

A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

# TALK ABOUT



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## WWTC – A MUSEUM PIECE

As many of our Alumni Association members are aware, we have been striving to collect, establish and house a permanent display of memorabilia in a suitable location as a memorial to Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. Until now, we have met with little or no success.

At last we can report that the Museum of the Riverina at Wagga Wagga has very kindly offered us a place in its museum. A school building, currently used as a display area for school items and also blacksmith tools is to be re-opened as a school house, only exhibiting school related items from teaching institutions of Wagga Wagga, and it will be a place to house Wagga Wagga Teachers' College memorabilia.

To quote from a letter received from Michelle Maddison, the Curator: "We would like to gather a collection of items from the College which are interesting to look at, have a good provenance, and tell a story. They may include blazers or other uniform items (hats, badges, ties), photographs of students, social events, etc, any miscellaneous souvenirs (crockery, glasses), paper based items - books, programmes, certificates, menus etc."

Michelle is aware of the personal value of treasured photographs and says photos scanned on photographic paper are quite acceptable. It is

proposed that collecting will start immediately and conclude at the September Reunion to be held at Bathurst 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

For those who wish to donate memorabilia it can be mailed to Ann Smith, 24 Whitworth Street, Westmead. 2145.

If you cannot get your photographs scanned on photographic paper, this can be done for you if you mail them to Lindsay Budd or Lew Morrell. Please make sure that your name, address and title are on the back of the photo so that they can be returned to you. All care will be taken to ensure that they are promptly returned.

This is all very exciting and we hope that sufficient memorabilia will be gathered to create a suitable memory of our College.

Another aspect is that we would like to have a "Hall of Fame", listing those who have been outstanding sports persons, community leaders etc who have been recognised for their achievements. Compiling such a list will depend on you, our readers, nominating those you know who have achieved such distinction. These nominations can be made to Lindsay or Lew.

Some examples: Don Talbot- swimming coach of the Konrads ; Ralph Bryant - 1st Grade footballer for Parramatta; June Hadley (Robson) O.A.M.

***The Scholarship Fund is over \$30000.***

# Christmas Get together Luncheon of the WWTU Alumni.



Jim Johnson (1953-54) Kay Johnson, Ron Baird (1953-54) Mavis Baird (Stewart)

At noon we proceed up in the lift to the Third floor where tables have been reserved for us and the meal is served. Most people then leave about 2.45pm and walk back to Town Hall station to catch a train home.

Why don't you think about coming?

The dates for 2003 are:

Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May

Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> August

Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> November.

Ann Smith

Our last city luncheon for the year 2002 was held on Friday, 22nd November in the Masonic Club in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, which is within walking distance from Town Hall station. We excelled ourselves in numbers attending (a total of 47.) Our previous best was twenty seven. Six came from the 1951-61 period and two, Sandra Rutter (Wilson) and Jenny Cummings (Stigant) were from 1962-63 session and were our youngest members..

The 1948-50 were the best, represented by fourteen members. Among those in that session who had never been before were Phillipa Dennis (Albery) Fay Martin (Kendall). Another first timer was Ann Nelson (Palmer) - a friend of Carmel Dobbie (Hayes) and Leila Andrews. Ann and I taught together at Oxley Park. Ron Baird and Mavis (Stewart) enjoyed the company of Jim and Kay Johnson, all 1953-54 as was Lorraine Colvin (Smith).

There were seven from the 1949-50 session. Some of the members attend every luncheon. Some are accompanied by partners, while others come alone. The fact that they keep coming back means that we enjoy the company when we meet on the second floor for drinks and introductions. This is about from 10.30 am onwards.



Jenny Cummings and Sandra Rutter (1962-63)

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## From the Secretary's Desk.



During the time from November to February I have not received a lot of letters. These snippets are taken from phone calls, letters and emails received.

**Irene Gilbert** 1968-69 wanted to be put on our mailing list.

**Lynette Luke** from 1967-68 sent me some names from her session. Pam Harris 1956-57 asked me for some genealogy information after we met at the Wagga Wagga Dinner after the Scholarship presentation to Ingrid Jones. **Bill Frost** (1963) is finding having two children, a farm and full time teaching is a very busy life. **Ralph Sadler** 1960-61 responded to receiving Talkabout and thanked the editors for their efforts.

**Anthony O'Shea** 1960-61 gave a generous donation to the Scholarship Fund. **Terry Jack** 1960-61 was delighted to be "found". **Ian McCallum** 1962 only did one year but he is still friends with **Graham Roberts** and **Alan Davidson** (both 1962). **Alan Milne** (also 1962) sent his subscription and gave me the name of **Verna Canning** 1962 to contact in Goulburn. She, in turn, told me about **Fay Moore** 1962-63 and **Carol Dalton** from the same session **Ray Osmotherly** was sorry to hear of the death of **John Hughes** 1958-59.

**Ross Graham** 1958-59 taught for four years. The department would not grant him leave to do his degree. So he left, intending to go back but he never did. **Clair Clough** 1965-66 has been teaching drama in Cairns. She moved to Logan Central in Brisbane and would be delighted to hear from anyone. (*Write her a letter and I will*

*address it for you.* Ann). Her sister **Jean Kellie** 1968-70 has just been visiting from San Francisco where she has lived for twenty years.

**John Murphy** 1952-53 is living at Swansea. This is his first contact since college from someone from Wagga.

**Rosemary Johnson nee Errington** 1954 was wondering why she had not received her July copy of Talkabout, which she enjoys immensely. It had been returned to the Alumni Office at Bathurst. (*If this happens your address is automatically taken off. If this happens please let the College or myself know so we can look into the reason. It is usually because you have moved and not notified us.* Ann)

I found **Trevor Pryor** 1967-68 in Tumbarumba but he is moving this year to Lismore.

**Allan Turnbull** 1967 would love to catch up with some friends from that era. He had just done some "catching" of prawns at Ulladulla.

**Ian Hopwood** from 1971-72 lives in the Northern Territory. He had swapped schools with another principal for a couple of months.

**Peter Duck** wants to contact others from that period. (*So do I so I can enter the vital addresses we need.*

*Some of you must be able to tell us where more of this session are..* Ann)

Just lately the following from the 1971 session have sent me their Information Form. They are **Neeltje Aylward** nee de Bruin, **Dianne Bussey** nee Coxon, **Denise Meldrum** nee Ninness( both some time ago) **Pamela Crook** nee Royal, **Ann Durnan** nee Bright and her husband Bill, **Keith Gibson**, **Susan Reilly**, and **Alice Robertson** nee Cahill Another find was **Maureen McGrath** 1952-53 at Kiama.

**Ross Coomber** 1966-67 saw **Ian Dinnerville's** Real Estate Agency sign and went in. Yes, they were at College together. **Doug Boughton** lectures at Northern Illinois University in the USA. He was disappointed in that he could not attend the reunion in January 2003 in Canberra. Overseas also is **Bev Raward** from the 1971 session.

**Eddie Keogh**, a Pioneer rang **Geoff Spiller** 1948 to tell him of the death of **Joe Pestell** 1948. Geoff rang me.

## MINISTRY

Following my entry in the November Talkabout **Ross McDonald** 1951-52 has informed that he was 26 years as chaplain at Abbotsleigh at Wahroonga and that now he is the Associate Minister at Christ Church at Lavender Bay. **Paul Gurrier Jones** 1952-53, a retired Anglican minister, was for many years chaplain at St Andrews Cathedral Sydney.

**Margaret Davis** nee Luscombe apologised for not being able to attend the 1961-62 reunion. We hope your hip operation is a success.

## MAIL

Mail has been sent to others whose name has not been mentioned here but from my research appear to be exstudents from WWTC. They contain an Information Sheet, a Talkabout and other explanatory notes. The request is that people will answer promptly so information can be processed quickly. It is of interest that more and more messages are being sent by email.

## FORWARDING MAIL

I am quite prepared to forward mail on to anyone whose address I have and you do not have.

