

A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS

TALK ABOUT



Volume 23, No 3

December 2020



Snippets from 2017 Dinner

From the President - Bruce Forbes

Kids and relatives living in another state. Can not and did not cross the border. Have not seen the progeny since Christmas. Drank some wine. Did not do the grey nomad trip. Booked a trip to overseas and now on hold. Lost my deposit. Read a few books. Drank some more red and found some white wine. Watched a few movies. Made a mask. Experimented in cooking. Drank some more wine. Withstood the supermarket rush for loo paper. Discovered virtual correspondence in "Whats App." Helped the grand kids with their schoolwork by phone. Drank some more wine. marvelled at Mr. Trump's stupidity. State of Origin

took on a new form with Gladys and Anna. Did not go to a pub, club or a restaurant. Ordered more wine. Looked at real estate in a country town. Visited an outback town. Got involved in Facebook to a greater extent. Did a few more crosswords and jigsaws. Enjoyed that extra glass of wine. Now living in a bubble. But are we doing it tough? Do we need counselling? It is just lucky we have wine. All we need now is a growth in national independence and get back what we had allowed to slide away in the process of globalisation. There should be more wine available! Resilience comes to the fore. Lucky we went to WWTC where we could not drink wine!



And my golf game has improved!

Across the Secretary's Desk - Lesley Forbes



Hello, I am writing to inform you that sadly **Kerry (Sherwood 1957-58)** passed away on 2nd January 2019 at Beaudesert Hospital. Sorry to break this news to you. Regards, Alan Twomey.

Yvonne Stapleton (Leah 1965-66)

Once again a fabulous edition. Thank you again for your dedication to WWTCAA and *Talkabout*. So great to see some familiar names and scenes from my WWTC era again, 65-66. I did my last prac on Allan Petersen's class at Turvey Park Dem School.

Ella Keesing (Redpath 1950-51)

Thank you for the newsy *Talkabout* edition and thank you for publishing my contributions. I had totally forgotten I had written those articles! It all seems so long ago that I had a flight to Sydney and enjoyed my colleagues' company. Victoria is in a sad position with virus infections. As an oldie I am managing quite well but I really feel sorry for the younger members out of work and plans upset. The reports of the Scholarship recipients are timely. One of my granddaughters finished her BA at Monash Uni last year and decided to take a year off before doing her Honours year. She had been accepted to staff for a Camp America, had all her injections, clearances and visas etc only for her

plan to come "unstuck". We're so pleased she is not in the US at the moment, of course.

I had an article published in the Canberra Historical Society Newsletter and the Editor asked me if I would write another article about my memories of World War II and compare it to the current crisis. I replied that lots would be written about that but after I thought about it, I suggested that if she were interested I would perhaps write, comparing my memories as a 13 year old when WWII ended, (I had just starting secondary school and learning Japanese, unusual in 1945) with my youngest granddaughter who has just turned 13, had just started secondary school (now home schooling again) and is learning Japanese. I finished up writing a lot but if you are interested at all for *Talkabout* perhaps I could do a precis.

WWTC Pioneer: 1947 - 1949

Joan Thomson (nee Smith)

24/03/1930 - 05/02/20

Joan began her teaching career in 2nd term, 1949 at the Migrant Camp School outside of Cowra. Whilst there she developed Yellow Jaundice (now known as Hepatitis) and at the end of the year asked the Department for a transfer. They obliged by transferring her to Adamina, at that time a remote and isolated place. Joan did two years there before being moved to Clovelly Infants in 1952. Following her marriage to Allan at the end of that year, she taught at Pelaw Main PS '53 & '54. It was her decision to be a Home Mum and she resigned from the Department to start a family in 1955.

It was in 1969, when her husband accepted an appointment in Papua New Guinea, that Joan returned to teaching and continued upon their return to Australia in 1971. She taught at Lake South PS and finished her career as Assistant Principal at Albion Park PS at the end of 1984, retiring to care for her elderly mum.

Joan and her husband enjoyed a long and fulfilling retirement, a very

happy 67 years of marriage and a great family before Joan passed away in February of this year following a few weeks in hospital.

Her husband, their four children, 13 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren, numerous relatives and friends attended a celebration of Joan's life, bidding farewell to a much loved, wonderful person.

Allan Thomson

Gerard Say

Thank you very much for the latest *Talkabout*.

As the editor of many journals in my teaching career, Church life and in Rotary, I am very aware of the tremendous effort demanded to produce an interesting publication that does full justice to the experiences of thousands of different Members who made up each organisation.

Now that our WWTC, the ex-RAAF hospital plus additions, has been absolutely erased, it will be up to *Talkabout* and its contributors to provide a more permanent record while our memories are still sparking.

Wishing you both good health and every success in your endeavours.

John (aka "Jim" at WWTC)(1954-55) and Vera Carolan, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Thanks for the email and thanks for again putting out a new edition of the *Talkabout*. It is always a pleasure to receive and I print out a copy as soon as it arrives. The colour photos of the Demolition of the South Campus came out very well and brought back memories of our last visit in October 2017. On that visit we stayed at the "Quality Hotel Rules Club" (like new) which is very close to the South Campus. We spent quite a bit of time touring the ground on our own before the 'Official Reunion Visit' on the Saturday. The hotel is next to the Wagga Aussie Rules Club that we had visited for meals on a couple of other visits to Wagga. (My niece and her husband used to live fairly close to the Aussie Rules Club - since the renovations it now looks like new.

The food there is very good. (During my time in Canada we have visited Narrandera on seven occasions.) Bruce you are a poet. I don't know if you were an English teacher or not, but we did enjoy the adaption you did to the "Veteran Golfer" poem. It is very good (and true!) I have not played golf for quite some time, but a couple of my friends still play - my sister-in-law Fran, is 87 years old and still played a good game (last year). With regards to sending down an item for the *Talkabout*, you have given me an idea. I will work on it soon and see what comes of it.

All are well here. Our travel plans are on hold because of the Virus. My sister, Maureen, in Narrandera passed away on May, 2020, so it is not likely we will visit Narrandera again. We were fortunate that we did six long cruises (14 to 28 days) when it was safe; not so any more. We hope that you and Lesley are still in good health and able to avoid the virus. Lesley that is a massive task that you undertake to produce the *Talkabout*. Thanks for doing so; you probably have a good helper in Bruce,

A note from **Barbara Barnes (Smith 60-61)** who resides in Temora that owing to on-going health issues, she does not wish to continue on the mailing list. She has appreciated the Association's efforts in maintaining connections with its members and has over the years enjoyed *Talkabout*. We wish her well in her health concerns.

