



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

TALKABOUT



Volume 11 No 2

July 2008

A DOUBLE WHAMMY

The first Talkabout of the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Association was issued in December 1997, the year of its formation. From the twenty five years and the twenty four graduation years of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College existence, over 3,800 teachers entered the N.S.W. Education Department.

When our Alumni Association was formed we had a mailing list of approximately 2,500 members who were invited to keep the spirit of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College alive by contributing to a fund to establish a perpetual scholarship and to contribute articles for publication in Talkabout.

Our mailing list has now increased to over 3,500 mainly due to the prodigious work of Ann Smith in tracking down those alumni who were lost.

As a result the Scholarship fund has this month reached our target of \$60,000 which will provide a perpetual WWTC Alumni Association scholarship. What a great effort!

Members have contributed a sufficient number of articles for Talkabout to flourish and it would seem that our members are pleased with the articles published as we continue to receive many letters and comments from members expressing the pleasure they derive from such articles and how they look forward to the next issue.

Many have said that they were reminded of some of their own experiences and were tempted to submit an article.

To continue the standard we have set we need more of your teaching memories, the humorous events, your learning experiences from your classroom, from your teacher/parent relationships, your departmental relationships. As teachers we, like our pupils, were on a learning plane, except that our years at school were a lifetime of learning as well as teaching.

Come on, let your hair down and entertain us with some of your experiences.

Another aspect — the double whammy bit.

What a dismal effort has been made to finance Talkabout. Of the 3,500 members who receive Talkabout, our books show that over the 10 years more than 60% have made no contribution to assist with the printing and postage of Talkabout. It is thanks to the less than 1000 regular contributors which has enabled us to keep going.

All we ask is \$10 per year to assist us with our, - no, your publication.

How about it!

UPCOMING REUNIONS

50 YEAR REUNION 1958-59 NOVEMBER 2008.

The 50th Year reunion for the 1958-59 session is proposed to be held in Canberra the first weekend in November. The 1957-58 and 1959-60 sessions are also invited to attend.

WHO:

Students of WWTC '57, '58, '59 and '60

WHERE:

Narrabundah Caravan Park, Canberra.

WHEN:

The first weekend in November.

Friday 31st October:

Registration and BBQ lunch at Weston Park.

Saturday 1st November:

Yacht Club on the Lake, fish and chips for lunch, Lake Cruise; catered dinner at Fay Collingridge's (Rowe's) daughter's coffee shop/restaurant

Sunday 2nd November:

Art Gallery, current exhibition, Picture Paradise, and the Members' Lounge (Lucy Jones now Denley is a member.) Lanyon and Calthorpe's house both have special exhibitions for Seniors.

Contact:

Mrs Caroline Baker

55 Thelma St.,

TOOWOON BAY NSW 2261

Ph & Fax: 02 4332 6107

Email: bakercaroline@hotmail.com

1957-58 REUNION

A reminder that the reunion for the 1957/8 session will be held in Wagga on 17th, 18th, 19th October 2008.

1955-56 REUNION OCTOBER 2008.

DATE: 18th October, 2008.

VENUE: Imperial Hotel, Mt Victoria.

FORMAT: Luncheon.

Contact: Peter Sparkes (1955-56)

ADVANCE NOTICE. MARCH 2010

There will be a reunion of the 1960-61 session on 11th, 12th and 13th March 2010.

The reunion will be held at Broulee, NSW South Coast.

In Memoriam

*Years go by, memories stay
As near and dear as yesterday.*

Donald Henry Hatch 49-50
Died 15th June 2008

Trixie June Rudder Grimston 55-56
Died 12th June 2008

Kevin Lyons Pioneer 1947-49
Died May 2008

Shirley Mary Bolam (Rolfe) 48-50
Died 1st May 2008

Herbert Thomas Hodges Pioneer
1947-49
Died 22nd January 2008

Jill Rowe (Venables) 49-50
Died 1st November 2007

COMING EVENTS

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The next quarterly meeting of the Alumni Association will be held at 11 am on:
Tuesday 12th August, 2008.

The meeting will be held at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club 24-28 John Street, Lidcombe.

WWTC ALUMNI LUNCHEONS

The next Alumni luncheon will be held in the Icons Restaurant in the Marriott Hotel Pitt Street Sydney (near the Quay) on Tuesday 19th August, 2008.

For bookings contact Lindsay Budd on 9601 3003 a week before.

CONTACTS

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LETTERS PAGE

There were three outstanding applicants this year so we were able to provide each with a Scholarship of \$2000.

The winners wrote to President Bob Collard.



Alicia McNab

Mr Bob Collard
President
WWTC Alumni Association

Dear Mr. Collard,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you, to thank you so very much for my recently awarded scholarship. Although evident I would like to express how remarkably admirable it is for a body, such as the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni to provide assistance to future teachers.

This contribution not only can be seen as an essential financial incentive for students it also demonstrates the faith and confidence you have in the Charles Sturt University pre-service teachers and soon to be teaching professionals.

It is imperative that organisations such as the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni continue their financial support to lessen the financial pressures of students completing their final year of tertiary education.

To be considered, in applying for financial assistance is in itself a credit, especially during my final year, nevertheless to be considered and awarded from such a strong field of applicants I can proudly say how very privileged I feel.

I would like to mention the relief it is to a student, such as myself, to be able to

accept such a generous contribution from such an inspiring organisation. Donations of this disposition reflect the dedication and confidence the trustees have in the future leaders of education.

As you are aware, I am in my final year of Primary Teaching and am eager to join the workforce. I have recently been notified of the location for my internship and it is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that the placement be at Ladysmith Primary School. I will endeavor to keep you updated throughout my final year at Charles Sturt.

Thank you once again for this opportunity and I look forward to updating you on my progress during 2008 and the future.

Yours sincerely,

Alicia McNab

Dear Mr. Collard,

I have much pleasure in writing you this letter of thanks in regards to your support as my sponsor for the 2008 Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Scholarship; the scholarship that I have been offered.

Thank you for this amazing opportunity, I accept this scholarship with pride. Receiving this will enable my last year of study to be more comfortable — especially throughout the duration of my internship where I wish to utilize the winnings of this scholarship.

