"Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff." —Mariah Carey.

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life." —Brooke Shields, during an interview to become spokesperson for federal anti-smoking campaign.

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body." —Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky basketball forward.

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country." —Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, DC.

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it." —Al Gore, Vice President.

"We don't necessarily discriminate. We simply exclude certain types of people." —Colonel Gerald Wellman, ROTC Instructor.

CONTACTS

President: Bob Collard: 2 Louise Close, Ourimbah 2258 Phone 43622764.

Secretary: Ann Smith: 24 Whitworth St, Westmead 2145 Phone 96350449
E-mail: annrae@bigpond.net.au

Treasurer: Lindsay Budd: 4 Flemington Close, Casula 2170 Phone 96013003,
E-mail: lbudd@bigpond.net.au

Talkabout Editors:

Lindsay Budd

Lew Morrell: 25 Grandview Drive, Newport 2106,

Phone 99971506 E-mail: lewis@bigpond.com

John Riley: 2 Woorak Cres, Miranda 2228

Phone 95255304 E-mail: francis.jr@bigpond.com

Alumni Office: Michelle Fawkes: The Alumni Office, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, 2795. Phone 63384629. E-mail: mfawkes@csu.edu.au

TEACHING MEMORIES

(In the March Talkabout John Rummary related his experiences after receiving his first appointment to Euabalong Public School. His story continues.....Ed)

FIRST APPOINTMENTS (Part 2)

During the August holidays I received another curt telegram, directing me to commence duty as T/C Public School Pooncarie. No directions were given as to the school's location or how one might get there.

A search of the road map of N.S.W. covering an area from the coast to west of the tablelands failed to reveal Pooncarie, until it was discovered half way between Wentworth and Menindee, located on a bend of the Darling River. One could take the Broken Hill train to Menindee and (somehow) travel south for about 70 miles, or reach Wentworth and (somehow) travel north.

I chose the latter method and decided to take the train to Albury and travel the Murray Valley by coach. This latter way meant that I could travel via Wagga and see my fiancée at Wagga station for a brief few minutes.

I digress here to relate an incident that happened before taking the train to Albury. I resolved to call at Bridge Street, headquarters of "the Department" and complain about being so summarily transferred. But who to see? I decided in my naïve innocence to see the Director General of Education, whom I knew to be a Mr McKenzie. The sheer effrontery of such an action is still frightening, but fortune favours the brave (and the foolish) and on finding where the D.G.'s room was I went there, knocked and walked in.

"Good morning" I said to a man seated at a desk, "Are you Mr McKenzie?"

"No" he replied, "I'm his assistant. Can I help you?" This said with a cold, controlled anger.

"Yes" I answered. "I've been transferred to Pooncarie, and I don't want to go there".

"Pooncarie!" he replied, "that beautiful spot on the Darling River! I know it well. Oh, how you'll enjoy your time there. And remember", he added, rising from his desk "children in isolated areas deserve the best teachers we can provide. Well, good morning to you."

I left, knowing that I had been conned, but knowing too, that I couldn't change the appointment.

While waiting in Wentworth for the mail car that ran through to Menindee, I called on the headmaster of the primary school. Hearing I was heading for Pooncarie, he gave me a cane from a cupboard. Seeing my look of surprise he remarked "You may need it, I hear there's been trouble there!"

I boarded the mail coach with my luggage including a "parcel", 70 cms long, very thin, and wrapped in brown paper. The trip of about 80 miles took almost 8 hours, and I disembarked at the Telegraph Hotel, Pooncarie, around 4 p.m., was shown to the teacher's room, and invited to come and have a beer. I elected rather to have a "Snowy" a local soft drink like carbonated cola. I had resolved that here too I'd be a non drinker of alcohol, not for any religious or moral reasons, but rather as prudence dictated. I remembered that in Wentworth they thought there had been some trouble at Pooncarie. There was an official letter waiting for me, urging caution, and pointing out that some parents had made things difficult for the previous teacher.

The school building was a typical one teacher school building from the 1880's, had a wide verandah and a roomy classroom with large windows.

Unfortunately the appearance was the best point of the building, as it was riddled with white ants, and the correspondence file was thick with letters drawing the attention of the Department to this condition.

The inside walls were paper thin, as was the ceiling, and white ants fell on children's heads and books very frequently. There was one shade tree in the playground which was less than two metres tall and very sparse of foliage.

I called the roll, and was aware of a tense excitement among the pupils who numbered 27. When I called one name (I shall refer to the pupil as X) one of the older girls said "X isn't here. X is in Broken Hill. You'll be sorry when X comes back!"

"Indeed?" I replied, "perhaps X will be sorry!"

The first day proceeded, until, just before lunch a 6th grade boy sang out

"There's a fox on the river bank! Can we go and run him down?"

I didn't think they meant it, and said "Yes!" The whole 27 stampeded out of the room, and broke into three groups, headed the fox and ran him down in about 10 minutes. The body was brought back and placed on an ants' nest near the school steps. In less than a fortnight a skeleton covered in mangy hair was all that was left.

The 5th/6th grade boys told me that since "Myxo" went through, foxes were in poor condition and quite easy to run down. Some weeks later, when the daily temperature reached 90° F+, I was aware of a commotion in the school ground as I walked down to school from the pub. As I hurried into the playground I saw that the 3 senior girls had the small children in a group in the middle of the yard and two senior boys were carefully walking through a great heap of grass and weeds that grew along the school fence. "Snake!" said one of the boys, and handed me the school axe, pointing to where the snake was being tracked. "Do or Die", I thought and dispatched the luckless snake who joined the fox's remains on the ant nest.

My respect for the self reliance and common sense of the children increased considerably, and my trust in their capabilities grew even more

As I ran the school bank each week, I was aware that many pupils, especially senior boys and girls, had some hundreds of pounds to their credit from rabbit trapping, fox skins, "dead" wool – i.e. wool plucked from the bodies of dead sheep. Wool was selling for a pound money for a pound weight, and the Darling River which ran past the back of the school was full of Murray cod, and an enterprising local had a large freezer, the size of a semi-trailer which stored frozen rabbit carcasses, frozen fish and frozen mutton for dispatch to Melbourne markets.

A great day came when I was aware of a "new" pupil at our morning assembly.

This was pupil X, whose presence would cause me sorrow. And indeed X did just that. X was a 13 year old, quite big, with small unpleasant eyes, and spent time in school disrupting the work of the school. Remonstrances were a waste of time, and clearly things could

TEACHING MEMORIES

not continue. I took a bold step, and suggested to X's mother that X could leave school and perhaps get a job or go to school in Broken Hill. To my delight and surprise, X's mother agreed and X disappeared to Broken Hill.