A jolly note from **Bob Muir (1952-53)** Like all my contemporaries who are still about, I am finding it increasingly difficult to keep the years at bay. Now that my first task each morning is to put my teeth in, adjust my hearing aids and clean my glasses, I am beginning to concede that, perhaps, I am losing the battle. Nevertheless, ever the optimist, I have just purchased a new farm buggy and started another pup.

I intend to get at least ten years out of both!

From our devoted pioneer couple, **Winifred (Walshaw) and Kevin Wilcox (1947-49)**, a beautifully written letter. Who would know Winifred

was of that age? She says the photographs of the old College in *Talkabout* were pleasant for them and they enjoyed seeing photographs of Chris and Jenny and us as they have enjoyed our company. Since early March they have been in lockdown in their home. She says the virus is a sinister, unpredictable disturbance in all our lives. They have only left the house for medical appointments that can't be dealt with by telephone. They have allowed themselves one haircut. Their son, Matthew, drives them for medical appointments and does their shopping. Their son, Nathan, comes down from the Blue Mountains when he can. He is retiring in October. They look forward to when we can hold meetings again, and depending on snail mail, are grateful that we keep them in touch through *Talkabout* and other mailings.

Jennifer Brack (Snodgrass 1950-51) says due to bushfires, floods, bronchitis, lockdown, a couple of things have changed in her nice life. She can't live on her own anymore and is grateful that her 'beautiful daughter has taken me into her home'. After a stint in hospital, her heart specialist said he didn't want her to drive anymore. She misses her car more than her house.

From **Desmond Handsaker, (1948-50)** letting me know that S. B. Robinson, who entered WWTC in May 1948 from Junee, passed away on 4 September 2020. Doing their Leaving at Junee High School in 1947 were Helen Kemp, Bruce Robinson, Des, Bonnie B and R Pickles from 9 pupils in the year. Bruce excelled at Exams at College, first in Year 1 and second in Year 2 amongst 150 students. He was a top teacher who reached promotion very early in his career. He started in Sydney, became Deputy at Armidale Demonstration School and Principal at Coolah.

With two failed marriages, on the marriage front, he was not so successful. Des found him to be a loy-

al and true friend for all those years. His last few years were spent at Bexley on his own, dependent on using oxygen with a distressing lung illness.

And a different point of view from **Barry Michell (1950-51)** on Allan Petersen's article in August's *Talkabout*:

Allan Petersen's letter defending teacher training programs against criticism comes with a touch of mortified indignation that such criticisms could be made. Sorry Allan but you're in delusion.

Teacher training courses were totally inadequate in preparing teachers for the difficult task of developing satisfactory English standards particularly in large class sizes, often composite and always with a wide range of English standards. Teaching skills did not come from the College; they came from actually teaching and those teaching skills that did develop whole class literacy levels, developed only after many years of frustration at the enormity of the challenge.

And while those skills were developing, many children passed through the system without appropriate English skills. And still do.

Neville Keeley (1969-71)... (from *FaceBook WWTC site*) **Peter Quinell** was appointed to Pooncarie as his first school. Sadly Peter left us last week.

(In reply to my message that I had played tennis at Pooncarie in 1968) You've been to Pooncarie Lesley Forbes? Another WWTC mate who started as "Teacher-in-charge" was Brian Pettit. Now deceased. BJ went to WEILMORINGLE in northern NSW. BJ actually had to help build his school, and opened it with hardly any supplies. It is an Aboriginal community and towards the end of his year, most of the eligible students were attending the school. Brian wrote a number of novels, the first of these was "The Weilmoringle Kid", a story about his time at the school.

And to one and all, as we enjoy the approach of summer and the festive season, keep well, happy and enjoy your newfound freedom with many restrictions being lifted after much Australian success in resisting COVID outbreaks.

The Old Bush School.....

myths and legends from a by-gone era.

Col Kohlhagen (1960-61)

What do one-room bush schools and Regent Honeyeaters have in common. (There's an answer at the end.)

When the July WWTCAA Committee Meeting was cancelled and our President appealed to Committee Members for *Talkabout* contributions, I responded by knocking together these few bits of trivia to help fill some space. It gave me another opportunity to revisit my fascination with that wonderful educational icon, the small rural school.

In an article I contributed in November 2015, I explained the origin of my affection for the small one-teacher school: both my parents received all their education in such schools. The first school I attended, Brucedale, was one and my first appointment, Coats Tank, was another one. Therefore, I feel have a reasonable grasp of the concept and this time I'm attempting to plot their rise and fall.

For many years, and certainly before December 1997 when the Alumni version of *Talkabout* first appeared, the best and most humorous accounts of how one-teacher schools operated down through the decades were recorded in two books written by Mary McPherson, a long-time researcher at the Department of Education History Branch, when it still existed, namely:

- *Telling Tales Out of School*
- *It Happened at School*

Over the years, a fairly common theme in articles published in the Alumni version of *Talkabout* beginning in 1997, has been the young teacher's first appointment as Teacher-in-Charge of some school, far distant from both home and previous life experiences. Our own *Talkabout* now has

a fabulous archive full of such trials and adventures to rival those collected by Mary McPherson, and all of them are first-hand accounts which cover the period from 1950 to the early seventies. Have you submitted your first appointment story? If not, I urge you to do so!!

I recently re-discovered a strong link between the small bush school, and another bush icon, the Travelling Stock Reserve. This happened while using old parish maps, many dating from the 1880s, to plot the exact location of some Travelling Stock Reserves north of the Goulburn-Crookwell road. This research was part of a project involving members of a BirdLife Australia branch to which I belong. Our branch was "adopting" these TSRs to highlight their biodiversity and recreational value, and as we discovered, their interesting history, which in many cases was linked to small bush schools. TSRs were a vital part of the agricultural infrastructure which serviced most mixed farming districts of New South Wales prior to the spread of branch lines and later, reliable road transport.

A series of Closer Settlement Acts beginning in the 1860s saw large areas of pastoral lease-hold land gradually broken up into small free-hold family farms with some Crown Land Reserves set aside for public use, including the above-mentioned Travelling Stock Reserves. Almost simultaneously, the first of several Public School Acts was passed in 1866 to begin the task of bringing denominational schools under government control while also providing additional public education opportunities for newly created and

isolated rural communities. These pockets of population were springing up all over New South Wales as a consequence of the raft of Closer Settlement Acts mentioned above. A basic stand-alone school building was often the first and only government-funded building to appear in any of these isolated mixed-farming localities.

Our perusal of the early parish maps in the Counties of Argyle and Georgiana where the BirdLife project was centred showed that by the end of the nineteenth century there was a definite link between Travelling Stock Reserves and sites of small schools. Nearly all the 18 TSRs in our BirdLife project were on or near Crown Reserves where small schools had also operated, some for only a short period. I am confident that the same link exists across the rest of the state. It certainly was the case at the first school I attended. Brucedale was opened in 1872 on a Crown Reserve, a few kilometres north of Wagga Wagga on the Junee Road, and eventually shared the site with a church, a public hall, tennis courts and a travelling stock reserve.