## TALKABOUT AND LISTS OF STUDENTS

Mailing months are March, July and November. If yours has not arrived by the following month, then please notify the Alumni office or myself. If you have moved and not notified us then there is a blank address column beside your name. At the end of last posting there were 600 who were temporary lost and 53 marked returned (not necessarily from the last posting). The Archives office are preparing lists of all those who enrolled in each session. The project has only just begun but already some names are being added to our lists. When our Alumni group was formed we did not know that Charles Sturt Archives existed. They do not have a set of Talkabout as printed since we began and we do not have a complete set either. We would need the following: Volume 1 No's 1 and 2 Volume 3 No 1 Volume 4 No's 1 and 2. Anyone who has Talkabouts as printed when you were at college, and you no longer have a need for them, could you also give them to us please.

## REUNIONS

Reunions are being held when instigated by someone in the group. As well as getting help from the Alumni Office check with me if I have anyone's address whose details have not been processed. They can then be added to your mailing list

## MEMORIAM CHARLES STURT

I discovered a copy of this memoriam in the State Records Colonial Secretary's Letters in Sydney Office. Tom Gibson from the Charles Sturt Archives in Wagga acquired a copy and had it printed out. It is now hanging in the Search Room. Have a look at it if you visit the Archives (*Note, Mrs Sturt did not receive a pension in response to their memoriam request Ann*)

## REST IN PEACE

Since our November 2001 Talkabout the following have passed to their eternal reward:

1. **Merv Armstrong** (1950-51) in December
2. **Jill Cleary** nee King (1954-55) on 29th September 2002
- 3 **Barbara Holt** nee Lenny (Pioneer)
4. **Joe Pestell** (1948-49)
- 5 **Fay Martin** nee Kendall (1948-49) lost her husband.

## LETTERS

16 Parklands Ave  
LANE COVE 2066

Dear Ann,

Several welcome editions of Talkabout have been received this year without my responding in any way. It is amazing how being retired (since February) leaves so little time for doing the things that one should now have more than enough time to complete. I'm not sure how I find time to work!! I shall have to become better organized.

I was especially moved to respond to the November edition, and in particular, the Rest in Peace segment. From the list of those recently deceased, I was shocked and saddened to see listed so many people I had known during my time at WWTC; Ron Houison, Bill Connell, Bill McNeil, Arthur Osborn, Lauren Pearson and Greg Worthington. Talk about intimations of mortality!! The last named, still owes me a Bronze Medallion for Life-Saving,

successfully completed after exams in 1961.

Bill Connell was a terrific bloke, a really nice person. I had last seen him in London in 1965 and, it was one of those things, I had always assumed that I would meet him again one day. Soon after receiving Talkabout, I read a most interesting article in the SMH of 129th November (page 14). The article was about a London cabbie, Tony Walker, who had been one of the original children who had participated in that famous "7 Up" series. Tony talked about his love of Aussies, beginning with Skippy, but extending to an Australian teacher he had had in 1966, one Bill Connell. The article read in part, as follows:

"That was me introduction to NSW, but me schoolteacher who introduced cricket to our school in 1966, Mr Bill Connell, he was an Australian. He was my inspiration as a kid, and I still get very emotional over the fact that he died 18 months ago in Ozzie. That's why I want to go to Oz. I want to walk over the Sydney Harbour Bridge, put flowers on Mr Connell's grave, and meet up with my two best friends .... who've cleared out and gone down under."

How Australian, to introduce cricket to a school. And not a bad tribute to a teacher, one that I'm sure any teacher would be proud to receive.

Vale Bill Connell, one of nature's gentlemen, and a fine teacher.

Regards,

Ralph Sadler, 1960-61

*The following was received from Janice Delavere after the 1961-62 reunion in Canberra.*

## SETTING CANBERRA ON FIRE

### Where is Bev Wilson?

These words in a previous edition of Talkabout were the final stimulus I needed to pack my bags for the journey across the Nullabor to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my graduation from WWTC (class of 1961-62). Why did those guys want to know where Bev was? Why not Stell, or Lorraine or even Jai? So with pace maker charged and walking frame included, I joined my friends – Adele, Lorraine, Estelle, Barbara and Bev in Jamberoo for several days of hilarity and reminiscences as a warm up to the reunion in Canberra.

There we survived a game of Bocce like no other with two gate crashers (Dave Hull and Ross Eggleton) who had so much fun that they had to be forcibly removed to allow for the main event – the celebratory dinner- to take place. Sparklers, confetti, the cancan, brains and cocktail frankfurts, Mickey Mouse ears, toilet class train tickets (no, don't ask their significance) all combined to make the night one which will bring smiles to our faces for as many years as our memories last. The following day the locals at the Kiama swimming pool were entertained by a bevy of beauties performing a superb synchronized swimming routine .... surprisingly not subsequently reported in the Kiama newspaper.

So ... Saturday, off to Canberra. There we spent the first couple of hours scrutinizing any grey headed persons in the hope of recognition while wondering at the forces of nature that could be so cruel. Unfortunately, the fires not only caused such devastating damage, they also prevented many of our friends from attending the wonderful dinner that had been so carefully planned by Lynn Gunn. But, what fun that was! Despite the fact that there were many there who I swear I had never seen before, many familiar faces had scarcely changed and the thought of those faces bring tears to the eyes as I now write. Sadly, the night was all over much too quickly despite the efforts of some to prolong the celebrations way past their bedtime but we did have the picnic on Sunday to look forward to.

A superb location had been chosen at the Carillon where Lyn had, once again, outdone herself in the preparation of food and the venue. The more energetic played cricket while a few nursed hangovers and caught up with those missed from the previous night. Gradually the friends departed but with the knowledge that another celebration will be organized in a couple of years at Tweed heads by Estelle Willak and Keith Wood. I, for one, intend to be there, even if only to find the answer to Where is Bev Wilson?

In the words of Estelle .... "*When we left WWTC we intended setting the world on fire but little did we know that our attendance here this weekend would set Canberra alight*".

# REUNION OF 1961-62 SESSION IN CANBERRA



**Back Row:** Ann Smith (Alumni), Keith Wood, Pat Foster, Joan Sutherland, Colleen Harvey, Patsy Miller, Margaret Marshall, Peter Crittenden, Kay Winter, Lynn Murray.

**Front Rows:** Jai Delavere, Bev Sturt in front, Jack Thebridge, Jeanette Paul, Adele Weatherall, John Sutton in front, Estelle Willak, Dave Hull, Kerry Potts.

The 1961-1962 Session of W.W.T.C. met in Canberra on the weekend of 18th/19th January. The impending disaster on Canberra's western flank had not yet hit but the scene that greeted us on our arrival was quite surreal, with thick skies of billowing, dirty-yellow clouds, a blood-red sun and bizarre reflections on buildings and cars.

We all assembled at the Ainslie Rugby Club for dinner on Saturday night where the effects of the bushfires were felt in lower numbers and empty tables as the Canberrans amongst us stayed home to secure property or were prevented from coming altogether because of road blocks. Nevertheless, the 45 or so who were able to attend will attest to their enjoyment of this, our second reunion in forty years. The evening was marked by much talking (loud), generally about our new life in retirement, lots of laughter, the clicking of cameras and even the rendition of some old College songs. A presentation was made to Lynn Murray (Gunn) whose persistence and planning had made the weekend

possible. Those in attendance were: Lyn Brown (Spencer), Eileen Browne (Farrow), Jeanette Cox (Paul), Kaye (Winter) and Vince Toohey, Joan Matthews (Sutherland), Pat Spaul (Millar) Tony McIlwain, Lynn Murray (Gunn), Jai Beale (Delavere), Adele Weatherall, Peter Crittenden, Dave Hull, Ross Eggleton, Noel Miller, John Garrett, Warwick Murray, Keith Wood and Jan, Ray Petts, Estelle Hammond (Willak), Kerry Potts and Georgina, Mary (Reece) and Mike Mayoh, Diane (Pearce) and Len Alexander, Nerida Newland (Smith), Jack Thebridge, John Sutton, Barry Robertson, Jill (Corner) and Tim Golledge, Bev Stewart (Sturt), Lorraine Gass (Lewis), Chris Dixon (Bishop), Fay and Graham Keast, Jackie Robinson (Paterson), Colleen Kennedy (Harvey) with Pat and Lew Morrell representing Talkabout and Ann Smith and Dot Judd from the Alumni association.

