

A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS

# TALK ABOUT



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## Brian Powyer - a Community Contributor

The chapel at Macquarie Park Crematorium on Tuesday 19 November overflowed with folk honouring Brian. The midnight hours had seen him tapping away at his computer keeping up with his huge involvement and commitment to the many organisations and committees in education and his great love, history.

As a principal he served at schools such as Hoxton Park, West Ryde, finishing his principalship at Winston Hills PS. He also served as an Acting District Director and in 2003 joined the DOE as an Assistant Director in the Curriculum Directorate, retiring in 2007.

He was Secretary of Retired Principals Association, keeper of all data for that Association, Executive on Stewart House Board and his work with the Institute of Chief Educators and the Retired Institute of CEO's was tireless.

As President of the National Trust, he was an expert on Colonial History and so involved in Parramatta's precincts, guiding historical walks and petitioning for the preservation of its Colonial structures.

Debbie Mills, CEO of National Trust was working with Brian on the strategic plan for National Trust's future. She saw him as intelligent, committed, a good guy, progressive President who loved a chat. He had a 'glass half full' approach to life. He leaves a void in each of these organisations and will be sorely missed.



## Brian Powyer, 25 July 1948 - 12 November 2019

Brian, a Bathurst boy, was the first born with his Dad a train driver. He is survived by his Mum, 93. Brian credited his dedication to work in life to his Dad's commitment and his Mum's belief that you can do anything. Typically he had Henry Street, Bathurst as the playground for the local family boys and maintained lifetime friendships with them.

He enjoyed sport and was an accomplished tennis player, winning a Sporting Blue at Bathurst High

School for tennis and hockey.

Brian met his wife, Lorenza when she was a practice student from Alexander Mackie on his class in his first year of teaching at Granville, 1968. This enriched Brian's life as her Italian family became incorporated in the family.

Their son, Nathan was born in 1977 and Brian became the bowler to his son and the scorer on the sideline.

Brian was the collector of ducks

and has a collection of top chart LPs from 1954 to 2005.

In October he organized a special event to celebrate Lorenza's birthday.

He loved Christmas, Santa and all of its paraphernalia.

He was a great counsellor to his daughter, Alicia, born in 1979 and a doting Poppa to his two grandchildren.

## Across the Secretary's Desk - Lesley Forbes



Elaine Saunders (1962-63) - Many thanks for another very interesting & informative "Talkabout". An interesting coincidence, last Wednesday at our Kiama Seaside Probus meeting three ex-students of WWTC, Les Davey (1949 - 50), Elaine Saunders nee Hardy (1962 - 63) & Garry Funnell (1967 - 68) enjoyed the guest speaker, Gerda Keast nee Hendriksen who also attended WWTC in 1960 - 61.

Bob Jackson (1966-67) - Currently my wife and I are visiting family in Wagga. My grandson graduated from year 12 Koorringal High. We saw him start kinder in Old Bar, so we had to see him finish. I mentioned Graham Keast. Graham's wife was great friends with my wife at Goulburn High. It is always interesting to drive past the old college buildings, bounded by a new housing estate and nearby juvenile justice centre. Looks quite sad these days. Wagga station has changed in colour scheme and there are no rattler dog boxes any more. I will endeavour to scratch my brains more in the future and send some more thoughts.

Ella Keesing (Redpath 1950-51) - Thank you for your efforts in get-

ting the news out. Congratulations on 50 years of marriage! It is indeed special.

I have just been awarded a Distinguished Service Award from AGOSCI at their conference in Perth. I'm flying up to Sydney in the morning but will try to write something about it before your next edition, if it's of interest. AGOSCI is a national organisation concerned with Severe Communication Impairment. I wrote an article for *Talkabout* some time ago about moving from Primary Teaching to producing books based on Key Word Sign.

Chris Fox (1968-69) recently had a fantastic trip to Ireland for the British Open with a teacher friend and then visited Greece and Turkey.

Bob Muir (1952-53) - Firstly thank you all for the latest edition of "Talkabout". I always enjoy the nostalgia which is generated. Jennifer Brack's poem inspired a great chuckle. I don't think that sort of mateship exists any longer. Perhaps it's because our standard of living is so high that we don't have to share our chewing gum now - don't even have to park it behind an ear or under the desk! It was great to read about Leslie Gordon Young. I fondly remember sparring many rounds with "Youngie" but I only ever won one bout. At the beginning of 1953 he persisted in referring to Stalin in the present tense. He was somewhat nonplussed when I asked if he didn't know that Stalin was dead or was it simply because he was using last year's lecture notes? Though she nominated me as our session's worst singer Chris Sterling was also one of my favourite lecturers. No wins there!