As we traversed the Laggan-Taralga district on birdwatching expeditions we came across two fine examples of old single-room stand-alone school buildings which, while no longer operational, are still standing. This sent me down the path of some further research and a visit to the State Archives.

The Golspie School opened in 1872 and the Burra Lake School, nine years later. They ended their operational lives in buildings of identical design, but were built two decades apart and from different materials, brick and stone in the former case, and weatherboard in the latter case. Golspie closed in 1948 and its sister school, Burra Lake, in 1955.



Golspie (1872-1948) and Burra Lake (1881-1955) Schools north-west of Taralga

Little is known about the type of building in which many other Taralga-Laggan district schools functioned, but school records held at the Kingswood Archives suggest they were often isolated and primitive, as described by Australian poets, Henry Lawson, *The Old Bark School* (1897) and John O'Brien, *The Old Bush School* (1921), from which these well-known lines are taken:

*"There I trudged it from the Three-mile,
like a patient, toiling brute,*

*With a stocking round my ankle, and my
heart within my boot,*

*Morgan, Nell and Michael Joseph, Jim
and Mary, Kate and Mart*

*Tramping down the sheep-track with
me, little rebels at the heart;*

*Shivery grasses round about us nodding
bonnets in the breeze,*

*Happy Jacks and Twelve Apostles hurdle
-racing up the trees,*

*Peewees calling from the gullies, living
wonders in the pool -*

*Hard bare seats and drab gray hum-
drum at the old bush school..."*

At the time of peak demand for new educational facilities, a school was usually established to serve a farming community if there was a sufficient number of children living within walking distance of the proposed school site. The threshold number was originally set at 25 but was gradually reduced to 12. As a rule of thumb, the radius of a school's

drawing area was roughly 6km. Rural kids often took a "cross country" route to school, especially if made-roads and/or the obligatory farm pony were not available.

When the Pioneer Cohort arrived at the Wagga Wagga Teachers College in 1947, the one-teacher school was still alive and well. Figures quoted in the Centenary of Education publication *Sydney and the Bush*, state there were 1,650 one-teacher schools still functioning in 1945, having fallen from 2,100 in 1910. The jury is out on just how well we were prepared, or prepared ourselves, for the challenges of being a Teacher-in-Charge. There was always a myriad of unforeseen problems, many unique to the bush school environment. They arose both inside the school room and in the community it served. One of the WWTC Pioneers, Peter Debenham, writing in the July, 2011 *Talkabout* recalled that the small school lecturer, Norm Donnison, himself a former Teacher-in-Charge, advised his soon-to-graduate students that ,

*"to survive in a One-Teacher School ,
you have to be able to play tennis, play
a good hand of euchre and it would
help if you could fight".*

Mercifully, he was describing the worst-case scenario, and fortunately not many of us were regularly called upon to use that complete set of skills to survive and prosper. From Pioneers such as Ian Thomas at Hardys Mill and Kevin Wilcox at Kangiara, all the way through to the Enders such as George Manojlovic at

Gidgell, Neil Smith at Cooplacurripa and Murray Townsend at Morundah, Wagga Wagga Teachers College graduates did their bit for the bush!! How many of you can name the Post Office nearest to each of those former schools?

The sixties was the decade when the farming rationalisation process began to bite into the provision of neighbourhood schools and their numbers steadily declined in many country districts. Figures listed in *Sydney and the Bush*, suggest that 1,200 one-teacher schools disappeared between 1950 and 1980.

At various times all the one-teacher schools listed below operated within a radius of 30 kilometres from Wagga Wagga, and this would have been a fairly typical distribution of resources across the state.

Of the 30 one-teacher schools listed below, 18 were still open in 1960 when my cohort arrived at WWTC. Within twenty years, only one of these was still open.

Opened Closed School

1872	1967	Brucedale
1873	1969	Eunonyhareenha
1878	1952	Rowan
1878	1959	Yarragundry
1878	1970	Downside
1879	1882	Bomen
1880	1936	Yathella

1882	1884	Wallacetown
1882	1920	Oura
1882	1968	Malebo
1886	1893	Moorong
1887	1966	Millwood
1888	1969	Gregadoo
1888	1978	Harefield
1895	1913	Connorton
1898	1930	Collingullie South
1899	1971	Experiment Farm
1901	1965	Coreinbob
1902	1969	Pearson
1909	1956	Flowerdale
1910	1933	Tooles Creek
1911	1972	Euberta
1915	1969	Plahgoman
1916	1970	Borambola
1918	1947	Dhulura
1919	1970	Oura
1924	1987	Book Book
1929	1971	Coursing Park
1937	1967	Belfrayden
1953	1980	Livingstone

It is difficult to ascertain the exact figures as some one-teacher schools operated as either subsidised or provisional schools, which were stepping-stones towards having sufficient students for a school to be classified as a fully funded one-teacher Public School. For example, as late as 1939, there were still 682 schools classified as "provisional" and another as 18 "half-time" out of a total of 2,735 schools.

Fortunately, by the time the WWTC Graduates from the 69-71 Enders Session, were well into their careers, a level of staffing support and resourcing undreamed of by

the Pioneer Session was beginning to make an impact on the character of any small bush schools that were still operating.

As we left the twentieth century behind us, Teacher-in-Charge disappeared from the departmental terminology and was replaced by Principal of a Class Six School. However, while the former teaching role/title has faded away and the number of small schools has shrunk drastically, the memories of the highs and lows of being a newly graduated WWTC Teacher-in-Charge are now preserved to be marvelled at by fu-

ture generations who have the time and the inclination to google <https://alumni.csu.edu/get-involved/publications/alumni/talkabout>.

The last time I looked at the NSW Department of Education's Website, the number of public schools with an enrolment of less than 25 students was only 183 out of a total of 2,242 public schools of all types.

Once they were widespread, but like the Regent Honeyeater, they are now much fewer in number across their traditional range.

Fay Mitchell's Reflection ...

First Year at WWTC

My brother (Lance Mullen) and I first saw Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in May, 1948, as freshmen not pioneers. They were already going into 2nd Year. I selected Wagga Teachers' College because I didn't want to go to 'cold old' Armidale where I felt I was related to most of the population. I thought Wagga would be a new and different experience, which it was!

I vividly recall getting on the steam train from Grafton where my father was the headmaster at Grafton Public School and my mother was in home duties. As one of nine children I guess they were quite relieved when one or two of us left home. It was a very long train trip to Wagga.

