



A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

# TALKABOUT



Volume 9 No 2

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## REPRIEVE FOR TALKABOUT

Talkabout will be able to continue in its present form thanks to the generous contribution from Odyssey Travel.

Michelle Fawkes has negotiated a deal with the travel company to subsidise the production of our newsletter. For the opportunity of including a brochure in our mail-out they are prepared to make a contribution which will more than cover the cost of postage.

Odyssey Travel was established in 1983 and its host member is the University of Wollongong.

To quote from the website [www.odysseytravel.com.au](http://www.odysseytravel.com.au):

*"Odyssey Travel is a not-for-profit organisation made up of 26 member universities in Australia, New Zealand and Asia. We offer a portfolio of stimulating Ed-Ventures for active, inquisitive travellers. It reflects our philosophy to offer a wide range of adventurous, cultural and heritage journeys that expand horizons and broaden the mind. We are a fully accredited IATA Travel Agent."*

The appeal in the March Talkabout produced good results, almost 300 contributions have been received. Many were from regular contributors but there were over two hundred new contributors. There were even a few cheques for \$100 "as payment for all the Talkabouts I have received and for which I've never paid."

Many people admit that they mean to pay but keep forgetting.

Perhaps it would be a good idea for them to get a 'roundtuit'.

### ***The Scholarship Fund breaks through \$50,000!***

*The Fund has reached \$50,251.20. Congratulations to all who have contributed and have enabled us to reach our target of \$50,000 by the end of 2006. This is a magnificent effort and has made it possible for the award of Scholarships to eight very deserving students. It is our hope that the Scholarship Fund will continue to grow so that the WWTC Alumni Association Scholarship becomes more prestigious and provides assistance to many more needy students.*

## THE 1951 AUSTRALIAN RULES PREMIERS.

In 1951 an enthusiastic group of students banded together to form an Aussie Rules team and entered in the Sunday competition. Bob Smith was mainly responsible for organising the team and Mick Hayes, who submitted the photo, remembers that Bob had a battle with George Blakemore about funding for the jerseys. To the surprise of everyone, especially George, the team won the Sunday comp and were awarded the Premiership.



*Back Row: Geoff Gorman, Robin Cantrill, Geoff Tunks, Frank Meaney, John Rosengren, Mick Hayes, Gordon Schliebs.  
Middle Row: Kevin O'Callaghan, Bob Whittaker, Bob Smith, John Woodger, Alan Roberts, Malcolm Hanratty.  
Front Row: Barry Cook, Ray Fielder, Charlie Thomas, Tony Morley, Knox Durrant, Peter Herden.*

### 2006 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

On 10th March a selection panel consisting of Roger Clements, Malcolm Hanratty, Graeme Wilson, Karen Jamieson and myself interviewed six applicants for the 2006 W.W.T.C. Scholarship Award of \$3,000 at the Wagga Wagga Campus of Charles Sturt University.

Prior to the interview of each candidate, the scholastic rating, needs and self evaluation (community involvement, achievement goals and motivation) were discussed by the panel. The candidates were then individually interviewed.

The six candidates were all worthy applicants and it was difficult to choose just one from such a field. However the panel finally chose one of them.

The Scholarship has been awarded to Rheanna McWaters who is completing a

double degree, Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Science.

Congratulations Rheanna !!

The Head of the Wagga Campus, Professor David Green, and his Executive Assistant, Karen Jamieson, hosted the panel at a very much appreciated luncheon.

Lew Morrell.

### CONTACTS

**President:** Bob Collard MBE: 2 Louise Close, Ourimbah 2258  
Phone 02 43622764

**Secretary:** Dorothy Tanner: 282 Doncaster Ave, Kingsford 2032  
Ph 02 96633204 E-mail: netanner@optusnet.com.au

**Research and Records Officer:**  
Ann Smith: 24 Whitworth St, Westmead 2145  
Phone 02 96350449 E-mail: annrae@bigpond.net.au

**Treasurer:** Lindsay Budd: 4 Flemington Close, Casula 2170  
Phone 02 96013003 E-mail: lbudd@bigpond.net.au

**Talkabout Editors:**  
Lindsay Budd  
Lew Morrell: 25 Grandview Drive, Newport 2106  
Phone 02 99971506 E-mail: lewismorrell@bigpond.com

**Alumni Office:** Michelle Fawkes: The Alumni Office, Charles Sturt University,  
Bathurst 2795. Phone 02 63384629. E-mail: mfawkes@csu.edu.au

## From Ann's Mailbag



In my position of Research and Records Officer I have been looking for still more addresses. I have concentrated on the later entrants to W.W.T.C.

In the November 2005 edition **Ian Sharman 69-71** was the only person who contacted me and it was from the U.S.A. All the other persons are still eligible to join. Another **70-71 is Diane Willis** who lives in SA with her two daughters. **Helen Ziebell 71-72** is now **Mrs Greg Simmonds, also 71-72.** **Lindel Carr nee Nelson** is a member of Parliament and lives in Cranbrook in Queensland. She was there in **71-73.** **Marie Radford nee Dignan 60-61 and Karen Horey and Margaret Brady 64-65** also live in Queensland. I seem to have lost the contact for **Anne Louise Jones nee Heffernan 71-73.** Could you please contact me Anne to verify the address I have. I cannot seem to find **Francis Bernard Crowe 71-74** and **Carmel Christine Croker 1969.** Sometimes the person I find has the right name but did not go to WWTC. e.g **Thomas James Halls 62-63.** Where are you Thomas? I rang someone at Adamstown but it was not you. The address for **Megan Stuart nee Williams 69-74** was in Innisfail. Has anyone heard how they got on? I have tried looking for you **Valerie Edna Stephenson from 64-65.** Where are you? I am also looking for **Raymond Starcic 51-52.**

**Ann Marie Whiting nee O'Brien 69-70** lives in Wirlinga. She has helped find some persons from her section. She has only recently been found and filled in her Enrolment Form.

**David Burns 60-61** has recently been overseas. So has our secretary **Dorothy**

**Tanner nee Williams 48-50** and her husband **Nigel.** They went to attend their daughter Felicity's wedding in London.

**Ann Patricia Carter and Robert Charles Carter,** both from **62-63** session did not receive their Talkabout because it went back to the Alumni Office. Has anyone seen them?

**Adrian Harvey and his wife Margaret nee Cannon 67-68** are living in Gunbar and breed cattle. **Cheryl Beard 69-73** is thought to be living in Wagga. Does anyone know her?

**Robert Fletcher is married to Ann O'Connor both 64-65** and live at Scott Heads.

**Terence Burke 58-59** has recently moved to Cammeray. **Eileen Guthrie 69-71** and **Linda Gaudan 59-60** have also been found. **Frank Nowak 65-66** has spent 25 years abroad, and ten in the Northern Territory. **Denis Simond 61-62** is looking to contact **Brian Royden Hunter 61-62**

More finds are **Stephen Nossitor 60-61** at Belmont. I found mother and son, **Mary and Quentin Ridley 67-68** but I could not find **Sydney Ridley 62-63.** **George Roufei 61-62** is still in the NT. The cyclone caused him some worry. **Barbara Frances Smith** are you still in WA? **Joan Reynolds nee Jenkins 58-59** your letter came back.

**Marie Elaine Walter nee Siedell 71-72** is found. I am looking for you **John Skuja 70-71.** **Voya Jovanovic 71-73** and **Lynn Ludwig 63-64** are both found.

**Stephen Holden 70-71,** are you at Mt Keira? Have you sent back the Enrolment Form? **Marc Surrest 71-73** have you received a form? **Judith Brindle nee McCaffrey 60-61** returned hers promptly.

**Mick Rowlands** who died on 28<sup>th</sup> April was very popular in the Mudgee Area. He was awarded an Order of Australia a few years ago.

**Fr Neil McIntosh 53-54** is the Acting Rector of Waverley Anglican Church. **Martin Dorrian 67-68** claims his 8 day stay at WWTC as the shortest one. Recently I was concentrating on students from the 60-61 session and **David Burns and Helen Schlenker nee Barratt 60-61** were mentioned as having filled in their enrolment form and returned them. David's form was accompanied by a letter:

"I do remember Helen Barratt. She was a brilliant teacher. Helen told the story

of Moses in the bulrushes as her narrative lesson. in front of Section 601. We were stunned at how good she was. All of us eventually had to face that moment of truth in front of our peers but I never heard anyone as good as Helen. Her occasional shifts into Irish and Scottish brogue were a delight." I rang Helen to get permission to use the above, which she gave. Then she told me that she could not remember doing it.

