



A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

# TALKABOUT



Volume 10 No 2

July 2007

## THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH . . .

The September Reunion not only marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wagga Wagga Teachers College but also the tenth anniversary of the formation of the Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni Association.

In that time the Association has achieved its goals, the renewed contact with all alumni through the regular production of Talkabout, the successful establishment of the Scholarship Fund which has already provided Scholarships for five years, the production of "Teaching Memories", the encouragement of Session reunions, and the WWTC display in the Riverina Museum.

It has been decided to take up the suggestion by Professor David Green, Head of Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga Campus, that we consider including Charles Sturt University Teacher Graduates in our Alumni Association.

A meeting was held with an Alumni delegation and a C.S.U. delegation and a proposed constitution has been formulated. The new title would be Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association.

The decision for the proposed changes will be discussed and decided by members of Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni Association attending the reunion at Wagga Wagga in September.

There are to be great benefits from such a proposal. As all members of our present Association will have retired by 2012 our membership will continue to decline until the last one of us drops off the twig.

If our members decide to accept Professor Green's suggestion then our work will be carried on.

The Scholarship Fund has reached \$55,000, and if we close it at \$60,000 our perpetual W.W.T.C. Scholarship is secured.

With the addition of 10,000 graduates from the Wagga Wagga Campus since 1975, the proposed objective to build an Education Cottage at the Wagga Wagga Campus as a lasting memorial to all teacher graduates from Wagga Wagga seems distinctly possible.

The cottage - comprising eight bedrooms, two bathrooms and shared kitchen, laundry and common room, costs approximately \$400,000 to construct.

The University will underwrite the cost of construction so that the cottage can be built at the start of a ten year period. With the donors reimbursing the University over time, 10,000 members each contributing \$4 per annum over 10 years is \$400,000.

.....Something to think about!

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW

The publication last July of the photo of the 1951 Australian Rules team created such a great interest we have decided to go with another one of the same vintage. Thanks to Geoff Gorman for contributing a photo of the 1951 Soccer team. It may also generate some interest.



*Malcolm Hanratty, Bob Campbell, Col Simms, Geoff Gorman, Frank O'Sullivan, Phil Bastick  
Gordon Schliebs, Peter Herden, Peter Howard, John Woodger, Bob Hagan*

## 2007 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



*Ann Harris*



*Carolyn Scott*

Four eligible applicants were interviewed for our 2007 Scholarships.

In assessing applicants for a scholarship there are four aspects to be considered: Scholastic Rating (C.S.U. Results Sheet), Self Evaluation (Student), Needs (Hardship or Disability) and Interview.

Once again the interview committee of Karen Jamieson, Roger Clements, Graeme Wilson, Malcolm Hanratty and Lew Morrell, was impressed with the high standard of student talent.

Two applicants were outstanding and both are studying for the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Honours Degree.

Ann Harris and Carolyn Scott have each been awarded a \$2,500 Scholarship in their final year.

Ann Harris gained 9 High Distinctions, 11 Distinctions and 3 Credits.

Carolyn Scott gained 1 High Distinction 14 Distinctions and 8 Credits.

We feel that these students will be a credit to the teaching profession.

## From Ann's Mailbag



Hi everyone. Yes, I am still looking for "lost" souls. With help from some of you more and more ex-students are being found and placed on the Data Base. The trouble is that more people are moving house and they forget to notify us of their new address.

Well done to those who let us know about deceased members. Let us see if we can find more before the Reunion at the end of September. **Ann Durnan** and **Karen Connolly 71-73** were two who came up with some of these.

As we get older more of our colleagues are passing on. This time there were six from the 47-51 Sessions. See In Memoriam.

Here is a list of some of the people who were found since the February meeting. **Raymond Anscombe 68-69**, **Doreen Angove nee McPherson 58-59**, **John Brewerton 60-61**, **Marcia Cheyne 50-51** who met up with **Jan Walsh's** husband, **Ann and William Durnan 71-72**, **Loretta Dagg 71-72**, **Ross Leany 61-62**, **Trevor and Beverley McGregor 68-69**, **Ross Vaughan 66-67**, **Mary Rule**, **Noeline Trotter 1965**, and **John White 56-57**.

An apology! One of my well meaning colleagues told me that **Raymond Markey 66-67** was a Professor at Wollongong University, I put that in the last Talkabout. Now he is a professor at Auckland University of Technology.

Recently **Shirley Salter nee Morcom 49-50** had a catch up coffee with two special friends **Barry Michell 50-51** and **Alan Roberts 50-51**.

She revived fond memories of college days with lots of laughter and fun. She

sent thanks to me for making the get together possible. **Barry** would like to meet more from his session. This was the second time I had traced him.

**Helen Crossweller nee Young 62-63** thanked us for all our hard work for the lazy exstudents. She loves reading Talkabout but won't be able to attend the reunion.

**Col Yarham 48-50** sends us greetings from a very warm Chennai in India. He is still very busy involving himself in the Health Education Program for children. There are 14 million in the State Education System.

Geoff Walsh wrote to say that he always enjoyed reading his late wife's Talkabout. She was **Janice Parker from 60-61**. He has joined us as an affiliate.

**Marion Fox (62-63)** who died in Wollongong was one of the "found" ones. **Dorothy Hall nee Sturmer 60-61** moved to Queensland. **John Breerton 60-61** and **John White 56-57** both sent me their address.

**Pat Limon 48-50** died last month. He was very popular in Narooma. Thanks to **Ann Durnan** for letting me know. **Bob Kirk** notified that **Molly Vidgen nee Darrington 50-51** had passed away.

**Doreen Angove nee McPherson 58-59** can't come to the reunion as she will be attending a wedding in Adelaide.

**Michelle Webster** notified us that her mother **Lyn** passed away on the 10<sup>th</sup>

August 2005 and her father on 14<sup>th</sup> February this year.

The Alumni were well represented at **Christel Wangmann's** funeral.48-50.

I hope to meet some of you at the reunion but this will depend on my health.

I hope that you will have a great reunion and that a lot of your friends attend.

It isn't too late to remind them.

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### In Memoriam

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

David Dillon-Smith  
lecturer 1948- ?

Helen Mary Eady  
nee Coddington 1948-50

Patricia Dawn Eady  
nee Hoare 1948-50

Patrick Basil Limon 1948-50

Christel Wangmann  
nee Cox 1948-50

Dorothy (Molly) Vidgen  
nee Darrington 1950-51

Lynette Joan Webster  
nee McPherson 1959-60

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# LETTERS PAGE



*Barbara Lane, Don Learmonth, Kath Noonan*

## COLLEGE MEMORIES

To the Editors,

I have just subscribed to Talkabout but have read a few previous copies, I have enjoyed reading the reminiscences, particularly of Dawn's account of life at Bourke, John Rummery's time at Pooncarie and John Bourke's weekend detention of a pupil which was a classic.

Here are a few reminiscences of college days:

George Blakemore was responsible for the well being of all students and in attempting to curb what he perceived as being too close a contact developing between sexes, he tightened rules rather than encouraging students to be mindful of personal responsibility and self discipline. As a result student resentment grew, culminating in a protest demonstration that palpably unsettled the principal.

The idea which spread like wildfire, was to enter the dining room, eat our lunch and leave in silence and for the whole lunch period only the clatter of crockery and cutlery was heard, it was a silent but dramatic manifestation of student discontent.

