



A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

# TALK ABOUT



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## SPECIAL REUNION EDITION

### Distinguished Alumnus Award

*Ann Smith was presented with the Distinguished Alumnus Award by the Chancellor of Charles Sturt University, Mr Lawrie Willett AO, at the Commemorative Ceremony on Saturday afternoon. The Citation for the award appears below.*

*Congratulating Ann are: Head of the School of Education Dr Brian Hemmings, Wagga City Deputy Mayor Cr Jan Hay, Alumni President Bob Collard, Ann Smith, Alumni Relations Officer Michelle Fawkes, CSU Chancellor Mr Lawrie Willett AO.*



Ann Smith (nee Broadhead) was among the first group of students to attend Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. She commenced in 1948 and graduated as an Infants teacher in 1950 with her first appointment to Guildford Public School.

This appointment was followed by positions at Darcy Road, The Meadows, Oxley Park, Parramatta West, Ringrose and Windermere Schools. Ann's successful career spanned 36 and a half years; 23 years of which encompassed the responsibility of a Mistress or Deputy Principal. A highlight was her role in the setting up of the Metropolitan West Publications Unit.

Ann's achievements also carried over into her family life – having been married to Brian for 40 years and producing three children – Julie, David and Peter.

Over the last ten years, the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Association has played a major part in her life. At the inaugural AGM, Ann was elected as Secretary, a role which involved not just the usual Minute taking but also tracing missing alumni. It soon became evident that this required a full-time effort and the position of Research and Records Officer was created. Ann was elected into this new role and has held it ever since.

Ann became the bounty hunter of the Association. She took to her mission of tracking and recording all those who had passed through the College from 1947 until 1974 with the passion of a true believer.

The Association's records of students from the College blossomed under her stewardship. Ann has located more than 2800 alumni. This has been a true demonstration of the "spirit" of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College.

Ann's dedication, and her ability to infect all of those around her with her passion, has helped to strengthen the ties which bind together all Wagga Wagga Teachers' College alumni.

The success of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Association in raising almost \$60,000 for Scholarships can in part be attributed to Ann's dedication.

There have been ten (10) Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Association Scholarships awarded over the past five years with a combined value of \$20,000. Each Scholarship has enabled a young student to achieve their goal to be a teacher.

In 2001, Charles Sturt University initiated the Distinguished Alumnus Award. This award is presented to an alumnus whose dedication to, and affinity for, their profession has shone throughout their career.

Ann Smith epitomises the values and principles that this award represents.

It is with great pleasure that I award Mrs Ann Smith the Charles Sturt University Distinguished Alumnus Award.

# REUNION PAGE

*The following outline of the Alumni Association's achievements was distributed to Alumni at the Saturday meeting where President Bob Collard explained the rationale for the proposed change in the Association's structure to allow the greater alumni membership. Alumni were invited to submit any ideas or objections in writing to the management committee prior to the Annual General Meeting in February 2008.*

## **WAGGA WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

This Association was formed in 1997 at the 50th anniversary reunion celebrating the establishment of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. It came into being following a low key meeting attended by very few, in an atmosphere of passivity from our colleagues and patronising recognition from Charles Sturt University. There was no charter, no guidelines and no concrete plan for what we hoped to achieve. But there was idealism, commitment and a spirit which had been created and fostered since the first students arrived at the college. This spirit and commitment soon allowed us to establish the course we were to follow and the goals we hoped to reach. The management committee concentrated on exploring the past, being actively engaged in the present and being conscious of needing to plan for the future.

### **THE PAST**

The history of the W.W.T.C. and the whereabouts and identification of its students, now our alumni, was of prime importance as without that history it was probable that the W.W.T.C. and its importance to C.S.U. would at best remain unrecognised and at worst fade from memory altogether. We set about reviving the factual knowledge of the college and its progress to the present time. An intensive and ongoing programme was initiated to trace and communicate with all former students. A collection of memorabilia was begun and decisions made as to its presentation. A collection of memoirs and stories

relating to events at W.W.T.C. was begun.

### **THE PRESENT**

A book was published: "W.W.T.C.: College and Teaching Memories". A scholarship fund was established and modest goals set. This project has been an outstanding success as we near the \$60,000 mark with a proud record of 10 Scholarships totalling \$20,000 over 6 years and future awards will be Scholarships of \$2,500 per person. Our paper "Talkabout" was resurrected and has become a main source of communication and information.

Reunions were organised - some pertaining to specific years - others to draw together all sessions since 1947. We established that our student body had spread throughout the world - with some notable successes. Regular luncheon gatherings were organised and have been successful in drawing together the alumni. Strong and meaningful contact was made with the C.S.U. Alumni Office which has tended to bring our Association with C.S.U. together. Memorabilia of all types was gathered and donated to the C.S.U. Archives and The Wagga Wagga Museum at Willans Hill. We have established a viable financial base for our activities. All these activities are ongoing.

### **THE FUTURE**

To assure the future of the W.W.T.C. Alumni Association and to preserve all that has been achieved and the recognition that is due to this body it is deemed that the wisest course of action is to extend and embrace all graduates of the teaching fraternity who have graced the Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga Campus and include them in an alumni to be renamed Wagga Wagga Teachers' Alumni Association. This will allow us to be an important element in the future development of a student accommodation scheme that is being planned. We believe that the W.W.T.C. Alumni Association has honoured its task and the motto "Excel With Honour" — and now to the future.

Bob Collard

*Michelle Fawkes, Alumni Relations Officer, wrote to all the participants to thank them for attending the Reunion.*

Thank you very much for attending the Wagga Wagga Teachers College 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion last weekend. There was such a positive and joyful atmosphere throughout the reunion that it was obvious everyone was enjoying themselves very much.

Thank you also for your kind words of thanks and congratulation. I was privileged to be a part of this special time.

I hope the Commemorative medallion will always remind you of your days at WWTC and the part you have played in the development of Charles Sturt University.

I encourage you to revisit the University information enclosed in your pack and I hope it will give you a better understanding of where your University is going in the future.

As the Chancellor, Lawrie Willett, told us in his address, the support of our alumni is paramount to the success of achieving our mission to be "a national university for excellence in education for the professions, strategic and applied research and flexible delivery of learning and teaching".

CSU plays an important role in the life of our inland communities. We need the support of our alumni to help us in our role as an agent for economic and social development of inland Australia.

Thank you again for being a part of a great 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion! I look forward to meeting you again soon. If you are ever passing through Bathurst, please call in and visit me at the Grange.

### **WHO HAS LOST A CAMERA?**

A camera was left behind at the reunion. Anyone thinking it's theirs can call Michelle on 02 6338 4629 to claim it.

## From Ann's Mailbag



The reunion is over and lots of good feelings were generated by those who came.

The following people expressed by email these good feelings.

**Malcolm Hanratty 50-51, Charlie Ferris 51-52, Kay Killick 60-61, Lindsay Budd 1950-51, and Ray Osmotherly 1959-60.**

I counted how many came from the attendance list. There were:-

1949-50 = 23 1960-61 = 21 1950 – 51 = 21 1947-49 = 21 1948 – 50 = 18

The other groups were smaller and every session was represented except 1966.