Kevin Stone (1968-69) - I have been meaning to let you know of the death of my dear wife Anne (nee Pavey) who died in Canberra on 9th June this year. She had metastatic breast cancer for more than three years but managed to be up and

about with only two days in hospital. Anne taught at Cobar and Tumbarumba High Schools in English/History and later taught casually at Cattai, Cooma, Crookwell and Goulburn. Anne trained at Newcastle University 1974-77. The funeral service was held on 18th June at St Saviour's Cathedral Goulburn. "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, God has prepared for those who love him." Our children and spouses, James & Ali, Kate & Pete, Ben & Katrina and Nicholas & Caroline and 10 grandchildren: Caleb, Isaac, Laura, Jessica, Emma, Fiona, Jenna, Lachie, Henry and Annabelle will miss her dearly.

Message regarding Wilhelmina (Billie) Andrew (1947-49) that she is confined to bed and unable to read etc in Marora Lodge, Waratah, from her cousin.

Margaret Priest (Smith 1957-58) - My husband Sam (Bryan) passed away on the 31st July this year. We met at WWTC in 1957-58 and had been married for 57 years in August. Twenty years ago just when we were about to retire he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, so it was a long struggle with the disease but fortunately I was able to care for him at home till he passed away. Our 2 years at Wagga was a wonderful time of our lives and our friends from those days are still close friends today. Our memories are to be treasured.

Just a quick note to let you know that Dad (Bob Hagan 1951-52) passed away on Monday 9 September after a long battle with cancer. His funeral was at the Goulburn crematorium at 2pm on Monday 16 September. I have been clearing up some of his stuff and found his stack of *Talkabout*. He was obviously keen to keep abreast of WWTC goings on.

Liz Meertens (Tuttlebee 1961-62)  
Delighted to hear your 50th wedding anniversary trip was a great success.

Before I had had the opportunity to open the last *Talkabout* my good

friend Bernie Body, nee Skinner, told me she had spotted Karel and myself in a photo on the front page. A great surprise!  
The Winter season has arrived, not

so much in regard to temperatures, but more in the line of activities meaning less gardening to do and hopefully inspiration not only for art but also to compose a piece for *Talkabout* !

## To Ski or Not to Ski - Gordon Bruton (1959-60)

In 1955 I decided to go to London and, with help from the Teachers Federation, I was given a position at Hartley Boys Primary in East Ham, an hours travel by bus and train (naturally, I was living at Earls Court!). I enjoyed it immensely: about the equivalent of our Third Class. It was some time before I found out that the boys thought I went home to Australia each night!

I arrived at the end of September, so it wasn't going to be long till the Christmas break. Being mid winter, the break was only for a week, and I was going to need two weeks for a planned trip to Norway (decided on by some friends I'd made on the boat going over to England) to learn to ski. The Headmaster very kindly agreed to my having the extra week away. After an enjoyable trip across the North Sea (dinner gave us our first experience of Smorgasbord), we arrived in Oslo and were put on a train to Lillhamer (years later to get the Winter Olympics), arriving about midday. There were about seventy of us, taking over the local Youth

Hostel. We had a quick lunch and were all anxious to get out onto the snow as it would be dark by 3.30. Unfortunately those of us with big feet had to wait till next morning for our snow boots to be made. So a few of us (the big-foots) decided to go down into the town-ship.

The mother of my friends from the trip over slipped on the icy step of one of the shops and broke her ankle. She spent her two weeks watching the rest of us going out onto the snow each day!!

We had lessons from 9.30 to 12.30 each day, and were then free after lunch to plan our own activities. I enjoyed being a bit more daring each day, going further around the hills. I had plenty of falls but only once did I start to panic: I fell over with the skis pointed in the wrong directions. My hands felt (or rather UNfelt) so cold that I had great difficulty in loosening the skis to be able to stand up. I felt that I would probably quickly freeze to death.

My time wasn't up - someone had

noticed my predicament!

The practical tests of our progress in learning were scheduled for the day before we were to leave Lillhamer. We were allowed three attempts at each exercise. I was managing to scrape through until we had to descend a steep incline slowly. First try: get ready, go -- bottom of the incline! Exasperated look from the instructor motioning me to the end of the line for repeats.

Second try: get ready, go -- bottom of incline! This time I felt I could see the instructor put a line through my name as he directed me to the repeat line. Third try: get ready, deep breath, go -- an absolutely perfect slow descent! I GOT MY 'DIPLOM'!

The point of my story is that, for the first time in my life, I found what it felt like to be at the bottom of a class. I think that skiing trip taught me more about how to be a good teacher than the two years at college and the five years of practice that I had already had. My 40 years of teaching gave me great satisfaction. I hope it did likewise for my students.

## And on Gordon Young - David French (1953-54)

I was especially interested in the article on Gordon Young. As a member of the Student Christian Movement, who were often invited to the home of Gordon and Margaret Young, I got to know him personally. This led to spending many weekends, travelling the Riverina with him.

Gordon was the voluntary representative of The British and Foreign Bible Society (as the Bible Society in Australia was then known). Hence, in a small van supplied by

the BFBS, deputation visits were made to towns throughout a wide area speaking in many Churches. However, the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Riverina would not permit a "rabid Baptist" to preach in Anglican Churches. Through his deputation work Gordon had met my parents in Tumut, so he asked me to travel with him and speak in the Anglican Churches.