We were now mid way through term 3, and the problem of white ants appeared to grow worse. They cascaded down from the ceiling, and the inner walls were only a coat of paint thick except for the hardwood studs. One afternoon when the pupils had left, I made a square of half a dozen desks, placing two desks on top and a chair on top of them, and then climbed up and lifted the manhole cover off. I immediately saw a large lump of "dirt" which I grabbed and threw to the floor. The lump was what was left of all the original school records, including the remains of the original admissions register, the first entry dated 1885. The white ants had made this whole heap of paper into a nest and nothing could be salvaged. Thinking of the state of the building and the number of years that successive teachers had drawn attention to this, I wrote directly to the departmental officer who had told me in Sydney what a beautiful place Pooncarie was, and how children in isolated areas deserved the best teachers. This officer's name appeared on some of the letters in the correspondence file as he had been District Inspector at Broken Hill. Bypassing the inspector's office at Broken Hill I wrote a letter of complaint in very strong terms, ending by remarking that sending the best teachers to Pooncarie meant persuading reluctant teachers to go there, but did not mean providing a proper classroom for them to teach. I posted the letter and awaited the inevitable explosion, but it never came.

In the mid sixties I was a member of staff in a large primary school in Canberra, and the official to whom the letter had been sent visited the school prior to retirement, and was introduced to the staff. Introduced to me he held my eye for a moment and said: "Mr Rummery and I have met" and passed on.

A note on the teacher's room at the Telegraph Hotel:

The room used by the teacher was large

and furnished with an excellent bed and other furnishings. The only catch was that it had been an extra tap room leading off from the bar, but this had been closed off and a light panel wall had been put across the opening.

The hotel had little bar trade during the day, but from 7 p.m. each night some dozens of patrons drifted in from the village and from local properties, and it was frequently late at night before trading ceased. The proximity of the bar to the teacher's room did not make for early nights, and I became adept at going to sleep with the noisy bar and its patrons only inches away through a thin panel wall.

Social Life in the Isolated Far West:

Nineteenth century stories are full of shearers, fencers, rural workers coming to the shanty and spending all their hard earned cash in a few riotous weeks until advised that their cheque had cut out, and after a few days of sobering up, they returned to work.

The Telegraph Hotel was not a shanty, but it regularly played host to fencers and rural workers who were determined to go through their money whilst having a glorious bender. They were generally quiet but very determined drinkers, seldom argumentative and seldom a nuisance. The hotel staff, mainly the publican and his wife, insisted that every few days there would be a dry day, and food had to be taken. This often meant that I took my meals with some red eyed very shaky people who were trying to "qualify" for the next few day's bender!

During the summer holiday a violent wind storm swept up the river and shook the school so severely that most of the ceiling fell in. When this was discovered, the parents' patience was finally exhausted, and they announced that they would not send any children to school until a new school was built. I returned to Pooncarie on the 5th Feb., 1952, and on the Tuesday morning I walked down to the school, puzzled that there were no children in the playground. No one told me the parents were on strike. I rang the inspector at Broken Hill and broke the news to him. "Remain on duty!" was his advice. After a month, a room at the old police

station was made available, and in March school re-commenced.

A builder came from Broken Hill to examine the site for a new building and to remove, or dismantle the old building. A rope was tied to the point of the roof gable and one pull with a light truck brought the whole building crashing down! It had been as dangerous as the parents had feared.

The new building was occupied at the start of term 3, 1952. It was half the size of the old school, had a narrow short verandah, no fly screens and no provision for heating in winter time, I was told that the plans were drawn up in Sydney, and that "it is always hot in the far west!"

The two new tanks which were supplied were found to have punctured bases, and remained empty through the spring and summer of 1952. The pupils brought bottles full of river water which they stored under the verandah and there was no other water at the school.

A final note concerns the cane I had brought from Wentworth the previous year. I had used it occasionally and one boy, Edgar, had seemed to have been punished more than anyone else. On the very last school day of 1952, I called Edgar to the front of the class, and produced the cane. "What's that for?" asked Edgar, somewhat truculently. "It's your turn today!" I said. "You can give me six of the very best!" and I handed him the cane, and held out my hand. Edgar certainly got his own back, and managed to sting me quite fiercely. I then gave him the cane to keep.

It was more than 30 years before I drove into Pooncarie again, and found that a permanent water supply had been laid on, electricity was also laid on, the school grounds were a mass of green trees, an air conditioned caravan on a cement slab was provided for the teacher and the town was full of lawns, gardens and sprinklers.

NOT LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS!

John Rummery 1949-50

TEACHING MEMORIES

A PIECE OF CHALK TALK.

My first teaching appointment was to Narrabeen Infants in 1952- thus I joined the ranks of the high-heeled, hatted and gloved, teaching spinsters of Sydney. I had enjoyed a few trips to Sydney up until that time, but this was different- I was really a part of the scene and the fascination of actually living in a big city. It lasted but a short time, as the Department decided that a young lady from the backblocks would be better placed in her hometown of Bourke. The reason given was that another young female teacher, boarding at the Presbyterian Manse, was causing concern with late night and early morning entrances and exits. I was required to take her place because I would be accommodated in my family home under the watchful eyes of my parents. At that time, Bourke was an Intermediate High School and I was attached to one of the three infants classes for the remainder of the year.

A new school year arrived and there was a large increase in enrolments. We were already at 40+ so it was necessary to form another class. The decision was taken to select a small group of 30 1A/ 2B pupils and place them in my charge. The immediate problem was that there was no spare classroom, so a temporary one was set up - in the weather shed. Weather shed? Well, when the desks were arranged around the three sides of the shed's built-in seats, my desk and me, and the chalkboard bore the brunt of the dust and the winds and the occasional drift of rain, but we all shared the same searing heat when the sun beat down on the iron roof. Each new page of an exercise book soon bore evidence of dirty, sweaty hand marks and when a child was called to the front of the "classroom", one of the edge-to-edge desks had to be pushed out of formation to allow exit from the cramped quarters.

Then came the day we were all informed that more suitable accommodation had been found. The Headmaster's residence was on a corner block beside the school, and diagonally across from the residence was the Methodist Church- the planned new location for the class. It was a bright sunny morning when we moved

in. We all watched the 6th Class boys carry cupboard, chalkboard, desks and chairs to the new "classroom". I gathered my charges into their hand-holding positions and ushered them out of the school gate. I then stood in the middle of the road doing my first policeman duty, stopping the bemused motorists. They were quite unused to being requested to "Wait there please" by a young teacher who was impeding their progress as they drove through the streets of their small country town.

After safely crossing both roads, we watched the boys push the pews forward and place our furniture in position as our "classroom" took shape. We were glad there would be no wind, no rain, and no excessive heat to bother us. Anything would be better than the weather shed!

The next day brought new instructions. The church was used for a meeting each Wednesday evening, so on Wednesday afternoons the "classroom" was dismantled - furniture neatly stored at the back of the church, pews returned to their normal places and all books locked in the cupboard. We reversed the procedure on Thursday mornings. Church Service was held on Sundays, so another double shift of furniture was necessary on Friday afternoons and Monday mornings. Tuesdays were as "normal" as possible under the circumstances. By this time, I found I was working part-time every day, but as the full pay kept coming in, who was I to mention my missed lessons to other properly occupied staff? I still believed conditions were better than in the weather shed.