**Helen Musgrove nee McDonald** 1966 sent an apology.

At this time I would like to say thank you from the Alumni to **Michelle Fawkes** for her organization of the reunion. Every ex-student and staff present received a Wagga Wagga Teachers' College medallion for the **Diamond Jubilee 1947-1971.**

I was given a standing ovation when it was announced that I also received the **Distinguished Alumnus Award.** Thank you so much. I am still recovering as I knew nothing about it. The Chancellor Mr Lawrie Willetts wanted to know why I was so popular. I blurted out "Talkabout".

**Karen Hoad (1971)** found herself to be the only one present from her 1971 group. In true Alumni spirit the 1970 group **Wendy Dwyer (Hockey), Sue Evershed (Payne), Mary Walter (Vonthien), Lorraine Mollard**

**(Partridge), Tom Grigg, and Les Dudman** invited her to join their group. Already they are talking of having a reunion for the 1970 and 1971 groups.

Thank you **Graeme Wilson (Pioneer)** for taking back to Wagga the Talkabouts left over from previous mailings. They were given out.

Among people who have changed address are Verna Taylor nee Canning 1962-63 and Jo **Yule nee Degotardi** 1952-53. Jo has lived in Canada for many years. Thank you to **Mary Penfold**, her friend from college days for telling me where to contact her.

Congratulations to the Scholarship winners **Ann Harris and Carolyn Scott.**

**Joe Lonsdale, Pioneer Registrar** was most impressed with the proceedings and looks forward to attending future gatherings.

Here are some of the Pioneers being kept busy in new found activities **Don and Thelma Davis (Whitechurch)** They are farmers at Wilton. **Nick Bricknell** and his son are building a boat. **Shirley Yonge** lives in Tamworth where she enjoys her grandchildren. **Kevin and Wyn Wilcox (Walshaw)** are proficient in German and use it in their travels.

Enjoy this Talkabout!

### In Memoriam

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

Isabella Mary Bieler,  
wife of Desmond (Pioneer)  
Allan McMahon husband of Kathleen  
Clare nee Mckerrow  
Jean Janet Bellamy nee Shepherd 49-50  
Patricia Dawn Fullerton nee Hoare 48-50  
Mary Ryder 1949-50  
Louis Frederic Whant 1949-50  
Michael James Rowlands 1950-51  
Rodney Donald Fenton 1950-51  
Ronald Alec Waters 1951-52  
Robert Campbell 1951-52  
Thelma Mary Furey 1952-53  
John Joseph Briggs 1953-54  
Donald Clifford Lusty 1957  
Robert James Bennetts 1962-63  
Cheryl Jean McHugh 1966-67  
Charlie Pike, warden in 1960's

### MUSEUM VISIT

At our 60th Anniversary Reunion some of our Alumni visited the Willans Hill Museum to view the W.W.T.C. Display and were disappointed to find none on show.

Madeline Scully, manager of the Museum phoned me to explain why there was no display. There are no permanent displays and all are regularly rotated. Those that are rested for a time undergo care and repair.

As a display was exhibited in Joyes Hall, much of the Museum artifacts had been borrowed by C.S.U. for this exhibition. Editors.

## CONTACTS

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# REUNION PAGE

*These ladies were girls together in Wandoo Dorm in 1960.  
Trish O'Brien, Jo Flintham, Margo Hopman,  
Pat Hayes, Kay Killick.*



*Ruby Riach cuts the 60th Anniversary  
Cake.  
In the background are: Michelle  
Fawkes, Gladys Budd, Lindsay Budd  
(Hidden), Joe Lonsdale.*



*1950-51 Session: Back: Phil Bastick, Noel Bible, Arthur King, Paul Butz, Gladys Budd, Lindsay Budd,  
Decima Pickles, Malcolm Hanratty, Robin Ryan, Knox Durrant, Ella Keesing, Robin Cantrill,  
Front: Ruth Chiswell, Pam Holman, Margaret King, Ray Fielder, Velma Kneale, Alan Roberts*

# REUNION PAGE

*Nigel and Dorothy Tanner have kindly submitted some of their recollections of the Reunion. Appended is a list of the attendees in Year order.*

## A TALE OF COMPLEMENTARY VISIONS

As a foundation stone of the Wagga Wagga Teachers' Alumni the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Association has already assured the place and the future that its members had desired for it when it was formed ten years ago.

The reunion was an opportunity to celebrate and applaud the achievements of those, many from the earliest years of its establishment, who have identified with the "Excel with Honour" motto of the College and now identify with the Mission Statement of the University.

A 1948/50 alumnus himself, Bob Collard, M.B.E., has been President of the Association since its inception and with the support of the management committee (and his contemporary alumnus, his wife Olga) has largely realised the vision of maximising the alumni membership. Ann Smith's indefatigable efforts in this regard were acknowledged at the Dinner by a special presentation from the Chancellor.

The College magazine Talkabout was resurrected by Lew Morrell and Lew Crabtree (now deceased) and Lindsay Budd (also Treasurer). Its publication of interesting and often humorous accounts by those who contributed to the magazine meant that the alumni's numbers increased even further. "Teaching Memories" edited by the late John Riley was a popular publication.

A Scholarship Fund that will close at \$60,000 was established on the basis of alumni contributions and it has a proud record of 12 Scholarships totalling \$12,000 over 6 years and future awards will be \$2,500 per person.

It has been proposed that all teaching graduates from the Wagga Wagga Campus since 1971 be invited to join the Wagga Wagga Teachers' Alumni.

At the 11.00 a.m. meeting on Saturday, President Bob Collard explained the

rationale for the proposed change in the Association's structure to allow the greater alumni membership.



Members were advised that the change would need to be ratified at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in February next year. Members were invited to submit any ideas or objections in writing to the management committee prior to the Annual General Meeting.

The historical significance of the occasion was enhanced by having the first Bursar of the College, a very fit Joe Lonsdale, as well as former staff members with us. The opening was only two years after the end of World War Two so, as Joe explained to us before saying Grace at the Dinner, he came from Airforce operations in Morotai to help launch new teachers in Wagga after overcoming considerable initial administrative problems.

Head of the Wagga Wagga Campus, Professor David Green, has expressed his wish to foster the spirit of service evident from the first days of the first coeducational residential N.S.W. State Teachers' College. The importance of the residential experience motivates his wish to see future alumni funds allocated to the building of campus student accommodation.

More than 270 attendees, alumni and their partners, enjoyed the busy weekend so smoothly run by Alumni Officer, Michelle Fawkes and her helpers. Too cool for the marquee, it was possible to have the initial Friday evening smorgasbord in the student dining area.

The importance that Charles Sturt University places on the Alumni Association was evident from the Commemorative Ceremony at 5 pm and the Dinner at both of which the very distinguished Chancellor of the University, Laurie Willett was present. He re-emphasised the importance of the Alumni Association and presented commemorative medallions to each of



the alumni as well as the Distinguished Alumnus Accolade to Ann Smith.