Armed with a "To whom it may concern" letter from the Anglican Archdeacon at that time Secretary of the

BFBS stating that I was an Anglican in good standing, I then accompanied Gordon on numerous deputation trips. It was an incredible privilege and valuable experience for a 19 year old. I also got a lot of diving experience.

On one trip we were returning along the Murray River towards Albury on our way home and came to Howlong. Gordon said "Let us do some colportage." He explained that to be door to door selling of Bibles.



I don't remember selling any, but I well remember a huge woman who answered my knock and offer with

a drawled "No thank you; there's nothing new in the Bible." When I

told this to Gordon, his response was an Old Testament

## Where is Euston...John Kjeldsen (1952-53)

At sixteen I had passed the Leaving Certificate twice but had not achieved highly enough to get me into university to study veterinary science which was the only career I had ever considered. In the isolated community where I was raised the store keeper was the most educated person and he arranged an appointment for me at the Department of Education because he believed I had a suitable disposition to be a teacher.

The interview in Bridge Street was my first brush with bureaucracy and it was a real eye opener. I was given a form to take to the doctor who acknowledged me with, "God, another teachers' college student." I was then told to strip while he ticked off the form saying, "You wouldn't have had..." At no stage did he ask for a response from me. Then without leaving his chair, he commented, "You look pretty fit to me. Take this form back to the front desk."

I was then directed to another officer who asks a number of inane questions before saying, "You have to be able to sing the National Anthem." I am tone deaf so my rendition was cut short with the remark, "That was bloody awful but those shiny bummed lecturers are overpaid and under worked so they can teach you to sing in tune!"

Before college the only sport I had played was a few games of tennis and social contact with the fairer sex had been minimal so my time seemed to suddenly be taken up with sport and girls, leaving little time for study. On reflection, I am not proud of my efforts at college and I was fortunate to pass, especially as both Neville Latham and Chris Stirling had informed me that I was wasting my time sitting for

their subjects as I had already failed.

By the last week in January 1954 I had not received a posting so I rang head office and was told to report to Euston but they could not tell me where it was located. The only added information was that it was in the western districts.

On a map I located Euston on the Murray between Balranald and Mildura so I caught a train to Hay and then set out to hitch hike the rest of the way. Soon a semi-trailer driver picked me up and the countryside was a real revelation. The unsealed road was a series of tracks between two fences half a mile apart. The only vegetation was stunted Mallee; telephone poles were around twelve feet high and there was not a house to be seen and the country was flat. Soon we caught up to a flock of emus and the driver wanted a half grown one to eat. So we chased the flock up and back along the fence line until they were exhausted and I was ordered onto the running board to tackle a young emu. Mission accomplished with the emu in a box, we proceeded to Euston.

Euston was a small but central school and this was the first time that a second teacher had been appointed. Somehow no-one realised that a second teacher required a second classroom, so I taught in the weather shed for all of first term and three weeks into second term. Coincidentally, the week after I moved into my classroom, I received my only written notice to report to Euston forthwith.

One of the local publicans gave me full board for three pounds ten shillings a week and I didn't have to pay during the holidays. It was six

o'clock closing and at a quarter to six, the local policeman lined up for his daily ration of free beer. The bar closed promptly at six but at seven thirty, the back door opened and a large influx of drinkers from Robinvale, across the river in Victoria, arrived and stayed until ten. The only time there was early closing was if a fight erupted. Every night I would work behind the bar and was told recently that I am remembered for that.

Playing tennis, cricket and AFL for Euston was good fun but there was not a lot of talent available. Despite my lack of talent, we played semi finals in the football each year as there were only four teams. There were a few aboriginal players in the team and I found them really good company.

Bill Mahon was the principal and it was his guidance that set me on the track to become a competent teacher. There were plenty of challenges: I was eighteen and there were sixteen year-olds at school but somehow, I managed. A few Italian pupils provided their own challenge. The girls attended every day immaculately dressed but the boys were dressed in patched up clothes and were absent whenever there was work to be done on the farm. The principal would send me to see the parents when the boys were absent for too long. I would be greeted with a box of grapes, watermelons etc with the promise, "Mario will be at school tomorrow." Mario would be at school the next day but then he would be needed on the farm.

At the end of the year my girlfriend was distressed because she didn't have a partner to take her to the Graduation Ball on the day before school broke up. I hired a small years as a commercial traveller, the

lege and booked a cab to pick me up at 5 am. After the ball, I joined some of my ex-football mates in one of the dormitories and we consumed amber liquid and played cards all night until my cab arrived. For some reason I was rather seedy when I arrived back in Euston, breakfast had no appeal and a shower did little to revive me.

