



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

TALK ABOUT



Volume 5: No 2

July 2002

INAUGURAL WWTC ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

What an exciting and satisfying afternoon was witnessed at the Wagga Wagga Campus of Charles Sturt University when members of the Committee attended the Scholarship Awards for 2002 on Wednesday, 15th May.

After five years of generous donations from the Alumni our aim of establishing a Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Scholarship has been achieved. The recipient, Ingrid Jones, an outstanding student, is the first winner of YOUR Scholarship. Bob Collard, our President, is pictured presenting Ingrid with her award.



Ingrid Jones, Bob Collard, Dr Henry Gardiner

Ingrid writes:

Hi, my name is Ingrid Jones, I am your first recipient of the Wagga Wagga Teacher's College Alumni scholarship. I am truly proud and honoured to be a part of the Teachers College Alumni through the scholarship.

I would like to thank you for the scholarship, it is a wonderful gift, and will help me immensely with the remainder of my studies.

At the moment, I am in my fourth and final year of primary teaching at Charles Sturt University Wagga. Within this course, I am completing honours, I am researching students' ability to problem pose in mathematics.

At the end of this year, I will be qualified to teach all grades from kindergarten to year six. The prospect of having my own class is very exciting. I am passionate about teaching, and as such I am more aware of what we have in common, and that is, the children, the teaching and touching of lives.

I thank you for welcoming me into the alumni, I had the pleasure of meeting some of you at the scholarship presentation, and I look forward to participating more fully with you in the future.

I am sure you will be hearing more from me as I begin my learning journey as a teacher in the big wide world!



Ingrid Jones

***The Scholarship Fund has reached
\$28,000***

With your continued support the Scholarship Fund will continue to grow and the WWTC Alumni Scholarship will increase in status.

REGIONAL REUNION DINNER AT WAGGA



Colin Curtis, Elaine Larkin (Davis), Roy Parker



Roger Clements, John Riley, Henry Gardiner



Nigel Tanner, Ray Fielder, Audrey Peake (Boyton)



Margaret Gardiner (Claridge), Bob Collard, Olga Collard (Taylor)

Following the Scholarship Presentation ceremony the members of the Committee repaired to the Wagga Wagga Commercial Club in Gurwood Street where the Regional Reunion dinner was to be held. Around 30 people attended including Ingrid Jones, her mother and a friend, as well as Michelle Fawkes from the Alumni Office.

The evening was most enjoyable for those who attended. People were able to catch up with the happenings of their friends from years ago and the time went very quickly. We are grateful to Elaine Larkin and Roger Clements for their

efforts in organising this occasion.

After the dinner President Bob congratulated Ingrid on her success and wished her well for her future.

Ingrid responded with a delightful speech thanking the Alumni and showing her appreciation of the efforts made to provide the scholarship. She expressed her hopes and ambitions for her teaching career.

This dinner was initiated to provide an opportunity to congratulate our Scholarship Award winners. It is hoped that in the years to come it will be an annual event.

We have been trying to encourage alumni members to arrange reunions at various country centres after the great success of the Wollongong reunion organised by Roy Parker. Our Scholarship Award Dinner would provide excellent motivation for an annual reunion at Wagga Wagga, particularly for alumni who reside in country districts within easy reach of Wagga. What do our members think about this?"

A VISIT TO THE ARCHIVES



The Collection of the Regional Archives was first formed in 1973, and was managed as the "Riverina Special Collection" in the Library of the former Riverina College of Advanced Education in Wagga Wagga. This Collection, which comprised of regional archival and non-archival material, was initiated and largely driven by local historian and academic, Dr Keith Swan, to complement regional research and teaching.



Dr Swan began his teaching career in this region in 1950 at the newly established Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. Following the formation of the Riverina College of Advanced Education, Dr Swan was appointed senior lecturer in history in 1972, and became Acting Dean of the School of Business and Liberal Studies one year later. His contribution to the tertiary education sector was recognised in the 1974 New Year Honours (BEM) and a lecture theatre dedicated in his name on Charles Sturt University's Riverina campus. Whilst working as a professional historian and academic, Dr Swan re-established the Wagga

Wagga and District Historical Society in 1962. He subsequently served as President and initiated the Society's archival collection.

Thanks to John Riley for the following account of a visit to the archives.

The morning after the Reunion dinner the Alumni Committee was given the opportunity to visit the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives (formerly Riverina Archives) in the Blakemore Building at Old Campus, to ascertain the situation concerning archival material about the college & what facility there is there to store memorabilia.

Before entering the archives, some of us went in search of the devastation Bill Atkinson had told us about recently; it was not hard to find - where the admin & dining room once stood is a fenced-off blank (except for weeds) space - a CONSTRUCTION AREA. Apparently white ants were the cause of the removal of the old buildings

In the archives we were given a

run-down on policy by the Director, Don Boadle, before being given a tour of the place. We were then allowed to browse through various priceless documents including books of CUTTINGS, photographs, REGISTERS, etc.

It was interesting to examine the photographic record of students in years after the earliest & to see among them some of the members of this group. It was even possible to examine (should one wish) one's EXAMINATION RECORD.

Apart from photos of college in its various stages of construction, the item I found most interesting was the large book of CUTTINGS, in which amongst other fascinating items were the Principal's agenda for the earliest of College assemblies. In a program of the dramatic performance "Hay fever", the name of one Charlie Ferris was seen to feature prominently. Someone could surely write a book on those early years of the college using these primary sources!

Another gem was the collection of college CALENDARS, complete except for the first in 1947. A reading of the Cuttings shows why - there WAS none - it was like Topsy! Seen in that section were the earliest Rules & regulations which appeared religiously in every year's calendar.

We were treated royally by the staff at the Archives, and were given photocopies of material that we asked for.

Anyone is able to view the material in the Archives, Mon-Fri, but they would have to pay for any photocopying.

John Riley 1948-50)

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From the Secretary's Desk.

Since the March Talkabout went out I have been kept busy receiving phone calls, letters and emails re the missing information. The lists created an interest for many of their classmates from many years ago. The names themselves made people remember other names of those who were already listed. Friends have been contacted and suggested addresses sent to me to process or check on. Some of those who sent me information were **Jackie Anderson** (Land) 1963, **Bill Anderson** 1951, **Judy Benson** 1960, **Ronda Bergin** (Luff) 1963, **John Boddington** 1964, **Darcy Brill** (Bartlett) 1958, **Greg Buddle** 1964, **Malcolm Clune** 1958, **Helen Croswell** (Young) and her parents (1962) **Sue Davis** 1972, **John Dodd** 1965, **Kay Durham** 1968, **Robyn Gooden** 1962, **Annette Hassett** 1959, **David Jones** 1962, **Patricia Lee** 1960, **Sandy Livingston** 1964, **Murray Luke** 1960, **Lesley Maxwell** (Ward) 1967, **Annette McCauseland** 1959, **Rosemary McLaren**, **Jean Mulholland** 1959, **Lyn Murray** 1961, **Patsy Paul** 1961, **Bev Raward** 1970, **Elaine Saunders** 1962, **Janet Stevenson** 1958, **Wendy Wade** 1964, **Adele Weatherall** 1961, **Lyn Webster** 1959, **Helen Wyatt** 1964. Thanks also to anyone I have missed, possibly because of the size of the job undertaken. Please still keep sending information.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Jan Perry (Porter) 1949 thought it was great that the Scholarship Fund is up and going. The first scholarship was awarded in May this year.

TALKABOUT

Judging from the letters and emails received Talkabout has been more successful than our Alumni group thought possible. 'It was exciting, a real blast from the past, thanks', (**Kaylene Chamberlain** 1968). It brought back many memories of Wagga to **Marcia Cheyne** 1960. She also enjoyed the story of the College radio by **Kevin Wilcox**. **Denise Clune** (Faux) thanked us for all the information sent. It was very interesting reading.