Our biology lecturer, a good natured person, had difficulty at times in holding his audience and so there was some restlessness in his lectures. In talking about moths and butterflies he intoned that the Wanderer butterfly was found in an area stretching from America to Australia, a wag asked could the butterfly make it in one flight.

On another biological occasion, to defeat the tedium of lectures, it was decided that at a precise moment we would as one, raise our hands to ask a pre thought up question, the timing was perfect, every hand shot up waving eagerly, every face clearly showing a commendable thirst for knowledge. The prank took up the rest of the period, the lecturer urging us to be patient as he would attempt to answer every question.

Still in Biology, slides were on the program and comfortable positions were taken up, some sitting or reclining on the floor; as the slides progressed a column of smoke suddenly curled up from the floor and drifted through the

Dear Ann and Lew,  
I was delighted to meet up with John Shields (1953-54) when exhibiting at Inverell Art Gallery this year. He was in my years at College and in the same Section 5. His first appointment after finishing College was to a one teacher school in the Inverell district, Wallangra Public School. He is well remembered and regarded in the area. His resume is enclosed together with a couple of photos.

I am also enclosing a photo of myself with Don Learmonth and Kath Noonan. We are all members of the Inverell Delvyn Bridge Club and have fun competing and socializing together. This information may be of use in your Talkabout Publication which I enjoy and read from cover to cover.  
Regards,  
Barbara Lane. 1953-54

**LIFE MEMBER AND PAST PRESIDENT OF THE MACQUARIE TOWNS ARTS SOCIETY.  
EXHIBITING MEMBER OF THE NSW ROYAL ART SOCIETY.  
LIFE MEMBER OF THE BAULKHAM HILLS ART SOCIETY.**

John Shields received tuition at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College (1953-54). Except for this tuition he was self-taught, looking for his instruction to the works of such well known Australian artists as Gruner, Streeton, Heysen and Robert Johnson. Their influence can be clearly seen in his work.

The main characteristics of John Shields' work are 'atmosphere and light.' His main interest is endeavouring to capture the varying light effects of the Australian landscape, be it the fog or mists of early mornings, the harsh shimmering heat of mid-day, or the glorious glow and heat hazes of the afternoon. At all times he tries to capture the subtleties of the Australian atmosphere,

He has numerous art prizes to his credit and his work is included in many private and public art collections in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, South Africa, USA and Western Germany, His work is exhibited in many galleries in NSW and in his studio gallery.

Address: "Rosemount Lodge",  
174 Francis Street, Richmond, NSW.



**JOHN SHIELDS**  
*Traditional Artist*

**FELLOW OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HISTORY AND ARTS**

# LETTERS PAGE

projector beam, someone had lit up a Rothmans.

One of the students had procured a cartoon by Joliffe entitled "Lassiter's Last Ride", it was graphically lurid and definitely not for publication but was brilliantly funny. As the word got round there was a steady beat of feet to the student's room to view the prurient picture.

Then there was the Great Bromide Affair. Rumour had it that to combat rising testosterone levels, bromide had been added to the milk which was contained in a large steel jug on each table. It became a ritual for one of the boys to pour a glass of milk, bring the glass to his lips, his other hand raised with the forefinger pointing to the ceiling. As he drank, the finger slowly curled down and by the time the glass was empty, the finger was pointing at the floor.

We were told that art extended beyond the drawing of a bowl of fruit but it was with some scepticism that we grappled with the thought that through art we could express our innermost feelings and emotions. Our first attempt at abstract art was therefore a challenge, the title was Music in the Wind and it had most of us scratching our heads, frowning the brows and looking upwards for a glimmer of inspiration.

One student looked downwards at the floor in despair and found his inspiration. He was wearing what was known as a Swanee Yankee tie, a flamboyant fashion item that featured swirl patterns in eye catching colours and he surreptitiously copied his tie pattern onto the art paper. The lecturer fulsomely praised the student saying that the theme had been captured and suitably expressed.

Come the final exams and one of the questions in Art was to develop our own ideas in innovative house designs, one student described the concept of electrically warmed toilet seats but the lecturer thought the answer frivolous and I believe he failed the student. The student has since been vindicated, his idea was ahead of his time.

Barry Michell (1950-51)

## WWTC REUNION 1961-62 November 2006

*Dear Lew,  
Eventually a follow up from the 1961-62 reunion held November 2006 on the Tweed – the committee only had a 'get together' very recently ... hence the delay.*

*Enclosed is an article I wrote for the reunion (slightly edited) which you may wish to use for Talkabout.*

*Best wishes,  
Barbara Deece.*

### Looking Back in 2006 to WWTC 1961-1962,

The sixties had just began. Bob Menzies was in The Lodge, John Kennedy at the White House and Richie Benaud was captain of the Cricket team! And Australia held the Ashes! The queen was on the throne very prim and proper !!!

During our time at WWTC, the Berlin wall went up, Morris Iemma was born, and somewhere in Liverpool UK a few young 'would be' musicians were strutting their stuff. Chubby Checker was doing The Twist and a young Elvis Presley, Ray Charles and Johnny O'Keefe were playing on our transistors - if we had one! Dawn Fraser, Murray Rose and Rod Laver were household names on the sporting pages. The 'Empire Games' were held in Perth.... Not that we noticed! We ate trainsmash, meat 3 veg, custard and jelly. And during "pracs" we taught seven year olds to read "Gay Days".

The meagre allowance we received was in pounds, shillings and pence... and as for teaching long division in the old currency! Thank goodness for the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1966!

We had never heard of Vietnam, the country, let alone the war, conscription or moratoriums. And as the sixties progressed we saw the man land on the moon on our little b&w TV sets. Most of what happened was brought to us each evening by James Dibble on the ABC news at 7pm. Or by Graham Kennedy. Many of us travelled "overseas" either to the UK or to Canada by ship and thought we were SO sophisticated and "knew it all"!

The seventies brought us colour TV, Gough, 'It's Time', Norman Gunston, Cyclone Tracey, Germaine Greer, Dame

Edna, Paul Hogan and ABBA. And a BIG EVENT in Canberra November 1975. Half a lifetime ago!

The eighties remind of us of the America's cup, Bob Hawke, high interest rates and Azaria Chamberlain.

Eventually we were all grown up, had careers, relationships (what were they?) families, kids, mortgages, good times and bad! We've travelled the world .. spread far and wide. Maybe many thousands of young Australians (and English and Canadians etc) are better people for having been taught by teachers from the class of 1962. I hope so.

Fortunately, we also learnt a few things along the way (many taught to us by the kids we taught as well as our own !) and a few new words crept into our vocab: .... technology, terrorism, environment, retirement, plasma screens, mobiles, superannuation, Thorpedo, Iraq, Makybe Diva...

It's great to be alive! ....and have such great memories!

Barbara (Todhunter) Deece 11/11/06  
Slightly edited April, 2007

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### ALUMNI RECOGNISED IN QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Awarded an AO:

**Mr Donald Malcolm Talbot, OBE,  
Currumbin Waters, Qld.**

For service to swimming, particularly through the development and implementation of innovative coaching programs.

Awarded an OAM:

**Mr Ralph Richard Bryant, Norah  
Head, NSW.**

For service to the community through the Rotary Club of Toukley and the Central Coast Festival of the Arts.

Don was in the 1951-52 Session.  
Ralph was in the 1949-50 Session.