It was about a hundred and ten in the water bag and I battled through until lunch time but I knew after lunch, I couldn't stay awake. I gave the kids a heap of magazines with coloured pictures, cardboard, paste and scissors and told them to cut out the pictures and paste them on to cardboard. In seconds, I was asleep and stayed that way until a little girl woke me at a quarter to three because a boy had cut off the end of her plaits.

I was soon wide-awake, faced with disaster: one boy had a haircut resembling a Mohawk, others had lost tufts of hair, most had paper stuck on them. A frantic clean-up got the room in order and at three fifteen, I gave the kids an early mark. The boss roasted me for this but that was better than him seeing the chaos. I was fairly apprehensive when I returned the next year but not a

word was said.

Following Euston, I taught at two one teacher schools – Bulgary (the worst year I have experienced) and Pearson (absolutely terrific) I had a dispute with the Department – technically I was wrong but morally I had no qualms, so I resigned. After two years as a commercial traveller, the department wrote inviting me to resume teaching and guaranteeing a spot in Wagga.

Two years at Forest Hill was rewarding and then I had five wonderful years in a one teacher school at Downside before being transferred to Wyong High School to teach maths. As I had dropped maths in second year at high school, this presented a problem but two teachers would teach me one week what I would teach the kids the following week and this worked surprisingly well.

After five years at Wyong, I was posted to Wagga High but the principal and I didn't get on so the next year I became one of the foundation teachers at Koorringal High School. A new school with mostly young teachers and very limited resources turned out to be very rewarding as everyone pulled together and pupils

and parents were great.

At the beginning of the second year the principal resigned so the deputy became the acting principal and I became acting deputy. An inspector told me that this was the first time a teacher without even list one was appointed acting deputy for a year. There were many challenges in this year but it was really rewarding. However, the relationship between the acting boss and me exploded on the last day of school so the following couple of years had some tense times. I was given list one but resigned to teach at Mt Erin for five years but then my marriage was collapsing so I resigned.

Later, Angie and I married and we moved to Dorriggo where I ran a dairy and sold real estate for Moy and Darby. After surviving a pretty horrific tractor accident, we had ten years on a dairy farm at Mooroopna before returning to Wagga.

We have retired on seven acres and I breed finches, show chooks and grow orchids. I have written a book of poems and seven novels. Despite a few health problems, I can still do most things that I want to and am blessed with a happy marriage.

## From Gerard Say (1963-64)

Merv OLSEN, a fellow 1963-64 General Primary student at WWTC, provides a *memoire* of Gordon [Leslie Gordon] Young and his distinctive approach to immersing us in SOCIAL STUDIES. Perhaps out of respect for Gordon's strong faith-commitment to evangelical Christianity, Merv, however, does not mention that our popular name for one of Gordon's key teaching-aids was his *psalm-cards*.

I first came across Bob Collard about 1968 when I found myself responsible for organising the *PSSA Athletics Carnival* for the *Fairfield Zone* within the Liverpool Region. Later he transferred from Lansvale East to Principal of Chester Hill North PS where I had been a staff-member [1968-1970]. In retirement, I worked happily with Bob as our Chairperson on the *Talkabout* Committee.

Henry [Harry] Gardiner was one of my English lecturers at WWTC. It was good to read his tribute to his wife Margaret. Over the years I met Harry at various Conferences, especially in Educational Administration [*Leadership*], while he held leadership roles at Goulburn Teachers College [now the *Police Academy*], at Riverina CAE and then CSU

## Teaching Snippets - Barbara Bryon (Stewart 1964-65)

When I left WWTC I was posted to a school at Colyton – which wasn't even in the *Gregorys* back then! But I found it, found a place to board and rode my scooter to work each day from Blacktown – out in the scrub those days. As a baptism of fire I had a Greek boy in my kindergarten class who wouldn't look at a female teacher, let alone listen to her. He did his own thing which mostly consisted of trying to ruin my teaching life. I often wonder what he grew up to be! I certainly avoided Kindergarten for the next 40 years.

I spent the first 3 years of my teaching career replacing women who were on Maternity Leave, but who had to return to their school before the Xmas holidays to qualify for holiday pay. So I missed the Xmas activities with the class I'd had all year. Though I did manage to make it into the class photos each year, because it was a different school each time, it was only years later, looking back at the old school photos, I noticed I had the same dress on in each photo. Talk about poorly paid!

From Colyton to Auburn -- middle class and very Anglo in those days. I was there for almost a year (again) and didn't meet the Principal once. Infant schools were separate in more ways than one. I got sent home to change in my first week for wearing a pants suit. Very very short mini skirts were ok, but not a far more respectable pants suit. As for leaning over Infants' desks: I avoided it wherever possible and we spent lots of time on the floor. In my second week I was given stockings to wear to save me having to go home to change again. Thank goodness it was actually pantyhose. I assume the men all had to wear ties, but I didn't see any men there so I don't really know. Imagine enforcing that dress code today. I moved to a flat in Granville, right by the bridge where the infamous Granville Disaster occurred. The

wreckage dominated the view from my window for days.