The women travelled First Class and the men travelled Second Class, all paid for as part of our scholarships. The train stopped at Broadmeadow for about half an hour. It was a refreshment stop and a great chance to stretch our legs. My brother, Paul, always met us, no matter what time we arrived. Lance and I enjoyed sharing a pie with Paul. We travelled further to Central where we would disembark and spend a few more hours before catching the next train to Wagga later that evening.

Whilst in Sydney, we visited The Domain. It was a popular and interesting

place then and a great Sunday afternoon outing. We enjoyed listening to the fire and brimstone preachers and the public speakers. As we travelled more often, we would also meet up with friends in The Domain. It broke our trip and gave us a bit of a rest from the slow, rhythmical and smoky train.

That evening we would join the train to Wagga. We would sleep on the train, and arrive at Wagga the next morning. A bus collected us and took us to the College. We must have had something to eat and drink for breakfast when we arrived but at this point I cannot remember that detail: probably a cup of tea and toast.

I recall an assembly on the first day where we were introduced to the teaching staff, who were not much older than us, taken on a tour of the College and given our schedules. We rapidly got into our routine. Lectures from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday. We would attend the mess hall for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We sat at tables with our allocated male and female colleagues which changed each term. There was a library where we could access texts because none of us had enough money to buy our own. There was a tuckshop, but because funds were scarce we used to just walk past and smell the cakes and pies, es-

pecially in the winter because we could not afford to pay for them.

We were eventually shepherded alphabetically to our rooms. There were six female students in a room and I remember wondering how we were all going to fit into such a tiny space. It was there I met my five room-mates; Bonnie Mutch, Judy Newman, Margaret Olive, Elma

Base. There was a garden hedge that separated the female quarters from the male quarters. As I was the only female student who was there with a brother, I was privileged to be able to go into the male area whenever I wished. When Lance wanted to say hi to me, or share a letter from Dad, however, he had to call me from the other side of the hedge.

that everyone in my year had the same experience. The mark on our foreheads was an F for Freshman and did not wash off; in fact, it burnt our forehead.

Back to College, the next day (first full day) we were given an IQ test. The counsellor, Vic Couch, became a wonderful friend and colleague. He was also so upset that we were all

Fay's 1948 Cohort: Fun activity to name these folk in future *Talkabout* issue



Parslow and Maureen Ryan. These wonderful women, Bonnie in particular, would become dear lifelong friends. I have memories of cold showers but my friends say that they had hot showers. I am now thinking they must have got there first and used all the hot water! Perhaps I never knew that hot showers were an option. Maybe that's why I love my hot showers so much to this day.

The College was a disused RAAF

I settled into my bed that first night, cold and tired, but excited and dreaming about my new adventure. There was no question about whether I was going to be a teacher. It was in my family; my heritage and I was born into it. It was now becoming a wonderful reality. I slept well that night but remember waking to someone putting something on my forehead. I washed it off and just went back to sleep (A function of having seven brothers!) On waking the next day, I was to discover

so worried about the F on our foreheads and whether we would ever get them off, that he felt the test results had been compromised. One of the boys in my brother's dorm, who worked with a pharmacist, knew what to do to remove the F and so we did eventually get rid of those marks. This was one whole week later. At this stage, Bonnie had decided that she was not staying at Wagga TC and was out. She had not returned the next Monday

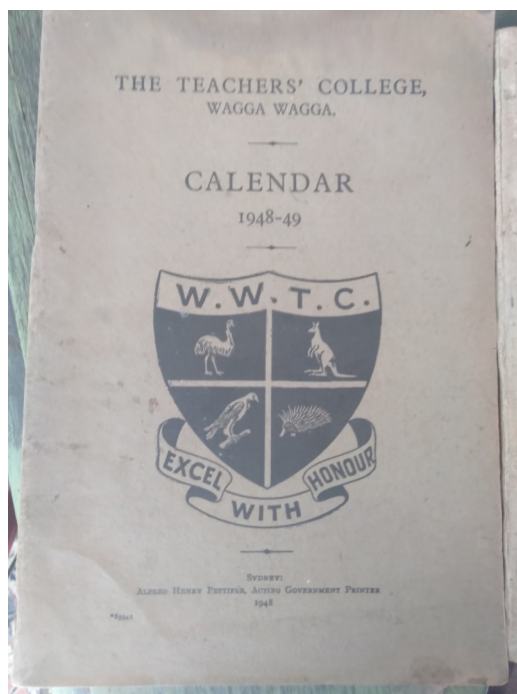
morning, but with some clever communications from her mother, she did turn up to give it another go. Without any more fs on her forehead, she was fine for the remainder of the two years. I wonder what they do to initiate new students. I have heard some terrible stories which make my F seem very insignificant in the scheme of things., but at the time it was quite major.

There was a shortage of teachers after the war so there was a focus on training new teachers as rapidly as possible. We were all on scholarship, receiving twelve pounds per fortnight.

The weekends were for sport or private home activities. You could apply for leave on weekends. I usually went to the local dance hall. There were always great dances on. If not a dance, it was a movie at the local cinema. My favourite movie stars were Hedy Lamar, Vivien Leigh, Cary Grant, Omar Shariff and Robert Taylor. My friend, Bonnie, used to go home to Junee every weekend to focus on her musicianship. Sometimes, I went along. She came home with me to Grafton during the longer school holidays.

There was always something interesting to do, or somewhere inter-

esting to go. I remember my first practi-



cal teaching session at Gurwood St, Wagga Wagga. We travelled by bus together to this and outlying schools. College packed our lunch, sandwiches, a piece of fruit and a drink for these days out. The students we taught were appreciative and generally well behaved. They seemed to enjoy the practical sessions which put us more at ease.

On the weekends, we often went by bus to watch our football team play against other regional Colleges. My recollection is that we regularly won. We would sing

College songs on the way and that was a lot of fun, even for someone who couldn't sing.

I remember when the College was being painted. The painters used to innocently linger outside our window and one day they asked me if I would toast their bread on my little bar radiator. I toasted their bread and they shared the subsequent toast and jam with me. What a delight!

My very happy memories of my time at Wagga Wagga Teachers College are flooding back. I continue to be very grateful that I attended WWTC, for the strong and enduring friendships and the outstanding teacher education I received. My teaching was primary, and this opened many doors for me, in both education of mainstream and special needs children. I have travelled extensively throughout NSW and indeed internationally, supporting education of children. I continue to have an enduring love for children and the importance of education in their growth and development. During my career, many of the teachers I met trained at WWTC and I found them to be outstanding in their craft and totally committed to the students they were teaching. We all knew we were important in creating a new generation of Australians.

Many Years Ago...or The Great Escape?