I look forward to participating in the ceremony and being presented with the scholarship; as I look forward to keeping in touch with you and letting you know how my studies are going (they are going fine at the moment — few assignments here and there but they are looking good!), as well as after university; that's if you are interested.

Thank you once again for sponsoring me for this award, words cannot describe how I feel about winning this scholarship; I do know however that I am proud of myself and very grateful to the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni.

Thankyou,
Amy Worsfold



Sheree Chadderton

Dear Mr Collard,

My name is Sheree Chadderton and I am the extremely lucky and grateful lady you are sponsoring for the 2008 Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Scholarship. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you for this very generous scholarship. Words can not accurately express how much this scholarship means to me.

This scholarship has not only contributed to my financial stability but has also renewed my faith in my own abilities.

I also value this scholarship highly as it is a great motivator to help enhance my grades. Over my university years I have not held a credit grade average but for my final year I will do my utmost to improve my performance. I hope I do not disappoint you.

I love being a classroom teacher and I consider the teaching profession to be a challenging but rewarding occupation. I am looking forward to completing my degree so I can begin my teaching career.

Once again accept my thanks. My sincerest regards,

Sheree Chadderton

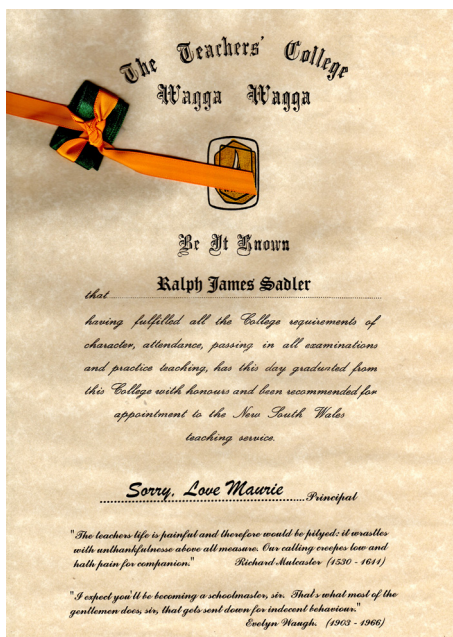
REUNION PAGE

THE LONG - AWAITED GRADUATION ALMOST COMPLETE

Keen readers of "Talkabout" would be aware of our determined efforts to grant the thirteen martyrs their graduation ceremony so foully denied them in 1961. The thirteen members of the 1960-61 cohort, Ken Eggleton, Mick Gow, Don Hammond, Billy Hauville, Ross Hosking, Kev Leys, Mark McCulla, Geoff Peters, Ralph Sadler, Allan Slater, John Tierney, Dick Winnett and Ray Writer were suspended from college for attending a private keg party after their final examinations. It did not matter that they were not breaking the law of the land, they did not misbehave after the party, their parents were denied a proud evening, their female friends were denied an escort to the ball and the vast majority of the lecturing staff counselled against the decision to suspension; out they went with great haste. The party was on the Friday, the decision to suspend was taken on the Sunday and the students left on the train Monday thus missing Wednesday's graduation ceremony.

So the belated graduation ceremony was held at Moruya on the South Coast on February 16 2005. Sadly Ken Eggleton and Don Hammond have passed away so from the surviving eleven revellers eight received their 'certificate' from Ray Petts, a Charles Sturt lecturer and a contemporary of The Thirteen. They also received a bottle of Charles Sturt

red as an ironic commentary on those ridiculous times of prohibition. Over 100 people witnessed the ceremony and had a wonderful time but all were keenly aware that Ralph Sadler, Mick Gow and Mark McCulla had missed their moment of closure.



Ralph and Mick were tracked down; the former had been damaged in a road accident on his way to the ceremony (fortunately, he and Jan have made a full recovery) and Mick Gow was in New Guinea. So this year, on March 13, these two worthies received their certificates

and bottle of Charles Sturt cab-sav. John Sutton, in an unaccustomed role as a sober principal of the 60's made a passionate 'sorry' speech that would have made Mr Rudd envious. We only had about fifty people this time but it was a glorious reunion over three days.

This leaves us with Mark McCulla. Mark had taken the trail to Canada in the seventies and is now a citizen of that fair land. He realises he deserves his time in the sun (literally and figuratively) and is determined to join us in March 2010.

This will be a significant time, not only for complete closure but for the 50th anniversary of the 60-61 group's arrival at WWTC. It demands a mother of all reunions. All who have been to one or both of the two reunions would attest to the tremendous satisfaction they experienced at discovering old friends and joining in some fun activities.

However, despite our best efforts to communicate and persuade, well over 100 of our friends from 60-61 have missed both gatherings. We feel their pain and we want to comfort them. So we have stepped up the organisation. Once again we thank Ann Smith and the "Talkabout" committee for their help and support but we are especially grateful for the services of Beth McLaren, a member of our 607 section and a librarian of note.

Beth has taken on the job of chasing and recording and has achieved wonderful results already. So any ex-student from the 59-60-61-62 cohorts or anyone with knowledge of any of those people should contact Beth at:

Beth McLaren
PO Box 904 Hornsby 2077
OR bmclaren@exemail.com.au

We are looking at the ides of March 2010. The hope is that with plenty of notice people can rearrange or postpone trips and trust that no new grandchild comes along at that time! For more information, please contact Beth or me hoskornj@acr.net.au.

Ross Hosking 1960-61)



Ralph Sadler being presented with a bottle of wine by Ray Petts (Maurie)

REUNION PAGE

KUMBU REVISITED



*Allen Roberts, Rob Foulcher, Col O'Grady, Barry Michell, Arthur King, Bill Bennett
Ray Fielder, John Goodger*

Mid-1950 fifteen male students were allocated to an ex-Airforce hut at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. Most had just left high school, but three or four had been in the wide world contemplating banking, the priesthood, or for a year or two, trying further studies. What a mix! And the hut was named 'Kumbu'!

Eighteen months passed quickly in one way, but in another way, so much happened in that time span that fourteen of them developed into conscientious, dedicated teachers who spent a lifetime in a profession where most of them rose to as high as they could go. But the amazing thing is that the friendships developed in those eighteen months have become stronger and stronger.