The planned BBQ at Weston Park on the Sunday was naturally abandoned and a new venue at the Carillon was selected for a lazy "recovery" picnic under the willows. Three new faces

appeared—Marg (Marshall) and Hugh Davies and Pat Foster and speeches were made on behalf of the ex-students (John Sutton and Warwick Murray) and Talkabout (Lew Morrell). A large array of great food was organised by Lynn Murray and those feeling energetic enough joined in a game of cricket.

Plans are afoot for another get-together in Tweed Heads in 3-5 years time.

The following people intended coming but were prevented, mostly by the bushfires:

Wendy & Hugh Crawford, Peter Robinson, Joy & Len Sheargold, Geraldine Schirmer & partner, Di (Stock) Turner and husband, Bob Heatherington & wife, Marg (Marshall) & Hugh Davies, Inta & Fred Gollash, Bill Atkinson, Lyn Kirby (Ferris), Geoff Cleary, Vince Fisher and Rex Robinson (Jackie's husband).

Lorraine Gass

# COLLEGE MEMORIES

## DISGRACED.

This account takes some small literary liberties, but essentially reflects the gist of real events:-

In '58, come Saturdays, John Harris and I would often take off on some meaningless adventure, to "recharge batteries" in wilderness environs. We'd ride our bikes down the extensive erosion gulleys west of the college, and luxuriate in consuming an apple cider and a pack of gruyere cheese. This would have been purchased that morning at DJ's basement deli beside Hunter's Newsagency in Fitzmaurice St.

At other times we'd escape in my old black '47 Standard sedan, and I'm almost sure Brian Hawkins and maybe Don Walkom joined in on more than one occasion. The essential principle was based on a 'certainty' that the old car could go 'anywhere'. We would drive as far as possible along those erosion gullies, challenges we referred to as 'gullying', or up into the roadless hillsides and wilderness, shovelling our own road if necessary to gain access to promised lands beyond. In those days, Red Hill beyond Turvey Park was a desolate expanse of emptiness, traversed by a corrugated dirt track. I would empty a one gallon can of petrol into the tank, and refill it at a garage on the way out of town.

When the engine eventually coughed to a halt, our spare gallon would be dumped into the tank to drive straight back to college. It was on these jaunts that we'd often 'rescue' various native wildlife and bring it back for the biology dept. (Gammage and Mackiewicz).

One notable prize was a possum which exhibited its reluctance for capture with tooth and claw. It was finally subdued with John's black lumber jacket, which apart from a liberal plastering of mud suffered less injury than our bare hands. The possum was taken back to college and held in custody by Mrs Gammage for the edification of biology studies for a week before she suggested we return it to the wild.

John once captured a young brown snake in a glass jar, but to his chagrin fellow collegiates took a dim view of

it in the dorms, and despatched it unceremoniously.

On one such jaunt, we were given the third degree by a land-owner who rode up (on his thoroughbred of course) accusing us of having his sheep in the car boot. Not to be outdone by this escapade, I thought we might be in truly dire trouble after lifting a property fence out of the grounds to gain access into some of the back hills.

By raising the posts, we could drive over the fence and then replace the posts. Fine thus far, but we found ourselves unable to return because of a drizzling rain which made the grassy hills too slippery. We worked out way through creeks and scrub until reaching a homestead, where the lady of the house complained about shooting on their property without permission. To make matters worse, Don recognised some the kids from prac teaching, so guessed they'd probably recognise him too, and he was somewhat too large to hide behind the seat. We hastily explained that we hadn't been shooting, but had come across the back hills, hoping to get back to the road. There was much relief when she speculated that we must have "come across from Simpson's place". We thought it wise to endorse that explanation without any elaboration.

Many times we'd venture amongst the forsaken mineshafts on nearby hills, and devise ways to get into the old mines. It's a wonder we survived to tell the tale. After telling spooky stories for some time while sitting at the bottom of a mine shaft, John Harris remarked "did you hear that?" We listened intently, and another mournful moan seemed to rise up ominously from the ground beneath. Probably the spooky stories had us primed, but when it happened again, we were out of there much faster than we got in, and never ventured into old mine shafts again.

It was useful to own a car, and Bob Ford often persuaded me to drive the swimming team down to the local pool at unearthly hours of the morning. It became a problem when the soccer team hoped for similar privileges. but all was not right, as I had a notion that "old faithful" had a

steering problem. I asked John to drive it along Charleville Rd in front of the famed rotunda, (and the Principal's residence) while I watched the front wheels. The car suddenly stopped and I called out, "Keep coming!" "It won't go" replied John. "What's the matter?" "Just won't go!" he repeated, and we pushed it back to park outside Ipai Major dorm in College St. In following weeks, the gear box was removed and stowed under my bed. John Lee (room mate) remonstrated that I'd be "in trouble if they found it". Who was it (Harry Irwin?) who got a right royal roasting from officialdom for having a carburettor under his bed? What if they had found a whole gear-box? Well, the problem was fixed eventually, regular motoring jaunts resumed, and John and I began to share dreams of one day buying Landrovers for truly exotic adventures, once we became wealthy from the proceeds of teaching appointments.

One Saturday, we invited two reserved lady students (names withheld to protect the innocent, ... but they will remember) for a "Nice drive" around the scenic delights of Wagga. They no doubt anticipated at least a civilized diversion. Once on the road however, the addiction for off-road adventure found us turned off into a stock route. Well, it's been said often enough that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. There had been torrents of rain that week and the stock routes and dirt tracks we enjoyed so much had turned to quagmires. In confident abandon, once committed there was no turning back. The stock route looked more like the wake of a bullock train through rice paddies. We slipped and skewed along hoping that soon an escape would appear towards higher and drier ground. The floor of the car was metal at the rear half, with a timber extension at the front, giving it an unfortunate tendency in bad conditions to scoop up water like a shovel. The girls in the back were audibly apprehensive as the car slewed from one side to another, and thin slurry began oozing into the cabin floor. At a corner of a paddock, the main road was sighted ahead about 50 metres.

*(continued over page)*

# COLLEGE MEMORIES

(continued from previous page)

"Only thing for it", cudgelled my brain, "take a running leap for it at maximum speed." The first 20 seconds seemed most promising, as back wheels furiously splattered mud and slush left right and centre and we gained speed more or less towards the sealed road. We were within 10 metres ... "hang on everyone, here we go." With roaring engine and screaming gears, the objective was in clear sight, but even as I was declaring "this might be a bit bumpy", we hurtled into the impasse of a table drain beside the highway. The new direction was decidedly downwards. Everything stopped, and much louder than the prognostic gurgling and hissing steam came yelps of consternation as the floor swamped with sludge swirling into ever faster eddies around our feet. "Nothing for it; get out while you can", I announced while jumping into the drain. There was an immediate orchestration of complaint from the back, but an equally articulate and rapid compliance. There in our tell-tale green and gold blazers, we floundered ignominiously in grand "teacher" dignity, mud almost up to our knees. I was thinking "this means a long walk back to college" with maybe a carpeting on Monday as an old but hefty coupe roared past, squealed to a halt and backed up. "Want a tow, mate?" yelled a young driver claiming his "V8" could cope with anything. We were thankfully out of there in a matter of minutes, but were soon to learn that there was an unforeseen price to be paid. The displeasure of our two passengers, having set out in demure presentability but now wearing less than fashionable mud stockings was understandable, in hind-sight. I forget which one said so, but it was subsequently exclaimed among other penetrating observations: "You should be ashamed of yourselves. I'd expect such behaviour from John Harris, but I wouldn't have from Bob Drummond!!!"