Kevin Delaney 1962 told us from W.A. that he especially enjoys catching up on the lives of some of the people from WWTC. Three people did not wish to receive Talkabout, but all wished us continuous success. **Anne Smith (Dinham)** 1958 thanked our team for all their good work. **Francine Walsh** hoped to receive Talkabout. 'Thank you for your fantastic efforts', (**Wendy Whatson** 1959) and thanks for all the hard work. **Nola Binden** found the last Talkabout especially interesting, in particular the personal reminiscences. **Carol Taylor** and **Helen Wyatt** both 1961 thought a wonderful job was being done. I wish to thank all those who have subscribed to Talkabout. (**Ann**) I sent any moneys received by me on to the treasurer **Lindsay Budd**.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

The following are snippets of information gained from your letters, emails and telephone calls. When I started in 1997 mine was the only name listed of those who roomed in a Phi Delta room containing six beds. First found was **Margaret Bailey** (Christie), Valley Heights, then **Phillipa Dennis** (Albery) at Berala. **Fay Martin** (Kendall) and her husband retired down to Jamberoo. I looked up her phone number and she had **Pat Wood** (Bool)'s address at Bardwell Park. **Dora Boughton** now Ames was the only "lost" one left to find and I was delighted when I opened a letter which told me Dora's address in Buderim Qld. Thank you **Margery Bonsor** from 1953 session. In previous Talkabouts we have mentioned some of our members who live in Canada. **Connie Paravantes** (Ongley) 1961 lives in British Columbia. So also does **Brian Daniher** (1961) and **Pippa Ingram** (1959). **Marc McCulla** wrote from BC and mentioned "Myrtle". It was from this letter that Myrtle's story in another part of this issue eventuated. **Elaine Caddon** (1956) wants to meet up with others from her period and **Nika Norman** (Lototzky) would like to attend any reunion planned for her years. Special thanks to **Warren Poole** who listed the last known whereabouts of some students in 1969/1970/1971. Again, these are the sessions that need a lot more work. Can you help?

STILL TEACHING

Some of the members are still teaching. **Pamela Hunt** (1970) went into Junior Secondary and is principal of Bombala High. **Fay Everson** (1960) teaches in the Sacred Heart Primary at Koorinal. **Denise Clune** (Faux) 1968 has been in the Cootamundra area for 32 years. She is back teaching at the Public School. **Diane Grocott** (Carlin) 1970 lives in Cootamundra also. **Di Alexander** (Pierce) 1961 has been relieving Creative Arts Consultant based in the Wagga Office. **Phil Crofts** (1969) is teaching at Upper Orana, just outside Coffs Harbour. He has been there eleven years and still enjoys it. "Hello everyone from 69 – 70. I hope you are enjoying life too."

Kevin Delaney (1962) has taught in a variety of places, six years in Junior Secondary NSW, two in London, two in Zimbabwe and the rest in Perth. **Margaret Davis** (Luscombe) 1961 has had a varied career and is sure she has taught every class from Kindergarten to Year 12. **Kay Durham** (1968) is a classroom teacher at Narrabri West. **Robert** and **Lyn Fletcher** (O'Connor) live at Scotts Head. Robert teaches Industrial Arts at Melville (Kempsey). **Bev Rose** (James) 1964 is married to Graeme and still does casual in the Byron Area. Two people sent me some details of **David Rankin** (1964) who has become a famous Australian Artist. He lives with his wife and three children in New York. See Encyclopedia of Australian Art by A. McCulloch 1994 page 1011. I do not have his address.

Helen Isaac (Gardiner) 1960, would love to hear from her friends and is interested in a reunion

RETIRED FROM OR GONE TO A DIFFERENT JOB

Some of our members left teaching and took up other work in various occupations.

Gary Walker (1959) works in the Department of Education Training Office at Blacktown. **John Ritter** (1970) has been a Qantas Flight Attendant for 21 years. **Paul Godfrey** (1968) taught for 19 years. Now he works for National Parks and Wildlife.

Deanne Churchill (1959) lives at Labrador on the Gold Coast. Her last job out of a variety of jobs was manager of library and sales for Qld Dept of Mines and Energy.

Judy Benson (1960) has also experienced a variety of jobs. She was a volunteer at Sydney Olympics and Paralympics. **Margaret Elphick** (1960) is retired. **Marilyn Pope** (Lyn Scrimgeour) 1959 retired some years ago as Principal Mt Rogers Public School. **Kevin Plummer** (1958) spent 30 years as M1 of Wynns Aust, an Auto Chemical Company. Now he is an investor, farmer and part time golfer!

John Maskey (1948) sent details of **Edith Hawker (Morton)** 1948 who is not very well and is living in R. McHale Hostel Tongala Vic 3621. Someone might like to write to her.

REST IN PEACE

I do not have full details but I have been told the following are deceased **Daryl McIntyre** (1967), **Ron Houison** (1960), **George Blackgrove** (1952), **Janwyn Cox** (Terlick), **Gillian Hume** (1969), **Jeff Amity** (1970), **Dennis Faulkner** (1959), **William Eldridge** (1962), **Rodney Smallbone** (1958), **Deidre Wenham** (Cadet) 1960 died December 2001, **Tom Shuker** (1955) died in March 2002, and **Barbara Holt** (nee Lenny) 1949 died in May 2002.

CONTACTING FRIENDS

With pleasing results some members have availed themselves of my sending on their letter to the person whose address they did not know. See March Talkabout 2002 page 3.

MORE ADDRESSES WANTED & MORE MEMBERS FOUND

Thanks to everyone who returned an Information Sheet. Sessions 1970 and 1971 are requested to fill theirs in promptly as you will not be on the mailing address list until your form is received in Bathurst. Please don't assume that since Christmas you have received a Talkabout at your correct address and that you do not have to respond. Either send back your form filled in or put your name and year on the sheet and indicate that you do not want to receive mail. This will be indicated against your name. An envelope with my address has been provided for your use.

How many more can we find by the end of the year? The question to ask is: "Do you get Talkabout?" and if not, then let me know.

Ann Smith



Dear Lew,

Attached please find a photo of a group (mostly) from the 54/55 session at Wagga Teachers College. All the women had rooms next to each other in Mari-Ipai Dorm, and have been close friends ever since. Of the five couples, two are married to college sweethearts. Apart from occasional visits in the early years (we being spread all over the state), we have been meeting regularly once a year for the past 20 years or so, each taking a turn to select an interesting location and venue --- though to be honest, there is so much talking there is little time for activities.

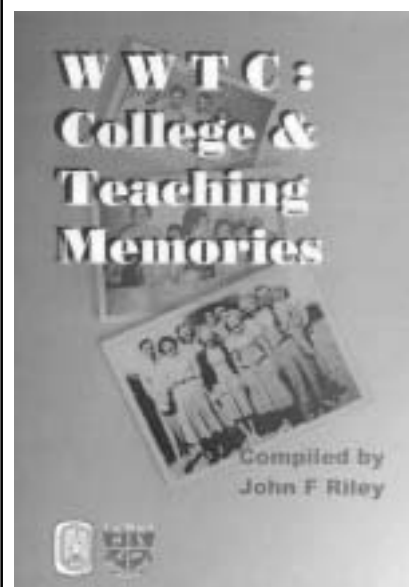
Front Row: Bill Poole, Mary Gainey (nee Rickson), Barb Davies (Heery), Connie Beaumont (Peters), Ruth Marshall (Miller), Lloyd Davies.

Back Row: Ray Beaumont, Les Gainey, Wendy Poole (Patroni), Graeme Marshall.

We enjoy Talkabout very much, as we did the wonderful reunion at Wagga a few years ago.

Yours sincerely,
Graeme Marshall (1954-55)

TEACHING MEMORIES



The long awaited "TEACHING MEMORIES" has been a great success and copies are still available for those who forgot to order one.

The books are available at a cost of \$20 including postage and may be purchased by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, Lindsay Budd at:

4 Flemington Close
CASULA 2170.

COLLEGE MEMORIES

Charlie Ferris (1951-52) and Henry Gardiner(1953-54) have both submitted some stencilled sheets, which they had been given on their first day at college. These were the Rules and Regulations which were in vogue in 1951 and slightly modified in 1954.

GENERAL RESIDENTIAL ROUTINES

1. MEALS:

MEAL TIMES:

Breakfast: (8.00 am) (Sunday 8.30am)

Dinner: (1.10 pm)(Saturday 12.30pm)

Tea: (6.00 pm)

Attendance at Breakfast is Compulsory, Monday to Friday.