Mind you, there was still the odd hiccup. There were no toilet facilities at the church, so three times each day, after class assembly, I would line up my charges and direct- "Girls to the left- boys to the right" to ensure they emptied their small bladders before we crossed the roads. Despite my precautions, a small hand would inevitably be raised in class- "Please Miss, I've GOT to go". I

would walk with her to the churchyard gate to watch her safely across the roads, then wait for her return, darting in occasionally to check on the others. I guess my one benefit in watching was to provide an eyewitness account should she meet with misadventure while attending to her needs. With that in mind, I developed my system of hand signals- Stop! Go! Wait! Look! Listen! We were all well-drilled in the safety procedure and passers-by soon learned to ignore my antics out on the street.

Another problem was the cow. Rev. Southwell had a milking cow, and its "home paddock" was the churchyard. I never liked to share my space with a cow, as one had hampered my play activities when I was a child. The class and I had no real dislike of her, but we would have preferred to see a fence

They were quite unused to being requested to "Wait there please" by a young teacher who was impeding their progress as they drove through the streets of their small country town.

separating us- as we had no protection between the church gate and the porch. I paired off my charges- an "afraid" one with a "brave" one. We would wait until the cow turned her back and ambled off in search of a green shoot. Being a local, I could have told her there were none to be had, but her hopeful search meant that, with me as a reluctant leader, we took our chances to rush to the safety of the porch, until we were all reunited. I also found it necessary to appoint a cow spotter, just to keep tab on her movements if anyone had to leave the "room". He was a good monitor.

There was just one more inconvenience- maintaining discipline. My desk faced the altar, the pulpit and church icons, and the fact that I was in a church was always uppermost in my mind. Sometimes, when teaching, there was a need to dampen high spirits, and I was reluctant to raise my voice to reprimand mischief-makers. Not only was it necessary to devise hand signals for crossing roads- I also had to practise accompanying facial expressions to shush any restless little body in my church classroom. However, we soon developed the habit of talking very quietly -the acoustics were excellent- and it was seldom necessary to resort to


TEACHING MEMORIES

a loud stage whisper, accompanied by a look of displeasure or a frown.


So, when I think on the sites of my “classrooms” that year, both had their drawbacks, but there was one important difference that gave preference to the church. As the rays of sunlight streamed through the stained glass windows, they bathed the books, the desks and their occupants with rainbow colours. I would watch a small head lift and two searching eyes try to assess how long it would be until the slanting rays of the sun put their owner in the spotlight. And my charges would play games with outstretched hands and arms as they slipped through, or sought their favourite rainbow colour when it was their turn to be favoured by the sunlight. And the smiling eyes also admired the streaks of colours on the clothes they proudly wore. Thus, when the rain came, and the people of Bourke were thankful for the laying of the dust, my class and I just waited for the sun to shine again. 50 years have not dimmed the memory of those different but special days!

Dawn Stewart (Andrews) 1950-51

**WWTC:
College &
Teaching
Memories**



Compiled by
John F Riley



Some copies are still available at a cost of \$20 including postage and may be purchased by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, Lindsay Budd at:

4 Flemington Close
CASULA 2170

LITTLE BOY LOST

During the 1960's, the NSW State Primary Schools' Swimming Championships at the North Sydney Olympic Pool was the busiest swimming carnival in Australia; completing more races in a two-day carnival than any other in the country. The NSW Amateur Swimming Association expressed concern that if a state, Australian, or even world, age record were to be broken at the carnival, it would not be recognized as we did not have all qualified ASA officials who would be needed to sign the record form.

This shortcoming was quickly addressed. Those of us who lacked the necessary qualifications set about the tasks of sitting for the exams and passing the practical tests to gain NSWASA qualifications for various positions. Two of us (including yours truly) passed as official starters. The only positions which were lacking in numbers among teachers were timekeepers (three per lane in those days before electronic timing) but volunteer NSWASA timekeepers were co-opted to make up this deficiency. From then on, until I departed to Queensland, I was one of the two official starters. We needed two so that one could be giving the obligatory briefing to his next heat while the other starter had his heat on the blocks. The system worked very well.

One particular year, the swimmers from my own school, Epping, had done very well at the zone and I had a fair number who had made it through to the State Finals. Also, Epping was billeting a group of swimmers from one of the country zones. Our principal also suggested that the billetees should also attend the carnival to encourage their billets. As a few parents were taking their own kids to the carnival this left a group just under the limit for one teacher to accompany them. From memory, this was forty in those days. So that I could carry out my official duties, it was agreed that I could leave the kids in the stand to be supervised by the afore-mentioned parents.

That morning, I picked up my tribe from the school, walked them to Epping station, took them to the pool, left them

in the care of the parents in the stand, said a brief “hello” to Don Talbot (WWTC 1951-52) who, by that time, had forsaken teaching for a career as a full-time swimming coach and carried out my duties as starter.

At the end of the day's races, I picked up the kids from the stand and made a quick count of heads. As it had just started to rain, I gave them the order, “Follow me” and led them off to Milsons Point station.

It wasn't until we alighted from the train at Epping that one of the young billets approached me and said, “Sir, I've lost my billetee.”

A wave of sheer panic swept over me. “Who is he?” I asked.

“Adrian Wright,” came the answer.

I knew Adrian, from Yr 4, who was a very quiet and unobtrusive lad - not the sort of boy one would miss in a hurry. After returning to the empty school, I braced myself for the next formidable duty - returning the solitary lad to his temporary home.

It was with considerable trepidation that I rang the doorbell.

When Mrs Wright opened the door, all I could blurt out was, “I'm sorry, Mrs Wright, but I've lost your little boy.”

“That's all right,” came the response.

“We know where he is. He's in the Mater Hospital.”

It was some weeks before I heard the full story of what had occurred.

Some time after my “Follow me” order, Adrian had realized that he had left his jumper behind. In running down the stand to retrieve it, he had slipped on the seats, then wet from the rain, and cracked his head open.

By the time the remaining officials and organisers learned that he was supposed to be with me, I had long gone.

As I was well-known to them, they set about attempting to save Mike Austin's skin.

Some took the boy to the Mater while others sought out Mr Wright from his office in the city and accompanied him firstly to the hospital and then to the RSL where they did an excellent job of convincing Mr Wright that Mike Austin is really a good bloke.

I am ever grateful for the understanding parents and for the “rescue operation” of my fellow teachers that day.

Michael Austin 1950-51

TEACHING MEMORIES

BLOOPERS

The following “bloopers” were posted on the waggatc-alumni E-group. If you have some similar incidents which may be suitable for Talkabout, please feel free to sent them to the Editor.

Blooper No 1:

In my second week of teaching at Queanbeyan PS somebody mentioned that there was a staff meeting that afternoon, after school. I had been playing 1st Grade cricket since I was 15 and knew how “team meetings” after the match usually ended up:...following a few Cleansing Ales ...mob of pie-eyed old codgers whinging about the umpires, the captain, not getting a bowl, batting too low down the order etc. So I caught the bus home. Besides, I had preparation to do for tomorrow. Next day I had great difficulty in explaining to the Principal that they never told us about Staff Meetings at Wagga Wagga. (not while I was awake, anyway).