Congratulations to both Alumni.

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# LETTERS PAGE

Dear Editor,

I have just received a copy of the March edition of Talkabout and I think editor Lew was looking through the mists of time with rose coloured glasses when, in his editorial, he enthuses on the effectiveness of our teacher training. Lew writes that the college was dedicated to producing top line teachers and that Wagga produced some of the finest teachers in the Department, well no one ever left any college capable of being judged thus, though the potential may have been there.

Perhaps I was not paying enough attention in lectures but the course, while it had its practical subjects was of little help in the real world of coping all day, five days a week with large numbers, multiple classes and varying standards.

The fact is that we didn't cope, we weren't anywhere near to being effective and anyone who thinks otherwise was kidding themselves, it was only through teaching over a period of some years, in many situations and all the while developing our philosophical ideals that we began the long process of fully understanding the challenges and our responsibilities and so evolving the skills necessary to becoming an effective teacher.

I resigned but returned in the 60's, then I did five years relieving then had twenty years on 6th class on every one of 4 levels. The experience of five years relief teaching and from being on the end the primary production line for twenty years as well as from pupils transferring from other schools, convinced me that there were, and no doubt still are, many ineffective teachers in the service.

And the Teachers' Federation claim that after three years of probation teachers were professionally qualified was absurd.

Barry Michell (50-51)

Dear Lindsay,

Ray Fielder sent me a letter reminding me about the quite unexpected win we had in the Rules comp and asking for a photo.

Naturally, I've managed to lose his letter and, after much frantic searching, I'm hoping that you might have his address and will be able to forward the attached photo on to him.

I do remember the victory celebration after the final. We were upstairs on the verandah of a pub down towards the bridge. Beer was in short supply and I skulled a bottle of something that I thought was a different brand called Froveen? Proveen?

Half-way through the second bottle I read the label and realised it was a wine type with an alcoholic content of something in the order of 14%. Things became slightly hazy after that.

What a lot of pleasant memories I have of those days.

Regards,

Tony Morley 1950-51



Dear Ann,

Re Janice Anne Walsh (Nee Parker)  
WWTC 1960-61

As you have previously been advised by both me and my sister in law Carol Taylor (nee Parker WWTC 1962-63 I think), my wife Jan passed away on 6 April 2006. In fact, Jan's death notice was published in the last 2006 edition of "Talkabout".

Just a note to say that the publication of Jan's death in Talkabout led to contact with Marcia Cheyne (nee Watling) who shared a dormitory with Jan way back in the early 60's. I think Lillian? (I suspect the Lillian Chapman nee Davies mentioned in "Ann's Mailbag" in March) was heavily involved with Marcia in tracking me down. I had a wonderful letter from Marcia followed by a couple of email exchanges - turns out I worked with Marcia's husband at BHP Port Kembla in the early 60's. Small world! Jan's mother and sister have also been in contact with Marcia

who lives in Thirroul NSW. All part of the grieving process for us. Jan is still on the mailing list for "Talkabout". I don't know what your rules are but I really enjoy reading the publication - particularly Teaching Memories - and I would like to continue receiving it. I think the subscription is \$20 per year and I am enclosing a cheque for that amount.

A brief history of Jan post WWTC. Jan's first appointment was at Kangaroo Valley followed by Warrarong then Woonona all on the NSW South Coast. We met whilst Jan was teaching at Warrarong and married in 1967. In 1969 I was appointed a BHP Special Cadet which meant travelling around most of BHP's sites in Australia for 6 months. Jan secured an appointment at Mark's Point on Lake Macquarie whilst I was in Newcastle and finished her teaching career there in late 1969. We then visited BHP sites in Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. A pregnant Jan and I arrived in Melbourne on 1 December 1969 for 6 months - and spent the rest of our life together here! Jan never went back to teaching - mainly because of her devoted role as a mother of 3, possibly because Jan was 2 year trained and one had to be 3 year trained to get into the Victorian education system. We have 3 great children and 4 terrific grandchildren. Jan's skills as a teacher never left her - with teaching aids she would have learnt at WWTC she taught our 3 children to read /draw etc etc long before they started school. Jan also delighted in "teaching" the grandchildren. We visited the old WWTC site a few years ago - a pity to see it looking so run down.

Ann, I am enclosing photocopies of a few of the many photos Jan had of her WWTC days. In some cases Jan recorded first names - but not surnames - in others not. I am a little reluctant to send you originals unless you have a real interest in some of the photos - perhaps for your 60th reunion. Let me know.

Keep up the good work - as I said above I enjoy reading Talkabout - being from a small country town (Jamberoo) myself I can sympathise with some of the stories about first teaching posts post WWTC. Kind Regards,  
Geoff Walsh.

# COLLEGE MEMORIES

The following are excerpts from *WWTC COLLEGE AND TEACHING MEMORIES* which was compiled by the late John Riley.

The first is by Christel Cox and the other two are memories of George by Dr Vic Couch. Ed

## GRAND ENTRY TO COLLEGE



The thing I remember most about my days at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College (apart from the cold weather) was the ordeal of getting there and home again for holidays. We used to live on a farm forty miles from Walgett and nine miles from Lightning Ridge. The Walgett Road was probably one of the worst in Australia — rough and dusty in dry times, and impassable after rain. In those days the train came to Walgett three times a week.

My father didn't want me to go to teachers' college. He said he had enough money, and that I should stay at home and help my mother, and eventually get married. His idea of helping mother was cutting burrs, mustering sheep, helping with the shearing, dipping, and lamb marking. He did finally relent, however, said I could go, and signed my bond. The day I wanted him to drive me to Walgett to catch the train he found he had to do some work on the farm, so I had to wait for the next train. I had to catch this train to Central, then another to Wagga, to arrive two days late.

When I finally reached College, Griff Duncan met me at the office. He said the students were having dinner, and escorted me to the dining room door. "Just walk in and find a place to sit down," he said. "Don't worry if the students stand up and clap. They often do if you come in late."

I opened the door, tired and dirty from the long trip, and walked in. All I could

see was what seemed to be hundreds of students sitting at tables covered by white tablecloths. For some reason I started to worry about having left my silver serviette ring (with my initials engraved on it) in my case.

As I stood there, nervous as could be, a tall, thin young man came up and asked me to sit at his table. He said they needed another girl. His name was Barry Jackson, and I sat at his table for the next two years. He carried on with sick jokes about chicken and marmalade, and sometimes made embarrassing comments, but we were rarely bored. To this day I have been ever grateful to Barry for rescuing me.

Christel Wangmann (Cox) 1948-50

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(Our highly respected former lecturer in Education, Dr Victor Couch, kindly recorded on tape a number of humorous experiences from his years at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College. Following is a sample.



## The Gem of Them All

I had been invited by Norm Donnison and the students to attend the football "do" at the end of the season - to honour the team for its successes and Norm for his great work in coaching the team. I was asked to say a few words. As it was an all-male affair, I thought it would be appropriate to tell the story about termites in the Northern Territory. The Wet Season was approaching and the termites had decided it was time to make a mound out of buffalo dung. They were making heavy weather of it because the dung, being too moist, tended to keep sliding downhill all the time.

So the foreman termite assembled all his workers and began gesticulating with his antennae. A termite from another colony was watching this performance. Intrigued, he walked over to the foreman and asked, "What's all

that about?"

