

PANORAMA

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
OF BATHURST TEACHERS' COLLEGE
CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY



Issue No. 34 WINTER 2018

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Panorama Readers,



This is the first edition of 'Panorama' for 2018 and it gives me cause to reflect on our year so far:-

* Our AGM and Luncheon in February at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel gave us a wonderful address by Denise Cramsie (BTC58-59) a pioneering Educator

in the field of Gifted and Talented (GAT) students.

* Two very successful Reunions held in March:-

- 1) The Pioneers Reunion (51-52) in Penrith.
- 2) The 58-59 Reunion in Bathurst.

A Reunion of the 60-61 Year (also my year), is planned for October. Further details about this Reunion are included in this issue of Panorama and if you are in this group it would be wonderful to see you there. We met several years ago and it was very well attended and a great chance to all catch up again.

A Southern Region Get Together is planned for July 25 at Mittagong.

The purpose of our Association as I see it, is threefold:-

1..Communication – This is mainly through 'Panorama'. Your support here is greatly appreciated, We all look forward to receiving reports, notices, stories and items of interest for inclusion in the magazine. There are also opportunities for you to pay an annual Membership Fee and a contribution to the BTCAA Scholarship Fund.

The Membership Fee pays for the printing and postage costs of Panorama and also assists in the running costs of the Association.

2. Organising Reunions – They are wonderful times. The first Reunion I attended I was very nervous, and had almost made up my mind before I went that I wouldn't like it and would never go again. Wrong! It was wonderful to catch up with so many warm interesting people I had known at BTC. We were all so young then, with our whole lives ahead of us.

It was, and still is, wonderful to catch up on our college years and also to discuss our life paths, teaching, family, friends, travel..... If you haven't been to a Reunion, possibly give it a go, or if your year group is not having a Reunion, why not attend our AGM and Luncheon next February. You may be pleasantly surprised as I was.

3. Scholarship Fundraising - The third purpose of BTCAA is Scholarship Fundraising. The scholarship contribution allows us to award an annual scholarship to a CSU student to help in meeting the costs of courses being undertaken. Every year a student who has a family member who attended BTC is eligible to apply for this Scholarship.

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The winner for 2018 has been announced and you will be able to read more about the winner of this award in this issue of Panorama. Many thanks to all of you who through your kind and generous donations make this scholarship possible.

I hope you enjoy our magazine, contact with other Alumni and I hope to meet up with many of you at various functions throughout the year.

Carole Sharp

President BTCAA
(talia7@ozemail.com.au)

2018 AGM and LUNCHEON SATURDAY 23 FEBRUARY

This year's annual AGM and Luncheon was again held at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel in Castlereagh Street Sydney. The AGM Meeting covered all the usual reports of the Association from the President, the Treasurer, the Panorama editor, from CSU and other general business. Afterwards a relatively small group of 30 attendees joined in sharing fellowship and good



food to hear a very interesting address from one of our esteemed BTC colleagues, Denise Cramsie (58-59). The talk

subject was the pioneering work in developing **programs for GAT students.**



Denise spoke very knowledgably (from extensive research and experience). Her journey to a Masters degree in Gifted Education was a most interesting and long term experience. She started the journey in a Year 5 Opportunity Class at Woollahra Public School. This was followed by High School at Kogarah and then 2 years at BTC. Denise taught for 3 years before heading overseas for 3½ years based in London.



Returning to Sydney home, marriage and children took priority

but Denise eventually returned to work as a teacher-librarian in the Catholic system. A desire to work in the NSW Education Dept led to study for a Conversion Course by correspondence through Mitchell CAE. This proved to be a significant point in her life as she got a taste for further study. As Denise said "for the first time it seemed that I was working to my perceived potential".