From Auburn to Redfern – not the Redfern we know of today. I didn't see an Aboriginal student anywhere in my time there. It was very much working class and would be called low socioeconomic today. I certainly didn't walk around alone at night, but there was no night life anyway, except for numerous pubs. And no self-respecting 'lady' would go into a pub. I think I was about 45 before I overcame my upbringing enough to actually go into a pub. All those years of missing drinks in the pub after work? If that culture actually existed it didn't happen anywhere I was.

When I started out it was accepted practise that single people found a place to board, usually with a widow who needed the extra cash. I started off with a college friend in Blacktown, then boarded in Carlingford with a family connection, then in Glenbrook I found a tiny 2 room flat. It was such an adventure to be living alone in my own space!

Then off to Granville to share a flat, but sharing was disasterville so I moved to Carlton then on to Ashfield. I changed flats more often than I changed schools, which is saying something.

From Redfern to Rand. Time for life in the country and back to basics. A two teacher school and I had 38 students in my lower division. I made the population rise to 99 and a local farming family took me in. I hit a cow with my scooter in my first week.

It obviously took time to acclimatise, but I was used to coming off because any gravel patch in the city I found and the scooter got used to heading off by itself. Time to trade in old faithful. My Honda 120 had certainly served me well. It was a 2 day

trip from Sydney to home in Narrandera which I did each school holiday. But it only cost 50c to fill up. The truckies were really friendly; I'd pass them going uphill and they'd reciprocate going downhill. The trucks have certainly changed these days! I wore leathers and must have looked the part pattering away because I actually got turned away from a motel in Yass. What a badge of honour. I had a favourite rock by the roadside out of Harden that was a perfect spot for lunch with a view and I give it a salute each time I pass it today in my Subaru BRZ at well over the speed limit.

So I found a VW that suited my personality by covering it in big yellow sunflower stickers (remember it was the 60's after all). I always said the 60's didn't hit Narrandera till the 70's.

The roads were pretty bad around Rand which is west of Albury so in the first week of driving my 'new' car I broke the windscreen twice while travelling into Albury. The windscreen bloke laughed because he thought I was a city slicker with no idea of country roads. Probably correct.

It seems that most of my adventures happened during my 'first week' but that's not totally true. I think maybe I was a slow learner, which helped me relate to my students wherever I was so it wasn't really a negative. Then again, if it was only in the 'first week' then I was a fast learner!

Tennis was the sport of choice for life in the bush and every tiny village had courts. A great way to meet the locals, who weren't really that local after all, and when it became obvious I could really play I was 'in'. Rand was suddenly on the map and the young farmers discovered an interest apart from football. The teacher before me had married a local so apparently it was on the cards. Didn't happen, but I had a lovely time anyway. My landlady was a true farmer's wife. She had a shrivelled hand that was caused by being bitten by a King Brown when she reached into the woodheap.

The snake stayed attached and as she couldn't shake it off she had to find the axe and chop at the snake. By the time she got to Albury hospital it was too late for the hand but at least she survived. No-one knew a limb could suffer from shock.

From Rand to Coleambally, the newest town in Australia at that time. My classroom was the kitchen of the local hall and in summer the chalkboard was actually nailed to a pine tree. The streets were too narrow to do a u-turn, the ubiquitous tennis courts were well established and with a fellow teacher I found a shed to live in. The farmers all grew rice. Until they made enough money to build a house, they lived in the end of their machinery sheds.

So our accommodation was an unlined shed on a farm out of town. Lucky I still had my flowered Beetle to get us around.

During our time in Coleambally in our unlined shed house we survived a mouse plague, a grasshopper plague and frogs. Frogs who loved the toilet and the shower, who came back night after night; who were slimy and slippery and unattractive, but beautiful, compared to the mice. Mice lived in our drawers, our cupboards, our clothes and our car. They ate our food of course but also the wiring in the shed in the car and in the tractor. We would be eating dinner and casually hit a mouse with a thong as it ran across the room. There were thousands of them and the rice farmers really

suffered. Then the grasshoppers brought out the evangelists who talked of the Bible plagues and what we had done to deserve this. Grasshoppers love the colour green. Green anything. They ate our green jumpers and t-shirts, our socks, tea-towels and curtains, bath towels and shower curtain. Anything that had a touch of a colour remotely related to green. And once again the rice farmers suffered.

But the social life was great and as young teachers we didn't really appreciate what the farmers were going through.

That's my first five years of teaching. Life certainly changed after that.

## Excerpts from *Talkabout* Oct 6, 1947

### "Talkabout"

In choosing "Talkabout" as the title for our College paper, we have adhered as closely as possible to the College policy of utilising aboriginal names wherever applicable.

Before the coming of the white man to this Continent, the word "talkabout" did not exist to the vocabulary of even the most literal aboriginal tribes but, with true Australian initiative and foresight King Billy soon recognised the value of an international language and thus, among others, the word

"talkabout" was coined.

Thus, we have chosen a title which can boast direct royal lineage - nothing less than a titled title.