I think John was slightly peeved by such discriminatory denunciations, especially as I had been the driver. I was simply relieved to get the car out of an impossible dilemma, and don't remember ever apologising to them

for this "indignity", but surely I should have. They had the grace never to remind me of it, ...and I most certainly avoided raising the subject again.

Bob Drummond 1957-58

## HANRATTY AND QUINN

MR R.A.L. Quinn  
SOMEWHERE.

Dear Sir,

This is a blast from your past, about which I know little but want more information on some aspects of it. I was under the impression that one evening after dinner, at an institution you attended for a couple of years, you jumped the table tennis table. Is this true or not? I don't remember who told me now, but it was probably some scurrilous type with whom you used to associate in days long gone. I rang Des Handsaker and asked him if it was true but he denied any knowledge of the athletic feat.

Sir, this is the last time I will ask you but it is of some little significance as I told some later light from the early sixties of the jump but may have to retract if it is not true. The late Roy Hudson may have told me but I'm not sure.

If you have no access to writing materials please inform me and I will get some to you. But please do answer this short epistle and do it forthwith, if you please.

Your one-time acquaintance,

Malcolm Hanratty (1950-51)

Dear Mal,

Your flowery epistle arrived but a day or two or three ago, certainly no more than - ah- hum - ten! Rest assured old friend, you don't have to retract your statement this time. I did in fact jump the said table tennis table in the gymnasium one night after the evening meal -must have been Indian Curry! I also dived across the table tennis table doing a forward roll on a gym mat appropriately placed on the other side a number of times until the local inhabitants refused to cough up sufficient lucre to make the performance worthwhile. In fact Lionel Allen brought this type of

performance to an end when he made me pay for a sheet of masonite I had broken in the common room of Dorm 9 when I was doing a forward roll over a moving (sliding) chair and misjudged both the distance to the wall and the effect of the highly polished floor. Lionel walked in just as I slid feet first through the panel of the end wall. Without raising his voice above conversational level he politely informed me that he would be awaiting payment next pay day which was some unknown weeks ahead. I thought he would forget with the elapse of time but I badly underestimated his power of recall! When I went into the admin block in my turn he was quietly waiting with his hand out. Eight bob it cost me!! As I had only collected a small amount for "chair diving" I turned my money-making activities to other fields, none of which proved successful.

Oh, well, such was life!

P.S. If you are talking to Ann Smith, thank her for forwarding your letter.

Allan Quinn (1949-50)

## Honours List

Congratulations to June Hadley (1948-50) who was awarded an OAM in the 2003 Australia Day Honours List.

The award was in recognition of her service to the community through the activities of VIEW Clubs of Australia.

June has been a member of the Committee of the Alumni Association since it was formed in 1997. She has recently moved to Nambucca Heads. (See write up and photo in the November 2002 Talkabout).

Congratulations also to Joe Schipp (1949-50), former Member for Wagga Wagga, who was awarded an OAM for service to the Parliament of NSW, and to the community of Wagga Wagga.



# TEACHING MEMORIES

## A FIRST APPOINTMENT

We were given to understand as students that one's first appointment would be accompanied by directions as to the location of the school and how best to get there. The notice of my first appointment was a terse telegram: "Commence duty February 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant teacher Euabalong Primary School"

Since I had indicated a preference for an appointment anywhere in the tablelands, I searched the map of N.S.W. from Tenterfield to Cooma unsuccessfully, until my eye found the name considerably west of Condobolin, located (as I thought) on the Sydney-Broken Hill railway line. I estimated the town to be about the size of Parkes, packed my gear, including an electric wireless, and joined the train from Sydney on the evening of January 31<sup>st</sup>.

As one expected, in those days, the train was overcrowded, and passengers, like me, were conveyed standing in the corridor. I remember that I lay down in the corridor and slept for some time, and when I stood up I was covered in fine black dirt.

I alighted at the station of Euabalong West, some miles from Euabalong and was met by my headmaster. He was a laconic gentleman, and as he introduced himself he remarked "You won't need that wireless. There's no electricity!"

"Where am I staying?" I asked.

"The teacher's room at the hotel!"

"Which hotel?" was my naïve query.

"There's only one." He said.

"How many on the staff?" I asked.

"You're it!" was his reply.

Before taking me the seven miles to Euabalong he detoured to a badly run down hut, rather than a cottage, to introduce me to the young teacher in charge of the one teacher school at "the West". I won't ever forget the sight of a young man in his early twenties and his new wife both contemplating the mess of what was clearly their first home.

The village of Euabalong is located on the Lachlan River. I learned that the previous year the whole village had been isolated for most of the year by flooding, and the roads were not long open.

I was taken to the Royal Hotel, and shown to the teacher's room by the publican who seemed to have the weight of the world on his back. Our conversation was brief and far from satisfying.

"The first thing I need!" I said "is a cold shower to get rid of this dirt!"

"Sorry" he said, "there's no water at the pub!"

"No water?" I said. "Why?"

"Windmill's broken."

"Well, I'd better have a couple of beers while I work out how to get clean!" "Sorry" he said, "there's no beer either!"

I changed into my bathing trunks, took a towel and a cake of soap and walked over the road to the river, and had a bath and a swim. As I cleaned myself, I was aware of a group of black children standing on the bank.

"Hey mister" they called "there's a Bunyip in that water hole."

"Bad luck" I replied, continuing my ablutions. I discovered that the belief in the Bunyip was real, and in my time there, I never knew anyone to swim in the river, except me.

On the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> February, I dressed for school. New shirt, buttoned up, a tie, long trousers, clean shoes, and a new jacket. Thus accoutred, I stepped into the street and walked about a hundred yards to the school, the temperature was about ninety five degrees F.

The school grounds were large, and there were two buildings. One was clearly the one teacher school building, dating back to the late C.19. The second building I took for a store shed and in between the two buildings was the largest pepper tree I had seen.

There were about 70+ children playing in the yard and I was surprised to see that most were aboriginal. This did not disturb me, but I had not expected it. I learned that I was to take Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades in the (supposed) shed, and that the Upper Division used the original building.

The next discovery was that there were just enough desks to seat 36 Lower Division pupils, and that, when all were seated it was almost impossible to move around the room. There was a space at the front for an old teacher's desk, and a blackboard on an easel.

I used the first session until recess putting a roll together, assisted by the children. They were a wonderful group, reasonably quiet, not at all shy, very willing to talk, and I was relieved that they accepted me so easily and naturally.

An amusing incident occurred when, the roll completed, I called it for the first time.

"Hey!" sang out a big boy in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class as a girl answered to her name, "How come her name's Vincent and mine's Saddler and she's my sister?"

"I don't know!" I answered and carried on. The headmaster supplied the answer later on.

"The mother knows who the father was!" he explained. The headmaster instructed me in the setting out and use of a day book, the plan ahead that organises instruction in each grade, and makes certain that the curriculum is being covered.

"I teach every day with my day book" he explained "and I find it invaluable to see where I am going and to make sure that no important areas are missed."

I walked into his Upper Division room after school one day, and saw his day book on his desk. It was an old Department of Education exercise book, and written on the corner in faded ink it read "Barranbodie Public School, Day Book, 1926. It had been compiled the year before I was born and was still doing yeoman service.

Easter 1951 and I took the opportunity of going away for the break, and in returning for the school to begin on the Tuesday I was stranded at Naradhan and reached Euabalong on Wednesday, a day late, to find the headmaster had been transferred and no replacement had arrived.

I gathered the whole school in the Upper Division room and attempted to run a one teacher school with over 70 children. This situation persisted for eight school days before relief came, just in time.

In June I was inspected, and found the Inspector courteous, gentlemanly and very considerate of the problem of the too small classroom, especially when he found that when the children were seated he, like me, was stuck in front of the room. He solved the problem by taking groups of children outside.