Around this time Denise's son had graduated from High School and was off to University so Denise decided to enrol in a degree course at University too. (He was 18, she was 52!). "I was overwhelmed when I received a High Distinction for my first assignment. I loved the work, the reading, research and the pulling together of an assignment". She graduated with a Bachelor of Education with Credit (the UNSW's Distinction). Talk about a late bloomer! The most interesting course was Gifted Education with lecturers, Dr Miracca Gross and Katherine Hoekman, whose passion for the subject was contagious.

"I was hooked on Gifted Education and inevitably I enrolled for my Master's in 1996". The highlight of this course was five weeks at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA attending a summer school. Miracca Gross suggested and arranged it with Professor Joyce VanTassel-Baska who was taking the course. This was an extraordinary experience; working with an international guru of Gifted Education in the second oldest college in the USA. (Only Harvard is older, by one year). And Colonial Williamsburg was a treat!

At this time Denise started an Enrichment programme in her school which involved a parent information night, a teacher information Staff meeting, an identification process and interviews with parents. This was one of the most rewarding experiences in her teaching career.

"However, being nominated for a Gifted Programme is not a reward for achievement or good behaviour. It is a right! Children are very good at covering-up their superior intellect, e.g the Kindergarten child who had a reading age of an eight-year-old. When she started school she was anxious to borrow novels rather than picture books from the Library. But she soon started to borrow from the same section as her classmates. She didn't want to be 'different'. Then there's Professor Gross's example of a Kindergarten child who when asked what book she was reading at home answered 'a book about bunnies'. I guess that's one way of describing Watership Down!"

"This wanting to conform and hiding an ability is called Learned Underachievement – not

wanting to appear different. It is usually home or school-related. Henry Thoreau implores us to support this 'differentness':

Denise finished up with an intriguing quote from Henry David Thoreaux.

*If a man does not keep pace with his companions,
Perhaps it's because he hears a different drummer.
Let him step to the music which he hears,
However, measured or far away.*

This truly has been a lifelong journey!

(Should you wish to read more detail about Denise's 'journey', a transcript of her address is available on request from the editor.)

wrbensley@hotmail.com

ALUMNI CONTACTS 2018

President: Carole Sharp (1960-61) – email talia7@ozemail.com.au

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BTCOA SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Hot off the press!

This year's BTCOA Scholarship winner is **Emily Caldwell**. Emily is doing a Bachelor of Education (K-12) course at the Wagga Wagga campus of CSU. Her father is Lindsay Caldwell who trained at Mitchell CAE (during 1969-70, the changeover years from BTC to Mitchell College Advanced Education- MCAE). More about Emily can be read in the CSU Report below.

Thanks go to our selection committee of Alan Smith, Rod Allen and John Paine (sub. Wayne Bensley) who spent many hours screening the eligible applications and choosing the winner.

CSU REPORT / UPDATE

CSU Alumni

Today's industry leaders.



• BTC Alumni Fundraising / Scholarship

The Bathurst Teacher's College Alumni Association (BTCOA) continues to contribute to the BTCOA Scholarship Fund with the total currently sitting at over \$40,000.

The 2018 BTCOA scholarship has recently been awarded to Emily Caldwell.

Emily grew up in a household of teachers, and has happy memories of her teachers from school. Emily has a passion for giving rural students equal opportunities in terms of education, and wants to make a difference. She is currently on placement at Hillston Central School, NSW.

If you are aware of a descendant of a BTC graduate who is considering enrolling in a course within the Faculty of Education at CSU don't forget to let them know about the scholarship!!

Please see below an article hot off the press!

• CSU postgraduate education courses attract students from around the world

Charles Sturt University (CSU) is taking its postgraduate teaching and education courses to new heights as a result of comprehensive recent reviews across the suite of courses.

The postgraduate courses are offered online by CSU's [School of Education](#) and the [School of Teacher Education](#) and are designed for qualified education professionals to take their learning and skills further, alongside opportunities to develop leadership and practitioner research capabilities.

Dr Brendon Hyndman (pictured below), senior lecturer and course director in the CSU [Faculty of Arts and Education](#) said the updates are exciting for those in the education profession.