The foreman replied, "I'm not sure I'm getting my message through to them. The signal I'm giving is 'Stop that BULLSHIT; stop that BULLSHIT'." I thought that would be the end of it, but when assembly came the following Tuesday and George stood up to speak, every man and woman student had their antennae up. George was flabbergasted and, of course, so was I. He could not understand what had brought on this remarkable reaction. I felt I had to tell him for his peace of mind that I had told the story, but not with any special intent.

Indeed, as I assured him, at my first lecture after the football get-together, a few of my students had their antennae up also!

## In Loco Parentis

Because Ian Renwick and I lectured in Psychology, George sometimes sought reassurance from us. He was concerned that, although he thought he was trying to do his best for his students, no matter what he did they criticized him.

He often pointed out in his addresses that he was "in loco parentis", and I assured him, "That's right, George, but you've got to remember that you're the father figure for both the men and the women students. You are getting the same sort of reaction from the students as any father would get from his late teenage son or daughter, but here it's magnified a hundred fold.

"And of course the relationship with the women students is a more delicate one, but nonetheless it's the relationship between father and daughter. With a daughter it's much more complex, because a daughter at one stage of development idolises her father, while at a later stage she hates him. And it's an extraordinarily complex situation."

At the next College assembly George stood up to propound on the matter. His outline of his role with the men went over all right. When he started to address the women he got a bit mixed up and said,

"I'm responsible for the condition of every woman in this College!"

# TEACHING MEMORIES

## UGANDA AND CAMBODIA

I have been very fortunate in my opportunities to teach overseas. This includes Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Britain, China, Uganda, and Cambodia.

I retired from the Education Faculty of Griffith University in 1989 and in 1991 I flew to Uganda as a member of the World Bank's Fourth Education Project. Uganda is a land-locked country in Central Equatorial Africa, bordered by Sudan in the north, Zaire in the west, Kenya in the east while in the south, it shares the vast Lake Victoria with Tanzania. Once a prosperous country, at the time of my visit it had not recovered from the depredations of Idi Amin who was ousted in 1979 when Tanzanian troops invaded the country. To add to its economic problems, it was wracked by civil war initiated by terrorist guerillas.

After flying to India by Qantas, I had to wait at Mumbai (Bombay) airport for a plane from Ethiopian Airlines that was to take me the rest of the way to Africa. In the terminal that night, I sat on a hard wooden bench for hour after hour, desperately swatting away at the clouds of mosquitoes that swarmed around me. Finally it was time to board a mini-bus that was to take us out to the plane sitting out on the tarmac some distance away. All the mosquitoes got on the bus with us, and then when we boarded, lots of them got on the plane as well and presumably some alighted with us when we stopped at Addis Ababa and again in Entebbe, the Kampala airport. During the flight, passengers protested, of course, to be met with a smile by the flight attendants – but no action. Apparently it was not unusual to give mozzies a free ride to and from Africa.

The Ugandan Education Department was very corrupt. This started at the very top with the Department's Chief Accountant. Teachers' salaries were sent out – very irregularly - to the District Inspectors who then *sometimes* sent them on to the individual schools. Headmasters customarily inflated their teacher numbers and the inspectors added in some more names, each keeping the extra money for himself when it came. The World Bank's conservative estimate was that there were at least 20,000 'ghost' teachers

throughout the country.

There is only one word to describe the state of the many rural Ugandan primary schools I visited all over the country. Appalling. Not one of them had a toilet or access to water, clean or otherwise. In some places, the teachers had abandoned their classes and gone back to their villages because they had not been paid for months. Where schools actually functioned, there was often no chalk, blackboard, children's exercise books or textbooks, and not infrequently up to a hundred children sat on an earthen floor in a windowless, thatched building or even under a tree. Moreover, many teachers were completely untrained. I recall one young girl attempting to teach the nine times table in English to a class of five year olds. None of them could speak a word of English, of course, and were just trying to memorise it by rote.

At the time, the country was in the middle of a guerilla war. In Western Uganda, the girls' secondary school that my colleague and I had come to visit had been burnt to the ground. We learned from villagers that after destroying the school, the rebel Lord's Liberation Army had raped and then kidnapped all the pupils. On the way back to the capital, Kampala, our Landrover was pulled up by an army patrol of stoned and very aggressive soldiers. Clearly we were not members of the Lord's Liberation Army, but that didn't stop them from strip-searching us and removing everything from the vehicle in a search for weapons. It looked pretty hairy for a while, but the situation was saved by the driver who passed around a packet of cigarettes, and they let us pass.

While this was happening, it didn't help to recall an incident concerning the last convoy of trucks passing along that same road under the protection of the Ugandan army. The army officer in charge had been riding in a vehicle somewhere near the rear of the convoy. Tired of eating dust, he ordered his driver to speed up and go up to the front. However when he approached the leading truck, its driver panicked, thinking that the convoy was under attack, and drove desperately to stop him passing. When the infuriated officer finally managed to get to the

front of the convoy, he stopped the leading truck, pulled out his pistol, and shot the driver dead.

When not actually in the field, we worked out of the Department of Education on the third floor of a building which had a lift, however the electricity had been cut off because the government had not paid the bill for some six months. It was rare for any senior officer to go out to schools because there was usually no money to pay for petrol.

Finally, when I was to leave Kampala to return to Australia, it looked as though I would have to overnight in Nairobi, Kenya. I was warned that I would have to present an *International Certificates of Vaccination* booklet to Kenyan Customs to show that I had been inoculated against cholera, smallpox and typhoid or be refused entry. I didn't have one, but that was no real problem, I was told by the Project accountant. The Project driver came to the rescue yet again. Asking me for \$US5, he drove me to a dilapidated government building and asked me to wait in the car. Shortly he returned with a photocopied booklet endorsed with all the inoculations signed by the Director of Public Health himself! All that remained was for me to write my name in the space at the front where it said "Issued to". As it turned out, all I saw of Nairobi was the airport, so I didn't have to present my forged document after all.

My next consultancy experience, which followed directly on from a six-months stint teaching the techniques of teaching and American Literature to a class of aspiring Masters students in Fujian Teachers University in China, was with the Asian Development Bank in Cambodia in 1994. This time, Shirley came with me. The goal was to train a group of 'super' educators who in turn would then revitalize the nation's teachers college staff. First, though, they would be taught English by another team of experts before our team arrived in the country. The only snag was that this didn't happen. The people who were to do this were incompetent and gave up six months into their teaching program. The second flaw was that instead of picking the best people for this group of allegedly superior teachers, politics intervened and the

# TEACHING MEMORIES

prime criterion for selection was active membership of Prime Minister Hun Sen's political party. The third flaw was that instead of people with teaching experience being selected, they consisted of bureaucrats and clerks from the Department who were only interested in making more money from the Project.

The curriculum 'expert', an Englishman, who was allotted to the team came with high credentials from the ADB, but was a great disappointment to me because he had the whole program mapped out before he came, based on former projects he had done elsewhere in the Pacific Region. He wasn't interested in tailoring this pre-conceived program to meet local needs, and we had a bitter falling out over it. I argued in my paper, which was to be part of the final submission to the ADB, that although it might have worked in Samoa, simply giving Longmans English textbooks to every child was not the answer, particularly as they and most of the teachers only spoke Kmer!. Classroom conditions were appalling, teacher training was poorly done, and consequently teachers had little idea of what they were supposed to be doing.