After 57 years, eight out of the original fourteen, attended a reunion on 8th and 9th April at Cessnock. Of those absent, Frank Meaney, Mick Rowlands, Frank O'Sullivan and Barry Cook are deceased, Athol Bergland is not well and Des Brady has revived a career in dairying.

It all started when Rob Foulcher and John Goodger were reminiscing early

this year and decided that we had better have a reunion 'before it's too late'. Rob took over the organisation and what a grand job he did! Accommodation was arranged at the Potters Brewery Resort, an excursion around the wineries and other places of interest in the Cessnock area proved a winner, but best of all were the two lavish meals at night.

No-one will remember the food, but all will remember the stories. The Tuesday's meal went for hours with many of those student pranks of 50-51 taking on unbelievable proportions. Five partners listened but didn't believe. How could these mature old men have ever done that?

John Goodger came from Room 1. Bill Bennett, Rob Foulcher and Col O'Grady had been in Room 2, Arthur King came from Room 3, Ray Fielder, Allan Roberts and Barry Michell were in Room 4, and those who were missing were remembered fondly.

Wednesday's meal was entirely different. Allen Roberts and Rob Foulcher performed an adaptation of

Gilbert and Sullivan. Barry Michell was in attendance, and for some, hadn't been seen for 57 years. Everyone was photographed.

For a period, the discussion left the pranks and the hard-to believe stories behind and the discussion became very serious. Some of the boys believed that they had discovered the answer to the poor grammar, spelling and literary skills of the modern teenager. The partners glanced at each other and secretly wished that their heroes could start their teaching all over again. What a difference they would make now!

Thursday morning was farewell time at Rob and Lorna Foulcher's home. Each person gave a summary of his illustrious career, Allan Roberts promised to circulate a copy of his book, Arthur King was presented with a complete set of Cuisenaire Rods, and after hugs and kisses all round the Great Kumbu Reunion was over.

Submitted by Arthur King (1950-51)

LETTERS PAGE

Ann found Peter Hamilton (1962-63) living in France. He sent her the following email:

Montpellier France.

Hello Ann,

Thanks for your letter, which reached me here in France last week. Much more than mere thanks, I would like to express my open-mouthed admiration and gratitude for all that you have done to stir, organise and 'enthuse' several generations of ex-WWTC people. And my hopes for a generous upturn in your health - long life and happiness to our glorious Research and Records Officer! The greatest digger since Billy Hughes ...

It was probably Keith Lambert who gave you my address but he hasn't contacted me. We went to Albury High together and shared a room at WWTC, and although we only stayed in touch for a few years after WWTC, he did run into my sister a few times more recently, tennis club?? P&T meeting??

I was shifted around a lot by the Dept. in the first couple of years, which probably triggered off walkabout tendencies of my own (but it's also true that during my 2 years in Wagga Wagga, I only dreamt of and waited for the day when I would finally get away from WWTC for good).

Which brings us without any further digressions, to the here and now of my life. I am living in the south of France, within the walls (mostly gone) of the old university town of Montpellier, near the beaches, surrounded by vineyards and enjoying the sunny Mediterranean climate. Since 1990 I have been teaching and lecturing locally at Paul Valéry University, though I am now, at 63, on the point of retirement. Negotiating!

We've been back to Australia a few times, and would like to coincide a future visit with a reunion or celebration of some kind, to meet my old friends and catch up on their lives. Because, although the institution, the ethos and administration, were, for me and many others, a kind of Gulag Down Under, we created together many great times, laughter, love and comradeship. As you know probably better than me, Ann.

Must go, keep in touch.

Cheers,

Peter Hamilton (1962-63)

Dear Editors,

I didn't fully explain my idea of bringing about individual reunions by the printing of names and addresses, it was put forward as a suggestion to see what others thought. I do understand the privacy factor, obviously only those who are interested in catching up with old collegians this way would OK the printing of their contact details.

The way I envisaged how these reunions could take place is in recreational travel. Even the more elderly of us would still be making the occasional car trip. How much more satisfying would the trip be with the knowledge that an old acquaintance lives along the way. The person would be advised of the impending visit with an enjoyable stroll down memory lane to follow.

Perhaps Talkabout could invite interest with the view to printing contact details either in Talkabout or on separate session lists. If there was interest, and depending on how much there would be extra work for Talkabout volunteers, that's why I said "sorry Talkabout staff".

While it was sad to read that Jill Rowe (Venables) is no longer with us it was nevertheless good to hear about David. Who can ever forget his bravura rendition of The Hot Canary.

Finally, reminiscences from scattered appointment are always interesting to read but I'm surprised that Talkabout isn't getting reminiscences from those who went out into the more remote areas, Roto for instance. Their experiences would make fascinating reading.

Barry Michell. (1950-51)
"Casuarina Grove"
Gunnedah.

Dear Lindsay,

I have just read the March Edition of "Talkabout". (We have just returned from a two-month touring holiday to northern South Australia, Northern Territory to Darwin and to western Queensland. Hence this late letter.)

In the Letters Page, p12, I noted in Barry Michell's letter (bottom of first column), that he mentioned George Blakemore's son and if anyone knew anything about him.

Warrick Blakemore married a second cousin, once removed, of mine - Virginia Hindle. They have two daughters, Elizabeth and Alexandra. I think he is either a lawyer or barrister. They live in Adelaide.

Virginia's mother is Mrs Elva Hindle who lives in Broken Hill. (She is now 87 and when I saw her a little over two years ago, she was quite active). I am sure that Elva would be able to give anyone Warrick's address. I do have another second cousin in Broken Hill who may be able to supply details if Elva cannot be contacted.

Perhaps another contact for Barry could be George's daughter, Elaine, who was in the same section (1956-

LETTERS PAGE

57) that I was in. I don't know her married name but Michelle Fawkes at the Alumni Office in Bathurst may have her details.

One of the memories I have of George.

He had a bad back and used to swim every morning in the city's Olympic Pool during the warmer months. Four or five of his students used to travel with him to train before breakfast. This training gave me the edge at the 1956 swimming carnival when I won the 50, 100, 200 and 400-metre races. After spending much of my early teaching in small schools in the country and away from pools, I have just returned to swimming over the last three years and now swim regularly in the new \$20 million pool complex at Wagga Wagga that contains two heated pools.

Hope this information is helpful.