I saw in "Education" this week that **Ross Neich 68-70 and John Martin 69-71** are both retiring. Keep well and enjoy the many things you can do.

We are still getting too many Talkabouts, which have been posted to members, coming back unclaimed. Please let us know your new address.

I received this letter recently from Margaret Robinson (Grahame) 47-49. Dear Ann,

I would like to write about my wonderful friend Joan Johnson (Armstrong) who died in March this year. We met on the bus taking the students from Wagga station to the college where we quickly realised that we were Pioneers. We had so much fun and laughter together at college in subsequent years – at reunions and other times.

Joan was a stalwart member of the ex-students, keeping in touch with so many and keeping interest in all the happenings of the Pioneers, in particular thru all the years. We were so looking forward to the 60<sup>th</sup> next year. I cannot express the sadness I feel in knowing she won't be there. I'm sure she will be very sadly missed.

Margaret Grahame

### In Memoriam

David Harrison d. 2-12-05 70-71  
Rosemary Johnson (Errington) 54-55  
Joan Johnson (Armstrong) 13-03-06 Pioneer  
Constance Jones (Fliervoet) 12-03-06 64-65  
John Sutton 58-59  
Elizabeth Muriel Hutchison 60-61  
Howard Patrick Jones 60-61  
John Whiteside 07-08-2003 53-54  
Allan Buckingham's wife Norma 48-50

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# REUNION PAGE

## WWTC 1961-62 Reunion – Tweed Heads

10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2006

The Reunion is definitely on and details of the weekend follow.

For a registration form please contact Estelle Hammond, 66 Companion Way, Tweed Heads. 2485 (or)  
Email to Barbara Deece at -  
bsdeece@iprimus.com.au

Friday 10<sup>th</sup>: 6 pm Informal get together at Club Banora Island House – Darlington Dve Banora Point - Finger food. \$20 each

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: 7.0pm Reunion Dinner – Sullivans Pioneer Village – Fraser Drive, South Tweed Heads. \$50 each.

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: 11.0am Informal Barbeque or Picnic in the Park at the Boat Ramp at Kingscliff. Electric barbeques are available. BYO everything.

Please make contact as soon as possible. We will endeavour to give you a great time in what we hope will be a weather perfect season.

## WWTC 1956 – 57 Reunion

Some 60 ex- students and their partners attended the 50th Anniversary Reunion of the 1956/57 Session held at our traditional venue, Ranelagh House, Robertson. A great time was had by all, just ask Bill Clayton. Because of the success of this Reunion, we have decided to have another 50th Anniversary Reunion, this time our Graduation Reunion. The Reunion will, once again, be held at our traditional venue, Ranelagh House Robertson on 15/16 March 2008. It is not often that you get the opportunity to have two 50th celebrations so plan ahead to attend, details below.

The reunion commenced with a photo session, more difficult to organise than a Kindergarten Class first excursion. At our next Reunion, a prize will be given for the best group photo showing all faces. During our lunch an Anniversary cake, thanks to Kath Hadden (Gray), was cut by Mary Blyton. Mary turned 91 this year and she is an inspiration to us all. We also remembered our departed colleagues and reminded ourselves of our good fortune.

Our afternoon session was devoted to a PowerPoint presentation featuring old B & W photos of College life as well as photos of various College landmarks including Myrtle and the Rotunda. In a trip down memory lane, we rendered various College songs and listened to The Golden Wedding and Summertime. A session of small school

memories was instigated by John Banting who escaped a stint in the bush by being appointed to Canley Vale. We were entertained by various small schoolies including Roy Strange, Frank Catt, Bruce McAllister and others. A session of College Trivia also proved to be popular. The day was capped off with a fine dinner provided by our hosts at Ranelagh House.

Planning for our next Reunion is already under way!

50th Graduation Reunion, 15/16 March 2008. Venue-Ranelagh House, Robertson ph 4885 1111 for bookings. The Reunion is to be organised by Kevin Street, 8 Ruby Place, Green Point NSW 2251 ph 4367 0035 email [kstreet@vtown.com.au](mailto:kstreet@vtown.com.au) and Gwen Ravell (Wild), 27/41 Smith Street, Wollongong 2500 ph 4229 4706 email [gwenravell@bigpond.com](mailto:gwenravell@bigpond.com)

We would like to thank all who participated in making this Reunion such a happy occasion as well as Michelle Fawkes of CSU Alumni for her cooperation and assistance. A special welcome to those who attended for the first time including Ken Glasson and Jenny Atkins (Livett) Thank you to those who brought along photo albums to share with us.

We really enjoyed organising this Reunion and with your help and suggestions our Reunion of 2008 will be bigger and better! A WWTC 56/57 group email has been established so that we may keep in contact. Email addresses for those who did not attend can be sent to [kstreet@vtown.com.au](mailto:kstreet@vtown.com.au)

Reminder: Don't forget to send your financial contribution to Talkabout so that news like this can continue.

Gwen Ravell and Kevin Street

## WWTC 1963-64 Reunion

A group of WWTC students, graduands of 1964, decided to invite other ex-WWTC students of their graduating year to a reunion to be held on the week-end of April 22nd and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The reunion began on Friday night, April 21<sup>st</sup> with an informal dinner at a wonderful Lebanese restaurant in Bathurst, called Maalouf's. Eight people attended and we ordered "The Banquet".

The food was varied and delicious. People attending were: Marion Giddy [Smith], Mark Lucas, Vanlyn Davy, Colin and Gail Grant, Russell and Lauren Warfield, Gerd and Sue King (Upton).

The following day, after brunch at Soho Café, the group had a guided tour through the "Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum – Home of the Somerville Collection" in Bathurst. The museum is very well organised and exhibits range from very rare to exquisitely beautiful.

At 7 p.m. Saturday night, April 22<sup>nd</sup> we all arrived at Tonic restaurant, in Millthorpe. People who attended were: Bill and Sandra Semple, David and Lyn Giles, Merv and Helen Smith, Colin and Gail Grant, Russell and Lauren Warfield, Gerd and Sue King, Marion Giddy, Mark Lucas, John Cassidy and Judy James (Wilson).

Tonic restaurant is a fine dining experience which everyone enjoyed immensely. We had excellent food and a good chance to catch up with old friends and ex-college associates.

Russ Warfield (1963-64)



Gerd King, Marion Giddy, Gail Grant at the 63-64 Reunion

## REMEMBER CURRIBA



*The Currriba Public School reunion took place at Easter. It was a great success and a comprehensive booklet was produced containing stories and photos submitted by former pupils and teachers. A copy has been presented to Ann for inclusion in the Archives.*

*There were five WWTC ex-students who taught at Currriba in the 50s and 60s. Peggy Macbeth (James) 61-62 was a pupil at Currriba from 1949 to 1955 and has submitted a report of the Reunion. She has also written about her memories of her time as a pupil at Currriba.*

On Saturday 16th April, forty years after the closure of Currriba Public School, a special reunion was held on the original site. With an attendance of over 150 people, made up of former teachers, students, family and friends, an impressive plaque was unveiled, inscribed with the history of the school and containing some of the early photos. This plaque included some of the stones from the original fireplace in its construction. Special markers were placed in the School Playground to recall some of the events that happened or to demonstrate features such as the marble games played. As students and teachers inspected the playground, many acquaintances were renewed and amusing anecdotes were recalled.

As the Empire Day Sports on 24th May were such a highlight, people then journeyed to Mudda Rocks to recollect the great events, such as the greasy pig chase, the races with rewards of “real” money, and the fireworks at night. Everyone could remember the trestle tables laden with wonderful food. It was interesting to see the rock pools still in evidence and that the rock formations were just as magnificent.

The reunion then moved to the Tullibigeal Hall. Here there was a display of photos and memorabilia and a special booklet was for sale. This booklet was compiled by Ellen and Doug Worland and contained memories of both teachers and students from their days at Currriba. Photos were

also placed throughout the book to add further interest. During continuing talk, lunch was served, having been prepared by a hard-working group who did well to accommodate such a large crowd.

Later in the afternoon many people spoke of their fond memories, with some speeches being presented in poetic form. Geoff Williams entertained the audience with his special song dedicated to the reunion “Currriba Oh Currriba”. This was very well received. A cake which was a replica of Currriba School was cut by the oldest and youngest students present on the day. The afternoon concluded with an inspection of the original Currriba building, which is now relocated to Tullibigeal Central School, where it is utilized as a classroom. As the Co-op store was such an integral part of life in the district, it was also open for inspection.