As in the case of Uganda, hygiene was terrible. None of the schools I looked at had a toilet or anywhere to wash hands.

What was badly needed was a freshwater well and a decent system of toilets in every school. Furthermore, mothers had little idea of health, and infants and young school-age children were frequently very ill and consequently attendance was often erratic. A completely different kind of education to the one being attempted was needed. However the ADB wasn't interested in rectifying any of these basic problems.

On a broader front, students were able to buy their way into university and also to 'pass' exams by paying off their lecturers, even in the case of medical students. At that time, the government was fighting the Khmer Rouge, the remnants of Pol Pot's genocidal regime. The KR had three strongholds: one in the south, one in the north on the Thai border and a big one in the west, again on the border with Thailand where they retreated when under duress. There had been a concerted effort to wipe out the northern base, and it was nearly done when the government pulled its weary troops out and sent in fresh ones to deliver the coup de grace under a general with his own private army. As was customary, this particular man had been collecting wages for his troops from the government, but in fact had no troops at all. They were all "ghosts"! The KR escaped, of course, but the interesting thing is that the general was

not indicted in any form. Whom was he paying off?

Just one last thing about Cambodia. Early every morning Shirley walked for exercise past the Palace down by the waterfront. It had rained overnight and the sun glinted on puddles on the road. As she made her way, she saw a man lying on the road, which was not unusual; poor people in Phnom Penh often slept outdoors like this. However this chap seemed to be lying in a puddle. When she got closer, she saw that it was not water at all, but a large pool of blood. His chest had been cut open by a row of bullets. Then, just a few feet away, she saw a soldier with a wild-eyed look holding an AK47 and staring directly at her. There was nothing she could do but hurry on.

Both these Third World experiences were extremely frustrating and left me with a very disillusioned view of both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank's efforts and success in improving education in the Developing World. When we returned from Cambodia, we decided that from then on we really would be retired and instead, spend time with our grandchildren.

It was a good move.

Nick Bricknell 1947-49



*Kevin and Win Wilcox, John Cummings, Clare Hopkins, Graeme Wilson*

## ALUMNI LUNCHEON AT ICONS

On Tuesday 15th May, 23 alumni congregated at the Marriott Hotel in Pitt Street Sydney for the quarterly luncheon at Icons Brasserie.

A few of the gathering including Lew Morrell, Lindsay Budd, Malcolm Hanratty, Kev and Win Wilcox, two Graeme Wilsons, Margo and Bruce Phillips, became thirsty on the way and stopped at The Ship Inn near Circular Quay for some refreshments. Everyone enjoyed an excellent buffet lunch and each others company at Icons. There were five Pioneers in the group which seemed a good enough occasion for a snapshot with the bar in the background.

The next luncheon is on Tuesday 21st August at Icons. Everyone is welcome. Call Lindsay Budd a week before.

# TEACHING MEMORIES

## CUMMERAGUNJA ABORIGINAL SCHOOL

### Part 3

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

#### Snakes.

Living along the banks of the Murray River in the Barmah Forest, you encountered a large number of highly venomous snakes. By far the most numerous being Tiger Snakes. In those days, the only good snake you saw was the one you were looking at over the barrel of a 12 gauge Shot Gun. In fact, killing snakes was encouraged, especially ones in or near the school grounds. One morning as I was riding to school, I nearly ran over an enormous Tiger Snake—over 5 feet long. I found a stick and dispatched it. I put it on the bike rack and rode on to school where I put it in a large jar. I borrowed some of the duplicator Metho and put it in.

When the kids came to school they told me all about the snakes they had encountered, around the settlement and inside their houses. They told me about all the different types of snakes that lived in the area. I said that if they killed any others, would they bring them to school and we would make up a set of specimens of different types of snakes. They all said, “Yes, Sir!”

The next morning I was inside preparing for the day and one after another of the children came in, reached into their pockets and pulled out a snake! By the end of the month I had a specimen collection which included the Tiger Snake, a Brown Snake, two different Black Snakes, a Tree Snake, a ‘grass’ Snake, (I never did find out exactly what sort it was!) and a legless lizard!!

I carried that collection with me for the next 10 years and only threw them out when the snakes started to disintegrate in the jars.

#### Swimming.

Even though the settlement was right on the river, many of the children could not swim, so I decided that Friday afternoon sport during Summer would be swimming. The only place to learn to swim was the river and there was a shallow bank right next to the school. There were two problems. To get there, you had to walk across about 100 yards of flat ground that was covered by the biggest cat-heads I have ever seen. The other problem was the broken glass in the river. The only way I could cope was to wear a pair of thick-soled Dunlop Volleys. The kids just ran straight through the cat-heads in their bare feet. When one stuck in hard enough to be felt, they just hopped on

one foot, brushed the cat-head off with a hand, and ran on! At the end of the swimming lesson, all those with cut feet from the glass went back to the school for repairs before they went home. I was absolutely amazed at the toughness of their feet. They had never worn shoes and had built up about a quarter of an inch of hard calloused skin under their feet. It took a large piece of glass to actually slice right through this tough layer. You would almost have to drill holes through it to stitch it. All I could do was pour on disinfectant, then Mercurochrome or Acriflavine, and bandage it up. The bandage fell off in a day or two and they just ran off happily, without any more treatment. They were tough little kids.

#### My First Car.

When I started teaching, I thought I was rich! During my training, I was paid, by way of a scholarship, 17 Pounds a month. Our accommodation and food were provided, so we could spend the money on clothes, sport, entertainment and teaching requisites. I was even paying off my Saxophone! (That was with what was left after you got past the ‘Fine’ table at the Pay Room. But that’s another story!)

My pay for my first year was 18 Pounds per week! I had to pay all my expenses then—board, clothes, teaching requisites and my monthly Saxophone payments!! My lovely girl-friend lived at Barham, about another 100 miles down the river. I could not get to see her much but my good friend Alby Ballard (see later in story) lent me his Volkswagen to go and visit Judith one week-end. He had just fitted a new motor and wanted me to ‘run it in’ for him. I had to stay under 60m.p.h. (100 k.p.h.)

By the middle of the year, I had saved up the required 100 Pounds deposit for my first car. My mate Alby and a mechanic friend of his invited me to travel with them to Melbourne to buy a car. We went to Kevin Dennis Motors. They rolled out several cars. The first one just made it round the block. The next one wasn’t much better. The third one, in comparison, was like a limousine. It ran beautifully, was clean, well looked-after and affordable! 800 Pounds! It was a 1957 FE Holden. It had been a taxi. The mechanic crawled in and out of it, peered in the motor compartment, under it and drove it round and round and declared it an ‘excellent’ buy! So I bought it and drove it home.

(We found that it had a worn out motor, had been filled with very heavy oil and the speedo wound back. Later on, my Uncle Bill and my father came to the rescue and put in a new ‘short’ motor. I then drove it 50,000 miles without any further trouble.)

I was then independent and could get myself to the football (I played for Picola Football

Club) the tennis (I played for the Picola Tennis Club) and most importantly, I could drive to Barham!!

#### Principal’s Meetings

Now that I had a car, I was able to attend the Principal’s Meetings at Deniliquin. These were always held after school as we were not allowed time off during school hours to attend meetings. I had to let the children out at 3.30 p.m., then drive like mad to try to get to Deniliquin by 4 p.m. I was always a few minutes late but that was allowed.