"In addition to providing flexible online study opportunities for busy education professionals, these recent course reviews ensure there are even more study pathways available to meet their professional needs," Dr Hyndman said.



"Some of the exciting updates in 2019 include providing new specialisation pathways in master's study for those seeking to explore Early Childhood Leadership

alongside the crucial teaching area of Curriculum and Professional Practice."

Course reviews are conducted at CSU every five years and involve widespread consultation with professionals from across the education sector. Dr Hyndman acknowledges the process is vital to ensure the courses remain contemporary, relevant and continue to meet emerging needs of education professionals.

Read more at <http://news.csu.edu.au/latest-news/education/teacher-education/csu-enhances-its-postgraduate-teaching-and-education-courses?flwzIbaPMLIYFrmd.99>

All members of the BTC are encouraged to continue to send your gift for support to the BTCA Fund, as you have read, your support is truly making a difference to student's lives.

On a final note, we have been working hard to ensure our alumni contact details are current. **We want to ensure that you receive all our latest news on events, benefits and more!** Head to www.csu.edu.au/alumni.

...*Sheridan Ingold*: email singold@csu.edu.au

REUNION REPORTS FROM 2018

PIONEERS REUNION (MARCH)

@ Penrith Panthers report by Lew Ford

We first met in March, 1951. Now, 67 years on we have gathered again to celebrate.

We've had the routine reunion activities - coach trip, Devonshire tea on the 'Neapan Belle' river cruise, lunch at the rowing club, the Arms of Australia Colonial Inn and Museum, the Olympic water sports facilities, Godolphin thoroughbred facilities.

More significant, perhaps were the reminiscences we shared -- our diverse adventures, our peak experiences, our celebrations and our sadnesses, the loss of family members and our fellow pioneers. All this with a certain strength, resilience and mutual support with the will to continue to grow as vital people richer and more special for having lived it the way we did.

On the first night we dined casually at Panthers' Kelly's Brasserie. On the second night we dined more formally in the Woodruff Room (speeches, commendations, toasts, group photos etc).

At the dinner, Royce Levi, Shirley Davis (Reid), and Grahame Howard spoke of their lives as teachers. Royce acknowledged the lasting influence of our lecturers and especially Betty

McDonald, Ellen Waugh and Frank Atchison who, though now in their nineties were there with us at the reunion.

Royce has had an interesting career in primary, secondary and tertiary education, in sport and drama, in writing and in publishing.

Grahame spoke of his career in the north and northwest of the state. Working with aboriginal families in the Moree area was especially important to him. He was a great sportsman as a young man and has carried this interest into his senior years. Grahame spent many years in promotion positions in Tweed River schools.

Shirley Davis recalled her early years in teaching across the state and eventually in Nundle where she met and married Don, raised her family and established a business in trucks and buses. Don was awarded an OAM for his work in the community.

My sketchy outline does not give due credit to the richness of their stories -- stories to which we could all relate as we came together and reminisced so comfortably and spontaneously about our lives in general through the past 67 years.

The 1930s, our infant and early childhood years-- we were Depression kids and are reminded of our parents' gallantry and resilience in coping with the hardship and deprivation while shielding us from the pervading anxiety.

Our high school days were war years and again our parents kept us safe and generally sheltered from the trauma. Close friends and relatives were "away" at the war. From time to time we'd receive the censored letter (treasures today had we kept them).

Some of us had spent their childhood in the bombed cities in UK; another in enemy occupied Latvia.

Post war, we trained at BTC and then we taught.

Together we have lived through 67 years of breathtaking change -- globally, nationally; economically, ideologically; technically, electronically. But here at home we have been blessed with relative stability and peace.

A few years back, acknowledging the utmost importance of our partners to us aging pioneers, we chose to embrace them as Honorary Pioneers.

Now we wish to extend that recognition to the next generation and welcome to the pioneer fold as honorary members, Janita Marscham, Peter Marscham and Trevor Lentfer who have given us tremendous support.