This wonderful day wouldn't have been possible without the superb organization of Byron James, Doug and Ellen Worland, and Bill Worland. Many other people assisted also with mowing, cooking and general support. I know we were all grateful for this opportunity to renew acquaintances, recall special memories and to take part in this important piece of local history, acknowledging the contribution of small schools and their teachers to the education of country children.

### **Currriba Public School Memories.**

I started school at Currriba in 1949 and have many fond memories of attending a small school. Off went Byron, Peggy and Jenny James on their pushbikes to pedal almost five miles to school. We kept an eye on the wind direction during the day as a head wind always meant a slow trip home. I remember the Mickans and Hables riding to school in a sulky, and leaving the horses in a horse paddock during the day.

I can't remember being particularly hot in that small classroom but it must have been. We had a waterbag on the verandah: no iced drinks in those days. We carried our lunches

in a leather satchel on our backs – it was usually mutton sandwiches with an occasional jam one. Pet magpies sat around during lunch waiting for scraps.

There were many playground games, which all ages joined in. “Prisoners Base” was popular. The pepper trees were a favourite play place for cubbies and shade. A brave attempt was made with school gardens – with silver bushes and geraniums being good survivors. I wonder if the map of Australia made with small white stones is still in the playground? We had to give it a wide berth.

I remember Mr Giles and Mr Woodger as being kind teachers. Mr Giles heated water on the open fire before school to warm our hands after the ride to school. He also decorated furniture items to brighten up the classroom. They both tried to make lessons interesting, with few tools to work with. The readers weren't very exciting “The cat sat on the mat. The rat can see the cat. The cat cannot see the rat.” But we learnt to read. The pens dipped in ink made writing a task: light up-stroke, heavy down-stroke. Putting a blot on a page of neat work was easy to do. We had to write our report cards with all the main headings. Most of my subjects were “Good” or “Very Good” but writing was always “Fair”.

The picnic at Mudda Rocks on Anzac day was a big event. For the races parents contributed small change with a shilling for first place, sixpence for second and threepence for third. We were all issued with an Empire Day Badge to pin on. Lunchtime was very special with cream puffs, jelly cakes, homemade sausage rolls and water boiled in coppers for tea. At night there was a bon-fire with Jumping Jacks, Catherine Wheels and Rockets let off in bottles.

Concerts and the Christmas tree were always looked forward to. We practised plays from the School Magazine and sang the songs we had learnt from the radio and Terrance Hunt. The choice of song wasn't that exciting – “Men of Harlech”, “The Ashgrove” but we sang with gusto. We spent some time guessing who Santa might be but when he arrived we forgot about that as the presents were given out.

The inspector's visits were quite important – in he came wearing a suit and tie and fired off questions about dates in Social Studies, spelling and tables, while the teacher looked worried. He usually let us go home at lunch time. I wonder what happened in the afternoon?

Yes, my small school days at Currriba were important to me and I always drive home to “Rosebery” that way so I can see the old site.

Peggy MacBeth 61-62

# ACROSS THE CONTINENT FROM SOUTH TO NORTH



*John Riley concludes his description of his and Joan's experiences on the Ghan.*

## OFF TRAIN TOURS

Joan and I chose the Nature cruise on the Katherine River, downstream from the gorge. Many years before I had done a nocturnal tour to Springvale Homestead during a round Australia coach tour. I could even recall that one of its features was a huge Indian Rain tree.

After photographing the homestead buildings and the tree, we moved down to the river bank where our flat-bottomed boat awaited us. First we travelled upstream to view the new concrete railway over which we would pass later in the day.

Then it was downstream, with our guide explaining that the low water level was due to a poor Wet season. High up in one tree was a screwdriver embedded there by a man in a boat during the 1/200 year flood in 1998. After a short distance we had to walk a couple of hundred metres along a virtually dry section of river bed to join another boat for continuation of the tour. The river soon began to widen, and with the pandanus and ti-tree roots being less prolific the banks in places have been sandbagged to prevent erosion.

We were told that 21 springs enter the river, these being evidence of limestone country. Below the springs are caverns, one such being 200m in length.

On the return journey a stop was made for morning tea. Our two guides and their local girl assistant soon had the kettle boiling for tea or coffee. Also available was cordial. To accompany the drinks there were damper rolls, with various jams and chutneys made from native fruits, including rosellas. I had not seen the latter since my family left Brisbane in 1946, but eaten raw they were nothing to enthuse about. That home-made rosella jam!

On the bank I noticed weeds that I correctly identified as nagoora burr brought down by floodwaters, as they were on the banks of Brisbane River when we were kids. In those days we called them "cats' eggs".

Our guide provided an interesting show by casting overboard bread scraps from morning tea. These brought swarms of catfish to the surface fighting for a morsel or two. If

this can be done at Lord Howe Island and elsewhere, why not here?

Our cruise concluded at 11:20, following which, after some confusion involving people from the Option 2 tour coach, we returned to the station. Our driver insisted that the name of the town should be pronounced differently from the way most people do, but I could show this only phonetically and I have forgotten my symbols learnt in 1952!

We reached the train at 11:52, and it departed on schedule at 12:10. only to be delayed almost immediately to allow a long freight train to cross.

## PASSING COUNTRYSIDE

In the waking hours of our two journeys we had on display the varied nature of the Australian countryside, when not too busy eating! On the *Indian Pacific* Joan and I had a compartment with the seat facing backwards. Consequently sights often passed before we became aware of them. We compromised by going to the lounge when seating was available. Before meals this was difficult with people from two sittings enjoying a pre-dinner drink. As a result we missed a number of points of interest.

At about 17:30, after passing through Blackheath, the setting sun was seen reflecting off water in a couple of dams way down in the valley, followed by eucalypts silhouetted against the blue sky.

After departure from Broken Hill we passed through largely flat dry landscape, with only a couple of tiny settlements to break the monotony. I was not surprised to see that little of the normally wheat-producing country around Gladstone had been prepared for planting.

At 10:00 on Monday, after we had crossed the Northern Territory border I was lucky to see the "Iron Man", made of rail lines, thanks to notification by the Train Manager. Unfortunately I was too late to take a photograph. This structure was built to celebrate the laying of the millionth sleeper on the line.

Also of interest to me as a rail historian were a couple of rusty iron bridges from the former North Australian Railway. Again I was too slow with the camera.

When we were warned of the approach of Adelaide River, I determined to be ready for a photo of the former impressive bridge, which in flood times provided road access to the town. I had Joan watching on the right while I, armed with the Pentax, watched the left. Suddenly she yelled that the former station yard was on her side. I dashed across, sighted an old NSU diesel locomotive there, but was too late for a photo. Meantime Joan, who had moved back into the compartment, suddenly announced that the much anticipated bridge was on that side. I dived across to the window and took a couple of quick shots. Neither would win a photographic

competition, but at least I have a record of a piece of historical railway infrastructure I had not been able to photograph previously.

As the train approached Darwin, we began to sight cleared paddocks, lush grass and hundreds of cattle. One would not need much imagination to nominate the major industry up there, apart from tourism. By 16:09 the first signs of housing appeared on the right, and we entered the vast freight yard at the terminal at 16:18. I noticed a new turntable being built on one of the sidings on the left, while seemingly miles of flat-wagons loaded with containers began to appear on a couple of sidings on the right.

We reached the terminal only three minutes behind schedule at 16:33.

## STAFF

Last but not least something should be said about the staff or should one say "crew"? The attendants it seemed were multi-skilled, turning their hands to many tasks, looking after passengers and serving in the dining room and bar.

When we returned from dinner at night, our beds were always down in place, whether this was convenient for us or not. If we had been earnest about the matter, we probably could have asked for this to be delayed.

After we reached Adelaide, hoping to link up with our friends from Brisbane we asked Deputy Train Manager Sonia if we could exchange our berth in Car L for one closer to theirs in Car C. We were told this would not be possible, as the train was booked out. The Train Manager confirmed this. So, greatly disappointed that we would not see them for the whole journey, we loaded our belongings into Car L on Platform 3, while Rod and Lynn did so into Car C on the opposite platform.