Yours truly,

Bruce McAlister (1956-57)

Dear Lindsay,
Please find herewith my contribution towards costs for production of Talkabout.

I enjoy reading about many of the students who went through Wagga while I was on the staff there, and the stories they tell. I can still put a face to many of the names that come into print.

Last year I was able to renew friendship with one of my fellow lecturers from my years at Wagga TC and we have had many interesting reminiscences about students and staff. Other students have continued to make annual contact with me, and it is great to keep in touch.

Unfortunately my husband and I were travelling overseas at the time of the reunion, so I was not able to attend but I would like to pass on to all those who attended my very best wishes.

Thank you for all your hard work with the publication,

Yours sincerely,

Betty Robertson (Keech)
(lecturer 1958-62)

Dear Lindsay,
Please find enclosed cheque to cover the cost of printing and postage of Talkabout.

Both Kay and I enjoy reading the "reminiscences" of the "old days" many had to endure in their early years of teaching and current news of ex-WWTC'ers.

Both Kay and I are on Long Service Leave until August when we plan to retire (Kay AP at Tweed heads PS and myself AP at Pottsville Beach PS).

Regards,

Cliff Clothier (1968-69)

Dear Lindsay,
It is with great pleasure and a great deal of nostalgia that I read "Talkabout". I keep it and do quite a bit of re reading until the next one arrives. We have a group of 12 ex "Kabi" girls who meet annually and another smaller group of 5 who meet every two months and "Talkabout" is frequently discussed.

Thanks to the committee.

Elizabeth Morrow (1957-58)

Dear Lindsay,
Enclosed please find my cheque for contribution to Talkabout. I really enjoy receiving my copies throughout the year. It is most interesting to read what all those students from many years back have been doing. Keep up your great work.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Brady.
(former lecturer in Music)

Dear Lindsay,
Enclosed please find my contribution to Talkabout.

Many thanks to all those involved in the production of Talkabout. You have done a splendid job and brought much pleasure to all who attended Wagga Teachers College.

Congratulations.

Cathy O'Donnell (Smith 1947-49)

Dear Lindsay,
I enclose my cheque towards Talkabout.

I have so much appreciated the news of students and their careers and I trust that permanent records will be available for the future. It is encouraging to know that the links with Charles Sturt University are being strengthened through the planned changes. The concept of residential training all those years ago was indeed a wonderful one. Thanks again for all that you do.

Elaine Bridges.

(lecturer in Maths 1950-66)

Dear Lindsay,
Please find attached my cheque for contribution to the production of Talkabout. Also please note that I have recently moved to Tasmania.

I was forced to give up teaching due to hearing loss in 1984 after which I started helping my husband with the running of his motor dealership in Bega, NSW.

We sold the business and retired in November 2005 and have now moved to Tasmania to enjoy our retirement in this beautiful state. However I enjoy receiving Talkabout and reading about WWTC occasionally seeing a name I remember. Keep up the good work.

Regards,

Di Momsen (Shoobridge 1966-67)

TEACHING MEMORIES

A YEAR ON COOPLACURRIPA

Dave Benson (1962-63) in 1964 received his first appointment to the one teacher school at Cooplacurripa. He has written of his experiences in his first year at the school as a first year out teacher.

Although he retains the rights of all material he has kindly agreed to share his experiences with readers of Talkabout. Ed.

The following are my recollections of one year spent at Cooplacurripa. It was 1964 and I have written the account without reference to anyone else or any other documentation, so time may have distorted my recollections. Anyone who reads these recollections and can correct them is invited to contact me.

David Benson, Karuah, 2008

alcedo2@bigpond.com

PART 1

The Appointment

After working for Brambles Transport Company in Newcastle, NSW for a year in 1961 and attending the University of Newcastle at night, I became a trainee teacher. As an accountant I just hadn't made the grade and I'd failed to pass any of the University courses I attempted. Much of my time had been spent at the Cross Keys Hotel, Islington and I did become very proficient at playing pool.

At the beginning of 1962, I quit my job with Brambles and within a week was on the train to Wagga Wagga Teachers' College where I spent the rest of 1962 and 1963. The course I did was called Small Schools Preparation. I completed the course with a reasonable result and I did return to Newcastle Uni later and managed a pretty respectable result!

What happened in those days was that the NSW Department of Education paid for your training, but expected that you then work for them for three years. It still sounds like a pretty good scheme.

Anyway, we were "trained" to run a small school, usually less than twenty students. Some were two or three teacher schools, but all were in fairly remote areas and most would be

considered economically unviable by the Department today.

One of the big events for a young teacher was to find out where the Department was going to send you. Some time in January, a distinctive government envelope arrived. It informed me that I had been appointed to Comboyne East Public School. My family joined me in looking the place up on a map and found it west of Taree up the coast. That was fine.

Three days before I was due to go, another letter arrived cancelling the first appointment and sending me to Cooplacurripa Public School. Unfortunately, the name didn't appear on any map we had in the house and we had to go and get a very detailed map of NSW before we found the name Cooplacurripa on a dotted road between Mount George west of Wingham and Nowendoc well inland and on the road to Walcha.

The idea that I was going to go to this place and take charge of a school was pretty unnerving. I was totally unprepared in my mind for the task of running anything.

The little school building at Cooplacurripa was still there when I passed through a few years ago. Someone had made it into a weekender cabin. It stood on a small rise and had a view from the front verandah eastwards down the Cooplacurripa Valley. The Cooplacurripa River runs into the Manning River some way down stream and eventually makes its way into the Pacific Ocean at Manning Point. On the way it passes Wingham our nearest major town and Taree which is a city in its own right.

The mail also used to come from that direction and the arrival of the mail van was an event looked forward to everyone. In those days, it was usual for maybe six or seven vehicles to pass the school each day and every one brought conjecture or information forth from the kids. Sometimes I'd get a pretty detailed account of what cattle were on a truck or whose mum was going to do the shopping. Sometimes it was just a guess at what might be going on.

Below the school, the river narrowed to a small stream and it flowed through patches of dense undergrowth. There were a few clearings overhung by low trees and on the days when the temperature hit the 100 degrees Fahrenheit mark, we'd trail down there in the afternoon, take our shoes off and sit with our feet in the water and I'd simply read a story.