Attendees were blessed with good weather for the weekend. They appreciated the good catering, transport and facilities and in particular were impressed by the display of memorabilia in Joyes Hall.

The ecumenical service and the brunch on Sunday provided a fitting conclusion to the weekend and more opportunity for reminiscing and filling in the blanks. As the Chancellor suggested, perhaps we should have our next major reunion in five rather than ten years!

## DOT TANNER'S IMPRESSIONS

What a weekend starting at the CSU Convention Centre on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> September! Ann Smith and her cousin, Russ, came with us from the motel we were staying at. We had intended to give our Pioneer Bursar, Joe Lonsdale, a lift from Wagga but he took a taxi for \$25 instead. It was great to see him looking so fit. Margot and Bruce Phillips as well as Graeme Wilson took care of Joe's transport to and from CSU from then on. We had our meal in the Convention Centre as it was too windy in the



# REUNION PAGE

marquee. It was wonderful to see so many of our quarterly alumni lunch group there. The evening just flew as we enjoyed the smorgasbord. Michelle, as usual, was able to gain attention and give us plans for Saturday.

On Saturday Pam English helped Michelle make sure we had a name tag and appropriate CSU promotional information. We then had time to inspect the memorabilia displayed in the Joyes Hall. There was a long white gown which must have been for a graduation. Some people are so thoughtful and generous with their donations! There were numerous photos and other items of interest.

Bob Collard then chaired a well-attended meeting in the marquee to explain the proposed extension of the Alumni Association. Lew Morrell distributed copies of an outline of the Association's achievements during the last ten years. After our morning tea there was a break until the evening activities.

A little after 4pm a bus arrived to pick Ann, Russ, Nigel and me up to take us to the Dinner. We were amazed that the driver actually picked some folk up from private homes so he had to consult his map quite a few times. What a wonderful job Michelle did organising this and also the group photos! At the Commemorative Ceremony we had several speakers including the Chancellor, Lawrie Willett, and the Head of WW Campus, Professor David Green. Bob Collard made an excellent response speech on behalf the Alumni. The Chancellor presented each alumnus with a medallion in memory of the occasion and a photo was taken as at a graduation.

There were pre-dinner drinks followed by the Reunion Dinner ably compered by Lindsay Budd. Joe Lonsdale gave a special talk about the difficulties he dealt with in 1947 in setting up the administration of the College. After he said Grace we had a feast.

Meeting other alumni was most fascinating. Some people have great-grandchildren and lead spectacular lives. The weekend went too quickly because we did not manage to talk to all the people we knew. Thankyou to CSU for having an Alumni Officer as enthusiastic and efficient as Michelle Fawkes.

## REUNIONATTENDEES

**Staff:** Joe Lonsdale, First Bursar, Margaret Macpherson, Librarian, Kay Kolsky, wife of Alan 57-58, John Cosier, Ruby Riach 50-55, Laurie Orchard 54-62.

**47-49:** Shirley Barry, Don Davis, Thel Davis, Jean Douglass, Gwen Ferguson, Miriam Foster, John Hale, Clare Hopkins, Noreen Hunt, Ruth McFadden, Bonnie Mills, J A Orange, Colin Taylor, Ian Thomas, Allan Thomson, Joan Thomson, Joyce Trindall, Brian Webb, Kevin Wilcox, Winifred Wilcox, Graeme Wilson.

**48-50:** Bob Collard, Olga Collard, Norma Cooke, Douglas Gamble, Eileen Garvan, Des Handsaker, Alison Harrison, Judith Hiatt, Jean Johnston, Hazel Mann, Bruce Phillips, Margot Phillips, Stanley Bruce Robinson, June Shaw, Ann Smith, Judy Smith, Geoff Spiller, John Stuckings, Dorothy Tanner.

**49-50:** Sylvia Andrews, Bruce Bowman, Leah Buckley, Roger Clements, Les Davey, Yvonne Day, Frances Gavel, Jill Gumley, Don Hatch, Barry Hubbard, Shirley James, Pam Martin, Lew Morrell, Bernice Munro, Jeanette O'Connell, Janette Perry, Sonia Phee, Ron Pickles, Shirley Salter, Joe Schipp, Leslie Shore, Margaret Watts.

**50-51:** Philip Bastick, Noel Bible, Gladys Budd, Lindsay Budd, Paul Butz, Robin Cantrill, Ruth Chiswell, Colin Crittenden, Knox Durrant, Walter Raymond Fielder, Geoffrey Gorman, Malcom Hanratty, Pam Holman, Ella Keesing, Arthur King, Margaret King, Velma Kneale, Decima Pickles, Alan Roberts, Robin Ryan, Jennifer Svenson.

**51-52:** Frederick Armstrong, Ted Fowler, Elaine Larkin, Roy Parker, Muriel Perry, Margaret Reid, Gary Ryan, Cynthia Strong, Col Curtis.

**52-53:** Lucie Gabb, Shirley Radcliffe, Jacqui Raine, Ann Whitfield.

**53-54:** James Banks, Lorraine Colvin, Geoffrey Cooke, Neroli Cooper, Henry Gardiner, Margaret Gardiner, Noel Haberecht, William Hanley, Mary Kanaley, David Long, Rhona Morton, Margaret Pyc, Barry Reece, Judith Reece.

**54-55:** Frances Bevan, Barbara Chisnall, Coral Hayman, James Hill, Evelyn Jones, A. Robert Mackintosh, Donald Whitbread.

**55-56:** Allan Cobbin, Pat Cobbin, Betty Hudson, Judy Magill, Bruce Wells.

**56-57:** Irene Crittenden, Keith Crittenden, Ruth Fritsch, Carmel McNeill, John McNeill, Peggy Shumacher, Helen Sigley.

**57-58:** Heather Dunne, Gladys McPherson, Janet Morrissey.

**58-59:** Malcolm Clune, Eric Bruce Reineker, Fay Rowe.

**59-60:** John Brasier, Leonie Brown, Patricia Buchanan, Barry Conway, Gillian Dodd, Deidre Lynam, Gwenneth McLaughlin, Ann McNeill, Ray Osmotherly, Margaret Perrin, Barbara Sawtell, Patricia Sheridan, Judith Smyth, Wendy Watson, Rosemary Williams.

**60-61:** Elaine Armstrong, Judith Brindle, Maureen Carroll, Helen Dunlop, Fay Everson, Joan Gunn, Margo Hodge, Joan Hosking, Ross Hosking, Beth Hudson, Helen Isaac, Kay Killick, Christine Martin, Kerry McNicol, Marie Radford, Helen Schlenker, Laurel Simmonds, Clifford Robert Smyth, Warren Williams, Gwenda Zappert, Constance Ross, John Mansley, Allan Slater.

**61-62:** Diana Alexander, Joy Carter, Gregory (Tony) Fogarty, Estelle Hammond, William Howitt, Lynette Kirby, Raymond Petts, Jackie Robinson, Denis Simond, Patricia Spaul, Adele Weatherall, Keith Wood, Alan Milne.

**62-63:** Marion Davis, Kerry Eastlake, Jenny Madden, Lyn Potter, Beryl Steinke, Robyn Stewart, Pamela Wyndham, Grahame Keast.