Just as we had completed this, Sonia suddenly rushed into the compartment to say that a couple of ladies in Car D had asked to exchange for single compartments (one could see why when observing their physique), and that a third party also desired change. So a three-way switch had to be made with only minutes to go for departure. Sonia took our two larger bags (I cannot imagine how) while Joan and I collected the smaller miscellaneous items. Off we headed to Car D.

Soon after arrival Joan realised that our mini Cool Bag containing my insulin was not to be seen. There was some confusion as to its whereabouts, so Sonia rushed back to Car L to check with the train about to leave. Fortunately the precious item was there and I could breathe again.

In the dining car the staff were most helpful about my special dietary needs, especially on the *Ghan* where we were almost exclusively served by Danielle, a girl with a somewhat loud voice but forever fast-moving to attend to people's needs. In similar vein was her colleague Jessica.

A concession made by the crew in

# ACROSS THE CONTINENT FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

recognition of Anzac Day was a short moment of silence in the lounge as the train continued on its way on Monday.

At one stage passengers were offered the chance to visit the "pantry" to see what it was like. Of course I took up the offer after breakfast one day and entered through the door indicated. I expected to find myself in the area where food was being prepared (not that I needed to pilfer anything after a hearty meal). Instead I found myself in a area where the two girls were washing crockery and cutlery in stainless steel sinks. I took a couple of photos

to record this important operation.

Our attendants were ever ready to assist with luggage when detraining. Hazel on *Indian Pacific* made arrangements for our luggage to be transferred to our compartment. In the *Ghan* at Adelaide without our having to worry about it while having a coffee with friends at Keswick.

Similarly on arrival at Darwin's low-level "platform" attendant Hans relieved us of the burden of trying to carry large bags down steep aluminum steps to ground level.

All these services were much appreciated.

## SUM UP

To sum it all up, the *Ghan*, with its new track, friendly staff and interesting sidelights, is a journey not to be missed. Its older cousin *Indian Pacific*, until the track is improved is nothing to enthuse about. I found myself wondering whether RailCorp or ARTC, whichever is responsible for the track to Broken Hill, should pay GSR for using it, rather than vice versa!

John Riley 1948-50

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## EARLY DAYS AT WAGGA WAGGA TEACHERS COLLEGE

*I am sending this e-mail on behalf of my mother Mrs Johnstone (previously Miss Kilgour) who is now 84 and is suffering from poor eyesight and asked me (her son) to type what she has remembered about the early days of W.T.C.*

*I hope that this article can be of some use in your magazine "Talkabout".*

*Cheers for now,  
John Johnstone.*

*(If you want to contact me or my mother concerning any matter about this, my email address is as follows:  
yogi4@bigpond.net.au)*

### ORIGINAL STAFF JUNE 1947

Mr G Blakemore: Principal,  
Mr G Duncan: Vice Principal & Math Lecturer,  
Miss J Wylie: Women's Warden,  
Miss J Moore: Speech,  
Miss B Kilgour: Geography,  
Miss P Webb: Librarian,  
Mr A Cornell: Biology & Agriculture,  
Mr R Pople: Music,  
Mr I Renwick: Education,  
Mr E Hawcroft: Phys. Education.

### FIRST STAFF MEETINGS:

These were held in Repin's Coffee Inn King Street SYDNEY. Later at nearby NORTH NEWTOWN P.S. DARLINGTON P.S. and BALMAIN T.C.

### 2ND INTAKE JUNE 1948:

A further 150 students and a dozen (12) Staff Members.

Let us return to those first weeks when we were supposed to be "off to a flying start".

FIRST OF ALL THERE WAS NO HOT WATER for 6 weeks' and of course it was MID WINTER.

NO WARDROBES - Clothes in our suitcases

NO CLEAN BLANKETS as this had been a RAAF HOSPITAL.

NO KITCHEN STAFF - Right from Night 1 the tea was cooked and served by Lecturers.

NO TEXT BOOKS - Except those that Lecturers could provide.

All this provided little good cheer for PIONEER STUDENTS who had travelled from all over NSW. We had students who had travelled far just to get to Wagga from Tweed, Albury, Broken Hill, Crookwell, Orange, Dubbo, Coffs Harbour, etc. All by now were cold, hungry, homesick, and to an INHOSPITABLE WELCOME at a college 3 miles out of town with very few buses offering any help.

We, the PIONEERS, (Lecturers & Students) were to learn that TRADE UNIONS were very strong in those early post World War II years. KITCHEN STAFF were often on STRIKE.

FRIDAY NIGHT'S FISH WERE DELIVERED AND COOKED COMPLETE WITH SCALES. Swede Turnips could be served for Dinner Breakfast or Lunch.

However there were some lighter moments and that telegram of our Principal's provided many of them. For instance his enthusiasm about Wagga

Teacher's College winning the very handsome Rose Bowl. Our teams played Balmain in 1948 and wouldn't have gone back to Wagga without the Rose Bowl which we had all been assured would look wonderful on the PRINCIPAL'S DESK!!

All those cold early rising practice sessions seemed worth while when the roses from the college's very front garden were admired next year.

Perhaps my one achievement in my first 2 years at W.W.T.C was our land use map of Wagga completed by my Geography Option Group. No petrol was available, indeed none of us had cars, so this was done on bicycles with very poor base maps and only coloured pencils.

I kept this for about 40 years and then posted the whole completed map (12 sections mounted on cardboard) to the Librarian at City of Wagga Library. By that time, 1987, I had been assured by an ex-city engineer that this had HISTORICAL VALUE as first such land use map - so much was then available to make such an effort so much easier - aerial photographs, computers, etc.

I have never received one word to say what had happened to the not considerable parcel. Someday it will turn up in the back of a cupboard or maybe it was just burnt!!

# TEACHING MEMORIES

## TEACHERS' FEDERATION ACTIVIST

Recently I had two pleasantly nostalgic trips down Memory Lane. As a result, I have been prompted to write this account of some of my experiences as a Teachers' Federation activist. The first episode involving revisiting the past resulted from accepting an invitation to attend the Federation Library to make a tape recording for the Federations' Oral History Program outlining my Federation activities over the years. The second occurred at the end of the same week when I attended the reunion of the 1956-57 Year of Wagga Teachers' College at Ranelagh House at Robertson.

To prepare for the Oral History recording I went through my archives of newspaper cuttings and memorabilia, and I would like to think that an account of a couple of the campaigns I relived in so doing may remind some of my contemporaries of their own struggles. Of course I realise there are many who won't have any such involvement or memories.

The first campaign I was seriously involved in was that for immediate relief for absent teachers. I reminded those at the College reunion that it was the norm for classes bigger than would now be found acceptable to be doubled in size when a colleague was absent. As an example, my wife Margaret had fifty in a Kindergarten class at Camden in 1958-59, which doubled in size whenever the other Kindergarten teacher was away. The concertina doors between the rooms were simply folded back and no relief was available for a month.

When I became involved in the Federation campaign in the late 1960's I was Federation Representative at Taree High having transferred from Primary teaching. Of the three high schools in the Manning Valley, only Taree High voted to take part in the campaign, which involved refusing to take an issued "extra" for an absent colleague. The protocol established was absurd but necessary. We would attend the office of the Principal, Bill Atkinson, who would read to us a series of set questions which we were directed by Federation not to answer. When the interrogation was complete we would be invited to take a seat and have a yarn because Bill realised that he needed to assure us that his sympathies lay with our cause. I recall having a discussion with Bill about the absurdity of my having to mind a Year 10 Cooking class for an absent teacher and that it did nothing for their education or for my lesson preparation and marking time, which to me was very valuable indeed, my being so new to secondary teaching.

I well remember that the very first "extra" issued under this system went to a first year

out English teacher who was understandably a bit traumatized by the situation. Jack McMullen, Science Head Teacher, one of my early mentors and a staunch Federationist grabbed the extra from his hand, told him to take Jack's Science class instead and marched off to the Principal's office waving the extra form like a banner.

As the only Manning Valley High School to be involved, we felt pretty vulnerable, so when the neighbouring much bigger Newcastle Association was threatened with dire punishment for their part in the campaign and went on strike for a day, we reckoned that we would go out in sympathy in the hope they would reciprocate if we were next targeted. This action really stirred the Country Party conservatives to denounce us as communists or fellow travelling socialists.

In the end we gradually won the right for casual relief. I always found it ironic that of two teachers who refused to be involved in our campaign, one refused because her father had been a policeman who had taught her that to strike was to break the law. She retired very soon afterwards and frequently came back as a casual to enjoy almost full time employment as a result of the campaign she had refused to join. I believe Jack McMullen may, from time to time, have politely and subtly apprised her of this fact.