# TEACHING MEMORIES

I had discovered that if one pushed through the hanging foliage of the huge pepper tree, there was a large open area big enough to accommodate all the children, and we frequently used it as a classroom, especially for singing, school broadcasts and story telling.

I invited the Inspector to join us, and he looked enquiringly at me when I led him into our green shade. He sat on my chair and we gave him an impromptu concert which he seemed to enjoy. He had the knack of being at ease with the children and the inspection was a great success.

Leaving the classroom for the moment I should record some of my memories and impressions of the Royal Hotel, in which I occupied the teacher's room.

I early formed the resolution that I wouldn't drink alcohol whilst there, and this decision saved me a great deal of trouble. Drinking until one was very drunk was a regular occupation. Fencers working on local properties came regularly for "benders" lasting sometimes for two or three weeks. These isolated workers were generally accompanied by their womenfolk, and sights and scenes too disturbing to describe were common. I felt that I was back in early colonial days and part of scenes and activities set around bush shanties.

I must also say that as "the school master" I was treated royally by the publican and his staff, and never suffered any inconvenience from hotel guests.

I might mention one occasion when I was approached to work out a problem for the publican. "If I went to Griffith and bought 4 twenty gallon kegs of wine, how many beer bottles would I fill? And, if I sell each bottle for seven and sixpence, how much money would I make if the wine cost me five pounds a barrel?"

The profit margin was huge, and the wine was bought, bottled in the cellar by kerosene lamp and disposed of. There were also many complaints from the Lake Cargelligo police about increased drunkenness among the locals. My time at Euabalong ended at term two, when I was transferred to Pooncarie, again by curt telegram with no information as to where Pooncarie was.

But I had two great terms with children whom I liked and who responded well to teaching. I have happy memories of the lower division and me playing "Sheep, sheep come home", a variety of cricket and softball, all-in football, and even chasings. To end this account of my first appointment, I relate an incident that happened to me in 1976.

I was visiting a western town in connection with student-teacher practice teaching and introduced myself to the principal of the local school. As we chatted, I noticed he was looking at me rather fixedly and finally he said "Do you remember me from Euabalong?"

"No!" I replied, and he then told me his name again. He was one of the children from my lower division. Not many nicer experiences have happened to me.

John Rummery (1949/50)

*Editors' Note: John was a former Editor of Talkabout during his College Years.*

## TEACHING BLOOPERS

### Bloopers 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)

### Bloopers 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

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.

# HISTORICAL MEMORIES

## My Grandma.

*Dawn Stewart (Andrews) 1950-51 has written stories about growing up on a property Back o' Bourke. This one is about her Grandma with whom she stayed after a bout of appendicitis.*

One little barefoot kid had such a bad pain in the tummy, that she could not stop crying. There was no ambulance, no taxi, no private transport, so she was wheeled through the streets of Bourke in a baby's pram- and she was eight years old! Burst appendix, peritonitis, periods of darkness- a long train trip from Sydney for the sulphur drug and then sunshine again. That was the reason she was sent to her Grandma for a long holiday.

Built in the 1880's by her father, Richard Walkden, Grandma's cottage sat on claypan twelve miles from Bourke. Off to one side was a wide sweep of black soil country usually covered by tufts of dry spindly grass, but when plentiful rains fell at the right time of the year, bright fingers of colour- the pinks, blues and mauves of the Darling Pea brightened the view from the cottage. On the other side, was a sprinkling of stones on claypan leading the way to a red sandhill and Walkden's Bore, a public watering place for travelling stock.

Grandma always wore long-sleeved, below- knee length dresses, buttoned right up to her collar, and stockings with sturdy lace-up shoes. (I was obliged to encase my feet in shoes and socks to please her). However, Grandma looked so elegant riding side-saddle in the Back-to-Bourke street parade in 1936- wearing her riding habit, her jacket and hat and very shiny boots.

Grandma's house hugged the main road so the first close view of it showed a narrow front verandah, and it was from that vantage point that I watched horse, bullock and camel teams carrying their heavy loads between Bourke and the back country and even to the fringe of the "Never-Never". I was told that one time, a teamster abandoned a lame bullock quite close to Grandma's cottage. Crazy by the heat, thirst and pain, he sought shelter in the only place available- her front verandah. Fortunately, she saw him coming, and

managed to shoot the bolt on her front door as he lumbered in and collapsed. All attempts to get him to his feet again, failed, and he died there some hours later.

The front door gave access to two rooms. One used to be Grandma's bedroom. On all previous visits, I had never seen inside it. My Granddad had died the year after I was born, so I guess she had special treasures in there, because the heavy curtain in the doorway was always tightly closed. The other room was the parlour, used when the minister dutifully called from time to time. But it was well used for family gatherings especially on New Years Eve- because it housed Grandma's piano. It was in that room that I learned the many songs of my forebears- English, Irish and Scottish. Poor sad Kathleen, wanting to go home, and it took me a long time to understand the one about "Doc. and Doris" and years longer to gain any meaning from the words of "Auld Lang Syne". And my Mum would sing "The Old Rugged Cross", and an almost forgotten song about an old man playing his violin, to a hushed church congregation, so silencing the organ and the organist.

At New Year's Eve, the adults drank hop beer and the kids, ginger beer and, as both came in brown bottles, thirsty kids had to wait for a grown-up to sniff the bottle to ensure they were getting the right brew. And looking down on us on those occasions, were the photographs of close kin, - Andrews and Walkdens, settled in the Riverina and south of the Murray- kin that neither Grandma nor her family had ever met because of the "tyranny of distance". We would rub our eyes so hard to keep awake, listening to the songs and the stories and the laughter filling the small room, until the lateness of the night had its way and we fell asleep.

I have but one further memory of the parlour. The inside of the room was lined with hessian, and it had some big bulges in it- right down at floor level. To me, that space between the logs and the hessian was an ideal place for a snake to overwinter or to take a rest from the heat of the summer sun. I was sorely tempted to push just the toe of my shoe into a bulge, but the thought of something

moving always helped me to resist the temptation.

From the parlour, there used to be a boardwalk out to the kitchen, but Grandma had built new, comfortable bedrooms for herself, Aunt Grace and my two bachelor uncles. I slept in the double bed with Grandma, and how pleased I was when she had me observe two chamber pots under the bed, one of them just my size. That took away my fear of having to go out the back at night, holding a flickering candle that could easily be snuffed out by a gust of wind, leaving me in the darkness. And I found new friends in Grandma's pile of magazines- Mandrake and the Phantom, to keep my Fudge company.

In the large kitchen was a table that would seat a dozen, its sturdy legs firmly on the boards as were the solid bench seats flanking two sides. There was but one chair at the head of the table, near the one window, and that was where Grandma sat. On either side were two kitchen dressers, proudly displaying her treasured china. "Look, but don't dare touch!" was the unspoken message. My aunt told me that when I was about three years old, all heard strange noises coming from me at dinnertime. It seemed I was having difficulty breathing. Indeed it was so, because I had fallen fast asleep and had my face buried in a plate of stew!

At the other end of the kitchen was a large open fireplace- the cooking area. Grandma was a wonderful cook, but never owned a stove. On one side of the open fireplace were her camp ovens, her stewing pots and frying pans- on the other her tools- pokers and scrapers, wire toasting basket and forks, as well as a small shovel which allowed her to arrange the glowing coals exactly to her satisfaction. Her spread hand was her temperature tester. Another interesting part of the fireplace was the series of hooks that hung down from above the fireplace, and they allowed for fast cooking, slow cooking or keeping meals warm for latecomers.

There was a back verandah too, one end closed off for food storage. There was an occasion when Grandma drove us to town with the horse and sulky to buy supplies, and when the horse was in proper gait, she trusted

me to hold the reins for a time- and Oh! I felt so important being in charge of transport at age eight.