**63-64:** Marie Curtis, Janice Fitzpatrick, Marion Giddy, Fay Keast, Sue King, Douglas Walker.

**64-65:** Bernard Fitzpatrick.

**65-66:** Marilyn Comitti, Raelene Wilson.

**67-68:** Shirley Craig, Barbara Selleck.

**68-69:** Bev Hill, Richard Morey, Christine Phillis.

**70-71:** Les Dudman, Wendy Dwyer, Sue Evershed, Mary Walter, Tom Grigg, Lorraine Mollard.

**71-73:** Karen Hoad, Ailsa Bowman.

# REUNION PAGE

## RECOGNITION OF WAGGA WAGGA TEACHERS COLLEGE

To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of WWTC Charles Sturt University publicly recognised their antecedent with a Commemorative medallion. At the Commemorative Ceremony each Alumnus who attended the 60<sup>th</sup> Reunion was presented with a medallion by the Chancellor, Mr Lawrie Willett AO.



### CITY OF WAGGA WAGGA PRESENTATION

Wagga Wagga Teachers College was recognised by the Wagga Wagga City Council by the production of a Commemorative Plaque. The plaque was presented to President Bob Collard by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jan Hay who spoke of the contribution the students of WWTC had made to the cultural and social development of the City of Wagga Wagga over the years.



The inscription on the plaque reads:

*“Presented to the students of the Wagga Wagga Teachers College by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jan Hay, on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2007.*

*On the occasion of their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion.*

*In appreciation of their contribution to the cultural and social development of the City of Wagga Wagga.”*

To illustrate the contribution that Wagga Wagga Teachers College has made to the City of Wagga Wagga the following excerpt is reproduced from a booklet which was prepared for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion in 1997.

### THE COLLEGE IN THE COMMUNITY

(A report from 1970)

Wagga Wagga Teachers' College participates in a variety of ways in the life of the larger community in which it is situated. Its members are associated with local groups and societies concerned with education, science, music, art, drama and the like, as well as with service groups and churches, and with social, sporting, and recreational pursuits. Over the years it has made impressive contributions to the cultural life of the district through its assistance with adult education.

College lecturers frequently are guest speakers at service clubs, all kinds of organizations, Parents and Citizens' Associations and Conferences, both in neighbouring towns and the City of Wagga Wagga. In-Service courses for teachers in a variety of subjects are constantly given, while most of the University adult education and W.E.A. classes have a member of the College faculty as lecturer. From time to time post-College courses are held for teachers. Rooms and equipment are constantly being used for these purposes and for organizations with an

educational value such as the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society. The library is made available to teachers in the environs, after the immediate needs of students and lecturers have been met. A number of books have been written by lecturers in Craft, Biology, and Geography and others are being prepared.

The College also contributes to the cultural life of the district by producing and sponsoring musical and dramatic works. In 1965, Beethoven's "Choral Fantasia" (for large choir, soloists, piano, and orchestra) was presented at a special concert in which music groups from the City of Wagga Wagga combined with the College. The proceeds of this concert, added to those of a special performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Patience", enabled the College to make substantial donations to the Wagga Wagga City Grand Piano Fund, and to the R.A.A.F. Women's Auxiliary.

In 1969 a Sacred Choral Concert was presented in St Michael's Cathedral, involving a College Choir of 130 voices, a Children's Choir of more than 100 voices and an Orchestra of strings, percussion, piano, and organ. The programme featured the presentation of Benjamin Britten's cantata "Saint Nicolas".

A special feature of this aspect of the functioning of the College is the production in alternate years of a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera, and the tradition has grown for many ex-students to return for these occasions.

Open Day, usually arranged in mid-September, has for years provided an opportunity for hundred of people who are interested to visit the College to see some of its activities, its grounds and buildings, and to meet the staff and students. Visitors also come in big numbers when the grounds are opened on a Sunday, at the height of the rose season on Michaelmas term.

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# REUNION PAGE

*A Reunion of the 1963-64 Session was held at Marion Giddy's home on Bastille Day in June 2007.*

*Marion submitted the following report by Graham Keast and some photos.*

## COLLAMBIENCE

What a joy it is to mix with such a talented, intelligent and interesting bunch of people as the ex WWTC students from 1963-64 era.

There have been quite a number of get-togethers over recent years at Wagga, Canberra, Millthorpe (near Orange), Armidale and Sydney. Future events will take place down Sussex Inlet way, Hunter Valley and of course Wagga again.

We tried to find a word which describes the feeling we have when we meet together. One dictionary meaning for get-together is to bring or come together; meet; assemble. Unfortunately that definition didn't seem to describe our assemblages. So on Bastille Day this year, at our most recent aggregation, we set about trying to come up with a word to better describe the atmosphere and the occasion. I think Bill Semple came up with collambience. We all agreed quickly that that word said it all. Thanks Bill. There were 36 who enjoyed the fabulous weekend at Marion (Smith) Giddy's place which happened to be on Bastille Day. Marion has enough space to park two motor homes, three A vans and a regular caravan and annexe. There were quite a few who had a sleepover inside as well. There's still room for several more such recreational vehicles and I would think if there was a replay (and there's every possibility), that Rob Hughes and the Fitzpatricks (and maybe others) might decide to book into Marion's "holiday park". One of the great things about these gatherings is meeting and getting to know folk that you didn't really know when you attended WWTC back 40 years ago. I mean, just how many girls did Dougie Walker whiz in that two year period? (Is it any wonder why some chose to repeat and make it a three year program?) As well as students we didn't know too well, there's also the partners that quite often weren't even thought about in 1963 or 1964. It has been a real thrill to get to

know the PSBMCK group (poor silly buggers that married college kids). They provide a necessary rich additive to our group.

Interestingly enough we are finding our lives are now having more in common. But not all are grandparents. Not all are retired. Not all are travelling overseas. But it is really stimulating to hear of others' adventures when we get together. Have the O'Briens finished their renovations? Is Graham Wright away judging roses in Adelaide? Has Jock Grant got an email address yet? Is Marion still painting? Have the Smarts returned from China and Russia? Are the Keasts still in Dubbo?

We do look forward to our gatherings with great anticipation. This is a special time of our lives when we can

enjoy ourselves and share our lives with people we are linked with from those Wagga days over forty years ago.

Graham Keast (1962-63)

Those who attended were : David and Lyn Giles, Doug, Lucie and David Walker, Sue (Upton) and Gerd King, Graeme and Susanna O'Brien, Grahame and Fay (Bailey) Keast, Bernie and Janice (Kerin) Fitzpatrick, Graham and Janet Wright, Merv and Helen Smith, Colleen (Brophy) and Bob Cureton, Wendy (Michie) and Keith Lambert, Bill and Sandra Semple, Van and Jennifer Davy, Russell and Lauren Warfield, Rob and Julianne Hughes, Tom McKibbin, Lynn Ludwig, Colin (Jock) Grant, Judy Dark, Judy (Wilson) James, David Baker and Marion (Smith) Giddy.