The second major campaign we were involved in was the class size action in the early seventies. Again Taree High was at the forefront of the activity in the Manning Valley. My records show that we were to roster out of class pupils when nominated class sizes were exceeded. The numbers were as follows, with my actual class size in brackets. Form II 33 (38) Form III 33 (36) Form IV 28 (35) Form V 22 (11) Form VI 22 (25). So the same students were not rostered out of every class for the day, we started with the students whose surname started with the same letter as the teacher's.

(These class sizes were fairly representative of the time, but my worst memory is of once having forty two in a class at Chatham High, with seats for only forty. Students ran to class to get a seat).

Taree High teachers held a public meeting to try to explain our motives to parents prior to taking action but unfortunately and typically few attended. On the other hand, once we were involved in rostering out students and the local press became involved parental indignation was overwhelming. It mattered little that students told their parents and the press that they were given prepared tasks to complete and were within view of their teacher at all times- they were just not *in* the classroom.

Taree High P.and C. decided to call a public

meeting but did not think it necessary to invite us teachers. We protested that we should be given a hearing and so the formal invitation was issued to John Geraghty as Fed. Rep. and to me as Association President. As it turned out we were given our first major lesson in political tactics. The other invited speakers were Bruce Cowan M.L.A. and Bill Kennedy M.L.C., both Country Party representatives. The P.and C. President introduced them first and called on them to address the meeting. In particular I remember the main theme of Bill Kennedy's diatribe was the negative influence "Pommy shop stewards" were having on Australia's industrial relations. (I don't really know if he knew John Geraghty was an Englishman- I don't think he was that well informed or clever. I think his condemnation was more of a generic nature. Probably it resulted from the success of such Labour Movement luminaries as John "Bruvver" Ducker). In any case both speakers worked themselves and their generally ultraconservative audience into a fine anti-union frenzy.

John Geraghty then was called upon to explain our motives. As he rose to speak, the two politicians approached the chairmen, and whispered something. John Geraghty was interrupted to announce that the two members of Parliament had to leave to catch a plane! They strode out of the hall to thunderous applause! John Geraghty then was allowed to speak in that explosive atmosphere, but the two politicians were not available for questions from whatever supporters we had.

We certainly did not win that night, or over the next couple of weeks of roof rocking and vilification in the letters pages of the local press but in the long run we did win as class sizes gradually were begrudgingly reduced starting from that time.

Those who tried to promote a petition to have John Geraghty and me transferred were disappointed that they could muster so few signatures.

One anecdote worth recalling from that time is that of the student and the reback. One of my students, sitting out of my class in my full and direct view doing the set work with due diligence rose and returned to my class to report he had been bitten on the buttocks by a reback. The implications were not worth even contemplating! The headlines were already writ large in my imagination!

**"STUDENT DIES WHEN  
UNSUPERVISED BY NEGLIGENT  
TEACHER"**

As luck would have it, the lad's Mum was a teacher at the Primary School over the road. She took him to Outpatients and within the hour he was back at school, none the worse



# TEACHING MEMORIES

for his misadventure. He is one of my son's oldest mates and we have had a chuckle over recollections of that day, and I can laugh **now**.

It's more than thirty years since we were so involved in those two campaigns, and many more causes were to follow. Recently when Kindergarten class sizes of twenty were announced with due fanfare, I felt inclined to write to the Manning River Times and remind those who hated us so vehemently at that time for our activism that maybe their Grandchildren are now reaping the benefits of that activism and that perhaps our motives at that time were more altruistic than they gave us credit for at the time.

Frank Catt (1956-57)

## FIRST YEAR OUT AT RAND

I attended Wagga Wagga Teachers College in 1968-9. The two years were a lot of fun learning about how to teach and manage the many challenges of the classroom.

When THE telegram finally arrived I had been appointed to Rand PS. I didn't need to wonder where that was, what the school was like or how to manage teaching a composite Year 3/4 class. By strange co-incidence my last prac at college was at North Wagga where the principal, also my supervisor had described Rand (his previous school) in some detail to me during my month long prac on (you guessed it) Year 3/4 composite class. This was a point to ponder many, many times during my first year of teaching.

I consequently knew I didn't have to follow the instructions on the telegram on how to get to Rand (two days from Sydney via bus, train, mail car) but could drive from Sydney to Wagga to Lockhart to Rand. Easy! The hard part was that in all the preparation I had completed at college-including surviving Remedial Spelling and completing Pure Maths I (Main study course through New England University thanks to Arthur Trewin), I had studied nothing to do with **MOUSE MANAGEMENT!**

For those who were teaching blissfully anywhere but the Riverina in 1970 I was at Rand reconsidering my career choice in a big way. February had had record heat day after day and then in March ...**THE MICE CAME MARCHING IN.....** I would look out my bedroom window and the earth appeared to be moving. My college Maths training helped me estimate millions of mice. The farmer would give a daily description of the nightly contents of his 44 gallon drum mouse traps. Again my calculations were close to correct.... Thousands of mice drowned each and every

night.

Each night I would sleep with my bed legs in buckets of water and traps around the room. Occasionally the sounds of a mouse half caught in the trap and dragging it around, could be heard in the middle of the night. Little wonder I arrived at school feeling hung over from lack of sleep. Luckily I had lots of training for sleep deprivation (and being hung over) during my college years.

Occasionally the farmer where I boarded would forget (he had **PROMISED**) to start and move my car each morning so the mice wouldn't run over me while I was driving to school. The problem was I kept adding up the number of times it happened and I was seriously thinking a career change would be good....doing anything back home in Sydney where I had never seen a mouse.

At school the kids were relishing in their home horror stories of mice as well as relaying their most common excuse for not doing their homework ... "the mice ate my book". The trouble was the mice also ate our SRA boxes, our equipment in our sports shed and our lunch even if it was in our Tupperware containers. The principal's residence (Mick Hayes) was having renovations at the time and the plumbers found they even ate through the steel wool they blocked holes with!

By early April I had had enough! I phoned my parents and said I was quitting. My father in his wisdom decided to send me an early birthday present! It was a 6 sided mouse trap - the best teaching aid I have ever used.

Mouse Monitors became important positions in the classroom. Different levels of mouse monitor tasks were assigned for different times of the day. The child with the loudest yell was the After Recess Monitor. His job was to go into the classroom before I did to scare the mice away. For after lunch we had a team of children who were the Seek, Search and Scare Monitors. Because we had such a long time out of the classroom for lunch, I wasn't taking any chances on mice who didn't mind loud noises.

At the end of the different lessons the Fast Worker Monitor had the honour of emptying the 6 sided trap (again). I often wonder if the improvement in Spelling, Reading and Arithmetic had any correlation to the monitor duties for boys in these subjects. Girls chose not to compete for the honour.

For some lessons in the afternoon the trap was put near my desk where I stayed seated until the Emptying Monitors had completed their task. All in all we were a great team. They looked after me, while I looked after them.

I would have to say that I had many good laughs about things that happened in years of teaching but none that compare to the funny times I had at Rand surviving my first year out. I often wonder if WWTC had a course in Mouse Management in 1968-9 whether I would ever have chosen it over Maths in terms of equipping me for life in the classroom!

The Rand Golf Course I must also mention with its deserted fairways, honesty box and sand greens equipped me with skills for the future that helped me survive many interesting times in the classroom for years afterwards!!!!!!

Cecily Chittick (Greason) 1968-69

## COMING EVENTS

### THE BIG REUNION.

The reunion for our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be held in Wagga Wagga in 2007. Please put the dates in your calendar and try to talk some of your peers into coming. We would like to see representation from all sessions.

Dates are from Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Meetings are held at Teachers Credit Union Building Homebush.  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

### WWTC ALUMNI LUNCHEONS

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2006  
at Icons Brasserie  
Marriott Sydney Harbour Hotel  
Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November  
at The Masonic Club  
Castlereagh St Sydney

# LETTERS PAGE

Dear Lew,

I have just finished reading the "Talkabout" article "Graduation – A Great Success". Have I missed some vital element in this article? The words "injustice", "martyrs", "puritanical" figure strongly, yet it seems these ex-students were suspended for breaking twice the total ban on alcohol consumption in W.W.T.C.

It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, a very sensible rule in an institute of learning where the vast majority of students are in their late teens. Surely the interests of health, safety and academic progress are considerations behind such a rule. I've taught in a number of high schools where students using mind altering substances, of which alcohol is the most common, have been suspended or expelled.