The other end was the laundry with several different sized tubs hung on hooks on the wall. My Dad told me that, when he was just a toddler, he went missing one day. An anxious but fruitless search time was carried out by the family and it was feared that he had strayed into danger. Later, he emerged from under the clothes in a tub, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

What no bathroom? No. In winter the baths were taken in the warmth of the fire in the kitchen, and in summer, out under the stars in the yard near a thirsty tree. It didn't matter that the water was dirty because of someone spending the day shearing, or on horseback, or stirring up the sheep manure in the yards. The tree didn't mind one bit!

The only piece of furniture on the back verandah was the food preparation table. My Aunt Grace decided that it was time for me to take cooking lessons. Oh, how my wrists ached as I tried to turn eggs into a frothy mixture. And they ached even more when the sugar was added. But, Lady Luck did me a favour. One day, I dropped an egg on the floor, and Aunt Grace silently cleaned up the mess. As a punishment for my carelessness, she then ruled- no more lessons. I hope I was able to look sufficiently disappointed

Off the verandah the bower shed was the summer living area. It was quite spacious- the roof and halfway down each side was thatched, and the bottom section of each side was covered with chicken wire and gauze. That kept out most of the mosquitoes and flies, and I would get a stern look if I left the door open. The shed held another large table and bench seats, two iron beds where my uncles slept in summer, a couple of goose necked waterbags and a charcoal drip safe. The drip safe was not really effective on hot summer days, and we frequently ate warmish goat meat, very wibbly-wobbly jellies, butter oil and soggy cream cakes. Despite being many years without proper refrigeration, I cannot remember having food poisoning. In those days, women were skilful in determining the "use-by" date of the food they served.

It was my responsibility to feed the chooks. Off to one side was a shed with three small rooms. One was the harness room with its lovely smell of well-treated leather. The second had no front to it, because fuels were stored in there, and my uncles regularly released the gases that built up in very hot weather. The third was the storage area for horse and chook food. It was also the cosy home for many mice. That didn't worry me- but I had heard that snakes like mice for a quick snack, and I have always disliked anything wearing scales. People had tried to convince me that snakes prefer to slither away from humans, but what if you are just a little kid, barring the only exit, and you can't jump very high and your jump timing is not spot on? So for me it was a very quick IN! GET! GO! And so I would run off with but half the required amount of food needed by the chooks who were waiting for their meal.

There in the goat yard, was Aunt Grace skilfully extracting the frothy milk from each nanny to squirt into the bucket. Goats can travel many miles when foraging for food, and despite the fact that a couple of them were "belled", there were times they played "hookey" and couldn't be found at milking time. The goats knew Aunt Grace well, because she always milked them in the same order, and new young mothers rarely needed tethering to fix their places in the milk line. I would watch over the fence, as there was no way I would risk getting caught between two head-butting billies. I remember that I withheld all conversation with my uncle for a whole week when I heard him tell Grandma that he had knocked a couple of kids on the head because their mothers were too poor to feed twins.

Just over there was the pit toilet- with its three holes in the bench- to suit all ages, shapes and sizes, and the last structure in the yard was another bower shed- not really a shed- just a thatched roof on some skinny poles. It was used to keep the hot sun from blistering the paintwork on Granddad's "retired" waggon and Grandma's sulky. It was also the chook house and evidence of their presence could be seen all over the waggon and sulky. Favourite roosting places were plain to see by the

placement of the chook manure piles on the ground. Above, in the thatched roof, dozens of pigeons nested, and I soon learned not to tarry too long under the roof. I would like to have climbed up to look in their nests, but I knew Grandma would not approve, so I had to be content with looking at pieces of eggshell that found their way down to my level.

When I was 14, my Grandma died, my Aunt Grace married and my uncles bought their own larger properties, so the little cottage sat silent and alone on<sup>th</sup> the road, until it neared its 100 birthday. It was then that a drifter sought shelter for the night and burned it to the ground. And the grown-up kid never went back to view the ruins of blackened wood and bits of charcoal and rusted iron and nails. I wanted to keep my memories untouched and untarnished during my journey through life. I have been told that the chimney and windmill still stand guard over the ruins of the cottage and its memories, and send out their message to the passers-by- "Once upon a time a family lived here"! No one heeds- but why should they? They were no part of those years.

And the barefoot kid?

Well, she went back to Bourke, kicked off her shoes and socks, and wiggled her toes with pleasure- but not for long.

Boarding School! Very soon she was wearing a below-knee length brown tunic and long sleeved white blouse buttoned right up to the neck where her new tie sat- and brown stockings and lace-up shoes. She knew then it was time to tuck the little barefoot kid into memory, together with Mandrake, The Phantom and Fudge, but sometimes the kid bubbles up to the surface of the mind to tell people of a life that was lived far back in time when her world was young and her mind was questing.

And then she met a man called Mr. Andersen, who told her his story about "The Ugly Duckling" and urged her to think on her future and work towards her career in life.

What would she turn into?

Perhaps.....or  
perhaps.....or  
maybe.....

Dawn Stewart (Andrews) 1950-51

# A MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF TIMOR

*Bill Bennett (1950-51), a former College Editor of Talkabout has sent us a most interesting letter that he wrote to Xanano Gusmao in 2000.*

“Far Shore”  
Kinka Road,  
Seal Rocks.  
N.S.W. 2423.

President Xanano Gusmao,  
Government House,  
DILI. EAST TIMOR.  
Dear Xanano,  
The Qantas 707 lumbered off the tarmac at Mascot and ever so slowly banked over Coogee South School. The bell had summoned the assembled school, who awaited the duty teacher's few words. The thunder of the huge engines prompted the teacher to save his breath, and he immediately directed the children to their classrooms. The Principal had been more fortunate - at least the Infants' Department had been reminded of the uniform dress requirements for school photographs next day. He arrived to find an empty Primary playground, swept by a bitterly cold, southerly wind. He looked up at the jet, which had quickly become a gleaming speck in the northern sky. Lucky people he thought - off to sunny beaches in the Pacific or to summer in Europe.

The pilot had seen it all before, many times and each time he thought of his own children, whom he wouldn't see for a couple of days. Lucky people, those teachers and kids at home with their families every night. He handed the controls over to his co-pilot and, using the intercom, he addressed his captive audience assembled behind the flight deck.

A few hours later he was again advising passengers, “Below the port wing is the island of Timor. You can just make out the capital, Dili. You can see a ship tied up at the pier beside the beach.” More lucky people he thought - easy life style in beautiful tropical surroundings. Home every night too.

The children on the beach looked up at the gleaming speck above. Lucky people, how exciting they thought; perhaps some of the older ones mused about life outside Dili, as they went back to digging holes in the

sand and protecting them with walls to defy the incoming tide. The bigger girls dunked the babies in the pools and all oiled and ached as the waves cracked the walls and the sand-dribbled minarets toppled. Their make-believe world of safety and castles was crumbling. So was their real world!

Gunfire shattered the peace. Across the beach ran armed Portuguese paratroops. They quickly mustered the children and shepherded them along the pier and aboard the Matt Dili. The ship immediately sailed for Darwin. The paratroops, the smoke and Dili soon receded. A new life for these children had begun in minutes. A new life had also begun for their parents and those back in Timor, but, Xanano, you and your brave people know all about that story. The good sailors gave what they could in clothing, many sacrificing their woollen seamen's sweaters. As shock subsided, it was supplanted by fear and seasickness. The bewildered children reached Darwin safely and were immediately flown by Qantas to Sydney. From Mascot they were taken to Endeavour Hostel at South Coogee.

Was it the same pilot returning from Singapore?

Coogee South School (enrolment 600+) serviced Endeavour Hostel, a modern Commonwealth establishment, which became the new “home” for the Timorese children. It could house hundreds of migrants in motel style flats, with a huge central dining-room. Migrant families could stay there for up to six months if necessary, while they found work and accommodation of their own. This meant that besides the local 400 children we could have up to 200 migrants at any one time. This meant that every day there were new enrolments and transfers to other schools. Apart from the strain on classroom and special language teachers, the clerical work involved in enrolment, transfer and preparation of pupil record cards was immense. All children were made part of normal classes and withdrawn to special classes for intensive English language lessons. As their English improved, they took more time in normal classwork. Clever language teachers used normal class programs for their

situational language lessons, great reinforcement in learning.