*Grahame Keast, Graham and Janet Wright, Lynn Ludwig, Susanna O'Brien (seated), Bill Semple, Judy (Wilson) James, David Giles (background), Fay Keast*

*Graham Keast called this one "How many people can you fit in a Winebago?"*



# TEACHING MEMORIES

## CUMMERAGUNJA ABORIGINAL SCHOOL

### Part 4

*Robert Smyth concludes the story of his first appointment and the two years he spent as TIC of Cummeragunja.*

#### **“Echuca, Here We Come!”**

One morning, as it looked like rain, I was driving the car to school and had driven down the bank and onto the punt. The punt man closed the back gate and went into the engine room to start the crossing. All was proceeding as usual and I was just sitting in the car. Because of the strong current, the punt normally swung down the river a bit, then curved back to the road on the other side. I noticed that this morning, the punt was swinging further than usual and I got out of my car to say something to the punt driver when there was a resounding ‘twang’ and the small drive cable broke, and the punt started to float off down the river, with the anchor cable just pulling out of the guide rollers.

The punt man raced out of the engine room, said some very rude words, then screamed out to his wife, “Mary! Ring the DMR (Department of Main Roads) at Echuca and tell them to stop the punt at Echuca. The cable’s broke and we are comin’ down the river! !” At that point, the clouds opened up and it started teeming rain. We both jumped into the car and sat there as we floated down the river! It was 56 miles of very winding river to Echuca. We floated about 200 yards down stream, and stopped against a submerged tree.

I had noticed Mary running out of the house, seeing the punt disappearing down the river, yelling something intelligent that sounded like, “OH, Sh—t!!” and ran back into the house.

When the rain stopped, we got out of the car and tried to figure out what had happened and how could we get out of this predicament. (It seems that someone had removed the nuts from the bolts holding the anchor cable on to the anchor posts—probably to use as sinkers for fishing—and the cable had just pulled out. That put the whole weight of the punt plus my car onto the thin drive cable and it just broke)

After a while (about 1/2 an hour) I looked

up and saw a lot of little black heads peeping over the bank, then a few hands thrown in the air, and a few jumps for glee and they all disappeared!!

Finally someone rowed the boat out to us and we were able to get off the punt, but that left my car sitting on it in the middle of the river.

The DMR truck arrived on the NSW side at about 10 a.m. The foreman and a couple of his men were picked up in the rowing boat and they got the spare drive cables, tied them end to end and dragged them into the river using the rowing boat. They tied the half inch cable on to the punt, wound the other end around the winch used for adjusting the anchor cable for the height of the river, and started to winch the punt back up the river against the current. I was amazed and told him so! He said, “Don’t worry mate, these cables are so strong we’ll pull it back easily.” I pointed out that the drive cable had already broken when the weight of the punt and my car was put on it when the anchor cable pulled out. He ignored my comments and continued winching. The cable began to cut into the bank and must have cut in about ten feet and was so tight, you could have played a top C on it.

I told everyone to take cover because the cable was going to break. Amazingly, the punt came back to about 50 yards from the road before it broke! Bits of steel wire whipped and lashed about the place and luckily didn’t hit anyone. The punt, with my car, just floated off down the river and stopped again, against the submerged tree. I just looked at the foreman with a look that said, “You B-----y Idiot! I told you it would break!”

What I did say was that if my car went into the river, the DMR would be up for a new one for me!!

He did not even reply, just got in the rowing boat and crossed back to the truck. He had a conference with his men and must have had 2-way radio in the truck to contact his headquarters back in Echuca.

After some time, the truck drove off and turned down the river and stopped opposite the punt. Using the rowing boat, they tied a rope onto the punt, hitched it up to the truck and pulled the punt in to the bank. They then unhitched and shifted

the truck back up the river and hitched it up again to the punt. The men then all lined up and pushed the punt back into the stream, then with much wheel spinning, dragged the punt back to the bank, but about 20 yards further up the river. They repeated this exercise over and over again until finally worked the punt back to the correct place on the roadway. They re-threaded the anchor cable through the guide rollers and bolted it back onto the anchor posts, put in a new drive cable and brought the punt back to the Victorian side of the river. I walked on to it and drove my car off and parked it back on the Victorian side.

I took my brief case and was rowed back to the NSW side and walked to school. I arrived there about 2 p.m! The few people around told me that the kids thought that there would be no school today so went off ‘down the bush’ for a picnic! I wandered off and found them about a mile down the river. As we made our way back to the school, they gave me a Nature Study Lesson on all the creatures they could find. They were a bit disappointed that they could not find any Tiger Snakes, knowing how I just love the things!!

After the kids left for home, I filled in a ‘Variation of Routine’ Form and explained why I did not arrive at work until 2 p.m. A week or so later, I received a note from the Inspector saying that, owing to the unusual circumstances, no loss of pay would be incurred!!

#### **Mr Kingsmill’s Visit.**

As I said at the beginning of this walk down memory lane, the Mission had been abandoned and most of the land leased out to Italian tobacco farmers. The rent money was supposed to be used to improve the facilities at Cummeragunja.

I was talking to a Teachers’ Federation Rep. one day, about the lack of facilities and he told me there was a section in the Federation that would be able to look into the situation.

Some time later two of the men were given fares to go to Sydney to Federation House and talk about their lack of facilities. When they returned, they said someone from the Aboriginal Board would come to Cummeragunja.

I received a letter telling me that Mr Kingsmill would be coming and to

# TEACHING MEMORIES

organize the people to tell him such things as the lack of a phone, the lack of an all-weather road, the inadequate water supply and the poor housing.

I was very happy with the number of people who crammed into the little building we used as a hall for Kingsmill's visit. Mrs Sophie Briggs was elected as the spokesperson for the people.

I went into the hall and sat up the back.

A large black car appeared, bounced over the track into the settlement and stopped outside the hall. Four large men in black suits with black overcoats and black hats got out of the car and marched in line, into the hall. They took a chair each and sat in a line in front of all the people (still with their hats and coats on!) folded their arms and glared about. I have never seen such intimidatory behaviour in my life!

Then, Kingsmill rose to his feet, glaring about and said, "Now, what do you want?" There was silence in the room. Then, very slowly, Sophie Briggs rose to her feet and started off:- "Well, Mr Kingsmill, we...we... .." then her nerve broke and she slumped back down into her seat.

Kingsmill boomed, "Do you mean we have driven all this way from Sydney to find that you have nothing to say??" With that, they all rose and started for the door.

I stood up and said in a loud clear voice, "Excuse me Mr Kingsmill. I would like to speak on behalf of the people of Cummeragunja."

He stopped in his tracks and glared at me and grunted, "Who are you??" When I told him who I was, he said, "Are you the teacher here?" I replied that I was and he said, "Oh! So you're the one." He, and his henchmen then continued on, got into the car and drove off without another word!

We had worked out an approximate amount of money that had been collected in rent over the years and deducted what small amount had been spent. Within six months, tradesmen from as far away as Griffith NSW, arrived and worked on houses and water supply. The value of the work would have been at least what we thought had been collected over the years.