No doubt "Professor Hale'n'Hearty" is a reference to the Principal of the time who stopped the martyrs graduating – doing his job in upholding the rule. I'm quite sure their parents and graduation partners were disappointed but the blame lies with the martyrs, not the Principal. They would not have been in ignorance of the possible consequences of their actions.

They themselves went on to assume positions of authority in educational institutions. One wonders how they handled matters of discipline. I would value a reply which may provide more information which would alter the case.

I enjoyed my two years at W.W.T.C. and also enjoy reading the Magazine.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms) Barbara Humphrey 1957-58.

*Editors' Note:*

*No alcohol was consumed on College premises. The students had imbibed at a celebration in a private home.*

*When this was explained to the authorities the accusation was made to stand because the alcohol was brought into the College in the students' systems.*

*If no alcohol was consumed on W.W.T.C. premises how was the rule (not Law) broken?*

*Nor were any of the accused under the legal age for alcohol consumption in public.*

*The details of the "crime" were published on the Letters page in the November 2005 issue of Talkabout.*

Regards,

Lew.

Dear Editor,

I have only become aware of Talkabout in the last three months. I enjoyed reading the article about the men who did not graduate. Although these "boys" were in my section and or dining table, I had forgotten that they had been suspended, and could not graduate. I had some suspensions myself and achieved a Conditional Certificate

which did not allow me to officially graduate. However, it has not been an impediment to my career.

My women friends from those years also had a reunion at Jamberoo in March this year, for the first time since we left college - Maureen Curtis, Therese Curtis, Joan Oxley, Faye Potter, and Marie Dignan.

In the article it was mentioned that Mick Gow could not be found. He had been teaching many years ago in Townsville where I am employed, but I have not seen him for a long long time.

Keep up the good work.

Marie Radford School Consultant

Dear Lindsay,

It was heartening to read Philip Porter's letter and Lew Morrell's reply in last July's edition on the subject of the effect of the Christian chauvinism that existed at the WWTYC at various times.

As a fellow student with Philip in the Junior secondary section, it became clear to us early on that not only were we 'Secondaries' regarded as different, we were seen by some as a threat.

Three factors may have contributed to this, although they did not excuse it; included in our number were several students who had already been to university or had been in the workforce and had diverse, less conformist perspectives to offer; the environment was a rural city, conservative in nature, and finally there was the anti war movement against the Vietnam war which was picking up speed in the capital cities and which was seen as a particular threat to good order and reputation. There was little room for alternative thought, and this seemed to provide Christian chauvinism with an unfettered right to propagandise.

I well remember being hissed at in the main street of Wagga some 10 years later by a close relative of one of our lecturing staff, probably because I was walking along, arm in arm with a friend! This person later apologised for their actions.

Those lecturers that Philip mentioned, however, taught with great intellect and outstanding integrity. They provided some balance to the rest and did their best to prepare us for what we thought we had come to WWTC for, that is to learn to teach. It is a pity that the control that was exercised over Christian chauvinism during the 47-51 period was not similarly in evidence during the late 1960s!

Linda Pettersson 1968-69

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed my \$10 subscription for Talkabout. I enjoy for the most part, the content and the occasional references to my cohort (70-71) – still not enough, but I suppose most of us are still working.

I am happy to contribute towards the cost of production. However, I would ask that you be aware that the regular inclusion of articles that make direct references to God, religion and the proselytizing that went on at WWTC via Gordon Young and his associates, (in a public institution, particularly where there is a duty of care to the young, this would currently be considered very unacceptable) can be insensitive to the secular beliefs of others. If this trend continues, I am ready to reconsider my subscription.

With thanks for your continuing efforts,

Di Haskell. 1969-71

Dear Lindsay

Pleased as usual to receive the March Talkabout. I admire and appreciate the efforts made by you and other fellow students and would be disappointed to see it ended. However, I am annoyed by folks who receive it and do not contribute to its printing. I think a final notice "to pay or not receive" should be included in next issue. Maybe there are some people who can't afford the contribution and I wouldn't like them to miss out; so I am enclosing an extra \$10 for their sake. I paid my contribution in January. Hope the financial problems can be solved.

Best Wishes.

Wilma Emerton (1949-50)

Dear Lew and Lindsay,

A short note to you prompted by the latest issue of Talkabout, which we receive with pleasure and read with great interest. It is always touching but I think important to learn of the decease of all who have been ex-students of WWTC.

Moirra Brien I remember from the 49-50 session and Jack Clark from the 48-50 session. Jack was SRC president and an example of integrity and all the qualities that made him an admirable teacher and school principal.

I met him several times when he was Principal of Narrabri Primary and my high regard for his outstanding qualities was increased as I got to know him better. My congratulations to Geoff Spiller for his wonderful tribute to Jack in your most recent issue.

I note with alarm the parlous state of your finances with Talkabout, and enclose a cheque for \$100 to help the fund along. I hope that you can report that you are overwhelmed with financial support!

In the pipeline is an article on teachers of the early 1900's, information gathered from people now deceased who had clear memories of their own school days in small country schools.

In haste and gratitude,

John (49-50) and Val (50-51) Rummery.

# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## Shirley Ruth Bricknell (née Williams)



WTC Pioneer, wife of fellow WTC Pioneer, Nick Bricknell, died after a fairly short illness on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2005.

Shirley and Nick were married for 54 years. They had continued to grow so close over the years that neither one could remember much about their separate lives before they married. Except, perhaps, for the two years they spent at WTC. Our memories may help other Pioneers recall something of that time.

Shirley and most of us other 149 teacher-trainees arrived in Wagga by steam-train in the first week of May 1947. We had spent a long night shivering in “dog-box” carriages, and as we moved out of the railway station juggling suitcases and bags, we were met by a huge overhead sign: *Welcome to Wagga Wagga – Garden City of the South*. Cold rain pelted us and there was not a flower in sight.

Six of the male pioneer intake were returned service-men, used to roughing it in primitive, Spartanly-furnished quarters like the recently abandoned airforce huts into which we were herded. To the rest of us, though, the change in life-style came as a bit of a shock. Added to the initial shock was the discovery that only one hot shower existed, half-way between the women’s and the men’s huts; and the domestic staff comprised of recently-arrived World War 2 refugees from Balkan countries. They spoke no English and very few had domestic service experience. We students were expected to help cook meals, clean up, wash up, and set tables.

Shirley Williams had spent the previous five years as a boarder at Annersley, an elite girls’ school at Bowral.. She had spent her early life on her grandparents’ property Ournie Station, where she learned to ride

and to love the bush and bush horses.

She had also a great interest in music and literature, especially poetry. Imagine Shirley’s delight when she found that the college housed a reasonable library, and in the paddock adjoining the college grounds – a spot that was later to become known as “the Lucerne Patch” – were several horses!

Subsequently, although Shirley was rarely late for English Lit lectures and was always on time for music lectures and never missed a rehearsal of the college’s first G&S production, *The Gondoliers*, her mind never quite registered that there were other subjects, including Physical Education and Sport, featured on the timetable and for which attendance was compulsory. Regularly sent by Eric Hawcroft, the Phys Ed lecturer, to find his missing student, we always carefully avoided the library and the horse paddock in our search.

The late Joyce Wylie, Head Warden of the female contingent was one who recognized and appreciated Shirley’s goodness. There was a mutual respect and friendship between them. When everyone was readying themselves for the Graduation Ball, Shirley was running late as usual. She decided that her ball gown needed a press, and was running an iron over it and probably dreaming in the process when the back of the skirt disintegrated under the iron’s heat. Joyce Wylie was the first person to her rescue with a replacement gown that fitted Shirley perfectly.

Not all the wardens of women students were made in the same mould: a couple of them were downright spoilers who revelled in intrusive power plays. Room inspections were one way of punishing “deviant” (read “non-conforming”) female students. A book or even a hairpin left on the quilt of one’s bed could result in a penalty of being ‘gated’ the following Saturday night. Quelle horreur!

Being gated did not upset Shirley so much - she could stay in and read – until she laid eyes on fellow-student Nick Bricknell. Shirley’s love for Nick was instant, deep and enduring and reciprocated in full.