Bill Atkinson 1957-58

Blooper No 2:

In 1963 I was teaching Year 5 at Campbell PS. I was busy writing Problem No. 3 on the blackboard, “If a farmer was ...”, when I felt a gentle tug on my shirt. There was Tanya, age 10, IQ over the moon. She whispered to me, “Mr A., when you begin with ‘If’ you must use ‘were’, not ‘was’.” I knew it was no use pulling the old “I was wondering who would be the first to notice that” bit on Tanya, so I thanked her very much and checked it out that evening. She was right. I must have been asleep when my teacher mentioned that.

Bill Atkinson 1957-58

Blooper No 3:

In the 1960s I was sent to East Denistone Infants. The Infants Mistress was an old dragon who scared me witless. That means that as soon as she told me to do something it went right out of my head.

Just before the school photos were to be taken she decided that all the classes should have colour names. I went from 1A (for Ayre, not because they were bright) to 1 Yellow.

Photo day came and I followed the barked orders and lined up the kids. “Class name?” asked the photographer. “1A”, I replied.

“Click”. A couple of hours later the penny dropped! Panic! My sin could not be hidden. Recess came and the Infants Mistress came into the staffroom. Confession time! “Oh, Miss G, I have done something terrible”. “What have you done now?” said she who must be obeyed. I told her. In her arms she had a bundle of books which she let fall to the floor before she walked out.

A couple of weeks of stomach churning. When the photos came back, my class was called 1 Yellow.

The old cow (excuse the French) must have rung the photographers and they doctored the photo.

Gretel Ayre 1952-53

ps. I got my ‘C’ list the next year at that school.

Blooper No 4:

When I was teaching at Mullumbimby High it was traditional for the Principal, at the beginning of each year, to put on a “Get to know the new teachers” do at the local golf club.

As his wife used to be a professional singer, dancer in her young days, she, with her pianist friend, usually contributed to the entertainment at these functions.

On this particular evening, I happened to be talking to the Principal and a couple of old stagers when we were joined by a New Chum. We chatted for a while and found out where he had come from and what he was to teach. Meanwhile the Principal’s wife had seated herself on the piano and began to sing “Somebody Stole My Gal”.

We stopped talking and turned around to listen.

The New Chum turned to us and said, “Who’s the silly old duck making a fool of herself on the piano?”

There was a deathly silence and all I could think of to say was “Can I get you fellows another drink?”

Lindsay Budd 1950-51

Blooper No 5:

I did my “home prac” at Warrawong Public School. The school was a teacher short, so I was given the responsibility of 6B, mostly without supervision. I was told to just let them draw a lot. I suggested to the kids they could bring in stuff for the Nature Table. One boy brought in a huge green frog in a box. As he opened the lid, it jumped out. Every girl in the class screamed and jumped up on the desks. “You won’t do that again, will you?” said a bemused headmaster.

Norma Fowler 1960-61

Blooper No 6:

My biggest blooper was with the DI when I was first appointed to a one-teacher school at Bangaroo North outside Canowindra-a school of 25 with large attached residence. We only had a wood fuel stove in the kitchen so I put in a request for an electric stove.

The DI wrote back and told me to go ahead and order one, I think from GovStores. This I did and the gleaming new stove duly arrived, but it needed to be wired in by an electrician, so I got one out from Canowindra and he informed me that the switchbox needed extensive rewiring to take the new appliance.

I promptly said “Go ahead” and the work was done with alacrity and the Bill presented-85pounds! Then it dawned on me that I had not gained permission from the DI for this work to be done. So, with heavy heart I penned a letter to the DI admitting my crime.

His letter back to me was a model of patient restraint: starting off: “Mr Briggs, you have acted wrongly on the following three points....”, which he proceeded to enumerate, and resignedly referring me to the appropriate clauses of the Handbook.

But he paid the Bill!

I was terrified that I would have been left with the Bill, as we were desperately poor. The DI was Jim Duncan, a really good bloke, and he did give me my C List after this most inauspicious start.

John Briggs 1953-54

TEACHING MEMORIES

A FIRST APPOINTMENT

29th January, 1952 was my first day. As I stood in the vestibule of the Forbes Boys' Primary who should enter but Marshall Johnson. I was delighted to see a familiar face. We fell on one another and were really pleased that we had a friend from college with whom to work.

I had booked in at the Vandenburg Hotel where I was ensconced in a plain, small room with a bed and not much else. However the grapevine must have been at work as shortly a fellow, one John Walmsley, I think, was his name arrived and conveyed me and my belongings to Mrs 'Ockings boarding house in Battye Street, where I found Marshall, Ian Hore and Gwen Mills staying as well of course as John and there may have been another. I must ask Marshall as he may remember.

The board was reasonable as I remember and included breakfast and dinner and as I recall we had to find our own lunch. Of course we had a cup of tea or something similar at eleven at school and after school at four o'clock or perhaps a little later we would sojourn to one of the bars and take a little light refreshment.

Marshall and I met the owner of one of the milk bars, Larry O'Leary, actually I think it was his wife whose name now escapes me who owned the place but it suited Larry to sponge and as he also often took a little light refreshment he was accepted by Marshall and me as a friend.

Forbes is a small country town where everyone knows everyone else and as I found out everyone in the district for many miles around also knows everyone else. I also now know that this is the case for all small towns and when a stranger such as new school teachers, doctors, policemen or other public servants arrive this is duly noted by the grapevine.

We didn't know people in Forbes, or not many anyhow, but you could bet your socks everyone knew us and our habits such as enjoying a small ale.

They were the days of beer restrictions which had been operating in New South for many years. The beer came on at four and went off at six o'clock when

the pub closed. It was known as the six o'clock swill and in that time you drank as many beers as you could. I think we probably managed four or six but we didn't buy bottled beer as that was in short supply also.

Mrs 'Ocking didn't approve of our drinking but as we were still quite sober after half a dozen we didn't cause any trouble at the boarding house. We managed to enjoy mealtimes at dinner as it was a more leisurely meal than our usually rushed breakfast, although I think we used to eat breakfast together. Mrs Hocking, whose name Marshall used to pronounce distinctly and clearly as "Ockin", pronounced the word "syrup" as "sirrp", so when Marshall was finished his formal meal which was usually very tasty and wholesome he would have a piece of bread, butter and syrup. I think more than one piece was frowned on.

Marshall would butter his bread and then clearly ask whoever was nearest to the commodity to pass the HONEY. Mrs Hocking bit every time.

"Marshall", she would say firmly, "you know there is no honey. That is sirrp!" Being well mannered we didn't guffaw but many of us could not suppress a grin as the poor lady made her usual pronunciation mistake, and Marshall had bread and honey at the conclusion of most meals.

I remember Mrs Hocking with affection, as a wonderful, simple soul whom I'm sure had our best interests at heart as far as accommodation went. When Gwen Mills and I went out together she seemed delighted. I also remember when we received a two shilling rise in our wages, the board went up sixpence.

Malcolm Hanratty 1950-51

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In those days board was considered to be 25% of one's salary.