## **Pam and Alby Ballard**

No story of my first two years of teaching would be complete without mention of the

two people responsible far more than anyone else, for my survival over those years. The only others to come close were the Lawfords.

I met Alby Ballard when I approached the Picola Football Club about playing Aussie Rules Football.

Before I had my car, I would catch the bus after school to Picola, go to the footy training, then go around to Alby and his lovely wife Pam's place for tea. We would then watch Gilligan's Island, then Adventures in Paradise, have a cup of Actavite, and Alby would drive me back to Barmah. As I said before, Alby even lent me his VW to 'run it in' for him and drive over to see Judith.

These two people were like foster parents to me. They took me to the footy, picked me up and returned me to Barmah many, many times and gave me much welcome advice on life and sport. I spent many week-ends at their home, helping with the baking (Alby was the local Baker) and sharing their lives and helping look after their children. It was Alby who organized the trip to Melbourne to get my first car. They were just marvellous people.

## **Post Script**

I am writing this in 2005—43 years after it all happened, but it seems only yesterday, as I have been putting this together. Whether my memory is completely accurate, only others who were there at the time can judge. A few years ago, I called in to Cummeragunja on my way back from a trip across Australia. I was delighted with the progress made at Cummeragunja...with all the new houses, proper roads, Community Centre, but most of all with the school. It had been restored and is now a small museum.

I met Ned Atkinson, an 'old' white-haired man now and he told me so many sad stories of the children that had been in my classes over the two years. I told him I was going to write this so, Ned, if you ever get to read this, may it bring back some pleasant memories of my "Appointment to Cummeragunja."

C. Robert Smyth.

Teacher-in-Charge. 1962 - 1963.

## **IT IS THE TEACHER'S FAULT.**

Bill Semple (1963-64) was appointed to Lake Cargelligo Central in 1965.

The School had a homework policy where forms were sent to parents if pupils did not complete their homework satisfactorily.

Bill has submitted the form and the parent's handwritten reply scrawled on the bottom.

(Names have been changed to protect the innocent/guilty)

Dear Mrs Brown,

Your child Ron has failed to complete satisfactorily homework set for today. His homework record is unsatisfactory.

Homework is set to enable the child to revise and consolidate the day's work and to give further practice at acquiring skills which will help the child to become proficient at school work. At times the child is required to seek further information about a subject treated at school.

Realising your keen interest in your child's welfare and your desire that he do his best, I am taking this opportunity to seek your further co-operation in supervising and encouraging the child's work.

Will you please sign and return this note to the class teacher.

Yours faithfully,

B Johnston,

Principal.

Comment (if so desired):

**Ian tries to do his homework but it is quite plain that he is not taught enough at school, by inefficient teachers who are not educated enough when they leave the Teachers College, to be able to teach or take responsibility of any child no matter how old.  
E.M Brown.**



# LETTERS PAGE

Hi Lew and Lindsay.

In reference to our recent conversation Lew, I am submitting this article and plug for my new book for your next edition of Talkabout.

Many Thanks,

Ken Little (1969-70)

I presented myself to Wagga Teachers' College for 'processing' straight off the sands and cricket fields of Sydney's Northern Beaches on a hot February day in 1969. My first impressions were of dust, heat and despair. Maybe it was the lack of sleep after the overnight train trip that had fogged my brain, but upon arriving I felt the most sensible thing to do was catch the next train back to Sydney. With similarly like minded newcomers around me, this impression lasted for just half an hour as friendships were made, apprehensions shared, sniggers exchanged and hope descended.

So I stayed and began two of the most enjoyable years of my life. For a sporty young chap who had zilch social life, (too tired after a hard day on the rugby paddock or a hot day on the cricket field), a country college was ideal. All those lovely girls, the sporting potential in Wagga, dorm living, plenty of food to eat, (despite its forbidding reputation), and college life to explore. Highlights were many over the next two years. The college revues come to mind as, by default, I found myself president of the revue club. Our revue nights were exciting experiences both from the performance side and from the uncritical good will that emanated from the student body. I remember opening proceedings with, 'The Spray Fresh Ad', and being overwhelmed by the number who turned up, the supportive smiles on faces and the 'thunderous' applause when I finished the skit. Our good taste revues of '69 and '70 showed that you didn't need to be smutty to be entertaining. A further highlight was my creative writing classes which acted as a motivating influence to some day write a 'novel'. Then of course there was the Milky Way and Willans' Hill but that's another story.

Sport played a big part in my life at Wagga. I opened the bowling for Lake Albert in the local cricket competition, played for Wagga in something called the Hedditch Cup, and represented Riverina and Country three times in rugby. Unfortunately a fellow country rep from Cootamundra wiped the smile off my face in a club match which resulted in me tearing ligaments in my ankle so badly I couldn't run on it properly again. Still can't - run that is.

My first appointment was to Cowabbie West via Grong Grong as a T.I.C. Despite a dodgy ankle I played Aussie Rules for the local area as well as hobbling around the paddock on Saturdays for Wagga Waratahs and Riverina at Country Week. Needless to say my prospects for Country Repping again in '71 were zero.

I enjoyed a short but enriching time at my school. The children and parents were magnificent and taught me much, but my social life again ebbed, waning proportionally to the waxing of my organisational skills finely tuned by attacking my responsibilities as the local T.I.C. with enthusiasm and best mate, gusto.

Unfortunately my stay was cut short when an infection in my finger, a legacy of the school's delinquent firewood, found its way into my spine thus domiciling me into Wagga Base Hospital paralyzed from the chest down. It all happened rather suddenly and sadly brought an abrupt end to my time at Wagga and a free flight back to Sydney in the air ambulance. It took a year of rehabilitation at The Royal North Shore spinal injuries unit until I was deemed fit enough to resume teaching at the Correspondence School. I stayed there long enough to draw pictures, write language leaflets, teach children, and write three school readers until I was able to escape to Bourke limping around the outback as an itinerant teacher and top banana of 'The Little Outback School'.

Being a keen observer of things in motion I learnt much while out there such as the resiliance of the bush spirit, the sheer terror and majesty of the outback and how to kill a brown snake with my walking stick before it did so unto me. I was accommodated in a single teachers' flat in Bourke while spending my school weeks out on the road visiting students on isolated properties and occasionally the aboriginal reserve at Enngonia. After one two week sojourn which took me out beyond Wanaaring up into Queensland and along the dingo fence, I arrived back in Bourke only to discover that Elvis had died while I had been out cavorting around the Paroo River. (Not that I thought it was his responsibility to consult with me first before dying.)

For a single bloke, living out there, though financially rewarding, had short legs so I came back to Sydney escaping again from the clutches of the Correspondence school after another year to spend the next three years doing post grad studies in Special Ed from which I learnt nothing ... other than systematic teaching is important as well as a few other important things. Another noted

event in '79 was a girl friend saw the error of her ways and came back from Scotland intent on maybe marrying me, which she did.