Bob Gass (1955-56)

Having graduated from Wagga Wagga Teachers College, in November 1956, I was now ready to begin my teaching career. I had three situations which would be quite critical in the next twelve months:

I had National service obligations. i.e.. To become a soldier in 90 days. I was in a relationship for the past three years and we were about to be separated for the first time. I was due to be appointed to a school after my National Service was completed. I was, of course, 18 years old.

In early January 1957, I reported to Victoria Barracks as required and was allocated to an artillery regiment at Holsworthy. There the group was divided into four companies each of which was to train to fire artillery guns. Because they had insufficient guns one of the companies was named as "as an infantry company in an artillery regiment. Because there were still insufficient guns available our company was double the size of the other companies. This feature was important because when we went on bivouac the company's rations were divided into four equal sizes, thus we were on half rations. This

did not seem a big deal but after forced marches and learning ambush-ing techniques we were exceedingly hungry.

After graduating from this military training, we were discharged from Holsworthy but were under a two year obligation to undertake further instruction at military establishments around the state.

This training co-incided with the Suez crisis and we were a little concerned we might be called up as reinforcements for that conflict. That did

not occur!

One situation was memorable. We were being instructed on how to use our bayonets in hand to hand fighting. The enemy was portrayed in a sack of straw dangling from a tree. This was, of course, quite strenuous, and we were not enjoying it until a bright spark decided to yell, "Disliked college person (I won't name him)" as we inserted the bayonnette and wacked the sack with the stock of the rifle.

Soon we graduated from our training and were given rail passes to return home. In my case that was Narrandera and was about Easter time. I there discovered that I was appointed to Junee North Public School. I reported to that school. I found accommodation, made plans for my teaching. I found a fellow teacher who played golf. I was ready.



After a week's teaching I caught the train to Matong which was my girlfriend's parent's home. Towards the end of that holiday my mother telephoned me and told me there was an Education Department letter addressed to me. I asked mum to open the letter. It said:

"Report to Goolma Public School as Teacher-in-Charge on the following Tuesday".

I researched the place called Goolma and discovered that to get to the school I would need to travel to Syd-

ney, then get the Mudjee Mail to Mudjee and then get the Postal Van to Goolma. I did a quick calculation and realized I would not get to school on time. An intolerable situation. The solution was to get the rail motor to Junee, as I had belongings to collect and accommodation to cancel. From there I would hitch-hike to Mudjee via Portland. I would get accommodation in Mudjee and hitch hike to Goolma the next day.

As I was leaving Narrandera I booked my excess luggage by train through to Goolma. This would enable me to execute my plan to arrive in Goolma before the start of the new term by hitch hiking.

This plan worked and I managed to get to the Goolma Pub on the Monday and I was ready to open my school, as directed, on the Tuesday.

By now I had attained the ripe old age of nineteen!

I discovered that I was replacing the 65 year old teacher who had started to lose control. The kids were climbing out the windows and control was non-existent. I think the school's roll showed about eighteen students were enrolled. The former teacher used to live at the pub and was known as the "Mayor of Goolma!" This accommodation did not suit me so I sought alternate accommodation. This I found in a farm about eight miles out of Goolma on the road to Mudjee.

When I first walked into the school it was like a time walk. There was no electricity or telephone. No fly wire was on the windows. The children sat at long forms and desks. The forms and desks in today's language would be forms and desks each of about three meters in length.

I did attempt to modernize the class room by requesting, from the Department, the new small tables and chairs which were recommended at our teachers' college. Imagine my reaction when the old cast iron and timber desks were delivered. The tables and chairs were delivered to a town school and Goolma inherited their old cast iron sided desks!

My National Service commitment re-

quired me to train at a local Army Base for two years but as there was no close Army Base that I could attend I was placed on the "Inactive List.": I assume I still hold that position.

The agreement with the farm family was: I could have accommodation at a certain rate, but I would need to drive the three children to school and from school.

There was only one problem, I couldn't drive. Like many families of that time, my family at Narrandera could not afford a car.

"No problem," said the farmer, "I'll get my ten year old son to teach you!"

This happened and after a week's tuition, driving and reversing around the farm I declared, "I am ready to go for my licence."

I had never driven on a road or read the rule book.

We set off one Saturday morning and went to Gulgong Police Station. On the way I drove for a few miles. The officer said, "Drive out of town, turn around. You'll do!"

I had my licence and could, henceforth drive the car and kids to school. I should explain further that we told the policeman that the purpose of my seeking a licence was only to drive the kids to school.

In the meantime, I had presented my baggage claim for the luggage I had booked through to Goolma and received a Department reply.

"Because you did not accompany your luggage to Goolma, you are ineligible for reimbursement!"

During the year the number of enrolments continued to climb and by year's end the school's number had climbed to about 25 students. Apparently, the community believed I had some control over the students and so trusted me with their children.

During this period I was still involved in my friendship with the girl I had met at Narrandera High School and continued the relationship through Teachers College. We met a couple of

Goolma Public School 1957



times during this year of 1957. The last time we were together was in the August holidays. Remember in those days we experienced a three term year. It was obvious in that holiday that there were problems but we agreed to communicate during that term.

After two months had elapsed I had not received any communication. I suspected the worst.

With my father's guarantee, I was able to purchase my first car. My fortune had been bolstered by a sum which the Defence Department had to credit me with the difference between my Department of Education and Army pay. This enabled me to have a reasonable bank account as a deposit for my car.

The car was a white VW. It had a small window at the back and had trafficators which jumped up when you signalled to go around a corner.

As I still hadn't heard from my girlfriend I contacted a couple of Narrandera mates who agreed to meet me at Wellington Railway Station on the last day of the school year. From there we planned a visit to Brisbane and get back to Narrandera just before Christmas.

Imagine my surprise when a letter arrived from my girlfriend just before the holidays. I had to honour the commitment I made to my friends to travel to Brisbane.

The letter she wrote was addressed to: Bob Gass, Public School, Goolma. BUT what happened was the "m" of Goolma looked like a "w" and so the

letter had been sent to "Goolwa, South Australia" where it languished for a considerable time until someone wrote, "Try Goolma NSW".

I arrived home just before Christmas and drove in my lovely car to Matong where I was greeted with the news that my

girlfriend had discovered a new boyfriend. I was now redundant!

What an eventful year.

As a result of my changed circumstances I needed to find new directions.