Mrs Hocking was one of the old school.

STANDARDS LIVE FOREVER

The NSW Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England, and the NSW railways were built by English engineers.

Why did the English people build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing the wagons would break on some of the old, long distance roads, because that's the spacing of the old wheel ruts.

So who built these old rutted roads?

The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts? The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for or by Imperial Rome they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Thus, we have the answer to the original questions. The New South Wales standard railway gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman army war chariot. Specs and Bureaucracies live forever.

So, the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right. Because the Imperial Roman chariots were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the back-ends of two war horses.

COLLEGE MEMORIES

Don Affleck was appointed Master of College Halls to the new RCAE in 1972. He relates his experiences which should be interesting to those WWTC students of the 50's and 60's.

EDITOR.

1972 - learning to walk on the grass

Five very hot travellers arrived in Wagga Wagga on 19 January 1972 and were given the keys to the residence at 22 Charleville Road, formerly occupied by the Principal of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. I had been appointed to this newly-emergmg entity called Riverina College of Advanced Education and given the amazing title, Master of College Halls ... what that title meant I was soon to discover!

We had arrived in the middle of a heat-wave. That first night the whole family carried their mattresses into the back-yard in an attempt to find a cool place to sleep.

The next day my wife, Marie, and daughters, Lynette, Merryn and Bronwyn ... plus Candy the dog ... were left to attend to the setting-up of our new home while I was given a whirlwind introduction to the campus.

"You can work from here," said Fred Wylie, the Property Officer. "It used to be the morgue in the old RAAF Hospital days. At least it's opposite the Dining Room and the Administration Building. Let me know what furniture you'll need." Exit Fred.

A gentle knock on the door. "Hello. I'm Jenny O'Donnell. I'm here to assist you." Jenny placed a tall pile of papers on the floor. "We've already received stacks of applications for accommodation," she said, "and the students will start arriving for classes in five weeks time. How do you want to handle this?" Before I could answer, the phone began to ring with parent's and student's enquires ... and it didn't cease ringing for a couple of months!

A phone call from the Principal advised me that he had recruited a person to be Deputy Master of College Halls, Mrs. Mona Ravenscroft. Mona arrived shortly afterwards and took up residence in one of the Warden's Flats.

Mona was a graduate in Psychology and Sociology, with extensive field work and hands-on experience. From the moment of her arrival, we clicked!

My stated responsibilities included total organisation of the Halls of Residence, placement of students within the Halls of Residence, assistance for students who would be living off-campus, the College Kitchen and Dining Hall facilities, the Student Union, student health, extra-curricula activities.

My only qualifications for the job came from my experience training as a Methodist minister, then 1968-1971 as a full-time, fee-paying, married student at the ANU, Canberra ... the year 1971 spent as a staff-tutor in residence at Burgmann College (living in close proximity with 300 students) in the first year of that College's life.

The starting point, for me, was the recognition that a *new* and untried institution (RCAE) ... in a *new-age* (the 1970's) ... was, by Government decree, located in a very self-consciously conservative inland City (Wagga Wagga) ... and expected to supplant an existing institution (WWTC) which, by all the accepted standards of previous times, was both highly regarded and well-credentialled.

With this recognition came the need to accept, as fact, that the new attitudes and practices were going to clash, powerfully, with former attitudes and practices ... and the new things would prevail! There was no way to avoid this impact. It would affect students and their families, staff, and the entire Wagga community,

The only question in my mind, given my areas of responsibility, was just how and when to acknowledge this change ... gradually or immediately?

Mona and I were very, very, fortunate to be able to consult with and hear reactions to this question from, on the one hand, persons who had first-hand experience of WWTC e.g. three continuing students who gave up vacation time to meet with me; admin. staff like Edna Wilson and Dawn Staines; the Catering Supervisor, Mick Draculic; domestic staff in the residences (wonder-women!); Cec, the

nightwatchman; Lyn Moodie, a Lecturer and Warden; Bill Rowlinson; former Deputy Principal, Ray Wade; continuing staff like Keith Swan, John Cosier, Arthur Trewin, Brian Cambourne and the remarkable Sister Jean Hamilton, RN.

On the other hand, often in the staff-room, we tapped into the excitement and the keenness of the arriving staff... emotions which always surmounted any questions and confusions they carried inside themselves. Mona and I shared and discussed what we had heard, usually late at night, and often with a well-earned night-cap!

I made my decision to run with *the new thing* and to do so immediately. There would be no attempt at a gradual change. In this I was supported by the Principal, Dr C.D. Blake.

Together with Jenny O'Donnell (replaced, a few months later, by Pat Kelly) I focussed upon the changes to be made to the on-campus accommodation. [Thanks to Charlie Ferris and Henry Gardiner for the reprint of the 'Rules and Regulations' (Talkabout, July 2002) from the midfifties.] Names like *Buna-Marinyah* gave way to *A, B, C and W, X Blocks*. *Wardens* were replaced by *Resident Tutors*. Four of the residential blocks were deemed *mixed housing areas*, with one male wing and one female wing and common use of the adjoining area. As there were many more students arriving at RCAE than could ever be accommodated in the on-campus buildings, the allocation of rooms was determined by *ballot*. The previous *Rules and Regulations*, many of which governed behaviour, were replaced by a minimum number of *Rules* focussing on property and physical safety. *Residence Committees* were expected to be the focal point for determining the style of life and domestic arrangements for each residential block.

The above changes were prompted by a number of factors, some being the age / maturity of tertiary students in the seventies; the societal demand for increased personal and social responsibility / accountability; the difficulties facing any institution trying to retain the *loco parentis* relationship

COLLEGE MEMORIES

with persons in their late teens and early twenties.

The changes made to the on-campus living arrangements were important in their own right, but they also acted as an indicator ... pointing to changes occurring across the whole campus. For instance, the Dining Room saw tremendous changes, with formal meal arrangements altered to suit the needs of scholarship/non-scholarship students ... and no *pig-table*; a lecture schedule for residents which did not provide a common meal break; no RCAE uniform, which made it hard for the locals to play *pick the student*; new subjects; new teaching locations; new presentations of subject matter; appeals/articles/interviews with the media in an effort to find sufficient suitable off-campus accommodation; the College "Revue"; plans already being drawn-up to re-locate the RCAE on another site; expanded Counselling and Medical services.

Stories better illustrate what was happening and, as well, give an opportunity to *feel* the changes.

I remember pleading with a group of young women students: "go bra-less and singletted on campus by all means, but please dress up for the city folk." The advice was ignored ... until they encountered abuse and actual physical violence from offended women in Baylis Street!

Don Boadle had a group of continuing students (2nd years) for history. A few weeks into term and the students complained to the Principal that Don was refusing to teach them. The subsequent inquiry revealed that Don had given his students an article to read for the next class. When he arrived for the said class Don asked who had read the article. Silence. 'Well, you'd better buzz off and come back to the next class, when you've read it.' ... and Don left the room. Kindly but firmly, Cliff Blake explained to the students that they were now in a new situation and they were being taught!