It was not easy in that cloistered environment for couples to find a time and place where they could meet without public comment. Fortunately the Returned Servicemen had let the Principal and Staff know from Day One that there was no way they were going to apply for leave passes, sign leave books and so on. They would come and go as they pleased. Nor would they obey rules prohibiting them from drinking and other ‘manly’ activities. College management soon gave up its attempt at control; some staff even figured it

was better to join them than fail in an attempt to control them. Rules were temporarily shelved. Thus all pioneer students benefited from the stand taken by our brave returned heroes of the Defence Forces!

The Lucerne Patch soon became a popular retreat for couples, while Willans Hill, with its quiet seclusion and view over the town offered an escape from the stifling atmosphere of collegiate living. Some pioneers will remember the fuss that a wouser warden tried to arouse when Shirley innocently laid claim to a blanket that had been found on Willans Hill!

Shirley and Nick married in 1951. We treasure our photographs of that wedding, some of which show other pioneers in attendance: Joan Carey, Winifred Walshaw and Marj Abraham who later married fellow-pioneer Alan Fryer, the first editor of *Talkabout* (Alan brought out the first issue of *Talkabout* in 1948 with the following editorial team: Betty Anderson, Mary Comino, Jim Hartnett, Jim O’Brien, Dave Rummery, June Scott and Win Walshaw).

Life with energetic Nick was never to be humdrum. As well as teaching, their early married years included Nick’s time as a professional fisherman and swimming coach after resigning from teaching. These episodes were followed by Nick’s return to teaching, but in Papua New Guinea which at that time was regarded as ‘the last unknown’. His successful career there involved at one time inspection of schools that could only be reached by way of log canoes and overnight patrols through waist-high kunai and over monolithic mountain ranges, while it was only to be expected that Shirley would become a teacher librarian.

In the late seventies they lived and taught in China, in Cambodia, in the Solomon Islands and in the UK. Shirley took all this in her stride, including, along the way, gaining a B.A. in Asian Studies with a major in Chinese language; the birth of three sons: Barry, Nick and Brett, and the fostering of a daughter, Patty.

In preparation for Shirley’s funeral service, Nick picked frangipanni flowers from their garden of their home in Sunnybank Hills, Queensland. For music at the Service, Nick said he chose *The Wind Beneath my Wings* “because she was my inspiration and my support” and *Blueberry Hill* “because she loved Lois Armstrong and because this reminded us of our own Willans Hill which we climbed so many nights, returning with grass seeds in our blanket.”

Vale, Shirley, our close friend of 58 years.

Beth and Scotty (1947-49)

# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## MICHAEL ROWLANDS

1932 - 2006



Michael James Rowlands was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1932 at the Royal Women's Hospital in Sydney.

He grew up in West Ryde, attended West Ryde Public School and then Fort Street High School. In 1950, at age 17, he went to Wagga Teachers College.

Mick's College days were marked by his determination to participate fully in the academic, social and sporting life of the time as well as many other things that weren't on the calendar. Typical of this was his involvement as a whole-hearted, no nonsense footballer who played that way despite playing against doctor's orders.

Many of us were on the end of his practical jokes dreamt up with devilish intent. However, he could take it as well as he dished it out. On more than one occasion he "dressed up" in dress and wig to cross the gym path and head for the women's quarters. Late one night on the way home he was stopped and questioned by one of the wardens who chipped him (in disguise) about being out late. She sent him back to the women's quarters!

Mick's first appointment was to the one-teacher school at Roto, in the west of NSW where he spent a couple of years in difficult teaching and living conditions. During this time he wrote to me frequently, using OHMS envelopes, always addressing the letters "Preacher-in-Charge". It gave me added respect for a couple of months until someone woke up.

After Roto Mick went to Glen Alice where he spent a few years. He had a 350 Enfield motor bike which churned the dust up on the road to Mudgee on weekends. During this time he met Kath Carmichael in Mudgee. They married in 1957 and had four children, Sharon, Michael, Janene and Neree.

A most significant event in his life was his posting to Eurunderee School. This was Henry Lawson's old school and Michael became a close friend of John Tierney, who

published "The Advancement of Spencer Button" under the name of Brian James and whose father was Henry Lawson's teacher.

Eurunderee was to become a major part of his career. During the next fifteen years Mick developed educational and social programs for children who were disadvantaged by location, opportunity or background.

He was responsible for many initiatives that helped to make life for isolated children much more bearable, including Small Schools Athletics. Because of its solid foundations this day is still a significant annual event for these children.

Mick was involved in the social life of the area as well. He ensured that all his students knew about Lawson and the history of their community. At the Eurunderee School Christmas party each year, the children would recite Lawson's poem "Eurunderee School" which Mick had taught them. He also assisted Professor Colin Roderick with material for his major work on Henry Lawson.

Due to falling population, Eurunderee Public should have closed years before it did. It remained viable because Mick picked up a number of children in his big black 1939 Pontiac, on his way out to Eurunderee each day. When the school eventually closed he left it as a Lawson Museum and a tribute to Mick for his 15 years of service to the community.

Mick reluctantly moved to Mudgee Public School where he taught for the remainder of his career, except for a brief stint at Cudgegong Valley Public School.

Mick loved the Mudgee community and worked to make it a fairer, better place. He did things because he cared, because there was a need, because he had vision and a belief that gave him the strength to bring things to completion.

He fought for what he saw as injustice towards marginalized children with disabilities. In the 1970's he was instrumental in getting Special Education classes established in Mudgee, so that these children who were otherwise kept at home or schooled in Dubbo, became part of their community.

He set a precedent in the history of Public Education in Australia by gaining inclusion of all children in the Public school system, regardless of their ability to learn at the same rate as able-bodied children. Special education units are now giving these very special students the opportunity to learn and reach the full potential that their disabilities allow.

He had a deep concern and love of the local environment. He became an expert in the propagation of native plants from seeds. I saw his backyard many times and there always seemed to be thousands of different sized containers with trees and shrubs, most of which were given away to worthy

recipients.

He spent many hours writing submissions for grants towards resources to teach environmental education. He became aware of the merits of the National Sport and Recreation facilities at Narrabeen Lakes. As a result Mick's environmental program grew to incorporate an annual pilgrimage of children to Narrabeen for a week of fun and learning with an emphasis on community and values. When Lake Windamere was established Mick saw an opportunity to develop Mudgee's own Sport and Recreation site. Thus began years of lobbying Government for grants, hard work and fundraising. Eventually his dogged determination and his persuasion in enlisting the support of Terry Holt (Sport and Rec) resulted in the establishment of the "Windamere Under Canvas Camping Site".

Whilst all his busy professional life was going on for others, Mick had other problems. In 1975 he had a massive heart attack which many said he wouldn't survive. With the strength of his faith, his doctors and his family he slowly recovered. For the rest of his life he fought against ill-health.

The opportunity to improve his health was taken when Mick underwent the relatively new procedure of by-pass surgery in 1982. However things did not work out as hoped and he was on the critical list, with his life in the balance, once again.

Amazingly he did regain much of his energy and followed Doctors' orders re his diet and lifestyle ... although it may be more accurate to say he followed Kath's orders in this matter.

Mick's continuing ill health forced his early retirement in 1985. However he continued his work with children through some casual teaching and the voluntary coaching of some children who were struggling at school.

In 1991 he had more major surgery. Again he was not expected to survive. But a remarkable spirit made him fight and be the success and example he was to his family and community.

Mick's lifetime of community service was recognised when he was named "Mudgee Citizen of the Year".

In 2003 he was awarded an OAM "For service to the community of Mudgee, particularly as a contributor to the provision of special education services and outdoor education facilities"

Over the years he was one of the few who always bothered to keep in touch with everybody else "Ring Mick, he'll know".

Mick is survived by his wife Kath, who is not well; his four children and eleven grandchildren.

Mick Rowlands -- A Good Friend.

John Goodger (1950-51)

# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

## JOAN JOHNSON (ARMSTRONG) PIONEER.



Joan had a full calendar of family life, trips away, attendance of all manner of cultural events and participation in sporting activities.

She made friends at WWTC and many of these friendships were to last.

When Joan married Bob, she and he travelled all over Europe for a whole year, as a honey-moon. He died in 1983 so Joan threw herself into many things. Joan was interested in opera and ballet. She belonged to the Mozart Society. Twice each year she went to concerts overseas.

Art exhibitions at Sydney and Melbourne interested her. She continually travelled in her car to various events in Melbourne. She played tennis and golf and was a keen bridge player.

Joan is survived by her four children and the three grandchildren.. Joan was kind and good. In short – a wonderful human being.