Although I knew many people of about my age in Narrandera, a chance encounter with Tom Payne was a life changing occurrence! Tom was a year ahead of me at Teachers' College. He started to visit Narrandera when his father was appointed Station Master on the railway. Tom and I had shared train trips to Holsworthy during Nashos but now we started to enjoy each other's friendship in this town. We discovered many things in common.....mainly sporting as a start! Eg. Swimming, golf, table tennis, cricket, tennis, shooting, fishing and these pursuits were added to like visit-

ing the RSL club for indoor sports and initially beer for Tom and squash for Bob (this was to change later to beer for Bob and wine for us both). Each holiday for quite a few years we sped home and continued our sporting activities. Later activities included solo with Tom's family (very competitive), a road trip to Melbourne and Adelaide, surfing/golfing trips to Moruya.

This friendship extended for several years until Tom decided to get married and fourteen months later I got married. To economise on the wedding costs, we wore the same suits! We were best man for each other's wedding.

Our friendship has endured some fifty plus years and we have spent many days enjoying all that life has to offer.

Career wise, we both gained university degrees and both became High School Principals.

After finishing our teaching careers I found enjoyment in building (a house) and Tom pursued a successful business career, which at the age of 81 years, he still enjoys! We both still enjoy sporting activities and remain competitive.

Meanwhile:

I stayed at Goolma for another two years. Enrolments soared to, I think, 36 students. I loved my



Lunchtime Goolma Public School 1957

teaching time there.

Two procedures I inherited from my predecessor were:

On the last day of school volunteer students came to the school and helped clean the place. At about 11.30 he would drive the kids home and then begin his holiday. I adopted that procedure! It gave me great pleasure to drive past schools still operating while I was “winging” my way home to Narrandera!

The Leader of the Voting Election place belonged to the teacher. I adopted this policy, ran the election, forwarded the results etc. But because I was not 21 years of age I could not vote!

I decided to abandon my decision not to play football again (I was of slight build and during my time at Narrandera High School I used to get injured). This was no exception and I broke my collar bone playing my one and only game of Rugby Union. I was still able to drive my VW, one handed!

I have many memories of my time in Goolma. I must recount two stories.

I was busy in the classroom preparing lessons when a girl rushed up to me and said, “Sir, I have lost my jumper down the girls’ toilet!”

I rushed down to survey the scene... I had never before visited this place. It was, of course, a pit toilet with a wooden seat. I couldn’t see down to see any object. I didn’t have a torch. I quickly devised a plan and collected some newspaper and crunched the pages into small balls. These I ignited

ed with matches and launched the flaming objects into the void. I saw the jumper and then got a length of wire and bent a hook onto the end. I lowered the wire down onto the jumper, managed to hook it up and brought it to the surface. It was quite stained but I did manage to reunite the girl and her jumper. Some time later she came to the classroom and said words like, “Thanks for getting my jumper but it’s got scorch marks all over it!” I ponder the possible result had the toilet retained a substantial amounts of methane gas!

My second story involves a trip to Sydney. It occurred during one long weekend. I was driving somewhere in the heart of Sydney trying to reach a long forgotten establishment. I was having trouble locating it so, as I drove through the city, I saw a policeman standing on the road, to my left. I was sure he could supply instructions. Before I could speak he said words like, “Son, you have just driven up a one-way street. I’m going to book you!”

Later on the Monday, I was driving from Windsor town towards the highway. I noticed a policeman standing at the side of the road so I drove towards him. He had a whistle which he blew so I stopped. He said words like, “Son you have just driven through a stop sign. I’ll have to book you!”

I didn’t read the indictments nor did I pay any money owed. I thought the problem would disappear. Imagine, one day when I had the kids outside doing P.E. one of the kids said, “Look sir, the Wellington cops have just pulled up!”

I feebly replied, “I think they want to

talk to me!” I walked over. The kids followed.

The policeman started to read a lengthy legalized document until I interrupted and said, “Yes! Give it to me.” He then got another document and started to read until I once more, interrupted. I knew what the table conversation was at Goolma families that night.

I solved the problem by visiting the Mudgee bank, obtaining a cheque, writing an apologetic letter, professing guilt. The problem solved!

At the end of three years it was time to undertake further studies. I was appointed to Granville Central School, Sydney. I studied as an evening student at Sydney University for five years. I then applied to teach in High Schools as a Commerce Teacher

I was appointed to Bega High School to teach shorthand and typing which, of course, I could not do. As a result I was appointed to the only school requiring a Commerce Teacher, Keira Boys High School in Wollongong.

Within a week I met the love of my life and after courting her for ten months we got married! Here endeth the days of my youth!

Postscript

Goolma township is not the community it was in 1957. There has been farm consolidation and population density is much smaller. The general store and bakery have gone, the population of the school is now 5 to 6.

Modern roads and transport mean that the student have other options to attend schools.

A trip to Remember...

John Hale 1947-49

After spending more than 2 months touring England, and some parts of Europe and Scandinavia, my wife and I on the way home, took a side trip to Zimbabwe to see the Victoria Falls.

To get a better view of the falls we walked past the memorial to David

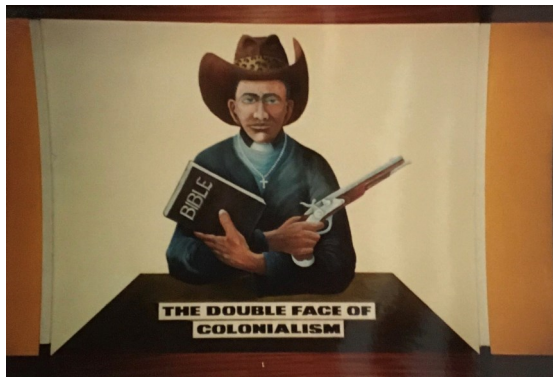
Livingston and on to the bridge over the Zambezi River and on to Zambia. On the Zambian side there were a number of taxis looking for business and we were offered a trip to the capital, Livingston, with a number of highlights including the museum, for US\$25.

The vehicle we chose was not in good shape, the windscreen was all

cracked, the doors were not lined and had to be opened from the outside.

On one occasion we had to pick up a “mate” who had to push the car to get it started, and when a policeman stopped us he was only interested in testing the horn to check that it worked.

After the tour of the town and visit to the museum, the driver discovered that he didn't have enough petrol for the return journey which required an additional financial contribution.



Painting in Livingston Museum

Safely back in Zimbabwe we visited the high-class Victoria hotel where we had a good view of the bridge and the bungee jumpers. The hotel employed a member of staff who had the job of firing blanks to keep the monkeys away from the tables.