Exemption from other meals is obtained by signing the Housekeeper's Book on the previous day.

Cases of illness are reported to the Warden and the Matron by the room-mate and, if the Matron so recommends, meal trays are provided for patients. The room-mate of a sick student should collect and authority from Matron, present it at the kitchen for a tray, and return the tray the same day.

Punctuality at Meals.

All students are expected to be at the table two (2) minutes before the meal commences. If delayed until after Grace, students should report to the head of the Staff Table. Students will wait for the Staff Table to rise before leaving the Dining Hall.

2. Dress:

At all times a high standard of neatness is required. Shorts, sun frocks, sandshoes and slippers must not be worn in the Dining Hall, Lecture Rooms or Library. Men Students should wear ties and sox to meals and to lectures.

3. Rising Times:

First alarm sounds at 7 am, the second sounds at 7.30 am, the third at 7.45 am.

4. Cleanliness of Dormitories

(a) Rooms must be kept tidy at ALL TIMES. Between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm (Mon. to Fri.) a high standard of neatness and cleanliness is required. Rooms are inspected daily. Each room must be swept; mats shaken and replaced; beds made and covers put on; all clothes hung in wardrobes; shoes put away; books neatly arranged; tables made tidy; shaving cabinets and toilet shelves left in order; cupboards and drawers must be clean and tidy; linen bags are to be hung behind the door or at side of wardrobe; towels should be folded and hung on the bed railing or racks; floors must be cleared of bags, boxes and other articles; wardrobes must be closed; bed covers must be replaced with a grey blanket or rug before student rests on bed.

(b) Saturdays: Beds are to be made and rooms swept and tidied by 9.30 am. Special attention will be given to wardrobe and drawer tidiness.

(c) Sundays: Bedrooms must be ready for inspection by 10 am.

(d) Articles must not be pasted on walls nor attached with Durex tape.

(e) A waste paper receptacle must be provided in each room.

(f) A suitcase may be left in the room only on condition it is neatly placed on top of a wardrobe, which will be free of all other impedimenta.

(g) Food must be kept in hardware containers.

(h) Food may be prepared only in common rooms and dormitory kitchens.

5. Change of Linen.

On Tuesday morning, beds will be stripped (top sheet changed to under sheet and blankets placed on chair beside bed). The soiled sheet, pillow slip and towel will be placed (folded) for collection on the foot of the bed. College sheets will not be used for fancy dress parties (eg togas).

6. Laundry Facilities.

Laundry facilities are provided for both men and women students. The Laundry is closed at 10.30 pm. All iron connections should be removed from wall plugs immediately after use by EACH STUDENT. No clothes to be left in Laundry at any time. Students are to provide their own ironing blankets. Student using coppers must see they are 5/6 full of water and are not left unattended. Clothes may not be left in driers beyond 10 30 pm. (Women students).

7. Fire Danger

(a) Any appliance involving a naked flame is prohibited.

(b) No electric appliances except reading lamps and radios are allowed in bedrooms. The Local Government Safety Regulations will be strictly observed.

(c) Ironing in Common Rooms is prohibited (Women Students).

(d) No gas fires are to be burning unless a student is present. Corridor heaters are to be turned out by "lights out".

(e) Immersion heaters are prohibited.

8. Firearms

No unauthorised firearms are allowed on the College premises.

9. Smoking

Smokers must provide ashtrays and use them. Matches, cigarette butts or ash on the floor will be regarded as a serious breach of Regulations. Women students may smoke ONLY in their Common Rooms.

10. Common Rooms

A high standard of neatness is expected. At no time should personal property or rubbish be left in the Common Room. Students must have a high regard for all common Room equipment and be careful not to abuse it. A quiet time will be observed strictly after 9 30 pm.

11. Mixed Common Room

This is for the use of all students under conditions determined by the SRC and the Principal.

COLLEGE MEMORIES

12. Breakages

Breakages, damage to or loss of College property must be reported immediately to a Warden. Articles broken should be REPLACED by students.

13. Bicycles

Must be put in the shelters provided. No bicycle may be left on the College premises during the summer vacation.

14. Visitors

- (a) The correct place for interviewing visitors is the Foyer of the Administration Block.
- (b) No visitor may be shown over the premises without the permission of a warden.
- (c) No visitor may enter a dormitory under any circumstances.
- (d) Visitors to College functions must come by invitation card obtainable from the Vice Principal. They must be introduced to the Lecturer-in-Charge.

15. Non-Residential Students

May use only the room provided in Kabi Dormitory (Women Students).

16. Leave

Monday to Thursday:

Dormitory Doors are closed at 10.30 pm when students are required to be in their own dormitories. Visiting other dormitories after 9.30 pm is permitted only at the discretion of the Warden, as QUIET TIME must be observed every night from 9.30 pm. Students are to have retired for the night by 11 pm and all lights must be out by that time.

Friday Night

On Friday nights general leave is granted. Lights are to be out and all students are to have retired by 11.30 pm.

Saturday Night:

Students wishing to leave the College premises must acquaint the Warden on duty of the fact and complete leave cards. All students must be in their bedrooms by 11.20

and have retired by 11.30 pm. Dormitory doors close at 11.20. (Dance finishes at 11.15)

Sunday Night:

On Sunday nights general leave is granted. Dormitory doors will be closed at 10.15 and students must have retired and lights be out by 10.30 pm.

Week-End Leave:

Week-end leave is not encouraged. A written application in correct form must be handed to the Warden by 9 am on the previous Thursday. The student will then approach the Warden personally between 7 pm and 7.30 pm on Thursday night to enquire whether leave is granted. The written approval of the student's parent is required and should be posted directly to the Principal.

Late Return from Leave:

Any student returning after the dormitory doors have been closed at the times stated above, is to press the buzzer at the entrance of their own dormitory and wait until a Warden opens the door. On no account must another student open this door. (Women students only).

17. Relationship between sexes.

There are three zones in this co-educational College:- one, the men's residential zone, to be frequented by men only, two, the women's zone, to be frequented by women only, three, certain zones where both men and women may meet freely. However under no circumstances will undignified behaviour be permitted.

3 foot rule: members of the opposite sex must not be closer than 3 ft whilst on the College Campus.

18. Supplementary Equipment:

Each student is expected to provide himself or herself with the following supplementary equipment, suitably marked for purposes of identification:

1. For Use in dormitories.
 - a. Personal bath-towel.
 - b. Linen bag.
 - c. Ironing blanket, pressing cloth and ironing sheet.

- d. Cup, saucer, plate, knife, fork and spoon.

2. For use in the dining room -- 1 serviette ring.

3. For use in Physical Education:-

Women

1. Black sandshoes
2. Dark shorts (Black or navy)
3. Tennis socks.
4. White cotton jumper.
5. A white street frock for formal wear.

Items 2, 3, 4 are to be used for physical education work until the student has purchased and made sports tunic, blouse and knickers. Material can only be purchased in Wagga.

Men:-

1. Black shorts
2. White beach pullover.
3. White socks.
4. White sandshoes.
5. Dark suit, white shirt and long maroon tie.

Men and Women.

College blazer and College tie. The blazer should be ordered through the College Registrar who will forward the measurements and cost to the contracting firm. The contract price is £7.

19. Hotels are out of bounds to all students, and under no circumstances may alcoholic liquor be brought on to the College premises.

20. Swimming in river is prohibited except at Bathing Beach. College towels must not be used on swimming excursions.

21. Bathrooms: No baths or showers after 10.30 pm. (Mon to Sat), 10.0 pm Sunday.

22. No College property is to be removed from the Dormitories.

23. "Lights Out" – students are to keep lights out till 4.30 am the following morning.

Ooooooooooooooooooooo

LETTERS PAGE

Farm 80 Coleambally 2707
5 March 2002

Dear Lew

Just a snippet of trivia for the pages of "Talkabout" should you, as editor, consider it to be of any consequence or interest.

In mid-March I attended a MOULD Family Reunion in Cooma. I had noticed from information prior to the occasion the name William Birrell appearing on the list of relatives notified. The thought passed through my mind "wouldn't it be funny if it is Bill Birrell, my WWTC Geography lecturer of 1958".