We will meet again next year in Mudgee, God willing.

*We've known many things since then,
That a heart that breaks can mend itself again
(that it can and it must be done),
And what loyalty can mean,
And how real a word like courage can become,
And that solitude can be rich and gratifying and
quite different from loneliness
We can still maintain the heart's own private peace.*

(The White Magnolia Tree)



58-59 REUNION @ BATHURST March 2-3-4

A WEEKEND IN THE COUNTRY

It was a small but enthusiastic group of 58/59ers and partners who met on the first Friday in March at the bistro of The Knickerbocker Hotel, a more upmarket version of the watering hole of our College days. It was an establishment whose threshold most of us had been too young to dare to cross. We were here to celebrate sixty years since we first travelled up the drive to find a place in the dormitory which was to be our home for the next two years.



Mid morning on Saturday our numbers swelled as we enjoyed brunch at The Acropole, where some fed their nostalgia with treats from the past. In the afternoon we gathered under a big tarpaulin near a barbecue area shaded by large eucalypts at CSU where Justin Williams from The Advancement Unit had a boom box playing familiar songs from our youth. While we enjoyed the afternoon tea, we looked at souvenirs that Justin and Sheridan Ingold, Casual Alumni Relations Coordinator from Wagga Wagga, had gathered for us. Of most interest was the big commemorative book that had been prepared for lecturer Theo Barker, which all students from

58-59-60 had signed under a small photo of themselves. Who remembered doing it? And weren't our signatures still not quite fully formed, which, when considering how young we were, was not surprising. From here we went on a short tour just to see the stained glass windows in the auditorium in the C D Blake Building and Olive Lawson's window in the Religious Centre. We also had a quick glimpse of the water feature commemorating the fishpond, the cabinet in the Heffron Building with memorabilia from BTC students and a final stop at L.J Allen's home, now the office for The Advancement Unit. So many memories, but most of us could say we had never been inside L.J's home while we had been there.

The evening was special, too. Thanks to Alan Smith, a local alumnus who had spent several years as a lecturer at Mitchell CAE and CSU, we had a meal in the Bathurst Community Centre Bowling Club where we ignored the tables and sat around in comfy armchairs so were able to move about and chat in a way that a more formal setting makes more difficult.

All attending received a copy of a reunion magazine of collected stories contributed by some of our year; some of us, obviously more naive or unobservant, were completely unaware of some of the goings on. We really were "Young, Naive, but Resilient", the magazine's title.

Denise Cramsie, the speaker at our recent BTCAA AGM, had also compiled a songbook of hits from the 58/59 College Reviews. If the patient staff serving the food hadn't needed to pack up, no doubt we would have all ended up singing some of them.

A few stalwarts who did not face a long drive met for breakfast at The Hub in Keppel Street, the 'in' place for a Sunday morning before heading home. We all enjoyed ourselves thoroughly and are letting all those who didn't make it this time know that we will be celebrating sixty years since we started teaching in Bathurst in March 2020. See you there!

-- Carole Goodwin

on behalf of:

Denise Cramsie and Dale Dengate, Sydney organisers and Barry Wooldridge, our rural representative.

NOTE TO READERS OF MAILED EDITION:

Enjoy the pictures in your 'Panorama' in colour! This can be done by going online to www.alumni.csu.edu.au >publications and then click on the Publications box and then BTCAA Panorama Newsletters.

REUNION NOTICES FOR 2018-19

SOUTHERN REGION 2018

The annual Southern region, Get-Together lynch will be held at the Mittagong RSL Club on the last Wednesday in July, the 25th.

The organiser is Reg Halliburton, phone (02) 6297-1859 or email – jan.reg@bigpond.net.au.

If you haven't attended before and would like to come please do. All BTC alumni are welcome to attend (regardless of your year group), or whether you are a regular or a newcomer. Please inform Reg as soon as possible beforehand.