I inherited a school radio when I arrived, but it turned out to be real monster. For some reason it was powered by a car battery which was always going flat so I'd have to race out to my car with the clock counting down to Singing Together in order to take the battery out of the car and hook it up to the radio. Then the reception was intermittent because we were in the bottom of a valley surrounded by hills. One of the older boys would be holding the aerial wire out on the verandah and the rest would be complaining when he moved and reception dropped out.

Even though there was a power line running past the school, no one had ever thought to connect the school up. Lighting was with kerosene lamp and stencils were made and printed on the famous old spirit stencilling machine. I remember being mightily impressed and even jealous of the teacher at Nowendoc who'd worked out how to print spirit stencils in two different colours.

My greatest contribution to Cooplacurripa Public School was probably getting electricity attached to the building. It involved lengthy applications to the District Inspector, quotations from the mandatory three electricians. Just finding an electrician who knew where Cooplacurripa was was difficult enough! Finally though, we switched on and entered the twentieth century.



The School at Cooplacurripa

TEACHING MEMORIES

PART 2

Arriving

I'll always remember my first day at Cooplacurripa. My parents drove me from our home at Belmont, near Newcastle up the coast to Taree where we swung inland and headed for the large country town of Wingham. From there we headed further west through the string of houses at Mount George and then onto a bone-jarring gravel road up into the hills.

It was sixty miles along this track until we reached the front gate of Cooplacurripa. Another seventeen miles and we pulled into the long driveway leading up to the house. All the way it had been raining without stopping. The inside of the car was fogged up.

The house at Cooplacurripa was surrounded by ramshackled buildings. Beside the main house which was a large and presentable building was a bunkhouse with an L-shaped verandah and a path leading up to the kitchen which was attached to the main house. Down the drive was a barn and stable arrangement.

These were all shrouded in mist. When I opened the car door, I stepped into the midst of three or four large men wearing very long rain coats and cowboy hats. Mum and Dad drove off down the road with even more trepidation than I did I think.

I was given a room with Lenny the gardener, the least impressive looking and least cowboyish character there. The room was unlined and there were gaps between the planks. The window was to the side of my bed. Lenny obviously thought it more sheltered against the inside wall and he was right. Mid winter up in those hills turned out to be a bit of a challenge. However, he was against a paper-thin internal wall and on the other side of that wall was George Muddle, world champion snorer.

I slept surprisingly well that first night, but was rudely awakened next morning when the whole building began to shake as if there was an earthquake. I had been sleeping with my head close to the corner of the building and the agitation of the building seemed to be particularly intense where I was. I was disorientated

and there was an air of unreality about the episode. Lenny was awake and watching me with amusement. The building continued to shake violently.

Suddenly there was a stupendous farting noise and gust of fresh gas burst through the walls. The corner of the building had been made a tail rubbing post by one of the horses. The smell of gas filled the room.

"Does that every morning," snickered Lenny. "I'd advise you to sleep the other way round."

PART 3

Lenny the Butcher

What I didn't realise when I first arrived at Cooplacurripa was that I was unknowingly engaged in a sort of contract. My job was to teach at the school. My board was free. Food (more on this later) was provided. I also got use of the oldest Land Rover on the place, a saddle and bridle, the use of whatever horse I could catch and ride and hadn't been already claimed by someone else and a .22 rifle.

The .22 mystified me for a while until the hidden clause in the unspoken contract was revealed. The schoolie and the gardener were given the responsibility every fortnight of slaughtering and butchering a 'beast'.

It turned out that Lenny had been a butcher in an earlier life, so it fell to him to train his apprentice (me).

Lenny explained to me the process: Tie the beast up to a rail in the slaughter yard with its head high. Shoot the animal in the head at the point where there is a curl on its forehead.

Lenny demonstrated and the beast fell shuddering to ground. For a city kid, even one used to horses and animals, the shock was profound. It was made particularly difficult because as the "schoolie" and butt of every joke, all eyes were on me. Helped by the callowness of youth, I pretended non-concern.

Soon we were engaged in the serious business of butchering and before long the beast was reduced to slabs of meat. The butchering was attended by every dog on the property and they all stood

in circle waiting to dart in should a scrap be thrown their way. Fights broke out and some had to be kicked back into the pack.

The distribution of meat followed a ritual. The prime cuts went straight to the big house where they were frozen and refrigerated.

The rest of the meat went into a huge Coolgardie Safe. It was a room enclosed in hessian sacking and flyscreen. Water dripped onto the roof and made the inside cool, but not cold. So, we had fresh meat for about three days and then the cook corned just about everything left. It's only recently, more than forty years later that I have been able to genuinely enjoy corned beef.

For the rest of the fortnight, corned beef, damper and cow turnips formed a large part of our diet. Bread came up from town once a week and was replaced by damper when it ran out.

The Cook, a large well-meaning lady treated me to damper sandwiches of pickled tongue for my first school lunch. I was appalled when I peeled back the top slice of damper. At school, the children informed me that the last teacher used to throw the tongue down the schoolyard. They seemed to enjoy my reaction.

Real horror overtook me a few weeks later when Lenny said to me, "Now, you have a go!"

I followed instructions, aimed the .22 at the curl in the selected animal's forehead and pulled the trigger. Bedlam broke out. The steer broke the halter with which it had been tied and ran through the side of the fence. Lenny was phlegmatic as he watched the animal disappear up the home paddock. "It happens. We'll get him tomorrow."

I spent a fretful night and was up early next morning. A few hundred yards up the paddock, the steer was grazing with the mob and seemed none the worse for his experience. Lenny and I caught him and brought him back to the yard where Lenny delivered the coup de grace. Out of curiosity, Lenny dissected the brain and found the lead pellets, one fatal and one not.

(to be continued)

TEACHING MEMORIES

Ted Fowler Remembers

A large number of W.W.T.C. students, including myself, did National service at Holsworthy in early 1953 before commencing teaching. I was in the tank division but we only saw a tank once. I played a lot of tennis instead of soldiering.

My first appointment was to do relief work at Young, Harden, & Gilgandra (met Roy Parker nearby) before being sent to Weetaliba a small school near Coolah. Col Curtis gave

Next, I received a transfer to Yass where I met Sid Dean. Six months later a single lady who couldn't get accommodation in the rough town of Captain's Flat was sent to Yass and I had to take her place.