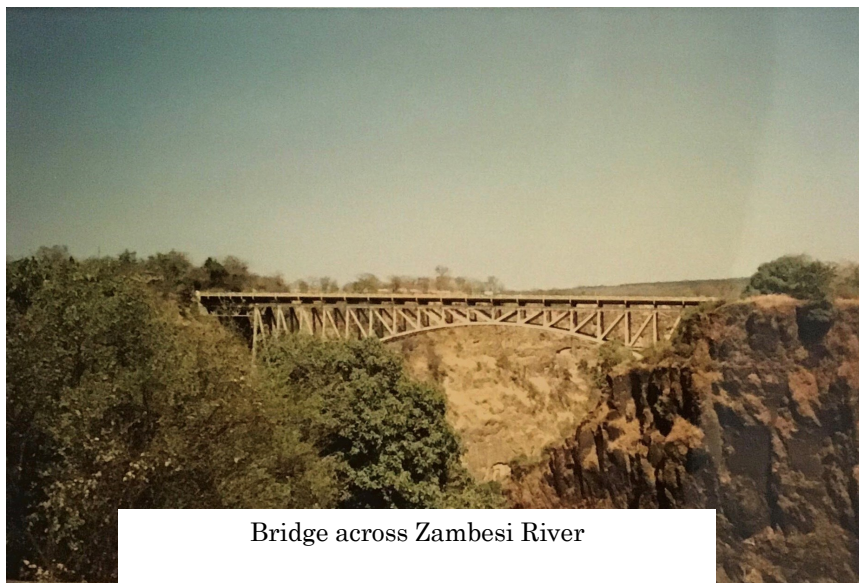
This trip also included safaris early morning and late afternoon to see much of the wildlife but the trip to Livingston was a memorable experience.



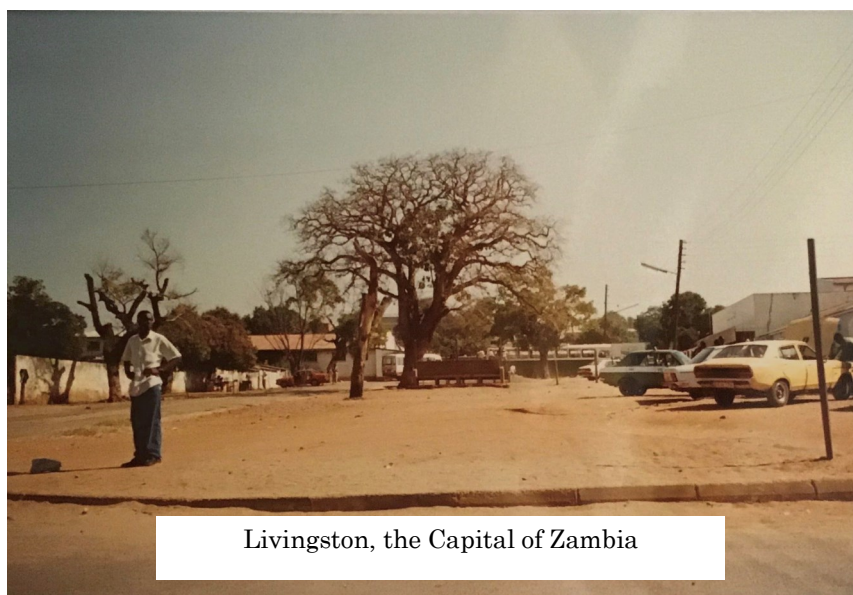
John and guide

From Renee Antill, present Scholarship Holder

The academic year is very close to finishing. I am currently completing my final placement and have to submit my TPA assessments following completion of the placement. It's very exciting to be so close to the end of my studies! While it has been enjoyable and I have learnt a lot, four years including summer session is also exhausting.



Bridge across Zambesi River



Livingston, the Capital of Zambia

I have completed my final secondary placement at James Fallon High School and am now completing my final placement at Baranduda Primary School. They have both been amazing placements which has made the decision about whether I want to teach in primary or secondary school more challenging! Earlier in the year I was certain I wanted to begin my career in primary school which has now changed.

Last week I accepted a job offer for next year at James Fallon in the English/History faculty! I was beginning to contemplate doing casual teaching next year due to placements being pushed back and wanting to focus on placement rather than job applica-

tions. I was surprised to receive an email from the principal offering me a position based on my time there on placement. It is certainly very comforting to know I have a fulltime position for next year as the thought of doing casual work isn't ideal and not what I had envisioned for my first year after graduating.

I have also been approved to teach for the NSW Department of Education and between placements was able to pick up a few casual days and have some booked in for the last four weeks of the term. While I was familiar with both schools I taught at, it is a very strange feeling to be on your own in the classroom and without a supervising teacher to jump in

and help with challenging behaviours when they arise. It has been a really great experience though and I've been very lucky to have done my first few days of real

teaching in familiar and very supportive schools.

While this year has been challenging on many levels and the end of the

year doesn't look the same as I had planned it to be, everything is certainly looking very positive and better than I began thinking it would.

The Two Best Years of my Life

Jim Roche (1959-60)

In response to our esteemed editor's request for "College Copy" of "Hallowed Halls" (now physically destroyed by construction workers), I have delved into my past and decided that the best two years of my life were 1959/60 at WWTC!

I'm sure many of you graduates of WWTC will now respond:

"What? You must have had a dull and boring life if you rate your college years so highly."

"Not so!" I say. "Allow me to elaborate"

1. Whilst still at school, I was selected as Australia's sole representative at a six week's 'World Peace Camp' in 1955 (ten years after WW2) in France and was guest of the Australian Embassy in Paris.

2. In 1952, I was selected to play in a NSW schoolboys Rugby League team vs QLD, which was the 'curtain raiser' to a sellout crowd at the 'Gabba' in a test match between Australia & NZ. 3. Whilst studying Arts (badly) at Sydney Uni, I won the batting trophy at the 1957 Intervarsity Baseball Carnival, won by Sydney in Brisbane.

4. Whilst Captain of the College Rugby XV, I was selected to play for Riverina in Country Week 1960.

5. Over many years, I coached teams which won State Championships in schoolboys' Rugby League and women's/ schoolgirls' state and national titles, which led to my coaching Australian teams at international tournaments in Canada, USA and NZ.

6. In year 2000 I was awarded The Australia Medal, for services to sport.

7. Of course there were many other highlights in my life, of a family nature, such as marriage, birth of my two daughters, Nikki and Kristen,

resulting grandchildren; and then enjoying their successes in academic, cultural and sporting achievements.

8. Plenty of enjoyment resulted from my many years of overseas travel in every continent (except Antarctica, which was only visited on a New Years Eve return flight from Melbourne)--which I highly recommend!

9. After my retirement as Principal from Leeton High School in Dec 1994, there were many highlights whilst caravanning around Australia over various extended periods (however being bogged to the axles in mud, following flooding rains on the remote track between Cameron's Corner and Birdsville is best forgotten!)

Surely these highlights prove that my life has been anything but dull or boring, so why do I rate college life so highly?