BTC 1965-66 2018

The annual luncheon for the 1965-66 BTC group is being held at Parliament House in Sydney on Friday 12th October.

For further details contact:

- Greg Woods at woods.greg@yahoo.com.au or
- Dave Simmons at dwsimmons47@gmail.com

BTC 1960-612018

Saturday, 20th October

@ The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

This is for a Luncheon, cost TBA, but approx.. \$70-\$75 per head. (This has been booked)

There have been various suggestions about extending the event to include dinner, or breakfast the next morning, or perhaps a show, a picnic or a harbour cruise. Would you be interested in including some of these, or other activities, over the weekend?

The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel is offering a special Room Rate for that weekend to accommodate anyone who would like to stay in the City.

Rates will be: Boutique double \$206.00 per night
Deluxe Queen \$224.00 per night

There is good transport (buses and trains) nearby, and there are parking stations within walking distance of the Hotel.

A group of us has begun to organize the Reunion but we'd be happy to receive help input from anyone who has ideas or who would like to make suggestions. This is a preliminary letter with another more detailed email of costs and payment arrangements to follow soon.

Please feel free to contact any of us on the emails below.

- Tony -Koop tonykoop@optusnet.com.au
- Gail Metcalfe gailmetcalfe@bigpond.com
- Michael Creenaune mikecree@jprimus.com.au
- Judy Sargeant judysargeant9@gmail.com

BTC 1951-52 PIONEERS 2019

68th Anniversary Pioneer Reunion

On the 5-7 March 2019, the Pioneers will gather, yet again, this time to celebrate the 68th Anniversary of BTC's foundation in 1951. The Reunion will be in the

Cudgong Valley, centred on Mudgee.

We expect that around 60 Pioneers and Honorary Pioneers, including some of our much-revered former Lecturers, will be participating.

Another exciting program is being arranged by our Local Planning Team – Pat and David Williams and June McWhirter (Woody).

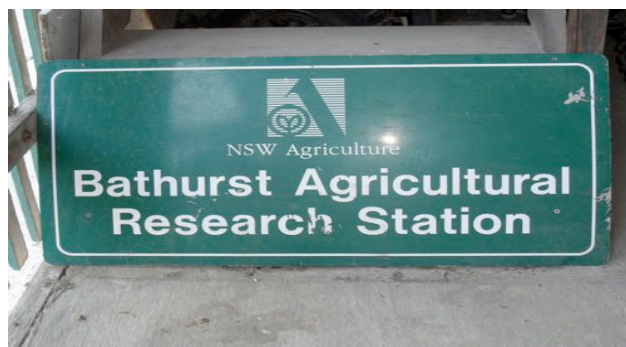
For further information please contact Julia Noon

(9958 1816) or Ralph Rawlinson (9743 4117).

RESEARCH STATION VISIT ... 2018

DO YOU REMEMBER THE APPLE ORCHARD BESIDE THE BTC DRIVE?

Recently I saw an advertisement in a local Bathurst paper for a free two hour tour of the Bathurst Agricultural Research Station led by Roy Menzies, an horticulturist there for some 37 years.



I decided it would be an interesting tour, especially as the apple orchard along the College drive was an 'attraction' for quite a number of BTC students over many years. Then it provided a ready, and free, supply of juicy apples.

The only negative about these apples was that they 'belonged' to the Research Station. We (the students) were warned that being caught raiding the orchard, or with apples in our rooms, that there would be consequences ... (ie. a visit to LJ, even dismissal from College). We had to raid the orchard after dark, usually in inside out black college trackies. These warnings did not stop many students - male and female - crawling through loose sections of wire fencing and

raiding the first few rows in the orchard for a supply of apples. (It was explained to us by 'old hands' that apples from the first three rows were not counted in the yield experiments).

Do you remember the 'forbidden fruit'? Were you one of the 'apple raiders'?

With this background in mind an invited visit was taken up to visit the old Research Station. Guess what I found out?