At 'The Flat' I met Ian Brewster, Elaine Hargreaves and Lorna Jermyn. Ian and I played table tennis at a typical old saloon. Both of us were in demand at local dances being young and eligible.

Once I travelled to Major's Creek where John Skene was teaching.

Commonwealth Public Service Trophy Competition. We won on several occasions.

In 1973 we joined the A.C.T. authority as we'd just built a new home. By 1978 I had become disgruntled with the system and took 6 months long service leave. I spent some time with Charlie Hollis, who coached many top Tennis players, including Rod Laver. From Charlie I learnt coaching skills, racquet stringing etc. We also took our first overseas trip to Asia at this time.

Later I worked in the independent system before buying a tennis complex in South Brisbane. Marie was able to obtain a position teaching music at Beenleigh State school. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I sold the business and was able to join the Queensland Education Department.

After ten years we bought a milk vending business at Byron Bay with a partner. After 3 years we returned to Brisbane where we did relief work before applying for a position in a tutorial centre in Singapore. Classes had a maximum of 8 pupils and lasted for 2 hours. We stayed 3 enjoyable years in which we travelled to many S.E Asian countries. Marie sang with the Singapore Symphony Choir and developed a love of choral music. Mike Gow also joined the firm in our last year.

Upon returning to Brisbane and having worked for 48 years we decided to retire to Burleigh on the Gold Coast where we have made many friends including Ed Keogh (a pioneer of WWTC.).

Recently met Les Noon who was house sitting here. Of course we still maintain contact with old mates e.g. Col Curtis & Gary Ryan and have enjoyed attending several re-unions.

Our health is not the best but we are still breathing and enjoying life.

Ted Fowler 1951-1952



Ted and the 1928 Willys

me a lift there and my first driving lesson. This was handy as the farmer I stayed with had an old 1928 Willys vehicle.

The first day I drove it, the brakes which were faulty, failed and the car slid into the first gate. Many years later I returned and the dent was still there in the gate.

On the second day I had to kill a large brown snake which was heading for the school building. It was placed on an ant heap – much to the children's delight. Schools were requested to beautify the school environs so we planted some flower and veggie seeds. They thrived until a huge grasshopper plague wiped out everything including the wheat fields in the area. Luckily the children were able to verify this for the inspector who had noted it in my journal - but of course no evidence.

About a year later a married woman decided to return to teaching and yours truly was shunted off to the Cooma district. I had a small school at Shannon's Flat. Teachers from the Snowy area used to go into Cooma on a Saturday for some social interaction. Here I met up with Margaret Parker and Kev. O'Callaghan.

A group of us including Gary Ryan went to Roy Parker's wedding at Balranald. We camped out in the open and had a fun filled time.

I asked to be transferred to Canberra and stayed for 25 years. I married Marie, (also a teacher) and had 5 children. Some teachers we met in A.C.T. were Val and John Rummery, Gretel Ayre, Ken English, Shirley Trent and Mike Gow.

The Teachers had a great tennis team which competed in the

25 STUDENTS

A first grade teacher had twenty-five students in her class and she presented each child in her class the first half of a well known proverb and asked them to come up with the remainder of the proverb.

It's hard to believe these were actually done by first graders. Their insight may surprise you. While reading these keep in mind that these are first graders, 6-year-olds, because the last one is classic!

1. Don't change horses.....until they stop running.
2. Strike while the.....bug is close.
3. It's always darkest before.....Daylight Saving Time.
4. Never underestimate the power of termites.
5. You can lead a horse to water but how?
6. Don't bite the hand thatlooks dirty.
7. No news isimpossible.
8. A miss is as good as a Mr.
9. You can't teach an old dog new math.
10. If you lie down with dogs! ,you'll stink in the morning.
11. Love all, trust me.
12. The pen is mightier than thepigs.
13. An idle mind is.....the best way to relax.
14. Where there's smoke there's pollution.
15. Happy the bride who.....gets all the presents.
16. A penny saved isnot much.
17. Two's company,three's the Musketeers.
18. Don't put off till tomorrow what you put on to go to bed.
19. Laugh and the whole world laughs with you, cry andyou have to blow your nose.
20. There are none so blind as! Stevie Wonder.
21. Children should be seen and not spanked or grounded.
22. If at first you don't succeedget new batteries.
23. You get out of something only what you see in the picture on the box.
24. When the blind lead the blind get out of the way.

And the WINNER and last one!

25. Better late than.....pregnant.

COMPUTER TERMS

BIT: A word used to describe computers, as in "Our son's computer cost quite a bit."

BOOT: What your friends give you because you spend too much time bragging about your computer skills.

BUG: What your eyes do after you stare at the tiny green computer screen for more than 15 minutes. Also: what computer magazine companies do to you after they get your name on their mailing list.

CHIPS: The fattening, non-nutritional food computer users eat to avoid having to leave their keyboards for meals.

COPY: What you have to do during school tests because you spend too much time at the computer and not enough time studying.

CURSOR: What you turn into when you can't get your computer to perform, as in "You \$#% computer!"

DISK: What goes out in your back after bending over a computer keyboard for seven hours at a clip.

DUMP: The place all your former hobbies wind up soon after you install your computer.

ERROR: What you made the first time you walked into a computer showroom to "just look."

EXPANSION UNIT: The new room you have to build on to your home to house your computer and all its peripherals.

FILE: What your secretary can now do to her nails six and a half hours a day, now that the computer does her day's work in 30 minutes.

FLOPPY: The condition of a constant computer user's stomach due to lack of exercise and a steady diet of junk food (see Chips").

HARDWARE: Tools, such as lawnmowers, rakes and other heavy equipment you haven't laid a finger on since getting your computer.

IBM: The kind of missile your family members and friends would like to drop on your computer so you'll pay attention to them again.

MENU: What you'll never see again after buying a computer because you'll be too poor to eat in a restaurant.

MONITOR: Often thought to be a word associated with computers, this word actually refers to those obnoxious kids who always want to see your hall pass at school.

PROGRAMS: Those things you used to look at on your television before you hooked your computer up to it.

RETURN: What lots of people do with their computers after only a week and a half.

TERMINAL: A place where you can find buses, trains and really good deals on hot computers.