So at the above said family reunion, I kept an eye out, and sure enough there was the nametag BILL BIRRELL on this craggy older man who simply had to be the above said lecturer. He turned out to be just that with his wife assuring me he was easily recognisable by his bushy eyebrows. Quite a chat ensued, remembering this person and that occasion, etc. etc. He did not however recall that I used to become quite irate when he mispronounced my name as 'Moold' at roll-call. One would have thought he'd have known better seeing we are both descendants of the same G Y Mould (my great-great-grandfather, Bill Birrell's great-grandfather). Bill lives at Taree. He and his wife do quite a lot of tripping around these days, so were very interested to hear of the Ballina reunion - reckoned the caravan could probably head them that way in early August.

On another matter altogether, I am curious to know whether Olga Collard (Taylor) was ever a student at Bega Intermediate High School. If so she and my sister, Joy Mould, were great friends. It is a small world after all! With great respect for the work you and the Alumni Committee are doing,

Jenny Briggs (MOULD) 1957/58

Editor's Footnote.

"Yes, Olga Collard (Taylor) did go to Bega Intermediate High School"

5 Mountain View Ave
Narara 2250

Dear Lindsay,

Enclosed is my donation towards the printing of "Talkabout. I sent two letters for publication some time ago but neither was published. I can only assume that I had made too many spelling and grammatical errors – which is understandable as I have been away from the classroom for 8 years now. However, this time I have used the 'spell' feature on my word processor so there shouldn't be too many mistakes.

I enjoy receiving "Talkabout" and looking through the pages for familiar names. Occasionally I see a photograph of an elderly retiree with the same name as someone I went through college with, I think, "That can't be the person I knew. He didn't look like that". Then I look in the mirror and realize I don't look like I used to either. Time changes all of us on the outside but not always on the inside. I still look on 55/56 as two of my happiest years and found it rather sad when I visited the south campus a few years ago and saw how dilapidated the buildings had become. I suppose one shouldn't dwell too much on the past but there is one reminder of my session that I would appreciate receiving. As I wrote in my previous (unpublished) letters I asked if anyone had a photograph of Leon Raselala that I might borrow to copy. When my brother visited Fiji he went to visit Leon on my behalf only to find he had died a few weeks earlier. I have fond memories of Leon and the union games we played together. I received a copy of a photo of Leon taken just before he died. As I said, we all change. I did not recognize him. Hello to any other 55/56ers out there who also receive "Talkabout". I hope you are enjoying your retirement. Surely there can't be too many still teaching. Having said that, I retired in 1993 but in order to live in a manner to which I had become accustomed, I had to go back to work ... albeit part-time as a bus driver for the elderly and odd job man at a Central Coast aged care facility.

Barry Cohen (1955-56)

Dear Lindsay,

Please find enclosed my cheque for \$20 to assist with the continued production of Talkabout. I look forward to receiving my copy and maintaining contact with my many friends and colleagues from Wagga Wagga T. C. days.

I attended the 1956-57 session and was one of the 8 residents of the Kumbai hut or dormitory. I was saddened to read in a recent issue of the death of John Clarke who was also one of the Kumbai eight. There were 4 rooms occupied by Keith Solomon with John McNeil; Stafford Baird with Neville Dunn, myself with David Hartnett and Keith Crittenden with John Clarke. Laurie Orchard was our in-house supervisor in the end room. The rooms were Spartan with brown lino on the floors and a few mats. The only heating was a couple of coil heaters in the corridor. On some winter nights I can remember putting an overcoat on top of the bed cover and then taking the mat off the floor and putting it on top to keep out the cold. We would usually remain in our beds until 7.48 am when someone would call out and there would be a frantic rush to get out of bed, dressed and to breakfast by 8.00 am. Usually finishing dressing on the run, we never missed out on breakfast.

Thank you for your part in keeping those friendships and memories alive. I was first appointed to Ilford, a one-teacher school between Lithgow and Mudgee where I stayed for 10 wonderful years. Then to Ulladulla as D/P for 11 years before accepting a P2 appointment to Barham. After 7 years on the Murray I was selected as Professional Assistant to the Regional Director of the North West region, David Maher. I then returned to the service as principal, Ross Hill P.S. at Inverell where I completed my career and retired in 1988.

I am now involved in community activities, Rotary, playing bridge, gardening, golf and bowls. Currently, like many others I suppose, I am maintaining my contact with education by supervising the HSC. Best wishes for the future success of Talkabout.

Don Learmouth (1956-57)

LETTERS PAGE

31 Camellia Circle
WOY WOY 2256

Dear Lew,

Congratulations on your great work in keeping 'Talkabout' rolling off the presses despite some funding and other problems. The reports of the July re-union at Sancta Sophia were most interesting, and the photos brought back many memories. Keep up the good work!

When I received my copy of Teaching Memories' I noticed a section on siblings who attended WWTC, and I thought some of your readers might be interested in my family's relationship with the College.

I was the first member of my family to decide on teacher-training, and I became a 'neo-Pioneer' (June 1948-May 1950) – one of that brave band who with the exalted Pioneers made up the first complete complement of students at the old partly-renovated ex-RAAF Hospital at Turvey Park known as Wagga Wagga Teachers' College.

My sister Patricia (Hoare) Fullerton followed as a part of the 1951-52 Session, and my brother Ken Hoare also decided on a teaching career (1954-55). We are all now enjoying a well-earned retirement in various parts of the country.

Not a bad effort, I hear you say – wait! That's not all!

My niece, Beverley (Fallowfield) Hill also attended Wagga Wagga Teachers' College, in 1969-70, and she is still teaching in the Wagga district. I have another niece, Gayle (Fullerton) Creek, who did teacher training at the Riverina College of Advanced Education – Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in another guise – in 1976-77, and she is also still teaching, in the Newcastle area. It gets still better – I now have a great-niece, Melissa Sim, of Wagga, who is just beginning her final year of a Bachelor of Education – at Charles Sturt University of course, where else! So the combination of teacher-training and the Wagga Wagga area has become a bit of a tradition in my family – three generations have now passed or are about to pass into the ranks of teaching through Wagga training courses. I would be very interested to hear through your letter

pages of any families with a similar tradition. Best wishes to all my old (no – not old, I mean 'former') Wagga colleagues. I hope the next reunion is not too far in the future.

Sincerely,

Barbara Maynard (Hoare 1948-50).

14-1855 Willemar Ave,
Courtenay B.C. V9N 3M5

Dear Ann,

I have procrastinated far too long in writing this letter. Have intended letting you know how much I am thoroughly enjoying getting Talkabout ever since it first started coming. "The road to hell ... etc". I think I'm well on the way!! Thank you so much for including me in the group you mail out to.

Having lived in Canada since January 1968, I'm well and truly a fixture here now. Besides I couldn't bear to leave my three grandsons and new granddaughter. I love getting "glimpses of a former life" as it were and reading snippets about former college mates though when Talkabout arrives.

Brian Pettit lives about an hour's drive away from me in the city of Nanaimo. We were both in the 59-60 session at Wagga and sat at the same table for the two years we were there. So it was great connecting again with him some years ago and we keep in touch fairly regularly.

I continue to teach. I still love what I am doing and feel blessed to be healthy enough and energetic enough to be able to do a good job of it. After all these years at it, I truly thing the teacher training at Wagga Wagga was second to none. I have been teaching at a small, very vibrant Primary school since February 1985. We only have grades Kindergarten to Grade Three with 86 students this year. It is a rural school with very much a family ambience and strong parental involvement in all we do. Despite being a city kid while growing up in Sydney, my first practicum at Narrandera got me hooked on country schools!

At the moment, the cuts that are being made to education here in British Columbia have given us all concern for the future. The fear that our unique, little school may be closed is

looming on the horizon. I have taught in both large and small school in the past 40 years now, and by far prefer the latter!

We are in the final term of out school year here at the moment. This coming August, I am coming "home" for a visit to see my mother and nine brothers and sisters. Mum turns 88 in August, so we will get together and celebrate. I hope to see a couple of college friends I have kept in touch with over the years as well, both Beverley Inall (Podmore) and Wendy Dobson (Hindmarsh). I would love to call you while I am home and perhaps even get to meet with you if possible to give you my donation to the cause i.e. "keeping Talkabout going". I will call after I get home to Sydney on August 4th.