First was the camaraderie and forging of lifelong friendships, never more in evidence than at the huge success of our 50 year reunion at Mittagong in 2010. The stories of exciting and hilarious events related there are testimony to wonderful memories; eg. Kitchen raids to supply 'eats' for all night card games, with blankets covering windows of course; evading wardens on escapades to women's/ men's dorms, substituting a dummy in your bed to fool the 10 o'clock bedcheck, while you escaped downtown for some forbidden activity, usually involving alcohol; card games and 'canoodling' on the long bus trips to the snow or distant localities for prac. teaching (Temora, Culcairn and Narandera); training, playing and cheering for college teams in a great variety of sports at local and distant venues; showcasing theatrical talents in our annual G & S productions.....and the list goes on!

Luckily, Section 597 had a few unique features which made college life even more memorable. We followed a different curriculum, which included two week-long field trips to Tumut and Griffith.....can

you believe ...our accommodation was in pubs!

597 also had quite a few 'senior' members who owned cars (quite a rarity at WWTC) which were used to ferry friends to various 'forbidden' destinations. Also, those same 'seniors' often involved our lecturers in verbal jousts, pranks and ambiguous humour, which made our lectures more interesting than those experienced by the six sections of the 'Primary / Infants brigade', which was dominated by numbers of students straight from High School.

NB. many had their 17th birthdays at College!!!

The best feature of college life I have left to last:

A 'live in' environment and our weekly Saturday night dances provided plenty of opportunity to develop personal relationships, which in many instances blossomed into romances of varying lengths and often future marriages.

In my case, I met up with an old college girlfriend, Joan Kirkham (Robinson 596) whom I hadn't seen in fifty years. We sadly exchanged the terrible news that both spouses had terminal cancer and made a decision to keep in touch. This led to our forming a partnership four year later, in 2014.

Joan and I now live together happily in Burleigh Waters on the Gold Coast.

And that, my good readers should help convince you as to why I rate my two years at WWTC 597 in 1959/60 as the most enjoyable highlight of my life.

John David Murphy WWTC 1961-1962

John's youngest sister, Denise, contacted me to let his friends and colleagues know that he died on 8th September, 2020 at Swansea, NSW. A family requiem was held at John's parish-church, St Patrick's, Swansea, the following week when two of his sisters and many of his nephews and nieces and his great nephews and great-nieces were able to gather to farewell him and to celebrate his life.

John was 77 years of age.

Both of us grew up off the Sturt Highway just a few kilometres east of Wagga. Both our fathers were Franks and both were engaged in running factories engaged in steel-fabrication, the Murphys Industries having, among other projects, large contracts for wheat-silos across Victoria and PMG [Telstra] footpath-covers for trenches across Australia.

John was two years ahead of me at Christian Brothers High School, Wagga. As well as his academic achievements, John was a very proficient athlete during his high school years. During his primary school years, John also developed a deep interest in the making of films which also involved his writing of some very creative scripts. He took great pleasure in gathering all of us at his home to view his latest film.

John was a totally dedicated teacher who regularly purchased extra resources that the parents or the school-system had not provided. He had been Teacher-in-Charge of Glenara Public School for two years when, in February, 1965, I was appointed to Fernthorpe PS, just a few country miles away across the wheat-crops and the sheep paddocks of Urangeline, about a hundred kilometres west-south-west of Wagga.

Although phones were not regarded

as essential to schools at that stage, I passed Glenara PS regularly on my way to Wagga or Lockhart and, in that first year, often dropped in to see John for his advice regarding local or Departmental matters,

On Friday afternoons, from 12 noon, both our schools combined with Bidgeemia PS, a little further west towards Urana, and out of our total of about 60 K - 6 students, were selected one Aussie Rules Team of fifteen and two Netball Teams. A convoy of parents and teachers vehicles would then head for Urangeline Oval for home matches or away to challenge the big two-teacher schools at Rand, Daysdale, Balldale and Pleasant Hills.

For our Christmas/ End-of-Year Concert, Glenara and Fernthorpe would unite for an extravaganza in Urangeline Peace Hall. Each year many youngsters who, throughout the year, in the one room School appeared to struggle with so many facts and concepts presented to them, managed to embrace numerous roles in the Concert word perfect. John played a substantial part in making the Concert an outstanding success.

Having completed his first three years at Glenara PS and been awarded his NSW Teachers Certificate, John decided to move to join the NSW teachers in Canberra where new schools were opening every year. John settled very quickly into life in our federal-capital with its very pleasant environment. When the major decision came to leave the NSWDE and join the new Commonwealth Teaching Service, John was more than satisfied to be a member of the smaller set of ACT teachers.

Over the years John experienced about five different school communities in Canberra, becoming very much an energetic participant in each one. Though the new Service offered a large number of promotion positions until the Fraser

years reduced the population, because John's overwhelming emphasis was on the individual child and the children's classroom-learning rather than on any administrative roles, he toiled away enthusiastically through each school-year from his base in his unit in Scullin while unwinding after school at the Workers Club.

For numerous holidays, John and Russ Jones, once TIC at Osborne PS just south of Lockhart, and later Deputy Principal at Holbrook PS in the eastern Riverina, set off around Australia or overseas, very much inspired by all their new discoveries.

Unfortunately, mature-age diabetes began to impact on John in his fifties. His ailments began to detract heavily from the energy and enthusiasm he required for his teaching. Very professionally, he took the heavy decision to retire several years before he would normally have done so.

John retired to Swansea just south of Newcastle where his youngest sister and her family lived. He took a leading role in the St Vincent de Paul Society there and was on hand to assist the constant number of families falling on hard times and the many track travellers passing through. As well, he enjoyed many days and hours tutoring and playing with the next two generations of his own flesh and blood who lived around him in the same community.

The District Nurse began to visit John on a very regular basis to dress the sores that regularly broke out on his legs. He gradually became quite immobile until a year ago he entered a local nursing-home. Complications from his poor circulation killed John on 8th September. His fellow Vincentians formed a guard-of-honour outside St Patricks after his funeral-service.

John was a fine teacher and a caring man. May he rest in peace.

Gerard Say (1961-62)



Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association

KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE IN 2021 TO SECURE THE FUTURE



IMPORTANT NOTICE

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

To ensure the continued financial viability of the Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association the following membership contributions and services will apply from 1 January 2021

a) Electronic Membership:

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

b) Standard Membership:

Receive all information and three (3) printed copies of *Talkabout* via standard mail. (and email, if online)

\$20.00 p.a.

In addition to either Electronic or Standard

Membership members may choose to make additional contributions from the options below.

c) Additional Contributions:

- i. Alumni Projects
- ii. specific donation to the WWTCAA Scholarship
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Opposite is a contribution slip for 2021.

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December 2020
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