Audrey Schaecken (Searl) 1958-50

## JOHN JOSEPH KENNEDY 1932-2003

John Kennedy was born in Casino on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1932. he began his schooling at the Convent in Casino. The war years intervened, and John's family all moved to Sydney, where they settled in Darlinghurst, East Sydney.

At this time John attended St Mary's Cathedral Christian brothers School, where he completed his Primary and Secondary Schooling.

After completion of the Leaving Certificate, John won a Scholarship to Wagga Wagga Teachers College, where he began in 1950. After one year there, he opted to pursue a calling he felt he had to follow for the priesthood – so for one year he attended the Seminary at Springwood.

This proved not to be his true calling, so in 1952, he returned to Wagga Teachers' College, where he completed his teacher training. He claimed to be the only Wagga Graduate who took three years to complete a two year course, and even that was only 18 months in duration. How Irish is that! So in 1953, began John's long association with Public Education in NSW. A hundred

tales at least could be told of those days, but here is a rundown of the schools he was at, beginning as a lowly 'first year probationer' to become at his retirement in 1989 a Principal.

John began teaching at Botany Public School in 1953. It was at that time, that two of his Wagga mates, Pat Dalton and Ted O'Brien introduced John to one of their co-teachers- Delores Whalan, and the inevitable occurred, they became engaged.

At this time John was transferred to a one teacher school on the Queensland border, Hurford via Texas, where he lived in a tobacco shed, and remained for two years. John and Delores married in 1957, and John then went to Camdensvale School where he began a long association with General Activities classes.

By now the Kennedy Klan was enlarging with the arrival of sons, Stephen and Mark. Time to leave the city and John went as Principal 3 to a Child Welfare school at St Helliers, Aberdeen. The Kennedy Caravan headed north to the Hunter Valley in 1962, where the family spent nine very happy years, in and around the area – John finally leaving St Helliers to go to Aberdeen. Then back to the City again, John to Kingswood Primary as Principal 2, then on the Green Valley to Busby as Principal 1. More adventures there, then off to his beloved Lethbridge Park at "The Druitt", as it was affectionately known.

Time to leave again, this time to the Central Coast, where John was Principal at Wyong for three years, then finally to his last and very happy school from which to retire, Wamberal, finally tossing away the chalk in 1989.

John lived his life with great joy and vigour. He and Delores spent 46 wonderful years together, travelling extensively and thriving on the love of and enjoyment in their children and grandchildren.

When John's illness was diagnosed, he accepted the prognosis with great dignity and throughout remained a teacher to the end, showing us with dignity and stoicism the way to do it.

He passed away at his home at Bateau Bay on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2003.

Vale dear John – we are all the better for having touched and been touched by him.

Delores Kennedy

## MORRIE GRIFFITHS – CAREER TRIBUTE

Morrie was born in Concord and went to school in Sydney. After attending Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in 1953-54 he did his stint in National Service. As a "Nasho" he was persuaded by a good friend to join the boxing troupe, but was unfortunately knocked out in one of his first bouts and his mate was amused to find Morrie still dazed

some hours after the event. This mate also reports that Morrie in camp always slept with a bible beside his bunk.

Morrie's first teaching appointment was at Myrtleville, a one-teacher school near Goulburn and he taught there until 1959. His next schools were Crookwell, Bankstown and Telopea. Morrie eventually decided to become a school counsellor and did his training course at the North Sydney Division of Guidance and Adjustment in 1971. Morrie was then living at Carlingford and was often late for the training session because, as he complained, getting to North Sydney was a real bugbear after being used to the ten minute drive from Carlingford to Telopea.

Morrie began his counselling career at Glen Innes in 1972 and stayed there until 1975. He came to our neck of the woods in 1976 when he was appointed to Kadina High School.

Despite the onslaught of his debilitating illness Morrie bravely worked for as long as he could, but finally accepted medical retirement in 1990. In his retirement Morrie, who was a born teacher and counsellor continued to offer his services at home, both as a tutor and a counsellor, to the wider community. He was still doing this as late as last year.

Morrie, to me, seemed to possess a certain saintly quality. He was never overly critical of those with whom he worked. He was one of the only people I know to have adhered to the maxim: "When you can't find anything good to say about a person, say nothing at all."

On many occasions when Morrie was on leave I replaced him at Kadina and found these stints particularly rewarding. This was largely due to the respect, even admiration, enjoyed by the incumbent, Morrie.

As an illustration of Morrie's saintly quality, he never seemed embittered by having been smitten by a crippling disease while still a relatively young man. In the face of adversity he appeared to his friends to be unfailingly cheerful and someone always positive even as his disease progressively overwhelmed him.

Before his mobility declined Morrie derived great enjoyment from regular lunches at the Goonellabah club with his former colleagues, Shirl, Colleen. Joan, Ken, Eric and Helen. He loved a joke and a smoke and who could begrudge him the comfort of his beloved tobacco?

In the last few years, while his cruel disease caused him to shrink physically, his spirit remained undiminished and his fortitude set an example for us all.

Morrie was a man of great wisdom, integrity, tolerance and compassion. He will be sorely missed.

Submitted by Ian Bedford

## New maths skills that make the modern workplace tick

**Employers may need to reconsider the mathematical skills they seek from young employees, says a senior Charles Sturt University academic after some groundbreaking research in the Australian workplace.**

Younger people now entering the workplace have learned many different numeracy methods to earlier generations, according to research by senior education researcher Professor Robyn Zevenbergen from Charles Sturt University (CSU).

“The way they have learned their number skills profoundly influences how they are perceived in the workplace,” Professor Zevenbergen said.

“Employers want them to show mathematical skills that come from the employer’s view of mathematics – calculating sums without paper, regurgitating times tables and giving exact answers.

“But this new generation – the Millennials – do maths differently to earlier generations. They estimate answers, they are great at problem solving and they see technology as a tool to do aspects of work.”

Professor Zevenbergen’s views on differences in mathematical performance come from her research into the mathematical skills needed by young employees across a wide range of industries.

Funded between 2002 and 2004 by the Australian Research Council, the studies included surveys, interviews, “workshadowing” and focus groups with employers, employees, teachers, job placement officers, students in work and workplace trainers.

“Millennials are the first generation born with technology in their hands. Calculators, computers, video games, mobile phones – they have grown up with this technology and see it as integral parts of their worlds,

including their working lives. This is the techno-savvy generation.

“We older generations – as teachers, employers and parents – need to be more understanding of these differences, and so account for them in our dealings with this new working group.



*Professor Robyn Zevenbergen  
photo: Elissa Cooke*

Professor Zevenbergen recognised that this group is particularly skilled at estimating and problem solving. “For example, when estimating how much ‘hardener’ they require to be mixed with a commercial adhesive, I found apprentice boat builders might modify the amount

according to the size of the job or air temperature, which affects whether the glue will harden before the job is in place – and they did this without asking their employer,” she said.

“They look at the whole problem, not just how much hardener is normally mixed with the glue.”

Modern technologies have also changed the workplace, particularly for people just starting work.

“In many jobs, they will access sophisticated cash registers, specialised computer programs and stock taking data loggers that use bar codes for many repetitive jobs. They won’t need as many traditional basic mathematical skills as they once did to complete these activities.

“Employers might need to reassess the skills they test, particularly during the job interview process and on-going training,” Professor Zevenbergen concluded.

Professor Zevenbergen is now looking to extend her research into this topic until 2008, having recently won further research funding through the Australian Research Council.

*Author: Wes Ward*

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### Bequests and other Donations to Charles Sturt University

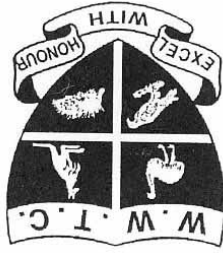
Valuing their teaching experience at CSU, two ex-staff members recently made a very generous Bequest of \$50,000. This contribution works toward providing that same amazing experience to students well into the future. The Bequest will be used to provide annual scholarships to exemplary students studying Education.

Another ex-staff member with a passion for Music education contributed \$20,000, enabling an annual Scholarship to a student studying the Music elective of the Primary degree.

Aiding in this way can ensure the development of future students in your speciality. Developing in young people the same sense of creativity, ingenuity and value for humanity that was fostered in us can only lead to deeper harmony and more effective ways of working together.

Please give your consideration to making a Bequest. For more information please contact the Alumni Office on 02 63384629 or email [alumni@csu.edu.au](mailto:alumni@csu.edu.au).





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