I look forward to talking with you then.

Sincerely,

Pippa Ingram (1959-60)

44 Linden Ave,
Boambee East 2452

Dear Lindsay,

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$30 to cover the cost of "Teaching Memories" and annual contribution to Talkabout.

It's amazing what one can find out in Talkabout. I taught with Norma Fowler at Muswellbrook but never realised that she was an ex-Wagga student. I also found out that Bev Fleming was an ex-Wagga student. I taught with Bev at Moss Vale. Talkabout is an excellent publication and full of memories,

Yours sincerely,

Errol Allen (1948-50)

Here is a limerick based on the mathematical expression:-

$$((12 + 144 + 20 + (3 * 4^{1/2})) / 7) + (5 * 11) = 9^2 + 0$$

A Dozen, a Gross and a Score,
Plus three times the square root of four,
Divided by seven,
Plus five times eleven,
Equals nine squared and not a bit more.

TEACHING MEMORIES

LIST ONE OR I'M ALL RIGHT JACK

I first met him in the 50's at the time of the Royal visit to Dubbo. A special school children's train ran from Coonamble picking up children along the way. Gular, Armatree, Curban, Gilgandra, then on to Dubbo. I boarded at Armatree, with 29 children Kindergarten to super primary, correspondence second year.

Two compartments in the corridor carriage had been set aside for us and the dutifully minded, by Mr Jack Stevens, the boss at Coonamble Central. The day was a memorable one. The Queen passed in her open Landrover with me holding a kindergarten aboriginal girl on my shoulders because, naturally enough, she couldn't see. The Duke smiled at us and gave Marjorie a special wave. All home safely and soundly by nightfall with a cheerio to Jack the Coonamble boss as we left the train.

Some years later, though still in the fifties, Joan (W.W.T.C. 52/53) and I were married, living and teaching as teacher –in-charge Binya, just outside the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area on the Temora railway line. As fate would have it, the dreaded letter one day arrived announcing "I propose visiting your school during the week commencing 14-7-1959 for the purpose of full school inspection. Please have ready all necessary documents." Signed J. Stephens, District Inspector of Schools.

Monday. On edge. Best tie, clean shirt, children teed up – right hand up if you know the answer, left hand if you don't know the answer. No inspector!

Tuesday. Another clean shirt (no mean feat as there was no electricity at Binya). Joan's favourite recipe for lunch. School bell dead on time.

Again, no inspector!

Now I start to worry a bit because my two latest encounters with the D.I. had not been great.

Number one: I had sent back the Age and Grade Distribution form having tallied it vertically and horizontally but failed to place the combined total in the bottom right hand rectangle – a total of something like 30. The form was returned to me with the empty rectangle circled in red pen with the note that I had not completed the form to departmental requirements.

Number two: Binya school residence had no clothesline. Well I had strung a wire from a sugar gum in the playground across the yard to an ageing pepper tree with two mallee sticks serving as props. However, number eight knots in the wire to make it long enough frequently snagged towels and pulled the threads on

windy days. Maybe there would soon be a baby in this house and nappies! So, using official correspondence paper, I wrote through the D.I. requesting a rotary clothesline stating that if supplied, I would undertake the erection. Alas! I put two r's in the word "erection", so again had my letter returned and asked to rewrite it without spelling errors. Besides "it is the duty and responsibility of the P.W.D. to install all permanent equipment including rotary clothes lines".

Tension was mounting by Wednesday morning. Monday's clean shirt had been washed and dried on the brand new clothesline, which had arrived and erected by P.W.D. from Leeton. (A driver, two workers plus numerous bags of cement and gravel.) Nightly my programme had been read then re-read by the light of a Tilly lantern as we diligently searched for spelling errors.

Nearing 9.00 a.m. on this Wednesday morning an unfamiliar car arrived at the school. Out I casually swaggered to meet the D.I. All the children had stopped playing, coming to the fence to view this special visitor. They had to be hustled away to pretend they had not been informed of this special occasion.

Out of the car came Mr and Mrs Stephens plus their little dog. "We've brought some scones and fresh bread from town for morning tea. Thought Mrs Parker might like a visit and a chat while you and I have a look at the school. Have you a shady spot and a water bowl for the dog? Besides, how's Armatree?"

Phew!!

As the morning progressed, Mr Stephens was amazed how the children of the junior school could read. They were all fine readers right from Kindergarten.

"I am going to structure a day with all the small school teachers and I want you to do a session on how you teach reading" the D.I. said. My response floored him. It had nothing to do with Schonell or even my lectures at W.W.T.C.

"From 9.30 to 11.00 the Kindy/1st class go across to the residence where Joan teaches them to read".

Whilst strolling to the residence for lunch Mr Stephens asked me what were my ambitions as a teacher. Again the wrong answer. I said that I was O.K. I had a brand new lovely wife, we had a nice residence, we had the best small school in the state, the children at the school were great, we had beaut parents (fresh milk, pure cream, home made butter, tomatoes in season, plus home killed meat), the district cricket team had just won the comp, the school children had just cleaned up the small schools' sports, all the kindy children could read. We even had a rotary

clothesline. I reckoned I was all right. I couldn't think of anything else I wanted.

"Well" said Mr Stephens, "I'm aiming at the top. One day I want to be the Director of Education".

During lunch, Mr Stephens told Joan, not me, "I'm going to recommend your husband for List One though I would like him to show a little more ambition in his life and towards his future in education".

Neither Joan nor I knew exactly what List One was but we accepted it. Along with hundreds of others, it meant that I had my name placed in the Education Gazette supplement "Promotion Lists".

Three interesting outcomes from the above:

- Mr Stephens did become Director of Primary Education
- One of the pupils who hung over the front fence on that famous day and who always put up his right hand was Andrew Newman, also W.W.T.C. who later became a Cluster Director at Wollongong. Andrew was my boss
- I did throw off my lethargy towards greater things in education to reach the front page of that renowned booklet – Primary Promotion Lists, concluding my career as P1 Farmborough Road Public School (the best First Class School in the State.)

Roy Parker (1951-52)

A GET TOGETHER OVER LUNCH

WHEN: Thursday, 1st August, 2002; 11.40 for midday.

WHERE: Masonic Club, Castlereagh St, Sydney. Meet at Lounge near Reception on Ground Floor.

MENU: Select two of three courses, with a number of choices available for each course.

COST: Approx. \$25; drinks extra.

CONTACT: Ann Smith at 9635 0449 for bookings at least a week in advance.

WHO: Anyone from WWTC, regardless of Session.

We look forward to making you welcome.

If you can't make it this time, the next lunch will be held on Friday, 22nd November, 2002.

TEACHING MEMORIES

THE BOMB HOAX.

There was a Departmental requirement that regular fire drills be carried out in case of fire, or bomb threats. All staff and students were expected to know the procedures for evacuating the school. These consisted of the teachers conducting the students in an orderly fashion to designated assembly areas and to mark the roll and wait for the all clear. Unfortunately we always managed to exceed the number of drills because they were regularly forced upon us in the form of bomb hoax phone calls. The clerical staff would answer a caller who said "There is a bomb in the Science Lab and it is going to go off in 20 minutes!"

No matter how childish the voice sounded the call could not be ignored because of the million to one chance that the call was not a hoax. The signal was a series of short rings on the period bell. This meant that all teaching stopped, students left all their belongings in the classroom and were conducted by the teacher to the assembly point for that Block.

Meanwhile, in the office several things happened. The phone which received the phone call was left off the hook and another line was used to ring Telecom to ask them to try to trace the call. Then a call was made to the Police Station to advise them that a bomb call had been received and that the school was being evacuated as a precaution. My deputy and I then made a quick patrol through all the buildings to ensure that everyone had left and to send out those teachers who were still marking books because it was only "a bomb scare."

When the police arrived they did a cursory search of the six Science Labs and if the bomb hadn't gone off by then they gave permission for the teachers to conduct the students back to class. The signal for All Clear was one long ring on the bell. Of course, by then the period was over so students had to return to the room they had been in, retrieve their belongings and then move to the next class. Typically, over an hour of teaching time was wasted and the Home Science teachers who were in the

middle of a cooking lesson were not very happy.

One day I was in my office when Anne came to the door and said, "We've just had a bomb call."