About ten one morning, after the enrolments had been sorted out and the new children allocated to their classes, the Principal heard a babble in the forecourt outside his office and a baby crying. He strolled out and there in the windy yard stood 83 shivering youngsters. The teenagers had little bubs in their arms and toddlers held bigger children's hands. Sweaters came down to their knees and the colour of their skins and facial bone formation was as variegated as their clothing. The tallest girl, a pretty Chinese lass stepped forward from the group and in fair English (no doubt to allay the amazement the Principal must have been showing) explained, “We were on the beach in Timor, when the soldiers took us to a boat.” And you already know the rest of her story. “Could you take us into your school please?” Just like that - of course he did.

Into the warm assembly hall he took them. The librarian was an accomplished pianist and tap dancer of note. Library lessons were cancelled and he led a troupe of any teachers who had free periods to help with a sing-a-long and entertainment for our new visitors. What a team of teachers he had - so professional. The canteen sent over hot chocolate and biscuits. The Principal retired to the office and his telephone.

He rang a neighbouring Principal, who said he would arrange seven dozen suitcases as a gift from Lion's International. The Principal informed the parent body of his needs: a Chinese or Portuguese interpreter, lots of helpers and spare clothing to suit babies or toddlers. He hoped they would make it by noon. Aware of their wonderful phone network, he was sure they would. He rang another neighbouring Principal who arranged for ten schools in the Eastern Suburbs to send their Stewart House clothing bags to Coogee South. Stewart House is owned by the teachers and children of public schools. It provides accommodation and medical attention for any child a Principal nominates, usually in emergency situations. One of its money raising activities is recycling clothing.

He explained the circumstances and the schools advised that teachers would drive the clothing bags over at lunch time. In between calls the phone rang.

It was the suitcase factory; when were the cases wanted? Was now too soon? They will be there in an hour.

It was recess now and the teachers in the hall had divided the children into three groups. The teenagers and bubs stayed in the hall. The Primary and Infants children were taken out to the playground and joined in games with their peer groups. This was normal procedure and the local kids had plenty of practice at welcoming newcomers. After play the visitors went back to normal classrooms with their new mates.

Parents had begun to arrive in the hall, some with small sized clothing and the older girls with the babies and toddlers helped sort it out with parents. You could see friendships forming already. Six trestle tables were set up on each side of the hall. Boys' sizes on one side and girls' on the other, ready for when Stewart House bags arrived. The Principal explained to the Chinese parent and the Chinese lass what he wanted. They prepared name tags with ribbons and pins. They had finished enough for all in the Hall and fastened them on. They made plenty of blanks for the rest of the group and spread them around the tables. The lunch bell rang and all the visitors returned to the hostel for lunch, as the first clothing bags arrived. Soon there were masses and masses of clothing being sorted on the tables. When the sixth class children had finished eating in the playground, some came in to help the parents with the sorting. The tables were laden and only half of the bags had been opened.

The parents sent a message to the office advising all was ready. The Principal had been delaying ringing the Education Department all morning. He knew, as you would Xanano, what damage red tape and experts can do. He was determined to keep the group together, ever since the Chinese lass had stepped forward; he realised he didn't even know her name yet! He knew that ages, staffing and welfare arguments would all be put forward. He would argue it was better for all the administrative problems be kept on the one site. It was even more important psychologically that each of

the "orphans" needed the security of the group for some time. It would be inhuman to split them up just yet. When they had more English perhaps and when suitable care could be provided for the very young ones. The Director was a kindly man and listened but stressed that the Principal wasn't to do anything until he came out to review the situation. He would be there in an hour.

This turned out favourably, as the Director saw the group, closely knit, come up the street as he was passing in his car. They said good afternoon to him in the Hall and the fitting out commenced and, as each child's case was filled they went back to class. The tagged bags were ferried down to the Hostel in parents' cars. The Director said it reminded him of a bazaar in Hong Kong. He also commented on the obvious interdependence of the group.

Underwear had proved a problem but the parents noted each child's size and went to two local department stores and purchased two pairs for each child and took them straight to the Hostel so that the children would have them that evening to put in their bags. "And what about toothbrushes?" added a dentist's wife. Another group set off for this purchase. That evening another group of parents went to the Hostel armed with marking pens for all the clothing. It took two nights!

The Director was impressed. He too, now wanted to keep the group together. He got the Principal's assurance that he would continue to do nothing until he rang next morning. The Principal farewelled him and went back to his office to prepare all the answers he would have to make ready for that phone call. He rang two recently retired Principals both of whom had High School and Migrant English teaching experience and asked them would they be prepared to teach on a long term casual basis. They agreed. There were also on site two wooden portable buildings that were waiting to be moved as soon as Public Works plumbers disconnected the gas. This could be stopped. Staffing and accommodation solved. What else could administration complain about? It had been a busy day. He went to bed that night confident that he would get permission.

He did, Xanano. The Department sent along a couple of extra migrant

teachers and at long last some extra clerical staff. Within two days all classes were operating smoothly. The Principal didn't even want to think about the administrative problems created at the Hostel. Immigration and of course the looming welfare hurdles to be negotiated, were thankfully not his responsibility. The school would bring some stability into the children's day. Parents would invite them into their homes and for picnics on weekends and holidays. That was normal for these wonderful people.

There are too many interesting stories to tell about their progress at the school to relate here. I'll send some on later if you like. If you are talking to Bishop Bello, you can tell him I have some great stories about two Jesuit priests, Father Diaz and Pereria who also escaped from Timor.

I have enclosed copies of extracts from the Coogee South Admission Register of 1975. They are a little bit of History of Timor that could be overlooked in all the destruction and confusion. I know that many of the parents may now be dead - I hope none of the children are. Their grief and the children's grief on their abrupt separation was indeed very great. All that I can say is that we did everything possible at Coogee South to make their young lives a little happier.

I was going to send this letter with one of General Cosgrove's staff but I had a bit of difficulty in digging out twenty five year old records. I don't trust the mails and want it delivered into your hands. The bearer is the mother-in-law of our Lighthouse Keeper here in Seal Rocks. Her name is Mrs Minter.

In closing, if ever there is anything I can do for you, here or in Timor do not hesitate to contact me. I would deem it to be an honour to be at your service. Please excuse your address and titles at the head of this letter. I know I should have inquired at our Foreign Office for the correct ones. You are my president and in the photos I have of you with your people, I can see in their eyes you are their President anyway.

May you, your brave people and Timor prosper!

W.J. Bennett. B.A. J.P  
(Ex Principal Coogee South School)

# E-GROUP JOTTINGS

*The waggatc e-group seems to inspire alumni to contribute memories of their college and teaching experiences which are shared among the members of the group*

*We feel that it would be appropriate to share some of the topics with the readers of Talkabout.*

*The following messages were posted as a result of someone mentioning "Music in Schools."*

*-- The Editors.*

Music has been a strong feature in primary schools in Canberra.

Tony Oriel (WWTC early 60s) at Campbell & Kay Killick at Flynn were largely responsible for some outstanding musical productions which involved students in the whole theatrical bit, from acting, singing, lighting, sound, props, advertising, ticket sales, program design etc.

Performances would run for two or three nights with a matinee for neighbouring schools.

At Campbell we put on Paint Your Wagon, Oliver, Annie Get Your Gun & others.

The bits that the audience liked best & which stick in the memory are those where things went wrong.

In Oliver a scene opened with the characters seated on a lounge beside a basket containing a cat (stuffed toy).

The cat was important for the conversation which developed.

On the second night the "responsible" props boy forgot to put the cat in the basket. The error was discovered with the curtains open & the dialogue building toward the cat bit. The audience saw the cat flying through the air from the wings to land accurately in the basket. Thunderous applause.