On my first trip, I was coming home and out near Mathoura, a truck passed me going towards Deniliquin. On the back was a pile of material from an old shed I think - beams, rafters, posts and a pile of old roofing iron. I continued on, at about 70 m.p.h., trying to catch the punt before it closed for the night. Next thing, the car suddenly became uncontrollable and I speared off the road and along the table drain with the brakes full on. I stopped in a shower of gravel and grass and when my breathing and heart rate had recovered, I got out to inspect the car. The front tyre was blown out, with a roofing nail still stuck into the tread. I was able to change it where it was, then drive the car back onto the road. Fortunately, I did not do any other damage other than a few scratches along the left-hand side where it had scraped the bank.

The next meeting was during winter and I knew that I would be late back from Deniliquin. I arranged with the punt operator to leave the punt on the NSW side of the river so that I could get back home at about 10 p.m. I duly arrived back at the river to find the punt back on the other side. I blew the car horn until it threatened to flatten the battery, I yelled myself hoarse trying to reach the punt man—to no avail. I tried to land a stone on his roof but could only reach the garden. The rowing boat was also on the other side. To get home by car would mean a 30 mile drive to Moama and Echuca, then another 56 miles up through the forest on the Victorian side to get to Barmah. Where I was standing was half a mile from the house!

Being very hot and bothered by this time, I stripped off to my undies, dived into the river and swam across. I thought of bashing on his door to tell him what I thought of him, but, with only a wet pair of undies on and freezing to death, I decided he could wait until the morning. I tried to get the motor to start but, you guessed it, it wouldn’t start!! I disconnected the chain, put in the winding handle and wound the punt across the river. The exertion to wind it obviously kept me warm enough—not to mention my renowned temper! I got back to the car, hastily re-dressed, drove the car on, and wound it back to the other side. I drove off home, had a hot shower and slept like a log.

# TEACHING MEMORIES

Next morning I was ready to throw the punt man into the river. When I pulled up, he stuck his head out of the engine room with a great smile on his face and said,

“G’day, Robert! I left the punt on the NSW side as you asked and waited up until I heard you come home at about 9.30 p.m. then went to bed!! (And went unconscious I thought???)

I told him of my night time exertions and he just looked at me dumbfounded. I told him to check out the number of stones in his garden! We found out later that one of the farmers had arrived, found the punt across the river and brought his car over and drove off! !

On another occasion, I had driven to Barham for the weekend and stayed over with the Davems, where Judith boarded. I decided to stay Sunday night, then get up early and drive back to Cummeragunja on Monday morning, in time for school. Great plan, but with only about 2 hours sleep, I was a prime candidate for going to sleep at the wheel! The morning was clear and warm, the road wide and smooth and I drove with the window down to keep awake. As I drove through one dip, I saw a large tortoise beside the road. I picked it up and put it on the floor of the car, intending to show the kids then let it go in the river. Of course it had pulled its head and legs in and just sat there without moving.

I noticed a movement out of the corner of my eye and looked down to see a sinister looking head coming out from under the shell. My immediate thought was that a snake had come out. I must have been looking at it and dozed off for a few moments, because the next thing I knew was the car bouncing about over stones and gutters on the OTHER side of the road!!!-heading straight for a solid wooden white post!

Being suddenly fully awake and with great driving skill, I ‘threw’ the car sideways back towards the road, then swung it forward again and the car straightened up and swiped beside the post, taking a bit of paint off the mudguard and bending the push-button door opener crooked! ! I was amazingly alert for the rest of that trip!

The final ‘episode’ with my car (Making me wonder if it was such a good thing to get a car) was on the way to Nathalia. In those days we were paid by cheque and had to put it in the bank ourselves. The nearest bank to Barmah was at Nathalia, some 20 miles away in Victoria. I had to let the kids out at 3.30, drive to the punt, get across quickly then drive to Nathalia by 4 p.m.! The road was wide and straight and by doing about 80 m.p.h. I could just make it. There was one slight bend on the road and a farm house on the left hand side. As I steamed around the bend, I noticed that all his ‘flock’ of chooks happened to be on the right hand side of the road. I was hoping like mad that they stayed there. They didn’t!!

They suddenly made a bee-line for the other side, straight across in front of me. All I could see for the next few seconds, was white feathers!! I said something like, “Dear Me!” and continued on to the bank. When I returned, I called in to the farmer and asked him how many ‘perished’ He said, in his best country drawl, “Only six!” I asked him what they were worth at the markets and he gave me a reasonable price, so I paid him and left. He promised to keep them on the house side each Friday fortnight between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.! As I walked off he drawled, “You’re not the first one to hit my chooks, but you are the first one that has come back, apologised, and paid for them! Thaaaaanks!”

## Sports Training and Sports Day.

I received information from the Barmah school teacher, about a Small Schools Athletics Carnival that was to be held at one of the small Victorian schools, and we were invited to take part. I asked around and was told that Cummeragunja didn’t take part because the kids wouldn’t leave the settlement and run in public. I had seen the athletic ability of the kids and thought that they could do well. I asked them if they would like to go to the Sports Day and received an enthusiastic and wide-eyed NO! - because they used a GUN to start the races. The kids were afraid of guns (for good reasons) and wouldn’t even think of going.

In those days, we used .22 blank shorts in a small hand pistol. I told the kids that the cartridges had no projectiles in, so couldn’t hurt anyone. They couldn’t understand, so I bought some blanks and gave the children a lesson on firearms. I had no pistol, but I did have a .22 rifle. I offered to use this to train the kids to start with blanks fired from the rifle. The townspeople knew what I was doing and had no problems with me riding my bike to school with my rifle slung over my shoulder!

One morning, I had to post a letter on the way to school, so rode up to the Post Office to post it. At the time, there was a new fuel tank being put in, in front of the shop, and a large hole was being dug by pick and shovel. As I rode up, a pair of ‘white’ hands on very black arms rose up out of the hole, followed by a hugely-grinning full-blood aboriginal head belonging to Pluto. He said, “OK, You got me boss. I’ll come quietly!” I realized that I had the rifle slung over my shoulder! We had a good laugh about it. He said that the kids must be pretty bad if I have to go to school with a rifle!!

He thought it was a great joke to start the kids with blank cartridges and suggested I get up close and fire it at their backsides. “Boy, that would make ‘em run!!” Pluto was a ‘great bloke’ and he was a very good friend to me whilst he was at Cummeragunja.

At first the kids would not believe that nothing

came out of the barrel and I had to fire it at a tin a few times to show that there were no holes in it after I had ‘shot’ it three or four times. (I did think that I overheard one snide comment. “He can’t even hit the tin from about a foot away. We’re pretty safe anyway!”)

The kids would line up, grit their teeth, close their eyes and wait until I had fired it, then had to yell, “GO” as well. It took some time but finally they became used to it and did some excellent training.

As Sports day approached, the kids became quite enthusiastic, but I had a small logistical problem—how to get them all to the sports day?? I mentioned this to the Shop Keeper, Cliff Maloney, and he said he would ask his farmer brother if he would take them on the back of his farm truck. He was ‘delighted’.

Early on the morning of Sports Day, we all piled onto the back of the truck, many parents included, and drove off to the venue. There was no crate on the truck and we didn’t even have hay bales to sit on. We just sat on the open tray of the truck. No one even looked like falling off.