- The apple orchard as I knew it in BTC days is no longer there and hasn't been for many years. It's just an empty paddock now.



- The Research Station is, and has long been, much more than an apple orchard.
- Tobacco, hops, pears, apples, peaches, nectarines, grapes, pasture grasses, wind break trees and more have all been grown there over the years.
- There have been stables, a piggery, a nursery, a weather station and a small shearing shed all in operation at different times.
- No research is undertaken there now. It is in limbo generally, just a block of some 160 acres maintained by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).
- It's a really fascinating place with a long history. It was originally a Bathurst Park Common of some 800 acres in the 19th century.
- A manager's cottage' prior to becoming the Research Station, is still there. In the 1940's the front verandah of this cottage was apparently often used as a regular meeting place by Ben Chifley, Reg May and other Bathurst luminaries to 'discuss and plan Australia's future'.



- So it's a pretty historic place! It's certainly much more than an apple orchard!

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

THOUGHTS ON PRAC TEACHING 1953-54

Reading, in the last issue of Panorama, how Hayley Fowler utilized part of her BTCAA Scholarship Fund to pay for her car registration and repairs so she could attend her prac teaching in Lithgow brought back memories of our practical teaching blocks in 53/54.

We commenced college early in 1953 and were informed that we would have a three-week practical teaching session early in the term. One day, as we settled in the dining room for lunch, a buzz started at one table and soon spread amongst the whole dining room. Some second-year students had seen admin clerical staff pinning up large sheets, with long lists displayed, on the notice boards. The word from the knowledgeable second years on each table was that 'the practice teaching lists are out' and we, soon-to-be 'stewed ants' to the multitudes of kids in the district, would be on them.

After we were dismissed from the dining room there was a massed advance to the admin notice boards where students frantically searched the 300 names for their name and the school they were to attend.

It seems that unlike today we had transport provided. As Bathurst Teachers College was in a country city there were not enough classes in the schools in town for us all to be accommodated so practical teaching became a major exercise. Each morning students set out from college on foot, bike, bus or train.

Large tin boxes accompanied each group as the College supplied lunch. It was not very exciting but there was always heavy cake and fruit. One particular item, which we received regularly, was cold egg and bacon pie. It was made in huge slabs and cut into individual pieces for us. After a while, we became used to it and even looked forward to it. We were very glad to get back to our normal lunch menu when the practical teaching sessions were over.

My first experience, early in first term, was in a primary school in Coerwull, a suburb of Lithgow, a mining town west of the Blue Mountains. Each morning we set out on a bus to the station in Bathurst to board a specially chartered steam train. The carriages were 'dog boxes' so once you were settled in your compartment you could not move around the train. On the way to Lithgow, the train stopped at each siding and two or three students, mainly men, would set out across the paddocks to the small school that was

part of each community in those days. They carried their large green lunchbox between them as well as any teaching resources they needed for the day. A large group of us alighted at Coerwull and walked through the streets to the school. Three of us were allocated to a Grade 5 class and spent three weeks on the class. Each of us taught for a session (morning, mid morning or afternoon) whilst the others sat at the back with the class teacher and observed. This was our first experience of the amount of preparation required to teach in a meaningful manner. The college library stayed open until late at night so we could do our research, especially if we had to teach history or geography.

One afternoon as we waited for the train I discovered I had left a book behind in the classroom. I ran back and burst into the room to find the teacher in front of the class giving a boy the cane. He had a notebook and was reading out of it. The fact of the matter was that the teacher sat at the back of the room all day taking notes. We had thought he was making observations of our teaching but no, he was watching out for us! After we left each day, he would call some kids out to the front and say that at 11 o'clock they were observed being cheeky to the student teacher or some other misdemeanor and he would then cane them. Up to then we had imagined that we were controlling the class quite well. It was a salutary lesson and made us work even harder to make our lessons interesting.

On reflection, it was a valuable experience. Although we were very green and we must have been a burden to the class teacher, he was an older and experienced man and it did not seem to worry him in the least.