In Annie Get Your Gun, Annie had a zipper stick while dressing for the big ballroom scene. The problem became obvious to all present as the curtain opened and actors wandered aimlessly around waiting for Annie's big entrance. Chief Sitting Bull, standing beside me in the wings, asked what we should do. Always ready to pass the buck, I suggested he walk out and tell one of the jokes he was famous for during art/craft lessons.

He thought for a moment, then folding his arms across his chest, strode onto

the stage and toward the audience.

Dressed in buckskin, with a long feathered headdress, he carried an air of authority which stopped the audience from fidgeting. He held up one hand, "How?" (giggles from audience) "Did you hear about the young brave who shoot arrow at sky? .....He missed!"

The audience broke up completely and by the time they settled down Annie was dressed and ready to get back to the script. The cast wanted the Chief to fill in again for the next night's performance.

All those who participated in these productions, practically the whole senior school, retained these wonderful memories, and I have seen many of them bob up in local shows as adults.

Bill Atkinson 1957-58

As a teacher in a small school I depended on "Let's Have Music" and regarded it as a great programme. It was a must for my school.. The only criticism I had was that at the end of the programme, Terrence Hunt would give a preview of next week's song. This frequently undid some of the learning of the song we had just learned.

The School Magazine was also a wonderful source of information to Music with its solfa passages. I found that the tuning fork and the modulator were such assets and although I could not read music competently our music lessons were always enjoyable. It is true those musically talented teachers made tremendous contributions in staff schools with suitable programming and preparations for speech nights, concerts, musicals and the like and schools felt a great loss when these people moved on and there was no replacement.

Lew Morrell 1949-50

My first appointment was to a one teacher school out of Henty. The facilities were primitive and there was only a portable wireless, which someone had donated as there was no electricity. We listened to school broadcasts but the reception was fairly

bad. If the children sang you couldn't hear the wireless.

That was when I bought a piano accordion so I could accompany the singing. This was a great investment because we could learn songs other than those in the Broadcast Book. We also did folk and square dancing and I was even coaxed into playing for the P&C dances.

When I was transferred to a small school near Gundagai I was disappointed to discover that the children couldn't sing. I at first thought they were tone deaf until I looked at the Observation book and read the comments of Inspectors regarding the previous teacher who had retired the year before. The Inspectors had written year after year: "Music is not taught in this school". Well, that was a challenge, so with me playing the piano accordion and the kids singing raucously at first, we started to learn to sing. We learned "Click go the Shears", "Waltzing Matilda", "Botany Bay" and a couple of Sea Shanties that I had the words for.

It took a couple of months for them to overcome their extreme shyness and embarrassment at singing together but then they started to enjoy it. I bought a couple of records of the Vienna Boys and the Obenkirchen Children's Choirs and played them on the radiogram.

When it came time for the Annual Inspection I was keen to let the Inspector hear the children sing so he could see that music was now taught in this school. What I didn't know was that the Inspector was new and did not know the school's background. After the children had performed what I thought was a very creditable rendition of "Click Go the Shears", I waited for some recognition of the skill of my tutelage.

The Inspector's brief comment was "Not very good, are they?"

Lindsay Budd 1950-51

# IN MEMORIAM

## JILL CLEARY (KING) 1954-55



383 Ocean Drive  
Lauriton 2443

Dear Ann,

Many thanks for the card and the warmth and friendship it brought to me. I can't recall whether I gave you any details of Jill's teaching career, etc, so please forgive me if I'm repeating myself.

Jill and I met at WWTC during the 54-55 Session, Jill was born and bred in the Junee district and attended Wagga High School from 1949-53. She was Girl Captain in 1953. We married in 1957 – her grandmother always referred to WWTC as a “marriage bureau” – Jill's brother Arthur King and his wife Margaret (Wallace) had met at the College some years previously.

Jill began her teaching career at Colyton Infants near Mt Druitt. I was at Camdenville Primary at the time; in spite of being a city bloke, we both wanted to return to the country, and were fortunate to obtain a double move to Parkes in 1957. Jill gave up teaching a few years later as she wanted to start a family, but the first of our two lovely daughters didn't arrive till 1963.

In the meantime Jill followed me in the peripatetic life of teachers of that time – we had moves to Leadville, near Dunedoo, where the girls were

born, then to Wiseman's Ferry, then to Tibooburra for three years, in an endeavour to emulate such ex Wagga identities as George Blakemore and Bill Bennett. They were three wonderful years – Jill was an ex-officio member of staff helping the young female ex-student assistant teacher, from time to time, but mostly providing open house for many interesting visitors who would pop into the residence, next door to the school.

We still have many valued friendships we made in our Tibooburra days; our girls began school there – so their CVs make interesting reading – ‘born at Dunedoo’, ‘started school at Tibooburra’.

Our eldest daughter Louise now enjoys teaching at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus and Alison is a campaign manager for the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) based in Melbourne. Louise attended Riverina CAE at Wagga in the early 80s and lived on the old Teachers' College campus. Alison began her tertiary education at Mitchell College at Bathurst – so the whole family belong to the same Alumni. So what goes round etc!

In 1971 we moved to Lauriton when I took up a position as Assistant Principal at Kendall Central School. Unfortunately Jill was diagnosed with breast cancer that year, but faced it with her usual determined and positive attitude and all she ever asked was that she be given time to see her young daughters grow up – she was granted that and even received a bonus of five happy years with a grand daughter.

Jill died peacefully in her sleep at home and so ended a 45 year old marriage but we called it a ‘45 year old love affair’. Many happy memories remain, beginning from those days we spent at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College.

Very kind regards,

Jim Cleary.

## BARBARA ANN HOLT (LENNY) 1947-49

9 Bentley St

Redhead 2290

Dear Ann,

I am writing to you on behalf of my father to inform you of the death of my mother, Barbara Holt.

Dad recently received a copy of Talkabout, which of course was addressed to Mum. He has asked me to let you know so that no more copies are sent.

Mum always enjoyed receiving news of what was going on, but it is with sadness that I ask you to not send any more.

Mum was in the first group of students at Wagga College, something that she was quite proud of.

After graduating she taught at South Goulburn Public School before moving to Newcastle where she taught at Belmont Infants School until she retired (early) because of breast cancer.

She lived for another nineteen years, but last year she was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in her lung, and sadly passed away 10<sup>th</sup> May 2002. I suppose a lot of your readers, especially those who knew her as Barbara Lenny might like to know that she has passed away.

Please pass this information on.

Kind regards,

Lesley Wells.

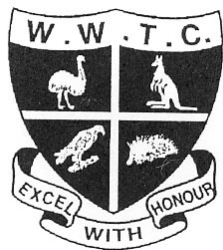
## REUNION NOTICE

As it will be 40 years since 1962-63 Session graduated from WWTC a reunion is being proposed for November 2003 or January/February 2004.

Once details are finalised they will be published in Talkabout.

Elaine Saunders nee Hardy.





## WWTC ALL SESSIONS REUNION

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the final graduating class of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in 1973.

To mark the occasion a Reunion of all Alumni has been arranged to take place in Bathurst on September 26, 27, and 28, 2003.

An Information sheet and Accommodation booking sheet has already been sent to all Alumni who are on the database. If you did not receive a form and wish to attend, please contact Michelle Fawkes on (02) 6338 4629 and she will mail you the information.

The closing date for returning acceptance slips has been extended to 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2003.

On Friday there will be time for informal get togethers of the various year groups to meet and renew friendships. Spaces have been booked in various pubs and restaurants around town.

It will also allow people to catch up with many of those from other years who they have met during their career.

Various activities have been planned for Saturday.

The Reunion Dinner will be held in the Grand Dining Hall at night.

On Sunday an ecumenical service will be held in the morning followed by a meeting of the WWTC Alumni Association. It is hoped that at the meeting some younger members will be prepared to nominate for the Alumni Committee for 2004.

It is hoped that there will be a display of the memorabilia which has been donated for the collection in the Museum in Wagga. If you have something suitable, please bring it to the reunion.