When we arrived at the Sports Ground, the enthusiasm suddenly evaporated and the kids crowded around me and said, ‘We can’t run in front of all these people!’

The first race was the open boys 100 yard sprint and Buddha Bux was our runner. I said to him that he could outrun all these kids easily and he just said, “I can’t run!” I said I would take him to the starting line, then go down to the end where he could see me. He was to keep looking at me, and when the gun went off, to run straight down to me. He nervously agreed. I had all the others sit at the side and watch.

When the gun went off, Buddha, who had not taken his eyes off me the whole time, bounded forward and left the others for dead. Half way down the track, he was so far ahead that he thought it must have been a false start so he stopped!! I jumped up and down and yelled to him to ‘keep coming’ so he took off again and still won the race and broke the record!! He grew 10ft tall that day, and the rest of the kids went in all their events and at the end of the day, Cummeragunja Aboriginal School took home 5 out of the 6 trophies awarded that day.

Our Senior Girl, Janet Button, won the High Jump and broke the record. During training at school, she would just run straight up to the bar, leap into the air, pull her feet up beneath her and sail over. I tried to get her to do the scissors jump or the western roll properly but she couldn’t jump to save herself using correct style, so I just let her jump her own way.

It was a very proud day for our little school.

*(to be continued in the next issue)*

# HISTORICAL MEMORIES

Dear Lindsay,  
In 2002 a smallish school in the south west of NSW held its centenary celebrations. As part of the historic occasion a small booklet was produced listing items of interest during the one hundred years of public education. I am enclosing a couple of the extracts relating to the staffing of the school between the years, 1902 to 1931. Please feel free to use these articles in Talkabout should you feel that they would appeal to readers – they certainly did appeal to me, possibly because Joan and I spent four very happy years at this lovely little school. Best regards and hope to meet up with you again come September in Wagga.

Roy Parker 1951-52

## The School Opens.

The first teacher at the school, 22-year-old John Falconer, was appointed as teacher of Mallan Provisional School with a salary of £88 on 17 April 1902. He had entered the teaching service three years earlier and came to Mallan from Urana School east of Jerilderie. He made the journey on his own horse.

In the following year, on 4 April, a parent, Mrs William Callander, wrote to the Minister complaining that Falconer was hitting the children severely around the hips and shoulders for trivial misdemeanours. She added that 'Mr Falconer has no cane, so uses any stick or piece of Board'. As was usual in cases of complaint against a teacher, Falconer was asked to explain and on 29 April 1903 he wrote:  
*"I admit that I have been somewhat harsh in my treatment of my pupils but in defence wish to state that it would be not have been so if my body was not tortured with rheumatism and lumbago."*

Having investigated the matter Inspector James Murray reported on 9 May 1903:  
*"After careful inquiry I am of opinion that Mr Falconer has been unnecessarily severe in his treatment of pupils and that to a fair extent Mrs Callander's complaint is justified. At the same time Mrs Callander admits that she is very well satisfied with the progress of her children. Mr Falconer pleads ill health and certainly looks rather delicate. The tone of his school appears good, & his work, apart from the question of harshness, very intelligently and effectively done. I estimated the efficiency of this school at 7.5. I think, in view of all the circumstances, that if Mr Falconer were cautioned against*

*using corporal punishment unless as a last resort the result would be satisfactory and I recommend that course."*

Falconer was moved to Hill Plain School near Deniliquin at the end of 1904 and was replaced at Mallan by a 19-year-old teacher on his first appointment, James Millerd. Millerd's salary was £72 and he was granted an additional £12 as living allowance after he requested this, writing:

- "1. I am paying 17/- per week, for my board, which is high.*
- 2. Any articles of clothing etc, which I require, must either be purchased in the nearest town, Swan Hill (Vic.) where everything is very dear; or brought over from Sydney or Melbourne, which is necessary to secure obtaining any article of importance. This is an expensive alternative owing to freight or postage.*
- 3. After paying my Insurance premiums the balance of my salary is small."*

In July 1905 Millerd broke his collarbone and needed a month off school. During this time the school presumably did not operate.

## Mallan Provisional School re-opens

When Mallan Provisional School re-opened it did so with 25-year-old Gladys McDonald, who had trained at Hereford House at Glebe in 1919-20, as teacher. She was appointed to the school on 10 October 1927 and remained only until the end of the year when she was succeeded by 27-year-old Francis Saunders, who had been a teacher in Victoria until 1920.

Saunders stayed at the closest available accommodation which was with Mrs E. Turner, 4½ miles from the school. He travelled to school by car, describing the route - for the purpose of claiming forage allowance - in the following way:  
*"Four miles of the journey is on the main road from Moulamein to Swan Hill, and one mile is across an undulating plain, the whole five miles would be classed as heavy in summer owing to dust, and very heavy in winter owing to mud. There are two bridged watercourses to cross, these are crossable in all kinds of weather."*

In July 1928 Saunders requested the Department's permission to grow wheat experimentally. He wrote:  
*"As Mr E. Marshall has given me permission to use eighty acres of cleared flood plain, securely fenced, for the purpose of growing wheat, I intend to fallow this year and crop with wheat next year, am quite willing to use a part thereof or whole piece for experimental purposes in the*

*cultivation of wheat, would use several varieties [sic] and thus ascertain the most suitable for this climate.*

*I have had experience with a fordson tractor, horses, also farming and gardening experience. Farmers around Mallan have offered assistance. Usual seed planted = 60 lb of wheat and 75 lb of manure per acre. As gardening is impracticable it would be a means of assisting the community. Will the Department supply the wheat and manure for experimental purposes and the conditions of same? Will the Department sanction the use of my leisure in carrying out the experiment, providing it does not interfere with my occupation as teacher in charge? Have secured the use of the land, tractor, horses and combine."*

The Department replied that it 'did not consider it advisable for you to attempt to cultivate more than one half of an acre'.

In November 1929 Inspector Robert Taylor reported on Marshall's building in which the provisional school was being held:

*"The building is rented by the Education Dept. and is very dismal and depressing in appearance. Owing to the long continued drought the owner of the property recently flooded some of his land to induce grass to grow and the water reached almost to the school door. This was apparently a last expedient resorted to to avert ruin but the conditions as far as the children were concerned were not at all satisfactory ... I recommend that the attention of the owner of the property be drawn to the fact that the boys' closet must be repaired and rendered safe and that he be informed that if it is proposed to flood his property for irrigation purposes with any degree of frequency it will be necessary for him to have the school building removed to a site where the children will not be inconvenienced by the water."*

By December of that year Marshall had repaired the closets.

Perhaps the drought was breaking by 13 May 1930 when teacher Frank Saunders reported:  
*"Owing to heavy rain falling on Sunday, Sunday night, and Monday morning, making an average rainfall of 170 points to 2 inches, I could not attend the above school on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1930. I drive by car a distance of 14 miles each day, and during a normal season, I have been able to hire a horse on wet days; but owing to the dry conditions the horse was turned out."*

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# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## Christel Wangmann nee Cox 1948-50



Christel Katherine Cox was born on 1<sup>st</sup> March (Saint David's Day) 1929 and died in her 79<sup>th</sup> year.

She had been suffering from heart problems for many years.

She spent her early years at the 37 Mile Tank near Lighting Ridge until moving to the adjoining property of Opal Downs with her family. After a couple of years of correspondence schooling she moved to Sydney and undertook more formal education.