Many persons in Wagga found it difficult to accept the new RCAE, especially those with strong connections and loyalties to the WWTC. To some of those persons an institution based on

principles of freedom and self-monitoring within the law was abhorrent and morally dangerous. In those early months I was personally denounced from the pulpit of two churches in Wagga. Abusive phone calls to my home and office, complete with Biblical quotations, were a regular occurrence. 'Letters to the Editor', in The Daily Advertiser, was another safety-valve for those who needed to let-off some moral steam on this issue. Finally, from those who either would not or could not confront me, there was the occasional nocturnal salvo of rocks onto the iron roof of our cottage.

There were students who were apprehensive about the changes they were experiencing. The RCAE and the Department of Education had agreed on an upgraded three-year training program to replace the two years presently required ... but there was to be a transition period. The returning second-years were given the opportunity to opt for either the two-year or the three-year program. The vast majority opted for the two year deal. They were known (proudly) as the Two of Twos. This caused a very obvious split in student attitudes and behaviour on more than one occasion.

Sadly, there were some students for whom the changes were just too much ... and they left after a short time. However, the majority of students continued on to graduation and to successful teaching careers. I like to think that living and learning, even amid the confusion and pain of that first change-over year, 1972, was a positive period of growth for us all ... but, since no sound research has been done on this period, it remains my dream like my reading of an incident which occurred on the first formal day of student-life at RCAE:

I hurried out of our cottage-by-the-front-gate at about 8.45 a.m. I had some papers to drop-off at the Blakemore Building, so I took the most direct route: I cut through the beautiful rose gardens and strode across the lawn. When I stepped on to the pavement around the Blakemore Building I was met by a group of students wearing WWTC blazers. "Excuse me," one student asked, politely, "but, can we

walk on the grass, now?" "Yes, you can!", I replied.

As I look back in memory, thirty-one years later, I can still see those students deliberately stepping on to the grass and I am thankful to have been there, with them, at that time.

Don Affleck 1972

WWTC ALUMNUS HONOURED



On Friday 23rd May over fifty guests, including former College alumni and partners, helped June Hadley (Robson) of the 1948-1950 session celebrate her investiture into the Order of Australia Medal, a ceremony that had taken place at Government House earlier in the morning.

Guests met in the second floor lounge of the Masonic Club in Sydney, before proceeding to the grand dining room of the Club for a two-course lunch.

June was honoured for her contribution to activities of the VIEW Clubs of Australia for around forty years, during which time she held a number of offices. The climax of her work came with preparation of a history of the Clubs in 1999-2000.

Brief speeches of congratulation followed lunch, before June in turn expressed thanks to those present who had supported her in various ways. When the gathering began to disperse, it was noticeable that former WWTC alumni were happy to take advantage of another opportunity to share memories past and present.

Congratulations from us all, June.

John Riley (1948-50)

1952 - 53 REUNION



Greg and Helene (Graham)Hodgekiss, Bruce and Fay (Boxsell)Taylor, Marion (Litchfield) and Jim Walliss.

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed a report on the Golden Jubilee Reunion of the 1952/53 Session of WWTC.

I have included a photograph taken when the reunion group congratulated three couples who married after their college romances 1952/53 and who have lasted the distance.

Helene Hotchkiss.

It was "Listen up, you guys", as one says these days for "Eyes front, pay attention!"

Twenty nine reunioneers participated wholeheartedly in the 1952-53 Session WWTC Golden Jubilee Reunion held at the Arthur & Yvonne Boyd Education Centre at Riversdale. The program allowed for both small group and whole group recollections, fun and festivities. Reminiscent of college days, the dormitory style accommodation (each room sleeping two with sliding doors to the adjacent couple) provided a nostalgic scenario. All rooms were enhanced by the magnificent view through their plate glass windows of the Shoalhaven River and Arthur's Hill, the scenes Arthur Boyd painted so often. All walls were hung with Arthur Boyd Originals.

Facilities and catering services were ideal for the group's needs and sunny weather was perfect for bush-walking, viewing the art works, using the library

facilities, viewing relevant videos or for wandering the grounds of Riversdale and the Bundanon homestead properties. The College Anthem "College of the Riverina" was sung with gusto at the reunion dinner and the following parody was rendered to the delight of all.

*"We retirees greet each other,
We relate our own great fame.
Raising voices in competition
Re the coolest guy and dame.
Straining limbs to make this journey
Spurring minds down "Memory Lane".
We still find it worth the effort!
Joy is always what we gain.*

*By a river, in a city,
Wheresoe'er we name the place
Friends re-met are great to be with.
This will always be the case.
We return to dorm conditions
No room service if you please!
And refreshed return to our homes,
To recall new memories.*

*That's sentimental (maybe bullshit?)
Pop your teeth in – "shoot the breeze".
Let's drink too much and grab the moment.
Smokers cough and others wheeze.
Fun forever is our motto,
All prepared to pay the price.
Decorum was ne'er our forte.
Say it once and mean it twice."*

Very hearty thanks and subsequently warm letters of appreciation were received by the organizing committee which was encouraged to arrange another reunion event in two years time.

Helene Hotchkiss.

(For the organizing committee.)

REUNION 1962-63

A reunion is being planned for the group who attended WWTC during 1962 and 1963 to be held in Kiama on 21st & 22nd February 2004. It will be a chance to catch up and look back on the past 40 years. Unfortunately addresses are unknown for over 60 of our group. For information contact: Leigh (Moore) Griggs (02) 99778441

Jennie (Lambert) Coggan
(02) 62737477
email:jcoggan@webone.com.au

Elaine (Hardy) Saunders
(02) 44417270
esaunder@shoalhaven.net.au

Dinah Walker
sandwalk@tpg.com.au

LETTERS PAGE

Dear Lew,
Nita (Chidzey) Mitchell, 1947 Session, gave me a clipping from the Wagga newspaper – the report of the College Opening.

There was also a copy of Talkabout, July, 2002 with a section of the letter from Don Learmouth (1956-57) highlighted. Perhaps direct quotes without comment.

Don Learmouth (1956-57) writes: "The rooms were Spartan, with brown lino on the floors and a few mats. The only heating was a couple of coil heaters in the corridor. On some winter nights I can remember putting an overcoat on top of the bed cover and then taking the mat off the floor and putting it on top to keep out the cold."

The Wagga reporter writes (June, 1947): "A tour of inspection of the College emphasised the claims that it was one of the most modernly equipped in the state. From the students to the domestic quarters, from the dormitories to the playing fields, it appears that every detail required for the comfort and modern education has been included. One of the most impressive areas is the sleeping quarters. These rival the rooms of a first class hotel with every modern convenience. Central heating has been installed through the male and female dormitories. All rooms have hot and cold water installed. The recreation and study rooms embody every comfort. The dining room resembles a similar set-up at a modern hotel with the latest of furniture and every necessary facility."

No, I can't resist a comment. What did those later students do to the FIRST CLASS HOTEL enjoyed by we Pioneers in 1947?