WINDOW: What you heave the computer out of after you accidentally erase a program that took you three days to set up.

COLLEGE MEMORIES

ON STUFFING THE HOOTER

This article by Roger Clements appeared in an early edition of Talkabout.

It so effectively encapsulated the ethos of the lads of WWTC that we thought it deserved a re-run. Ed.

In Brief: a hooter was installed on the WWTC campus in the winter of 1950. A handful of students plugged it with papier-mâché.

The administration unplugged it and set it working again.

I recall a causative sense of outrage, the generally held distaste for the vulgar and the aggravation of incongruence. Here was a klaxon-type device in a blatant central position bolted high atop a telegraph pole. You'll remember that pole – half way along the path from the main gate to the gym and at the point of separation for those going to the men's dorms or to the women's. A pole strategically placed at the geographic centre of the campus; the pole that marked the trysting place ("under the light") of the students from both sides of the path. Unfortunately it was also the perfect pole to install an intrusive obscene hooter.

Its installation provoked immediate frowns and mumblings of derision. To be a student institutionalised and bonded was one thing but to be offended by the trappings of incarceration was quite another. A hooter to denote the timetable of the administrative expediences of reveille, meals, lectures and assemblies was an anachronistic leftover from the previous decade's concentration camps. The rustic ambience of our college was being fouled under our very sensitive early-adult noses.

The incessant cajolery in Talkabout against the insidiousness of student apathy must have struck home, for a war party of zealots from the male section of the student body met to fly in the face of lassitude.

And although the memory of ageing alumni is notoriously fuzzy, the silver details of that meeting remain untarnished. The insurgents talked about the efficacy of a good stuffing — what items in our cultural property deserve to

be well and truly stuffed — like olives, Christmas turkeys, a few lecturers, most administrators, and especially, all hooters.

But hooter is the wrong term for that obscenity. It did not hoot. Tugboats on foggy estuaries hoot for the purposes of well-being and with the dignified resonance of respect. The campus hooter belched like a klaxon on a vintage automobile whereby a rubber ball on the narrow end of a sound tunnel is squeezed and a self righteous spasm of atonality is emitted. Its purpose is to arrogantly bestow on itself the eternal right of passage.

Furthermore that hooter's emission was neither spasm nor wail nor call-to-arms nor "thing of beauty or a joy forever!"

It was an obscenity without a rhythm and without a pitch, disgustingly electronic without a vibrato, only a long, long plank of toneless severity. Proof enough for the decision makers to be presented with the rewards of the olive and the festive fowl and for the saboteurs to get on with it.

It was one of those foggy (June/July) nights where you can only guess where the moon is — good for gaol escapees, petty burglars and foxes in the chicken yard. At well past one o'clock we met in Hut 9's common room and prepared papier-mâché (a la Norm Donnison's puppet recipe) from newspaper and starch paste heated in a billy with the ubiquitous immersion heater. The alum was omitted in the belief that any critter that climbed high up a vertical pole, dodging electric wires in a search for starch in a long funnel was more than welcome to it.

We didn't wear balaclavas or even streak our faces with soot but we did pay homage to the muse of subversion by wearing dark clothes. Then forward through the shadows to Mrs Whittaker's quarters where an extension ladder lay in the crawl space under the floor. Thence to the pole with its demon exposed and vulnerable.

Just when the ladder was extended and resting below the hooter it became obvious that the actual stuffer had not been appointed. In the ensuing whispering it was revealed that everyone

was either nursing a football injury, gym sprain or an agonising fear of heights, — but was a gifted ladder holder.

So it was by default that the seemingly least afflicted and least convincing got the climbing job.

It was then a matter of going up into the haze, imploring the others to hold the ladder steady, swinging a billy of stuffing with a priming stick, and worrying about the voltage in close wires and the proximity of the Principal's residence. Anyway the job was done, the procedures were reversed, the evidence disposed of and off smirking to bed.

I was surprised how little papier-mâché a hooter holds. Mind you there wasn't too much that could be detected from the ground but just enough to mute the sound.

The next morning brought more than ample reward. Instead of the extended *blatt* of invasive vulgarity came the gentle purring of a replete and very contented cat. You almost had to be directly underneath it to hear it.

For us the administrative response was a source of utmost equal joy. A length of barbed wire was wound around the pole about nine feet from the ground and extending five feet upwards. The ladder was not suspected and was left unfettered in full view under the same house. We had obviously been accorded physical skills that none of us pretended to, and no questions were asked about our whereabouts that night either. However the hooter was cleaned out and put back on the payroll but it didn't quite sound the same again. It had lost its self-respect and coexistence.

Inevitably the hooter-stuffers went their separate ways and some of us have not met again since but the magic of past relationships is not in the accuracy of recall but in the attitudes that are left behind. Of great comfort in looking back is the residue of the warmth and companionship and good fellowship. We undertook a prank that was popular for the right reasons. It incurred no personal insult and damaged no property. It's still a giggle!

Roger Clements (1949-50)

LETTERS PAGE

**From Diane Elizabeth Grube
(nee Webster) 1961- 1962**

Scappoose,
Oregon, 97056

Dear Lindsay and Lew,
This letter contains my thanks for the March '08 "Talkabout" and a check for \$50.00 to cover the cost of postage. I have been slack in following up with payments.
Sorry, now I am caught up.



Diane Grube

In this issue I particularly enjoyed reading the 50th anniversary of Mungoola Public School reunion. It was lovely to hear how deep the friendships run.

In particular I truly appreciated reading Beverly Irving's (nee Grieg 56-57) report on her teaching memories of her first teaching appointment to Broken Hill.

That was the city where I grew up , attending Morgan, a lower primary, then North Girls School and first year Broken Hill high, then our family moved to the coast near Wollongong to be near grandparents.

I applied to Broken Hill to do country service teaching after graduating from Wagga Wagga. I was glad to get the appointment at Alma Public School - the school my father went to as a child. The three years there were wonderful.

I now am far away from my roots but the memories live on strong in my mind and heart especially when I read the "Talkabout". The space of time and distance highlight the value of what has

gone before. I feel a rich sense of history. Thank you for attending to this important collective telling of our stories. Love it.