Matriculating from Parramatta High School in 1946, she subsequently attended Wagga Wagga Teachers College graduating some 2 years later. Teaching was not her first career choice but a life long desire for knowledge, the poor circumstances of many rural people at the time and a scholarship no doubt were factors in her decision. Her first appointment was to a small school in the Pilgla scrub called Kenibri! As she once recalled at least she wasn't sent to Tibooburra!

While there she met and married Roy Wangmann and they enjoyed a happy union until his death in 1995.

They had four children As is the nature of things, following their marriage, little bundles of joy began arriving, the first in 1954 at Dubbo and the theme was repeated in 1956. Sandra caused me to be the middle child with her arrival in 1959 at Texas, Queensland but I lost that status in 1963 when Suzanne made her appearance at Coonamble. As can be seen we lived a rather mobile existence as the 'old man' pursued his business ambitions.

Mum was a person who always valued education especially for her children.

She did not distinguish between genders in this regard and I am sure that it was always a sense of achievement for her that all of her children completed high school, tertiary studies and forged independent careers for themselves. I believe that she was also pleased with the lasting marriages her children made. She touched the lives of many people and those not to be forgotten are the hundreds if not thousands of children she taught over a long career interrupted mainly by her own kids and her eventual retirement.

Before her health deteriorated, Mum pursued her love of travel with destinations as diverse as Egypt, England, the United States as well as her regular sojourns to South East Asia. Her other interests included lawn bowls, painting and various forms of what she described as "leisure learning"! Her life long love of books and reading was one aspect of her life seemingly not affected by her health problems.

By Jeff Wangman (Christel's son)

## Patrick Limon 1948-50

The death of Pat Limon has left a very great void in our town that will not easily be filled.

Pat Limon was a teacher at Narooma Central school and later Public School for 28 years from 1961 until his retirement in 1989, teaching many hundreds of students in this time. Many people who are new to our town might remember him as the bloke who was always out walking from town across the bridge, along the Boardwalk to the rock wall, dressed in shorts, penguin shirt and cap and with his socks pulled up.

His greatest gift to our community was as a teacher and he became a legend at Narooma school. He taught at various places out west like Gulargambone Aboriginal School and Trundle before arriving at Narooma Central School in 1961.

While other teachers were Mr This or Mrs That Pat was always "Sir" and forever after ex-students who had grown to be adults would greet Pat with "G'Day Sir".

He was a brilliant teacher and was loved

by every one of the children he taught and also by every teacher who taught with him.

He taught the old-fashioned way with a strong emphasis on the 3 Rs and God help anybody whose pencil grip was wrong.

He expected the children he taught to do their best and told them: "If you aim at nothing you're bound to hit it."

He was a great sportsman, loved all sports and always was the epitome of correct technique, style and above all, sportsmanship.

He was a single-figure golfer, a state champion bowler, a stylish cricket batsman and leg-spinner and an excellent tennis and snooker player.

His love of sport continued at school where he coached the football teams and ran famous boxing tournaments.

He was the sort of teacher that every school really needed and Narooma was lucky to have him. At his retirement at the Golf Club in 1989 the highlight was a group of his ex-pupils singing: "To Sir With Love".

He was a great supporter of the St George football team and his hero was Changa Langlands. He would not hear a word of criticism about him.

He felt the same about Frank Sinatra and hated all this modern rubbish on the radio. Pat's bar room at his house in Dalmeny was legendary and on a Saturday afternoon often resembled a busy pub bar with a TAB attached with sometimes more than a dozen visitors. On Rugby League Grand Final day you could find half of Dalmeny at Pat's place.

There was a TV in the bar for the serious students of the game and no one was allowed to talk while the game was on.

More noise was allowed in the lounge room but women and children had to watch in the family room.

Despite a few ups and downs with his health Pat remained active, walking miles almost every day and playing golf and recently taking up bowls again.

His death is a great loss to our town but the legacy he left with his friendship and his service to the education of our children will never be forgotten.

By Bob Burnside

# NEWS FROM CSU

## A winning smile: CSU gets Dental School go ahead



Charles Sturt University (CSU) welcomed the Budget announcement by the Treasurer, Peter Costello, of \$65.1 million in funding for a new School of Dentistry and Oral Health at CSU.

The new school is planned to open in 2009 with pre-clinical and clinical facilities worth \$54.2 million in Orange and Wagga Wagga and Dental Education Clinics in Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst and Dubbo in New South Wales. CSU will also receive around \$4 million for student accommodation and funding for 60 extra student places as part of the Federal funding package.

CSU Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Goulter said that it was wonderful news for the people of inland NSW and a reason for them to smile.

"Through this decision, the Government has acknowledged that CSU has the demonstrated capacity and national academic standing to provide a real solution to Australia's rural dental crisis.

"The scale of the funding also demonstrates the Government's understanding of the challenges facing rural communities and its commitment to addressing the rural dental crisis. It is the largest capital investment in CSU by the Federal Government since the inception of the University.

"Like all great achievements, this initiative would not have got off the ground without the support of our inland communities," Professor Goulter said.

"In particular, I must pay tribute to Mrs Marj Bollinger and Dr Catherine Errey, the co-founders of the Rural Dental Action Group (RDAG). The RDAG made rural oral health a key public issue. Without their efforts, this issue would

not have received the attention it has. CSU owes the members of the RDAG debt of gratitude, as does inland NSW.

"The support and advice of the Australian Dental Association (NSW), in particular its President Dr Tony Burges and Chief Executive Mr Matthew Fischer, were invaluable in ensuring the program would meet the needs of the dental profession.

"Our thanks must also go to the 25 mayors and local councils across inland NSW who wrote to the Prime Minister and advocated strongly on behalf of their communities for a solution to the rural dental crisis.

"We extend our thanks to the numerous members of the rural dental profession who offered their counsel and advice and gave generously of their time in the progress of this initiative," Professor Goulter said.

"I also thank the many local members and senators who have worked so tirelessly to advance this proposal successfully, in particular Mr Kerry Bartlett, Federal Member for Macquarie (Liberal) who led a team of inland members and senators in arguing for this funding.

"I would also like to thank Mr John Cobb, the Federal Member for Parkes (National); Ms Kay Hull, the Federal Member for the Riverina (National); Ms Sussan Ley, the Federal Member for Farrer (Liberal); Mr Mark Vaile, the Deputy Prime Minister (National); Mr Peter Andren, the Federal Member for Calare (Independent); Mr Alby Schultz, the Federal Member for Hume (Liberal); Federal Senator Fiona Nash (National); Federal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells (Liberal); and Federal Senator Bill Heffernan (Liberal) for their support.

CSU also welcomed an additional \$3.5 million of Federal funding for Clinical Science teaching facilities on the University's Orange Campus.

This funding was announced on, Tuesday 15 May, by the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon. Julie Bishop, following the broad announcements made by the Treasurer, Mr Peter Costello, in the Federal Budget.

### WWTC 60th Anniversary Reunion

There are some 280 attending the Reunion on the weekend of 28, 29 & 30 September this year.

Receipts have been sent to all those who have indicated attendance.

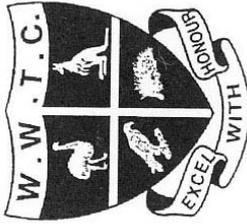
**Full payment is due on Friday 31st August, 2007**

**Direct all queries to:  
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alumni@csu.edu.au**



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