My second teaching experience was at a small primary school in South Bathurst. We walked there and back each day. The school was very normal and left very little of an impression on me.

Lucknow, a small gold mining town, between Bathurst and Orange was my first small school. I had elected to join a Small School's course in second-year so our first teaching block involved a long bus ride of 47 km each morning. The school itself was fascinating as it had a worked out goldmine with a huge derrick above it just outside the playground fence. One lesson I will never forget. We were instructed that we had to teach a music lesson while our supervisor observed. It was a requirement that we learn the recorder flute to be able to use it in school as a teaching resource. I had never had any music instruction whatsoever before coming to college and I was hopeless as nobody in our family played an instrument. In fact, I had approached Elvie Cornell, our music lecturer, and asked whether

she would give me extra recorder lessons so that I might have a chance to pass music. We had to pass every subject to qualify for a teaching position and I was getting desperate.

That evening after dinner I was on the end of a stern talking to from my girlfriend. Elvie had called her in and told her that she was to give me the extra help I had requested. A boarding college meant that everybody knew what relationships were current. I was pleased that I learnt my three tunes and passed. Anyway, I commenced the lesson with the class, using the recorder as a help. Needless to say, I mucked the lesson up but bluffed my way through with the kids. The lecturer, bless him, found it very hard not to laugh out loud and had to leave the room because he could not control himself.

Afterwards we all had a good laugh and he suggested that perhaps I use the radio for my music lessons in the future. Incidentally, many years later I successfully taught a group of upper primary students the recorder flute. It happened because I had a brilliant year five girl who could look at the music and play each new piece spontaneously. She actually taught the group by osmosis but the parents gave me the credit.

There were three of us placed at Lucknow and as the football season was drawing near we could change into our shorts, leave our bags at the side of the road and start running home each afternoon. The bus would come along from Orange, pick up our bags, then catch up with us and pick us up. It certainly helped us get into condition. An interesting note is that our bags were never interfered with by passing traffic.

My final teaching block was the most interesting. It was at Kirkconnell and the bus to Wallerawang would drop three of us there each morning. The head teacher had been around for many years and as soon as we got there he informed us that as it was our final teaching block he expected us to teach without his supervision and without the other two students watching. We were to bring tennis rackets each day and spend some time in preparation and the rest of the time playing tennis on the school courts with him and his daughter. Our supervisor was Russ Porter, our physical education lecturer, and he was very easy-going. In fact, when he came out to observe us, the head would take him down to the schoolhouse for a cup of tea and he usually ended up entertaining the family with his piano playing. The block was most interesting and very useful in that we were able to teach without feeling threatened by others observing us. Our practical teaching blocks gave us an opportunity to escape to the real world for a while and allowed us to experience what teaching was really about. I hope Hayley enjoys her teaching



ig 1953/5

AGUES

Articles in earlier 'Panorama' of family connections/experiences re celebrations of battles in world wars, c l stories, have prompted some interesting articles being sent to the editor. Last issue saw some letters related to the 1812 Battle of Trafalgar being received. This issue (#34) reproduces excerpts from several letters relating to experiences by family members in the 2nd Boer War 1899-1902.

This connection comes via an uncle of one of our BTC Pioneers, Estelle Gould. Her uncle, Private Walter Pope, was one of hundreds of Australians who volunteered to fight for 'Queen and Country' in South Africa. This conflict was essentially a conflict between British colonists and independent Dutch Afrikaner settlers (aka Boers).

This war was officially the first war in which Australia as a nation was involved. (Australia became a Federation in 1901). Some 15 000 Australians were involved.

Estelle has forwarded copies of seven letters, transcribed from the originals sent home by her uncle Walter. They detail experiences of the trip across the Indian Ocean from Australia to Cape Town, in some early minor conflicts and impressions and reactions in major conflicts. An interesting comment from Estelle is that the letters were all "in a fine flowing copperplate, a credit to the teachers of the country schools where he received his education."