"Not again!. That's the second time this week!"

"I know. What'll I do?"

"I guess we have no choice. Ring the bell and I will talk to Telecom. They haven't had much luck lately at tracing the calls."

I went into the main office and tried to ring Telecom but of course they were engaged. In exasperation I picked up the phone which had received the call and had been left off the hook. I could hear whispering and giggling at the other end. It sounded like girls' voices and I heard one of them say, "Hey, I can't get through!"

I realized that they were trying to ring someone but because the line was still open they could not ring out. They seemed to be a bit confused so I spoke loudly into the phone, "This is Mr Budd. Now I want you to listen very carefully. Who am I speaking to?"

A startled voice answered immediately, "It's Rosie, Sir"

"You mean Rosie Johnson in Year 9?"

"Yes, Sir."

"And is that your sister with you?"

"Yes, Sir."

"You are jiggling school, aren't you?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Well, you could be in big trouble. The two of you get yourselves to school immediately and come to my office when you get here. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Sir."

I hung up the phone and called to Ann, "Ring the All Clear. Have a look through the absentee sheet and see if Rosie Johnson and her sister have been marked absent today. And don't bother to ring Telecom. I have already traced the call."

Lindsay Budd (1950-51)

CRICKET EXPLAINED

For those who need to explain the game of cricket to visitors from overseas.

CRICKET:

You have two sides, one out in the field, and one in.

Each man that's in the side that's in goes out, and when he's out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out.

When they are all out, the side that's out comes in, and the side that's been in goes out and try to get those coming in, out.

Sometimes you get men still in, and not out.

When both sides have been in and out including the not outs,

THAT'S THE END OF THE GAME!
HOWZAT!!!

REUNION

1961 – 62

A reunion is being planned for the WWTC group attending during 1961 and 1962, to be held in Canberra 11th and 12th January 2003.

It will be a chance to catch up and look back on the past 40 years.

For information contact
Lynn Murray
35 Gallagher Crescent
WAMBOIN, NSW 2620

PH 02 62 383 295
Fax 02 62 383 095
agmurray@austarmetro.com.au

TEACHING MEMORIES

TWO GERMAN GIRLS.

I did not have an opportunity to study German at school as only French and Latin were offered – and I dropped both of those languages before my final two years at school. I'm not sure why, but I had a hankering to learn German, possibly because my favourite opera was (and still is) "The Magic Flute" – the one opera Mozart wrote with a German libretto.

With the aid of a German-English dictionary and a German phrase book, I made several half-hearted attempts to learn the language.

Luck came my way at the beginning of 1965 when I acquired a new roommate at the guesthouse in Dubbo at which I boarded. Hans was fresh off the boat from Germany and I told him of my desire to learn German. He agreed to teach me in exchange for my helping him with his English.

I found this phonetic language much easier to learn than either French or Latin and, within a few months, I was able to have conversations with Hans in German – with a little prompting when I made a grammatical error, or I sought assistance with a word that was not yet in my German vocabulary.

It was about October of the same year that the principal of Dubbo South PS brought in two new girls to my Grade 5 class. Apart from the fact that one girl was an inch or so taller than the other, they could have passed for identical twins. It was obvious from the first glance that these sisters were not Australian girls, as Aussie girls do not wear hand-knitted dresses – which was their attire. They were, in fact, new arrivals from Germany: Margrit (10) and Ingrid (almost 12). With their fair, shoulder-length, straight hair and bright blue eyes, Hitler would have been delighted with them.

I was tempted to greet them in my newly acquired language but I stopped myself in the nick of time. It occurred to me that if they knew that I could speak some German, they would expect me to translate everything I said in class for them – which I was not prepared to attempt. Instead I

welcomed them to the class in English.

They were both lovely girls, albeit somewhat mischievous at times – and they could sing like angels! Apparently many German mothers do something that is rare among Australian mothers; they teach their daughters to sing.

Because they thought that I could not understand German, they would speak to each other in German whenever they did not want me to hear. This was invariably followed by giggling. I did not always catch everything they were saying but I understood enough of what was being conveyed. I let them get away with it for some weeks before I had had enough.

I can't remember exactly what Margrit said to her sister that day but I recall that it included some words that are not to be found in polite German-English dictionaries – but Hans had taught me those words anyway.

This time the girls' giggling was interrupted by my saying, "*Margrit! Kommen Sie bitte hier.*" ("Margrit! Come here please.")

Being the first time either of them had heard me speak German, the girl nearly fell off her seat before covering her mouth with her hand and coming to the front of the class.

I then said, "*Du mal ein bravis Madchen. Nicht Deutsch in Schule sprechen. Verstehen Sie?*" (Be a good girl. Don't speak German in school. Do you understand?)

With downcast eyes, Margrit nodded before returning to her seat. Never again did I hear either of them speak German (except when they were singing to me).

Hans had once told me how German beachgoers would (in those days at least) freely change in and out of their bathing costumes on the beach and no-one would take any notice.

The time came when I had to take the class swimming. I gathered the class inside the Dubbo pool for their obligatory pre-entering-the-water rollcall. Before stating to call the roll I said, "After your name is called you may go and get changed."

I was about a quarter of the way down the boys' list when I heard a silly noise emanating from the remaining boys. Looking up, I saw the cause of the clamour as there were Margrit and Ingrid unashamedly getting changed into their bathing costumes there and then on the lawn; a phenomenon which the boys found somewhat exciting.

Had the boys witnessed this happening in silence, the German girls would not have been at all embarrassed about their exposure but, as it was, the cacophony from the male section of the class did cause them some embarrassment. I explained to the girls that, in Australia, changing is done in the changing sheds, not on the lawn.

Later in the year I would often get the girls to come in at lunchtime to sing for me. Their repertoire included German folk songs such as *Fuchs du hast die Gans gestohlen* (Fox you have stolen the goose) and other things such as *Guten Abend, Gut' Nacht* (Brahms' Lullaby). They would always sing in harmony and their voices blended beautifully. Pure delight.

Michael Austin (1950-51).

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

All alumni are invited to attend the quarterly meetings which are held at the Teachers Credit Union, Homebush starting at 11 am. Meeting Dates for 2002 are as follows:

Tuesday, 7th May
Tuesday, 6th August
Tuesday, 5th November

Curious Titbits

- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like an apple.
- I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy.
- Stifle is an anagram of itself.
- What did you bring that book that I didn't want to be read to out of up for?

THE MYSTERY OF MYRTLE

After hearing about a statue which was rumoured to have graced the front lawn at WWTC Ann Smith made some enquiries via the E-group and several people responded, offering various explanations and anecdotes regarding the sculpture which was alleged to have been created by a student of Rodin's.

Ann and Lindsay decided to ask Henry Gardiner if he could find the whereabouts of Myrtle. Henry sent the following e-mail and some photos of Myrtle.

Dear Lindsay, (and Ann)

Many thanks for today's e-mail re Myrtle. I have consulted with the Art Curator of CSU and have concocted a brief note which I am arranging to be placed on Myrtle's "new" plinth in her current location in the gardens in front of what was the Education School of the then RCAE before CSU built the Henry Gardiner Hall to house the Faculty of Education. The draft of the note is as follows:

Myrtle

Myrtle was created in bronze by the 19th century French sculptor, Albert Carrier-Belleuse. The statue was donated to Wagga Teachers College by the Wagga Wagga Chamber of Commerce, from the Community Development Fund, in 1954. She graced the lawn in front of the Principal's Office and received her name from the fact that she shared the precinct with a large specimen of the bush, Crepe Myrtle Lagerstroemia.

On the formation of Riverina College of Advanced Education Myrtle was moved to her present location in the gardens adjacent to the then Education School.

The reason that you do not remember Myrtle is that she arrived in 1954 by which time you had already graduated. Those of



from army service had lots of brasso and we filled in some of the wee dark hours polishing Myrtle's bare breast. Every time we polished her, a Craft Lecturer ("Perce"/John Cosier, I think) was directed by George Blakemore to paint over the shiny bit with a kind of artificial verdigris that had been concocted in the Craft Rooms.