On going to press we feel that we have a link with the past, and that we have captured something of the subtle significance of a mighty and undying soul. We can hear, too, in reading this, the insistent voice from King Billy's grave which seems to be saying, "Bi cli, dat pretty good."

We hope that you, too, in reading this,

our pioneer issue, can feel the presence of our royal patron, and that, if you are successful, your thoughts will be of him and his white brethren of the First Fleet, honoured ancestors of so many of our political leaders, teachers and lecturers.

We give you "Talkabout" in reverent memory of its royal originator, who departed this life well over a century ago. "Gone but not forgotten."

CHARLIE CHAPPEL

### Student Representatives

The following students, elected by popular vote, constitute the members of the Students' Representative Council

President, Mr. Murray Millar

Vice-President: Mervyn Whittaker

Treasurer: Ian Thomas

Secretary: Maureen Lane

### Section Representatives

Section 1: Noel Fletcher

Section 2: Paul Rees

Section 3: Margaret Grahame

Section 4: Jack Gleeson

Section 5: Mervyn Whittaker

### Club Representatives

Debating Club: Gwen Roberts

Evangelical Union: Don Boyle

Hobbies' Club: Billie Andrews

Horticultural Club: Arthur Smith

Musical Society, Little Theatre Group and Library Club: Kein Quinn

Social and Recreational Club: Ian Thomas

Sports Union: Doreen Manwaring, Ruth Johnston, Alen Nilon

Visual Education Club: Ed. Rascal

Writers' Group: Charlie Chappel

Mathematics Society: Bill O'Sullivan



## Farewell, Dobbo - Peter Dobson (1958-59)

Survivors of Ipai 1958-59 were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Peter Dobson, following a long battle against illness. Peter was one of those who met his future wife, Wendy (Hindmarsh) at college and the couple lived most of their lives in the Kiama area.

Peter followed another Ipai man, Geoff Tasker, as a Sports Organiser and this commenced a remarkable period when Peter had a profound influence on school sport.

As one report said, "Mr Peter Dobson is synonymous with the New South Wales Primary Sports Association and in particular the Sport of Swimming. Throughout his career Peter Dobson championed the significant role that school sport plays in a child's education."

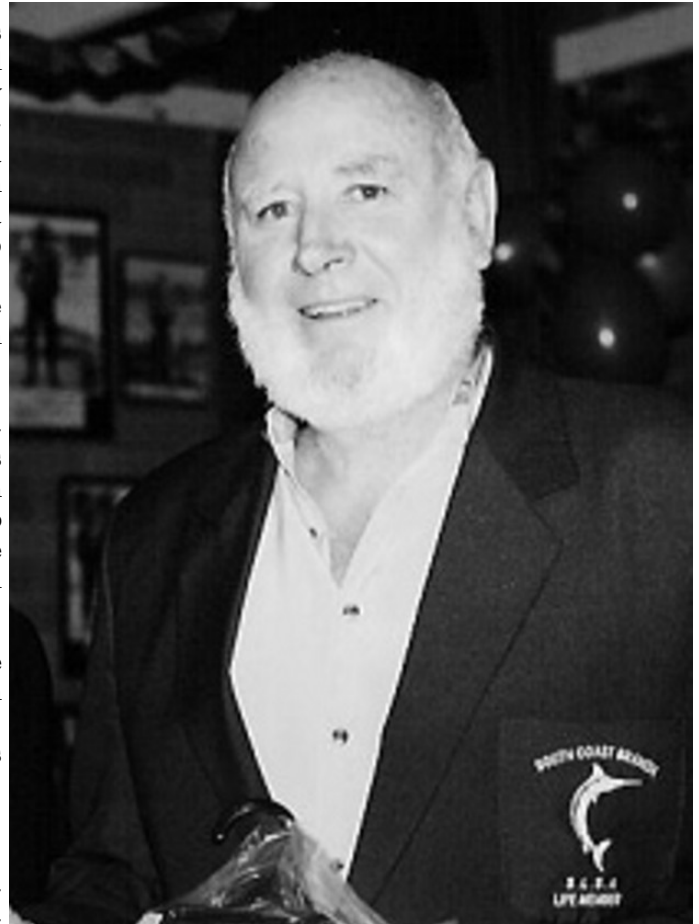
In a remarkable record, Peter Dobson was the NSW Schools Sports Association Swimming Convener for a staggering twenty-seven years. Peter's name will live on with NSW swimming because the trophy for K-6 schools with enrolments between 25 and 54 has been named as the "Peter Dobson Trophy". His name has also been preserved in a South Coast SSA award for the outstanding individual performance each year. Peter also served as the National Swimming Convener and was honoured to take a schools team to China as its manager.

Peter, in addition to his contribution to school sport, is a legendary figure in local life-saving. He has been a member of the South Coast Branch of Kiama Surf Life Saving Club for nearly sixty years, during which time he has contributed through competition, administration and training. Peter continued to patrol until he felt that his physical condition would not permit him to do so effectively, but he still remained involved by manning the radio.