Reproduced below is part of Letter #4 dated March 11th 1900.

"Modder River is a horrible place, up to one's knees in dust. After seven days wretched camp at Modder River we proceeded to join Lord Robert's army about five miles on the road to Bloemfontein, capital of Orange Free State. (On the third day we had our first brush with the enemy We chased the Boers for about four hours, when they succeeded in leading us into an ambush. Only that the Boers were too anxious to fight and capture us we would certainly have been completely annihilated. As it was we were five hours lying in the boiling sun on an open plain with bullets dropping like hail all around us. The Boers were posted in an impregnable position on the kopje () and had us completely at their mercy simply through the rashness and incompetence of our officers. We had to wait until dusk before we could retreat."

A couple of days later nearer to Bloemfontein:

The Boers were very strongly posted with big guns in splendid positions. The battle lasted all day, and just at sunset we succeeded in driving them from their positions and chased them across the plain. (Many were on horseback). I cannot describe in writing what a great battle is like, unless one was there to see for oneself. The noise that the big shells make going through the air is most awe

inspiring and dreadful. It is an awful sight to see a shell burst over an army of some hundreds of men and blow half of them into eternity. The continuous roar of cannons and incessant rattle of musketry is ear splitting and the rain of lead is inconceivable. After the battle which was called Dryfontein, or some such name, we pushed on to Bloemfontein,

(Then on March 15th)

"We have at length arrived at Bloemfontein and captured it after half an hour's fighting. Bloemfontein is now in the hands of the British and the O.F. State has surrendered unconditionally."

The hardships we have gone through have been very trying, and for three weeks we have had nothing to eat but three hard biscuits a day, and now and again a drop of tea or coffee. On the march, especially when fighting our way, we are nearly always separated from transport for days together, consequently if we run short of biscuits we must starve until it comes up again. Hardship is not the name for what the troops have come through, for at intervals, our privations beggar description. Twice now we have been standing to our horses for 24-36 hours respectfully in terrible thunderstorms, and the rain teeming down in sheets. Of course, wet to the bone, and then march on without drying our clothes.

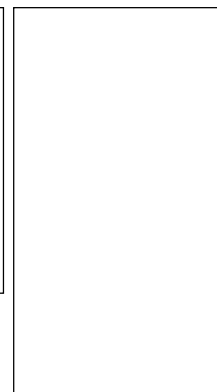
We had to stop where we fought once, and a bitter cold night it was. All we could do was just??... up our horses, put on our greatcoats, put our arms through our bridle reins, drop down on the ground and sleep as best we could. I have quite determined to stop away from soldiering if I get home again, for when we get 800-900 casualties in one engagement it makes a fellow very dubious."

Walter Pope did get home again. He was invalided home arriving 15th September 1900 suffering from rheumatic fever. In 1900 this was a long and debilitating illness and recovery was slow. Veterans of the Boer War were awarded a medal, Private Pope's medal has three bars: Cape Colony, Driefontein and Johannesburg (see below).

By 1906 Walter Pope was a policemen stationed at Sunny Corner near Bathurst and he married there. Ten years later after his wife died he left the police force and became a government valuer for the Bathurst district. He died in 1946 aged 68.



BOER WAR VETS.....
John Ross, Walter Pope, Alexander
Constantine



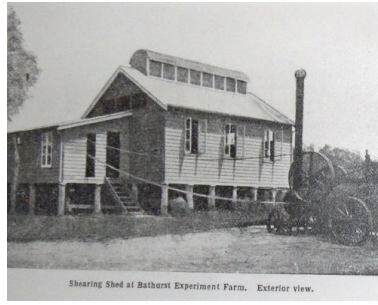
Medal with 3 bars

Note from Editor: These excerpts were chosen from many to show a number of aspects of conflict and war. There is an element of excitement in the early letters,

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astlereagh Boutique Hotel February 2018



jns / shearing shed built 1908 (still there)