Quite often, those jealous non-nashoes who did not have brasso snuck out and wrapped (crepe?) toilet paper around the offending pointy bit too. Anyway, that, together with the *crepe myrtle lagerstroemia* botanical name which John Gammage ("Speed") had had placed in front of the large bush with which the statue shared the Boss's lawn, gave rise to the name, "Myrtle".

Some time after Maurice Hale became Principal, Myrtle was removed from her place of prominence and put into store. About twenty years ago, when I came back to RCAE after Goulburn College closed, I was able to locate our pride and joy and the Principal, Cliff Blake, found

the funds to re-erect her in the front gardens of the School of Education. Unfortunately, the flame-like light fitting had disappeared and a modern substitute light had to be found.

When I went out to campus at Ann's suggestion to take the photographs a few weeks ago I quizzed every student in the vicinity and no one knew anything about dear old Myrtle. However, I did notice that one portion of her anatomy was somewhat shinier than the rest of the statue (true!). To cut a long story short, I went over and had a chat to the current Head of Campus, Prof David Green, and he has agreed to put a suitable plaque on the plinth, hence my draft, above, which I will take out to David tomorrow when I go to the scheduled Board of Directors of the CSU Foundation meeting.
Cheers,
Henry.

PEOPLESCAPE – A CENTENARY OF FEDERATION EVENT.

Our congratulations are extended to Janette Perry (Porter) .W.WTC. 1949-50 who was one of the successful nominees for Peoplescape, the final event of the Centenary Of Federation held in Canberra in November.

Australians were invited to nominate someone they had felt had significantly affected their life, their community or their country.

Janette was nominated by her daughter Elizabeth who wrote quite poignantly of her Mother's influence on her life and depicted her attributes artistically on one of the life-sized figures which were displayed on the lawns of Parliament House. Janette's husband, Mick was also successfully nominated by daughter Elizabeth.

Contributed by Shirley James,
W.W.T.C. 1949-50.

THE VIC CHAPMAN STORY

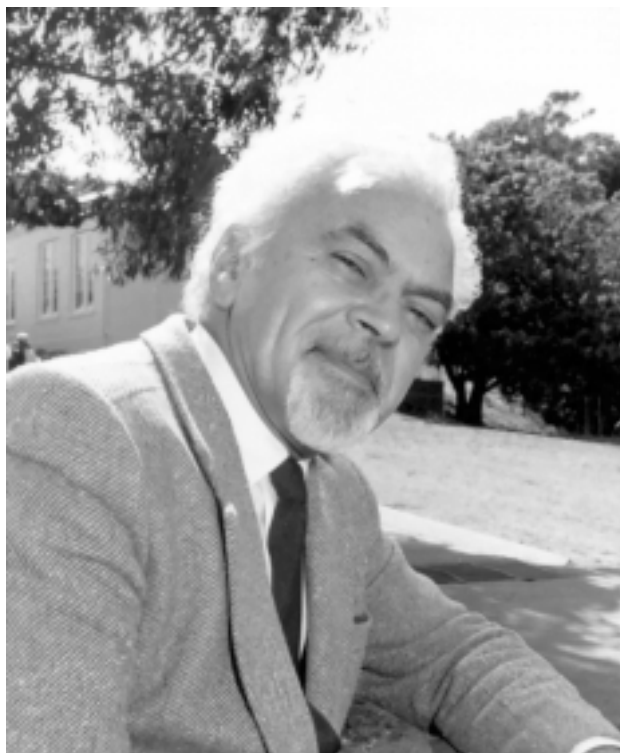
Prelude

Since 1788 indigenous communities right across Australia have been influenced, modified and adulterated by government sanctioned programmes. The programmes have literally changed the makeup of Aboriginal people and contributed largely to the loss of history, language, stories and lore. Despite this Kooris everywhere have demonstrated that kinship and connections with the land are as pertinent as they ever were. There is evidence, too, of a growing interest in reclaiming these aspects of culture already alluded to, that were, up till now, considered gone forever. It is a demonstration of our strength, our resilience and our will to survive as a people,

"How deprived we would have been if we had been willing to let things stay as they were! We would have survived, but not as a whole people. We would have not known our place". So wrote Sally Morgan in the Dedication to her book, "My Place".

Pallingjang Saltwater III is a travelling exhibition being developed by the Wollongong City Gallery. It gives local and South Coast Aboriginal artists the opportunity to explore and express the concept of family and their relationship to the community in which they live. The many different painting styles and the wide range of experiences depicted by individual artists reflect the diversity of Aboriginal people so often open to stereotype. The theme of Family and how closely we as Aborigines relate to country is pursued in the story that follows. It is my own story.

I was born 14th March, 1932 on "Currawillinghi" Station, about six kilometres from Hebel, a small town near the Queensland – New South Wales border, the fifteenth child of Patrick and Lesia Chapman. Both were Yuwaalaraay people who spoke the language, the Gamilaray language, and as well had a good understanding of Murrawari. It was



also the birthplace of my father in 1875 and his mother and her people claimed it as their country. He rarely left the area during a lifetime of ninety-six years and had an intimate knowledge of it when engaged by the new owner, Major G. M. Richmond, in 1910. It was a contract that was to last sixty years during which time a close bond developed between station owner and station hand and their respective families. The relationship was indeed unusual – all the more so when Aboriginality was a factor.

Not far away at "Bangate" station on the Narran River my mother was born – the younger of two children of Liza, an Aboriginal woman at the station and the Scottish bookkeeper, John Finlay McCrae. At a very early age she began working there as a domestic servant on the property owned at the time by a Mr Langloh Parker. His wife, Katherine, had a close affinity with Aborigines which undoubtedly stemmed from being rescued from drowning as a child by her black playmates. She learned the language of the Yuwaalaraay people on whose country "Bangate" was situated, collected their stories, studied their customs and was perhaps ¹ "the first white person to write exclusively of Aborigines as fellow creatures".

When my mother and father came together they chose to settle at "Currawillinghi" because it had strong family connections and meaning. As a small child I have memories of Baagi (grandmother) living with us and her

chatter in the "lingo". She was an accomplished fisherwoman and set off, smoking a bent stem pipe, with bait, a sugar bag and the lines she had herself made, to a favourite fishing hole. When the fish seemed to lose interest she picked a handful or two of clods from the riverbank and threw them into the stream, which caused the kids to say "Baagi womba" as we questioned her sanity. But she rarely came home empty-handed, and we learned much later what science had to say about this strange behaviour. The old lady was still steeped in the ways of her people and led us in pursuit of bush tucker – porcupines, quandongs, wild honey and other products from the open space supermarket. We learned many of the ways and customs, which were often practised at home and left behind as we entered the wider community. The speaking of Yuwaalaraay was not encouraged away from the immediate family and even invited chastisement if

spoken at school. Because of poor language maintenance and as the family dispersed – for whatever reason – much was forgotten, and it approached extinction.

None of the old people, including my mother and father, had any formal schooling. This was strongly related to government policy, which quickly directed young Aboriginal boys and girls to work as station hands and domestic servants. Education for them was considered superfluous and public schools most times refused to enrol them. Even so, the benefits of schooling were realised and my parents made a concerted effort to get us the education available at the time. Initially it meant walking six kilometres from "Currawillinghi" through the scrub to Hebel State School and back again each day – rain, hail or shine. As time went by and money became available, a house was purchased in town. It was arranged that my eldest sister, Sarah would care for those of us of school age and "send them to school". I do believe that as well as simplifying matters for those of us concerned, it was an open demonstration by my parents to those who carried out these policies of how well they could house, clothe, feed and school their offspring. It was certainly a good insurance policy against "The Welfare" who were a constant threat in removing Aboriginal children from their families and of whom we were forever anxious.

By the time I'd turned six, Sarah was relieved of the supervisory role and my mother took charge. Though small in stature she was strong and tireless. As well as caring for her own family she took in washing and ironing, and often walked several kilometres to clean house for others.

I have great memories of this period – carting wood and water for home consumption in a two wheeled cart built by my father, fishing and hunting escapades, making fish and animal traps, collecting scalps of birds and animals considered by farmers to be a threat to livestock, learning to swim in the gullies when the flood waters came, and the evenings when the town kids came together to put on their very own fun programme. It was also a time when every family member, no matter where they were or what they were doing, came home for Christmas.