Peter was made a life member of the South Coast Branch in 1995, in recognition of his enormous contribution.

Perhaps the most dramatic event that involved Peter was the tragic incident at Kiama in 1992, when seven people died after having been washed off Shag Rock, near to the Kiama Blowhole. Peter and the Lifesavers were actively involved. Acting as a spokesperson, Peter "acknowledged the expertise and commitment of all involved and also added that he was pleased to see the tremendous support those involved gave each other as lifesavers."

Peter added comments that the area could not be made safer by fencing it off.



He said that common sense and education were the answers to problems of this type.

In some ways, Peter was fortunate in being able to spend so much of his life working in areas that he enjoyed and in which he was gifted. It is, however, important to recognise that his contribution to these areas has been a massive one, marked by extreme energy and dedication. His achievements are already legendary.

## Grandparents' Roles - Gillian Madgwick (1955-56)

I imagine there are fewer of the 55/56 etc left. Janet Ingram is down the South Coast Laine Langridge has migrated to near Lismore to escape rather bitter winters in the Adelaide Hills and Anne is in Perth but recently vis-

ited Laine. My grandchildren range in age from 26 to 7 and I have been doing reading groups at the school where the 7 and 8 year old attend for the last few years. I retired at 72

then was an acting magistrate for another 3 years and then have been fully retired for the last 6. I am fully occupied with taking the children to and from school and looking after them until their parents come home.



## Vale: John Cassidy - his daughter, Joy

The first child of Fred and Eileen, John was born on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1945 in Brighton, U.K.

He was baptised Frederick after both of his grandfathers and John after Fred's father. Fred returned home to be "demobbed" and Eileen and John arrived in Melbourne on board a bride ship, the "Athlone Castle", a converted troop carrier, on Easter Saturday 1946.

They travelled to the family dairy farm near Gundagai. Of course, John was a very good baby.

In his early years Fred and Eileen had a succession of small corner shops. John could remember sitting on the awning of the shop at Ashfield and eating Monte Carlos. John's brother Brian was born and the family moved to Sans Souci (which is French for "without care").

Here John attended the convent school. The nun in charge, Mother Sebastian, was referred to as Mother Basher for some reason.

In 1955 the family moved to Harris Park and John started at Marist Brothers, Parramatta. His sister Joy was born and John completed secondary school, gaining a scholarship to train in Wagga for two years. On graduating he was appointed to Macksville. After a happy year on the North Coast he was appointed to Tarcutta. When he told an old lady he was going there she said, "Oh, I didn't realise they sent people OVERSEAS".

In 1967 he resigned and went to work as a lay missionary on the island of Kairiru near Wewak. The boys he taught were a constant delight. After two years on "Paradise Island" he returned to Sydney and spent four years teaching intellectually disabled children.

In May 1974 he was appointed act-

ing deputy principal at Deniliquin at Deniliquin North. In 1980 he travelled to London to teach on exchange in Tottenham for a year. One of his duties was coaching the soccer team. He couldn't fathom the rules and blowing the whistle when a fight started did not work. He re-



turned to Deniliquin for a year and then had a year on a new housing estate near Campbelltown.

John joined the Catholic Schools system in 1983 and was deputy at St Anthony's, Girraween for three years. He taught Year 2 at Smithfield for a term where some of the Year 2 mothers came to Assembly to verify that the new teacher was a man. He then worked at All Hallows, Five Dock. He moved on to teach at Benedict Junior College in Lidcombe from 1988 to 1991 and then at St Margaret Mary's Merrylands. He resigned from there in 1994.

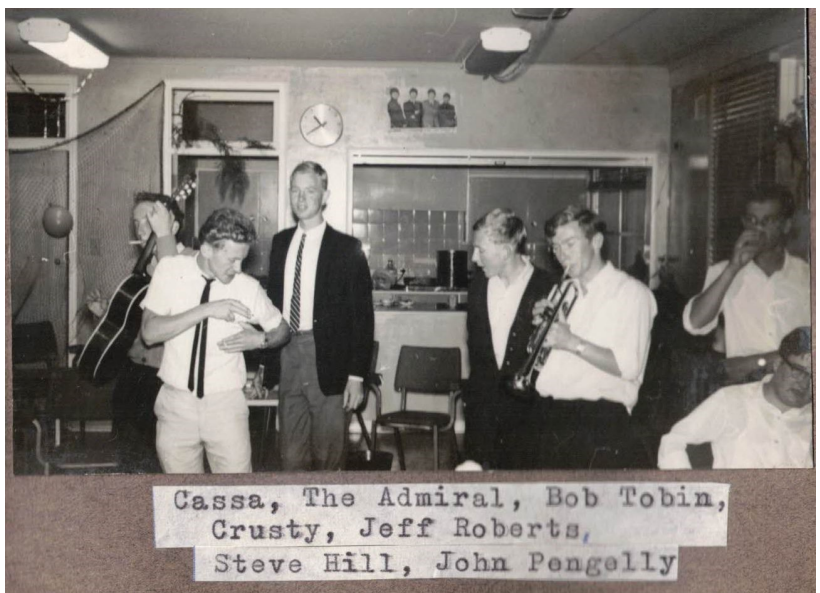
In 1995

he began working at the Register of Encumbered Vehicles call centre until his retirement in July 2007.