I spent the years from 1980 - 85 at Cromehurst SSP, Lindfield, working alongside some brilliant teachers and teaching the full time class of children with learning disabilities. A highlight there was writing the script for a Christmas musical for our students and seeing them perform it with supreme confidence in front of a packed St Albans Church Hall to thunderous applause - again. I left the department at the end of '85 to join Northern Beaches Christian School where I started a Special Ed unit. Another musical followed, more thunderous applause and after eleven more years I was out of there with my life as a classroom teacher pretty well over. Mobility had become an ever increasing problem so for the past eight years, other than six months at distance education for special needs students, I have been working with primary and high school aged students as a private tutor.

With teaching waning and writing beckoning I renewed my acquaintances with my pen, completed a script writing course with the Australian College of Journalism and began writing a novel, completing it last year. With encouragement from a number of sources including Tom Kenneally, (the writer not the football player), it was published last month by Zeus Publications an Australian company based on the Gold Coast.

Its title 'Three Miles in the Dry and Twelve in the Wet' would be well understood by anyone who has ever taught in a P4. It not surprisingly concerns the life of a young fellow from the beaches who ends up teaching at a little bush school down near Wagga. It bears an uncanny resemblance to real life events but although I have drawn on composites of real characters and personal experiences it is mostly fiction. It has a sprinkling of romance, (boy meets beach girl at beach, boy goes to bush, boy meets feisty country girl, now what does boy do?), some juicy educational challenges for teachers in isolated schools, lost souls such as an ex-Vietnam War veteran and a drunken barrister whose life is spiralling downwards as well as 'colourful' characters such as Fang who accidentally sets fire to his pants while trying to smoke a rollie during a football match and a group of old fellows called the Jolly Boys, (which is in fact based on a group of old fellows I met along the Paroo river who were called by locals, The Jolly Boys).

Some of my associates from the '69 -'70 session have found their way into the book

# LETTERS PAGE

as well in some form or another. For anyone who is interested, (it would make a good Christmas present for a teacher don't you think?), it can be ordered through the publishers at [www.zeus-publications.com](http://www.zeus-publications.com).

At the moment I am writing the sequel by courtesy of my trusty iMac but reflecting back on my life I count the time I spent at Wagga, the people I met, the experiences I had, and the life education I received as priceless. Some have written critically about college life back then but despite some petty annoyances I found it to be an ideal place for young people to grow and mature even if I "had" to miss the moon landing on television just to attend a Gordon Young history lecture.

In appreciation.

Ken Little (1969-70)

Dear Lindsay,

The following may be of interest to the readers of "Talkabout".

At the Reunion of some of the 1960-61 session, held in Moruya in February 2006, many inquired as to the whereabouts of Michael Gow.

During September 2006 I was standing at the counter in a Radiographers Office in Corrimal and was asked my name. After informing the receptionist it was Frank Leonard, a diminutive man standing beside me said, "You are not the Frank Leonard that went to Wagga Teachers' College are you?"

When I answered in the affirmative it triggered a long conversation that reviewed both careers and life histories, a social drink together at Corrimal Bowling Club the following Saturday afternoon and a get together with John Tierney, Barry Brown (1959-60), Geoff Peters and Dave Martin a few weeks later in Wollongong.

Mike now lives in Gordons in Papua New Guinea and has returned to Wollongong again during May of this year where, again, a convivial was held that included John Tierney and myself. Mike has a brother who is a doctor practicing in Austinmer, which is one of Wollongong's northern suburbs. This is what brings Mike back to Australia on a fairly regular basis.

If anyone is interested I have Mike's address and mobile telephone number.

Sincerely

Frank Leonard

[fleonard@exetel.com.au](mailto:fleonard@exetel.com.au)

Dear Editor,

Well, someone has finally done it; criticized our beloved college.

Barry Michell's criticism (July's Talkabout) about our training at W.T.C. has some credibility. Being a "pioneer", I don't know what went on, in regard to training, after 1949, but I have to agree with Barry that some aspects of our training left much to be desired. Not that I, personally, thought about it at the time I was a trainee, but it was not long after venturing into the unknown world of teaching that I realized I had been left high and dry, so to speak.

It was when I found myself as teacher-in-charge of an isolated small school, first up, that I realized I had not been prepared adequately for what confronted me. To begin with, I had received no training in how to cope, all day, with a roomful (32) of children, aged from about 5 to 14 – from kindergarten to early secondary school, and all with varying abilities. General Primary training wasn't of much help. Surely the Dept. of Education and the College hierarchy were aware of the fact, when we were being trained, that some of us, mostly the men, would end up in the back blocks of the state.

While I spent many hours planning lessons, and determining how best to manage my time with various groups, as best I knew how, there was virtually nothing in my college training that assisted me, during those early days.

Then there were the problems with literacy and numeracy – students' problems and mine, too.. I soon realized, much to my concern, that I was totally unprepared to help students who had problems in these areas. What to do with those who struggled? How to diagnose problems and treat them were hardly mentioned (unless I was asleep at the time) during our training. Perhaps our lecturers, at that time, didn't know much about tackling problems, either. Some years later, having gained a lot of experience, I thought that much valuable time was wasted during our training, time that should have been spent on method and organization.

(I don't think I was alone with the above problems. Sadly, even 20 plus years later, when I was a Principal, teachers appointed to my schools still knew "B-all" about diagnosis and treatment. Also, lot of confusion existed about phonics and other methods, when it came to the teaching of reading.)

Barry spoke about "potential" and stated that no one left any teachers' college as an accomplished teacher. Quite right. However, something existed at W.T.C.,

something intangible, because many of its students, with potential, became very successful teachers who climbed to the very top of the education ladder.

There, I've done it – my only fling in Talkabout. I must say, however, despite my criticism, my days at college were among the most enjoyable of my life and to this day I treasure the memories of it all. I always look forward to catching up with college friends and saddened when I read of the death of those with whom I shared some wonderful times.

## COMING EVENTS

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The next quarterly meeting of the Alumni Association will be held at the Teachers Credit Union Building Homebush at 11 am on:  
Tuesday 13th November 2007.

The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting which will be held on:  
Tuesday 12th February 2008.  
At this meeting decisions will be made which will determine the future of the Alumni Association. Please attend if you can.

### WWTC ALUMNI LUNCHEONS

The Christmas luncheon will be held at the Masonic Club in Castlereigh Street Sydney on Friday 23rd November.

For bookings contact Kevin Wilcox on 02 9580 5916 a week before.

### 1956/57 REUNION

A reminder that the reunion for the 1956/57 session will be held at Ranelagh House Robertson on 15-16 March 2008. It is a significant year as it will be 50 years since we commenced our teaching career.  
Phone 4885 1111 for bookings.



# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## RODNEY FENTON (1950-51)

Rodney Donald Fenton was born 15.1.33 and died 31.5.07 aged 74. He grew up in Dubbo and attended Dubbo High School and then to Wagga Teachers College 1950-51.

He began his teaching career at Edgehill, a small school near Henty. He then taught in the Deniliquin area before returning to Dubbo in 1958 to teach at Dubbo South Primary School. While at South Rod was asked to fill an awkward spot at Dubbo High School teaching OAs. He then moved to the Social Science department where he became acting Social Science Master on the retirement of Harry Treverrow.