Petrina Grube

At this moment I am feeling a great sense of pride after celebrating my daughter's recent accomplishment of gaining her Masters in teaching language. Of course she is the 21st Century electronic student who does every thing on computer. She does not have to laboriously hand write all her essays and reports as we did. She just graduated from the University of San Francisco. We are very happy for her achievement . Just thought you would like to know the teaching tradition is ongoing.

Now, I wish you well. Thank you to all the staff for keeping the relationships of our days fresh in our minds through "Talkabout" publications and emails. I look forward to further stories that inspire my mind and heart.

Thank you again.

Diane Grube (1961-62)

A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Kevin Lyons 1947-49

Dear Lindsay,

I have enclosed an obituary for Kev. His passing was quite sudden as he was in Calvary Hospital, Wagga, about to have hip surgery when he was diagnosed with lung cancer, (he was a non-smoker), and then 24 hours later after a seizure they found that he had multiple brain tumours. Mercifully he lived just one week after his diagnosis.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to write his story and thank you to all of you who are responsible for bringing Talkabout to us.

Kind regards,

Gloria Ryan (1954-55)

Kevin's sister.

Kevin was born in Tumbarumba 29.11.1929. He was educated in Tumbarumba and at Wagga High School. In 1947 he became one of the Pioneers at WWTC. The photos which he still had tell us of a great two years at the College.

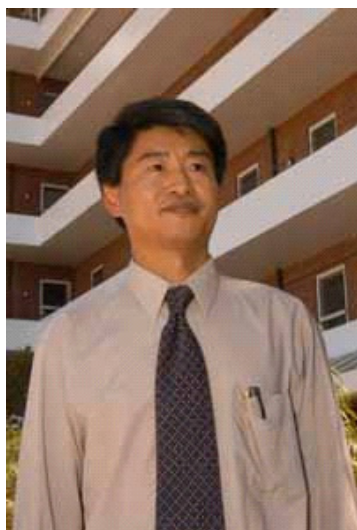
Kev's first teaching appointment was to Tumut and then as Teacher in Charge to Widgewa, Deputy Principal at Griffith, Principal at Curtin, and finally as Principal at Tolland (Wagga).

Kevin retired to Tumbarumba some 23 years ago. In retirement he cared for our mum, was a staunch member of the Masonic Lodge, made it to State Pennants for bowls and was for many years Treasurer of the Tumbarumba Turf Club.

Kevin passed away at the Calvary Hospital, Wagga after a short illness. He was part of a large and loving family and will be sadly missed. I must mention that he loved receiving his Talkabout and we had many discussions about the stories and names therein.

NEWS FROM CSU

In defence of the heart



Researchers from Australia and China have uncovered a new and potentially vital therapeutic role for folic acid in protecting the heart muscle from the onslaught of high glucose levels experienced by diabetics.

The team from Charles Sturt University (CSU) in Australia and China's Guangzhou Red Cross Hospital and Taishan

Medical College conducted experimental trials on diabetic rats and found that the use of folic acid can significantly reduce the rate of cardiac cell death.

"The study in a diabetic animal model showed that dietary folic acid supplementation for 11 weeks will substantially diminish the rate of cardiac cell death," said Professor Lexin Wang from CSU. "The study also found that folic acid enhances the expression of cell-death-prevention genes and suppresses cell-death-inducing genes in heart muscles."

"This study is the first of this kind in the world and such a therapeutic role of folic acid has never been reported," said Professor Wang from the School of Biomedical Sciences in Wagga Wagga.

The study was recently published in the prestigious international journal, *Cardiovascular Drugs and Therapy*.

"These are extremely exciting discoveries because for a very long time we did not have much of success in steering the heart away from the insult of high levels of blood glucose, in particular in the early stages of the cardiovascular disease process.

"Now with a short course of folic acid treatment, we see a clear cut reduction in the death rates of cardiac cells. More importantly, the biology of the surviving cardiac cells is also improved, making these cells and muscles more resistant to future injuries from diabetes."

Diabetes is one of the most important risk factors for cardiovascular disease in Australia and internationally. In patients with diabetes, there is an increased risk of heart failure largely due to the development of diabetic heart muscle disease or diabetic cardiomyopathy.

Up to a third of the cardiac cells can be destroyed or damaged as a result of high blood glucose levels experienced by diabetics.

"Therefore the development of new preventative strategies for cardiac muscle injuries in diabetics is extremely important in terms of reducing the overall cardiac complications and improving the clinical outcomes for patients," said Professor Wang.

Can this novel research be translated to bedside patient care?

"Only time will tell. Given the sheer scale of diabetes as a preventable disease in all societies, in particular in fast growing countries like China and India, I think a large clinical trial on the clinical efficacy of folic acid is warranted," said Professor Wang.

"We may just end up with a big winner."

Professor Wang lectures in the University's School of Biomedical Sciences based in Wagga Wagga and is head of CSU's multi-campus [Cardiovascular Research Group](#).

He holds an Honorary Professor of Cardiology at the Liaocheng People's Hospital (LPH), a Clinical School of Taishan Medical College in Shandong Province, China. Professor Wang currently directs the CSU-LPH Cardiovascular Research Centre.

WWTC Alumni Scholarship Fund

Congratulations to WWTC Alumni

Charles Sturt University would like to congratulate the WWTC Alumni on reaching their target of \$60,000 for the WWTC Alumni Scholarship.

This project began in August 1997 with a \$100 donation from the Association. Eleven years later following some 1914 donations, ranging in size from just \$2.50 to \$1,500, you have reached your goal.

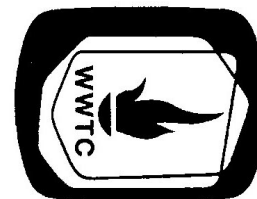
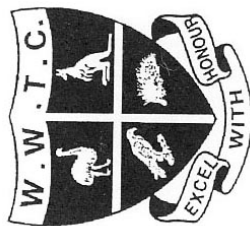
The total now stands at \$60,811.20.

The Scholarship Fund will be capped at \$60,000 which will provide \$6,000 per year for allocation to Scholarships. All monies over this amount will be redirected towards the Association's new fundraising project.

While this is still to be decided, DON'T STOP DONATING as the new project will be a much larger project with a much larger target.

Keep the good work going!

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