John's next four years were dedicated to the care of his elderly mother Eileen at their home until she entered John Woodward Residential Aged Care in 2011. John continued to spend every day visiting and caring for Eileen until her death in June 2013.

John moved into Gilroy Village on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2014 where he made many new friends and became an acolyte, a role that he loved and took great pleasure in. He became a pastoral carer as well and his days over the last five years were spent caring for others and being an important part of his community.

John was a kind person and a loyal friend. He took such pride in his teaching as in all his other activities. His time at WWTC held a special place in his heart and he remained in contact with several friends from his time there. John was a rare combination of generosity of spirit and dry wit, always an astute observer of life. He will be sorely missed and fondly remembered by his friends and family.



## Kabi Girls 1957-58 - Lyn Stewart (Gould)

It is 60 years since the cohort of the 1957 Kabi Dorm began teaching.

Twelve young women began their careers in various parts of the State and then were led along diverse paths. Some followed promotion paths, others taught overseas or in different institutions.

The bonds established during the WWTC years were not broken, and we have all kept in touch either directly or via shared contacts over the intervening years.

As family commitments and teaching loads decreased we have been able to meet together regularly. We have been fortunate that geography has helped, all but one lived either in Sydney, South Coast, Southern Highlands and ACT. So almost annually for the last 20+ years we have shared a meal together, along with husbands, often in the Southern Highlands.

Over the last few years our numbers have fluctuated: three others who began at Wagga in 1957 have joined us, Jenny Reynolds (Smith) and Barrie and Wilma McNicoll, and after Wilma's death Barrie has still shared with us; Bev Baulch (Sear) lives on the North Coast and can't always make it, although when she does visit Canberra, she catches up with some of the mob; Leah Woolf (Meyers) has not been well enough to travel, she too meets up with those who live in Sydney; Bev



The Kabi girls - Graduation Day

Woolley (Parker) died several years

ago, but her husband Mike still keeps in touch and comes along when he can.

So this September 16 folk gathered at Eling Forest Winery to share, chat, enjoy each others' company, and celebrate 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays with a cake. The 9 Kabi-ites present were Liz Morrow (Cunningham), Marg de la Garde, Di Mason (Scot), Aileen Dillon (Phillips) all the way from Melbourne now, Pam Piper (Platt), Jan Goodall (Dinnerville), Anne Nutt (Foster), Janice Hodgson (Matthews), Lynette Stewart (Gould).

We know we are fortunate to have shared community life and gained career skills in quite a different era, to continue to be engaged in many areas over the 60 years and to still enjoy the opportunity to 'catch up'. It was thought this year might be our last reunion, but the consensus is 'not yet'!

## From the President - Bruce Forbes

*Talkabout* is our Alumni journal even though the physical buildings of its genesis have been significantly obliterated.

The sudden shock-passing of our editor, Brian Powyer, is yet another powerful reminder of our fragility. Brian has been an integral member of our committee since he succeeded Lindsay Budd in this role as *Talkabout* editor in 2011. He will be sadly missed by his family, his communi-

ty and his peers in education. This edition is a little late impacted by recent events, including the fires which have ravaged NSW and led to the cancellation of November's quarterly meeting.

**Note the accompanying information about the Southern Highlands social get together in March.**

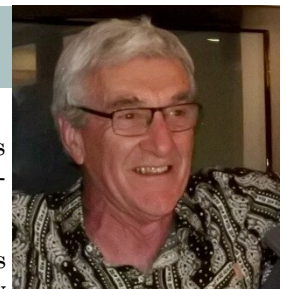
Please enjoy this abbreviated edition and keep sending your stories,

snippets and messages.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We definitely need your stories to fill the editions in 2020.

We look forward to ongoing contributions.



## Vale: Betty Punton (1948-50)

Betty Punton (1948-50) from West Wyalong has passed away. She was a stalwart of her town winning many local awards and recognitions. And serving locally as an educator over her long teaching career.



# Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association

*KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE IN 2020 TO SECURE THE FUTURE*



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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

### MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

To ensure the continued financial viability of the Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association the following membership contributions and services will apply from 1 January 2020

#### a) Electronic Membership:

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

#### b) Standard Membership:

Receive all information and three (3) printed copies of *Talkabout* via standard mail.  
\$20.00 p.a.

In addition to either Electronic or Standard Membership members may choose to make additional contributions from the options below.

#### c) Additional Contributions:

- general donation to the Alumni for ongoing projects e.g. digitise archives from \$10.00.
- specific donation to the WWTCAA Scholarship Fund from \$10.00.

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