Rod commenced a BA degree with New England Armidale in 1964 majoring in Economics and Geography – Geography being his passion.

In 1971 he moved with wife Margaret and children Ian and Jenny to Coonabarabran as Social Science Master – a position he held until taking early retirement at 55 in 1988.

Rod was a dedicated teacher who participated in all phases of school life – a lover of his students and people, - a mate, and friend to all whatever age.

Rod enjoyed teaching whether his students were good or bad, gifted or not. He was patient but firm and learning in Rod's classes was fun. He was a leader to his staff. His inspiring ways lead many students to continue their studies beyond High School with amazing successes.

Rod carried the Olympic torch at Henty in 1956 and was honoured to carry it once again in Coonabarabran in 2000. He suffered with arthritis for many years and had a knee replacement in 1999 to enable him to jog more freely with the torch. Since then he had had both hips replaced – the last in late 2006.

Always being a frustrated farmer, on retiring Rod "retired" to his little farm KOSTALLOTTA on the Timor Road while still living in town. There he grew gladdies, fruit, vegies, pecan nuts

and berries and raised a few head of cattle – all named.

Rod loved the limelight and performed in many local musicals such as Mikado, South Pacific and Fiddler on the Roof – yes, he was Fagin in Oliver.

Rod was diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer in Jan 2007 and succumbed at the end of May.

A tribute to Rod was the editorial in the Coonabarabran Times 7.7.07 – “a popular member of the community. His rapport with people from all walks of life, and his continued interest in the pursuits of all who crossed his path, will be remembered with fondness.”

Rod loved music – most music but especially John Williamson. “True Blue” could have been written for/about him.

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## BOB BENNETTS (1960-61)

Bob Bennets died on Saturday, June 30, 2007, surrounded by his family in Canberra, Australia, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Bob was born in Tumut, New South Wales, Australia, on December 28, 1944, and attended Tumut Primary and High Schools. He graduated from Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in 1963 and, after three years of teaching in New South Wales, he emigrated to Canada where he spent the next 30+ years teaching in School District #60 (Peace River North) in British Columbia.

Bob was principal of several schools in Fort St. John and area and earned much respect from parents, students and his colleagues as a teacher, a leader, an educator, an innovator, and a vocal proponent of many varied causes.

His school musical productions were well known throughout the District, and among his many achievements was the establishment of the School District Cultural program. Bob was very active in the Fort St. John community, especially as a Master of Ceremonies at various arts and cultural activities, and at the Annual Fort St John Child Development Talent Show. Bob was

well-known in the Provincial and local arts community for his active support, and he was a member of the British Columbia Provincial Arts Council, and British Columbia Touring Council for many years.

Bob returned to Australia in 2000 where he settled in the warmth of Coffs Harbour in New South Wales. There he enjoyed his garden, his woodworking and once again the close proximity of his family.

Bob touched many lives. He will be deeply missed.

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## MARY RYDER (1949-50)

*The following article was taken from The Wagga Daily Advertiser, July 2007.*

Wagga lost one of its more influential citizens on Saturday with the death of teacher Mary Ryder. Ms Ryder, who was Wagga sporting news identity Ted Ryder's sister, taught in the area for many years, was 75 and is survived by her sisters Clare and Elizabeth.

Former editor of the Daily Advertiser Michael McCormack, who knows the family well, said he was saddened by Ms Ryder's passing. "She was a great lady", he said.

"In many ways she was a lot like her late brother Ted, who dominated the local sporting media – newspapers, radio and television – for more than three decades.

"Both were very forthright with their views and meticulous in their professions. Everything had to be just right.

"But for all their frankness, the Ryders were very kind and caring people and were greatly respected in the community. My deepest sympathy goes to Mary's sisters Clare and Elizabeth."

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# NEWS FROM CSU

## Increasing higher education opportunities for inland NSW

Story by Peter Andrea

Charles Sturt University (CSU), Griffith City Council and TAFE NSW Riverina Institute (RI) will cooperate to develop further opportunities for higher education in Griffith and the Western Riverina region through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed this week in Griffith.

The parties will devise a strategic plan to sustainably develop tertiary education in Griffith, which will support the growth of the city and the NSW Western Riverina region. The plan will also aim to improve participation in higher education in the region, which is currently below State and national levels.

CSU Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Ross Chambers says the MOU builds on the collaborative achievements in the parties' teaching and research in recent years, including:

- the establishment of a joint Riverina Institute/CSU study centre at RI's Griffith Campus in business courses at undergraduate and post graduate levels;
- collaboration between CSU and Riverina Institute in providing higher education in social welfare, network engineering, digital media and fine arts;
- the extension of the work of CSU's National Wine and Grape Industry Research Centre and water management research in the Griffith region.

Professor Chambers says, "CSU welcomes this collaboration. It will greatly assist us in our commitment to the education of

professionals who will be retained in and contribute to inland Australian communities."

"We are always looking at ways in which we can bring more educational opportunities to people within our communities, and this is a great example of how we can work co-operatively to benefit people in our region," says Riverina Institute Director Rosemary Campbell.

Griffith City Mayor Councillor (Cr) Dino Zappacosta welcomes the impending MOU signing as a positive step for Griffith and the communities of the Western Riverina.

"Developing a greater university presence in Griffith will help to attract people to the area and retain some of the young people who leave to pursue tertiary studies," he said.

"This community has identified access to tertiary education as an important factor to stimulate future growth of this city."

Cr Zappacosta also applauds the forward thinking of both the Riverina Institute and CSU that fostered partnerships such as the one being developed with Griffith City Council, which will provide positive options and access to tertiary facilities and courses that would otherwise be unavailable to regional communities.

The MOU establishes a working group, which comprises two senior members from CSU, Griffith City Council and RI to oversee its development and implementation.

## Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Scholarship Fund

The WWTCAA Scholarship Fund currently stands at \$57,501.20. This is a superb effort!

It would be great if we could reach the \$60,000 mark before Christmas. If all 3000 alumni gave just \$1.00 we'd more than make it.

The University pays tribute to all those WWTC Alumni who have so very generously donated to this wonderful Scholarship.

Twelve young students have benefitted from your generosity as will many more into the future.

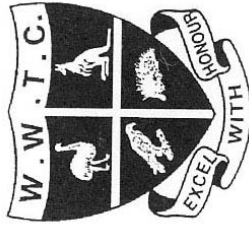
### Event & Reunions Dates for 2008

Early March	CSU-Bathurst Rugby Fundraiser	City Tattersall's	Sydney
March 11 - 13	WWTC 1960-61		Broulee
March 15 & 16	WWTC 1956-57		Robertson
March 21 - 24	RCAE 1975-85		Wagga Wagga
October 17 - 19	WWTC 1957-58		Wagga Wagga
October 24 - 26	Wagga Ag 1956		Wagga Wagga

For information on any of these events contact the Alumni Office on 02 6338 4629 or email to [alumni@csu.edu.au](mailto:alumni@csu.edu.au)







If undeliverable please return to:  
The Alumni Office  
Charles Sturt University  
Bathurst NSW 2795 Australia

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Place address sticker here.

### **Change of Address**

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