Towards the end of 1942 my father left "Currawillinghi" to manage another out-station for G.M. Richmond. It was not far away from Goodooga in New South Wales – some 40 kms from Hebel. The family soon followed, again setting up house in the town and carrying on as before. It was another place, quite stratified, with very little overt fraternisation. The references to Dagos, Chinks, Indians and Boongs reflected the thought climate and attitude to those of us who were different. Living in such an environment we developed a sort of double consciousness. At home the Aboriginal world was secure. Out there it was uninviting and sometimes hostile. The light in the darkness, for me anyway, was the local schoolteacher, Mr McKinnon. He instilled confidence and made learning fun. I guess he saw in me some academic promise, and after meetings with my parents and older family members, it was arranged that I sit for a State Bursary Examination. I clearly remember that Wednesday in November 1944, because all the other kids had a school-free day while I alone, with the Principal and the supervisor, attended the serious business of examinations.

During the summer holidays of 1944, we received a congratulatory telegram from Mr McKinnon as he holidayed in Sydney. I had become a State Bursar! This entitled me at the time to fifty pounds a year financial assistance towards secondary education from the State Government. When the idea of staying on at school was broached, our family had no concept of the education system beyond the village school. With the help and perseverance of the good teacher and other kindly townsfolk, the path to secondary school was now sealed.

The lead up to this epic journey was perplexing, exciting and apprehensive. Up to this point in time I had never been away

from my parents and family for even a short period of time, nor travelled further than 80 kilometres from where I was born. Now I was about to be caught up in a wide range of new experiences without the support always taken for granted. It began with a new port, new clothes, new shoes, plenty of advice about how to conduct myself, but very little about the practicalities of this new venture. Nobody knew and nobody was coming with me.

The day came only too soon when the sad farewells were said. Mother pinned a ten-pound note into my pocket and gave me a piece of paper with the address of the place where I would stay as I attended Dubbo High School. At the time it was the nearest "full" high to the Queensland – New South Wales border, drawing its students from places as far afield as Brewarrina, Bourke, Cobar and even places just over the border. Reluctantly, I climbed onto the truck, which took me to Brewarrina from where the next day the train would take me to Dubbo. It was all very emotional.

In Brewarrina I stayed at the house of a friend of the family. At 8.00 am a taxi took me to the railway station where I was to have my first affair with trains. The problem of buying a ticket, where to sit, how to get something to eat en route, how I'd know when I reached my destination were matters for discreet inquiry and keen observation. I later came to the conclusion that when the chips were down even a shy kid can learn a lot in nine hours. Needless to say it was an exhausting experience – frightening and fearfully lonely.

Having survived the train journey and been safely delivered to "Lilrose" 134 Bourke Street in a cab, I enrolled at Dubbo High School the following day. Having come from a one-teacher school, the size of the place was something to be reckoned with and there was so much to learn about specialised classrooms, school organisation and other matters of routine.

As a State Bursar I was placed in the "A" stream, which was maintained throughout five years of secondary education. My academic performance was consistently good and I gained selection in the school's athletics and football teams. It seemed I was free of the many difficulties I'd encountered previously and still being felt by the Aboriginal students in the school situation. And there were other committed teachers like Mr McKinnon, the most memorable of whom were "Nippy" Ward, the football coach and maths teacher, and Graham Charles Shaw, the all-wise Principal. It was also my good fortune to be elected Prefect in 1948 and School Captain the following year, by my peers.

Throughout this time at High School, I continued to be "home sick" and took

every opportunity to travel the long distance to be with the family – sometimes even for a few hours. It was their strong support, their encouragement and their confidence that I would eventually succeed that kept me focused and determined not to disappoint them. Consequently I matriculated and accepted a Teachers' College Scholarship to Wagga Wagga Teachers' College.

The selection process for teacher trainees involved going to Sydney and fronting up for interviews at the old Department of Education building in Bridge Street, at Sydney University and for medical checks in Macquarie Street. Although it was my first encounter with "the big smoke" it was nowhere near as difficult as taking those first steps away from home and family. In the interim some important survival skills had been acquired. By the time it was time to set off for Wagga Wagga and teacher training, going it alone was second nature.

Wagga Wagga Teachers' College was a co-educational live-in college operating from what was formerly an Air Force hospital. In spite of its tertiary status students tended to be organised and treated as juveniles. It offered a two-year Teacher's Certificate course in General Primary, Infants and Small Schools Method. Lectures were conducted non-stop (except for a lunch break) from 9.00am to 5.00pm, five days a week. Assignments were freely dished out by lecturers who thought their own speciality was the most important. The communal dining hall was set up for First and Second Year students in tables of eight (four females, four males) and presided over by a large representation of academic staff. The kitchen staff were not renowned for their culinary skills. Someone suggested that Student Allowance at the time of nine pounds, five and sixpence a month was the only reason what was served up was consumed. Sitting at my table in my final year of study was Ruth, whom I eventually married.

Following graduation, our teaching careers began in 1952 with Ruth being appointed to the Corrimal Inspectorate and myself to Mendooran in the Mudgee Inspectorate. In January 1955 we were married in her hometown, Cowra, after some resistance to a mixed marriage. The situation resolved itself after a time when it was realised what a shallow argument it was and what firm personal beliefs were held by the main players. Also in early 1955 I was transferred to the South Coast Region where we both worked in schools until our respective retirements. In 1968 Ruth became one of the first Teacher Librarians appointed in New South Wales government schools, continuing that role for the rest of her teaching career.

Meanwhile I worked as assistant teacher and subsequently Deputy Master, Assistant Principal and Principal until leaving the teaching service at the end of 1990. During this time I had managed to undertake some University studies and courses in Ceramics at Wollongong and St George TAFE Colleges.

For about eight years from 1959, Ruth's career in teaching was put on hold to take care of our two sons until it was time for them both to start school. Both eventually became students at the University of New South Wales in the Faculties of Law and Surveying, and have since done well in their chosen fields. From them we acquired six delightful grandchildren, balanced and bright with an interest and pride in their Aboriginal heritage, and a healthy attitude to life in general.

By the time I retired from the teaching service I had worked in schools for 39 years. It had been many things for me – challenging, annoying, exciting, hard work, but most of all rewarding. It was also rewarding in another way also. In the 1991 Queen's Birthday Honours I was awarded the Public Service Medal for my contribution to Education in New South Wales – in a roundabout way a thank you from those who were forever making my job easier than it would otherwise been. I continued to work in the field of education after exiting schools from the pre-school to University level. I wanted to share any pearls gathered during my inroads into Teachers' College, University, TAFE, and even the School of Life.

At the same time there was the opportunity to continue the learning process through involvement with the Ceramic Society, with Wollongong City Gallery and with issues relating to Aborigines in general.

Both Ruth and I have seen and learned much from travelling in this great country of ours, stopping at the best motels, in caravan parks, and camping in tents under the stars. We have traced the entire coastline of Australia and criss-crossed the land to see some of the world's most awe-inspiring places. It's a beautiful and generous country. Little wonder that Aboriginal people all over come under the spell of its magic.

In November 2001, I returned to "Currawillinghi" Station with my son John and my only surviving brother. The large complex that had in its day ². "police constable, border inspector and saving bank official" was also a privately owned sheep station. According to an Annual Report in 1881, it was a property of 243,080 acres running many thousands of sheep. As a child living there I remembered the numerous buildings and structures, not all being utilised then, but

obviously a legacy of those former times. Like the large family that I came from it had wasted away and showed the effects of passing years. I seemed to see the spectres of Baagi, of my parents, of my brothers and sisters long since gone, who were all an integral part of the place when I was growing up. And I thought when that special time comes for me; it would be great to be with them again, in that very special place.

1 Introduction by H. Drake-Brockman to "Legendary Tales" by K Langloh Parker

2 "Hebel Hallmarks – A Local History", Mike Whitcombe

Vic Chapman (1950-51)

EDITORS' NOTE :

In the new Educational Complex at Dubbo a Walkway has been named Chapman Walkway to honour Vic.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO TALKABOUT

The Committee wishes to acknowledge with thanks, those alumni who have contributed more than \$10 since the publication of the last Talkabout.

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Allan Thomas Buckingham
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Frank and Margaret Catt
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