Kevin Wilcox (1947-48)

A LETTER FROM A PIONEER LECTURER

Dear Ann,

I am sure that you, Ann, will remember me. I was Betty Kilgour (Pioneer Geography Lecturer) who was one of the six initial lecturers who lived-in at the W.W.T.C., from its beginning in June 1947. In 1948 I married my Returned Soldier and became Mrs Jack Johnstone. He taught at Wagga High School until 1954. Following Departmental rules I resigned in 1949, but in 1952 was seconded back to College to become Lecturer in Biology – Mr Gammage's off-sider.

I wrote to the Bathurst office when the big move was made – that's how I came to receive Talkabout, I told about the pre-Wagga days of the Pioneer Staff. We were appointed at the beginning of 1947, and lived a nomadic life in Sydney.

We had our first Staff Meetings in Repin's Cafeteria in King Street – arranged we presumed by Mr Blakemore! Following these meetings we spent time in Sydney Teachers' College and Balmain and various Demonstration Schools. We were delighted at the thought of a permanent home in Wagga, but shocked when we arrived a week or so ahead of students to find the state of things. The arrival of 150 students in mid-winter, with no hot water and the barest accommodation was a further shock, and when all of the kitchen staff went on strike on the very first day, we saw further disaster ahead. Mr. Blakemore, then oblivious of most of our problems, sent off a well remembered telegram to Head Office which read: "Wagga Teachers' College off to a flying start".

All that is long since forgotten, Ann, but there were a large number of home-sick students who we in-livers had to console in those early days.

It wasn't those early memories that I wanted to write about, Ann. It was seeing Barbara Lenny's name in the obituary notice. (Her married name was Barbara Holt).

I remember her especially, in the College A Hockey Team. I simply put up a notice asking for hockey players with some idea of experience. When I

saw Goulburn H. S. alongside her name, I knew she was just the person we needed. (Crookwell and Goulburn were recognised first class hockey areas.) From those lists I made up 2 teams which we designated A and B, and they played like that against Balmain in the 1947 Intercollegiate.

I might add that there was a rose-bowl for the College which won, and, Mr. Blakemore made it very clear that he wanted that for W.W.T.C. Surprisingly, considering how short a time there had been a W.W.T.C., our teams won the Rose Bowl. All that early morning practice proved worthwhile.

I write about Barbara in the hope that when a longer obituary is written about her, someone will remember her ability on the hockey field. She was a delightful person as were so many of those Pioneer Students.

The Pioneer Lecturers weren't so bad either! I am sad to say that so many of them have passed away, which is not surprising in view of our age. I would have been the youngest on the staff, and I am now over 80.

Please excuse my writing Ann – blame old-age and arthritic joints – after all 1947 is 56 years ago!

Best wishes to all those keeping the Talkabout alive and to any who still remember.

Good wishes,

Betty Johnstone (officially Catherine)

A GET TOGETHER OVER LUNCH

WHEN: Thursday, 21st August, 2003; 11.40 for midday.

WHERE: Masonic Club, Castlereagh St, Sydney.

Meet at Lounge near Reception on Ground Floor.

COST: Approx. \$25; drinks extra.

CONTACT: Ann Smith at 9635 0449 or John Riley 9525 5304 for bookings at least a week in advance.

WHO: Anyone from WWTC, regardless of Session.

If you can't make it this time, the next lunch will be held on Friday, 21st November, 2003.

IN MEMORIAM

MERVYN HENRY ARMSTRONG



The death of Merv Armstrong occurred at home at "Cariginda" on the 28th December 2002.

Merv was born at Dubbo in 1932 and was the second eldest child of Bob and Flo Armstrong of Mogriguy. During his years at high school he boarded in Dubbo from Monday to Friday, riding his pushbike from Mogriguy to Dubbo. Merv revelled in sport and was a member of the Astley Cup in rugby league and athletics. From late 1949 to June 1950 Merv worked as a sleeper cutter and fanner with his father at Mogriguy, when he was accepted to Wagga Wagga Teachers College.

From June 1950 until the end of 1951 Merv trained at Wagga Wagga Teachers College. Again Merv became involved in the sports and represented the college in Australian rules, soccer, rugby union, basketball, tennis and hockey, being captain of the college hockey team premiers. One of the highlights of Merv's time at college was when Merv and his mate Col Sims rode their bikes from Wagga to Mogriguy, sleeping under bridges along the way. Col was best man at Merv and Jan's wedding three years later.

After graduating Merv became teacher in charge at Balladoran Public School, from 1952 until May 1955. This was one of the most significant times in Merv's life when he met Jan and they were married on August 28th 1954. When teaching at Balladoran his sporting interests were cricket, tennis and table tennis, building the tables and

starting a club. Later in life he enjoyed boating and teaching his children and their friends to water ski, and played golf until ill health prevented him playing.

In 1955 he left teaching and began to work at C.T. Whitemans and Sons in Miller Street for his father and mother in law, Cliff and Beryl Whiteman.

It was as Holden dealer that most people would associate Merv. He bought the business after Cliff's death in 1966 and was managing director of Whiteman's Holden until 1991. During that time he owned or was in partnership in several associated businesses, bought and sold between 1966 and 2001.

Many people worked with Merv in these enterprises and knew him as an honest and hardworking man who wanted to do the best for his employees and their families, his customers and his own family. Merv felt a commitment to the youth of Gilgandra and was always proud of the fact he trained many apprentices who have become a part of the businesses in Gilgandra and further afield. He lived by the Rotary motto of the Pride of Workmanship. .. "Do it once, do it well".

Some of Merv's achievements during this time were: Founding member and five times president of the GMH Country dealer Council (NSW); Councillor and Vice President of the NSW Motor Traders Association (MTA); Chairman of the NSW Auto Industry Training Committee and NSW representative on the National Committee; Time magazine Quality Dealer of the Year, NSW 1984. Merv's involvement in these associations enabled him to visit every state in Australia and also Asia, and this love of travel led to he and Jan having numerous overseas trips.

Merv's love of teaching was evident in all areas of his life: his career, his leadership, his staff, organisations and family. His grandchildren (and children!) would have a look of resignation on their faces...Oh NO Not another grandpa lecture!!!!

Merv lived out his life to the end with spirit and humour. He was obviously slowing down in recent months, but he was totally impressed with all the

people in Gilgandra and their incredible compassion for a man "on his last legs"!!

Merv is survived by his wife Jan, his four children Dianne, David, Virginia and Greg, and their families with fourteen grandchildren, his two brothers and two sisters and their families.

Jan Armstrong

WALTER ELI WILCOX.

Early students of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College will be saddened to hear of the death on January 14th this year of the Pioneer Art Lecturer, Walter Eli Wilcox.

He came to Wagga Wagga Teachers' College from a position at Sydney Tech. High School to establish the Art and Craft Department. Two years later he moved to Newcastle Teachers' College where he established the same section in that College.

This section he later expanded to the training of Manual Arts teachers for secondary schools. He remained at Newcastle for thirty years and was awarded an honorary degree in recognition of his services.

On retirement he moved with his wife Lorna to Sydney where he followed his interest in Spelling, Reading and Writing with publication of a book in this area. He spent his final years in a Retirement Village in Sylvania where he died in his 89th year.

He is survived by his wife Lorna and son Ron and he was the adoring Grandad of seven grandchildren and seventeen great grandchildren.

This tribute was given at the celebration and thanksgiving service for his life :

*"A teacher who was ever ready to learn,
A talker who spent more time listening,
A thinker who always thought others thought,
And a doer who took his satisfaction from*

*A job well done rather than any praise
That went with it."*

Kevin Wilcox (1947-49)

COLLEGE MEMORIES

SOME STUDENT MEMORIES:

There are many stories of Wagga College times that are exchanged whenever old students get together. These are some of our memories. Who will forget the Green Hornet? Not I. It was the transport to my first practise teaching. Keith Willard and Kevin Quinn were at Eunonyhareenha School and Lindsay Clifford and I were at Experiment Farm School, (Experiment Farm is now Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga Campus). The teacher was Mr. Carl Dempsey, father of our fellow student, Margaret.

Wally Wilcox was our supervisor and promptly at 8 a.m. each morning we were picked up and transported via the Green Hornet to our schools. North Wagga was also on his list. Readers of "Teaching Memories" (compiled by John Riley) will be familiar with the stories of the Locusts and the car radio. My girlfriend (now wife of 52 years) had her first practise teaching at North Wagga. At the end of the practice period our supervisor met us all and spoke to us about our efforts and gave words of encouragement. He sought Winifred and I out and made this very prophetic pronouncement: "After watching over you this period I have come to the conclusion that you will be good for each other; he will bring you out of your shell and you will make him pull his horns in."

I remember the way craft material was meticulously measured and handed out. How I complained about the small measure. When I arrived at my first school and received my first requisition – all the materials for my students for the next year – I thanked him in retrospect for the lesson learned in the economical use of supplies.

I don't think I have met anyone who organised more completely everything about his craft room, materials, seating, organisation, work display – everything. A product of his times, a time of post war shortages, learning how to appreciate what we had and how to make them last in good condition for many to enjoy.

I remember and I'm sure many of his students do – how Mr. X and/or Miss Y would be spoken to about rocking back

on the back legs of the chair which cut holes in the flooring. I wonder how many of us rocked back in our chairs in our new homes in later years and who didn't think back on those College days. I remember – "Miss B, – if you cannot control yourself how do you expect to control a class?"

I remember the two hessian strips carefully marked out in squares – 1 to 15 and 16 to 30 – where our art masterpieces were displayed. These I specially remember. Our section was Drama Option and Art Option. There were 16 students in Drama and 14 in Art, and naturally arranged in alphabetical order in each option. So as W = Wilcox, I was number 16 in Drama Option and 17 from Art Option was one Jack Ackhurst. Jack was that great ex-service and ex-P.O.W student who had been a commercial artist. Next to his work my poor efforts were just that. I complained that my work should have been displayed with those of the Drama Group and not highlighted next to Jack's. Didn't get anywhere with the argument and continued to get my regular 50%.

I sit now in my Seniors Leisure Learning Art Class and do landscapes in oils. My present Art teacher congratulates me on the excellent perspective I have incorporated in my painting. I smile to myself and say softly and with great appreciation – "Thanks Wally".

Winifred & Kevin Wilcox 1947/48

Interested in having a Reunion?

The Alumni Team
Is here to help you.

Just give us a call and we will be able to advise and assist in the organisation of your special event.

Phone: (02) 63384629

HALL OF FAME

BARRY DESMOND JACKSON 1948 - 50

Barry played Rugby League football against France at Armidale in 1951. He played for North Sydney first grade for three years, 1954/5/6 but retired with osteo in right leg.

He was telephoned at school one morning and told he had been placed on standby for New South Wales to travel to Brisbane that same day, as a replacement for a player who had to undergo a fitness test. Unfortunately for Barry, the selected player passed the fitness test, and he was not phoned the second time. He, thus, so narrowly missed the opportunity to play for the state.

Barry was in a most controversial match against the French touring team in 1951 at Armidale when the referee abandoned the match ten minutes before full time.

In his own words Barry tells us:

"Jackson rakes ball from under Frenchman's foot, Frenchman attacks Jackson and is sent off.

Jackson has running argument with G. Delay, scrum in front of French goal, Delay boots Jackson in face, Jackson rubs blood over face and Delay is sent off, Ambo comes onto field, looks at cut, "Christ Barry he's opened up the side of your cheek", at this point Jackson panics, Ambo cleans face with wet cloth, 1/4 inch cut on Jackson's face, Jackson is pacified.

Fifteen minutes before full time both teams brawl on field, Jackson is flattened but rises to his feet and shapes up again, ref blows his whistle (10 minutes before full time) and walks from the field."

"Papers report French victory but I will go to my grave believing that we could have won if we had played those last ten minutes.

W.W.T.C. Drama Option improved my football skills no end!"

COLLEGE MEMORIES

Do you remember these paintings?



A letter was received from Darryl Walker (1952-53) in which he says: *"I have enclosed scans of two photographs of the paintings done by Dave Lyons, whose name has popped up from time to time, and which hung in the common room of the Kabi/Kumbu men's dormitory from 1952 onwards. They may be of interest."*

Copies of the photos were sent to David Lyons (1952-53) and the following reply was received.

Lindsay,
Well fancy that! History raises its ugly head again. Thanks for the snaps - I guess they were black and white photos in those days as the murals were coloured. I didn't have a camera at College. (Thank you Darryl). Certainly use them as part of the College history if you wish.

Yes I was the perpetrator of the Kabi murals, there's a DL in the bottom right corner of the first. As best I can remember it, fairly early in 1952 Greg Hotchkiss was elected to some committee or other, I suspect it must have been associated with Kabi dormitory. I think the sum of twelve pounds had been forcefully prised from the tight

fists of residents and Greg asked me to design a couple of murals featuring Kabi's totem, the kangaroo. I don't know how Greg overcame the more pragmatic outlook of Kabi's solid drinkers, smokers and gamblers but these murals were commissioned. I remember going with Greg on the bus to order the masonite, timber and paint, me with my head full of Jacky Sly at the time.

Greg (and probably others) constructed and mounted the frames. Enamel paint was used on primed masonite (no plastic paint in those days). The first was a 6' x 4' panel from memory and it hung

on the northern wall of the Kabi common room. There was a mild controversy about the second which hung in the entry area and featured a bare breasted lubra holding up a water lily while being perched upon by a Kabi, but I think the thing got by on the basis that she was black and it was "art", so it didn't matter much anyway. Such was the enlightened thinking in those days.

I remember a later exhibition where my much ruder and nuder "Mauri Women" caught the eye of George Blakemore who studied the work in fine detail (salivating the whole time

according to Lionel Gailor's version). That along with a heap of my ballet and other drawings were stolen from my room by some short sighted fine art lover or pornophiliac.

I wonder if anyone took photos of the backdrops I designed for the theatrical productions such as "Ruddigore", "Patience" and "Arms and The Man" etc. They were about 20' x 40' from memory, and for me exciting projects to work upon.

David

