



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

TALKABOUT



Volume 9 No 1

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CAN TALKABOUT CONTINUE?

Those present at the AGM were informed by the CSU representative that due to funding restraints within the Alumni area of Charles Sturt University, the WWTC Alumni Association will now have to cover the costs of postage as well as printing of our wonderful Talkabout magazine.

At present the printing of Talkabout is funded by contributions from WWTC Alumni and up until now the cost of postage has been borne by CSU Alumni.

The cost of printing each issue is around \$1800 and at 3 issues per year this comes to almost \$6000.

So far this amount has been covered by your donations - thank you to the 1000 who have contributed financially. (3000 alumni regularly receive each issue of Talkabout).

Postage costs are \$1500 per issue totalling \$4500 per year which means we are faced with the prospect of having to pay about \$3300 per issue for our Talkabout magazine. The contributions we are receiving at present **will not cover this extra expense.**

As you can see, unless the two thousand who have not yet contributed make some effort to keep our publication alive then the future of Talkabout is in jeopardy.

We are presently investigating other avenues of funding such as selling advertising space in each issue, **BUT**, if you want Talkabout to continue in its present form, you **MUST** get behind it and support it.

We do not want to restrict the circulation to those who contribute but this may be necessary to cut printing and postage costs.

We hope you please our Treasurer with your financial response using the form in this edition.

WE DON'T WANT TALKABOUT TO GO WALKABOUT

The Scholarship Fund is over \$47,626

Almost there! Just under \$2,500 to go.

Let's get moving and reach our final target. \$25 from just 100 people will do it. Come on WWTC Alumni. Let's go!

WWTC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Teachers Credit Union building, Homebush, on 7th February, 2006.

In the absence of President Bob Collard who had recently undergone surgery, Vice President Graeme Wilson chaired the meeting.

Graeme welcomed Professor David Green, Head of Wagga Wagga Campus, Charles Sturt University, Michelle Fawkes, CSU Alumni Relations Officer, and Alumni Members present.

Graeme gave an impromptu report on the highlights of the Association's activities for the year:

- The well-attended general reunion.
- The official opening on Saturday, 1st October, during the reunion, of a display of WWTC memorabilia at The Museum of the Riverina.
- The quarterly lunches in Sydney.
- *Talkabout*, the alumni magazine.

Michelle Fawkes, in her CSU report highlighted the WWTC Open Reunion when well over 170 people attended from all year groups, the opening of the WWTC display at The Museum of the Riverina and the ride on the miniature railway, something John Riley would have enjoyed.

- The Scholarship Fund had reached a total of \$47,320.20 by the end of 2005.
- During 2005 the Alumni staff moved into 'The Grange' and are now fully integrated into the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. Because of funding restraints Pam's services as a casual were lost. The funding shortfall will also impact on the distribution of *Talkabout*.

Professor David Green expressed his enthusiasm for the work of the Alumni Association. He emphasised the importance of keeping alive the memory of one of the founding institutions of Charles Sturt University. He suggested that WWTCAA consider joining forces with the CSU School of Education in a joint outreach to CSU education alumni. In this connection Lew observed that, by 2012, all WWTC alumni would have reached retirement age. Their views on the matter, he felt, could be ascertained by means of a survey in *Talkabout*.

It was resolved to give David approval to suggest to Ros Brennan, Acting



Professor David Green

Head, School of Education, that she contact WWTCAA to discuss the possibility of providing a single alumni service for all Education alumni of CSU and its antecedent institutions.

David provided copies of a Riverina Foundation brochure which makes suggestions as to how donations might be used. Because students who are living on campus are more likely to complete their courses one suggestion is that Scholarship holders should receive their benefits in the form of rent-free accommodation on campus (or cash in lieu). New 8-unit cottages are to be constructed for this purpose.

It was noted that Ian Thomas, a WWTC Pioneer, has been awarded an OAM. Ann will send him a congratulations card from the Alumni Association

The election of office bearers for 2006 was conducted by Michelle and resulted in:

President: Bob Collard
 Vice President: Graeme Wilson
 Secretary: Dorothy Tanner
 Treasurer: Lindsay Budd
 Hon Auditor: Margaret Easterbrook
 Research & Records: Ann Smith
 Talkabout Editors: {Lindsay Budd}
 {Lew Morrell }

Committee Members:
Phil Bastick, Col Crittenden, Mal
Hanratty, Nigel Tanner, Kevin & Win
Wilcox.

The next meeting will be held on
9th May, 2006.

Did you ever wonder:

1. If a deaf person swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap?
2. If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?
3. What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
4. Would a fly without wings be called a walk?
5. What was the best thing before sliced bread?
6. If one synchronised swimmer drowns, do the rest drown, too?

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From Ann's Mailbag



In my position as Secretary and now as **Research and Records Officer** I have been endeavoring to find details of as many people as possible who went to **Wagga Wagga Teachers' College**. Help in doing this has been given by lots of people who have given me information of people in their session, such as married names, people who are deceased, where other members live, and so on. Thank you to all those people.

All the sessions from 1947 to 1971 have at least some details missing.

Session 1968 needs to find 79, 1969 needs 50, 1970 needs 83 and 1971 needs 110.

All the lists were taken from Graduation Lists, Enrolment Cards at the CSU Archives and Examination Books with only the names showing for some sessions, newspapers, and some correspondence and other sources like Talkabout. To find people it is almost essential to have both Christian names and a married name if applicable. I use the White Pages to contact people to ensure I have the right person. Sometimes there are people who have the same names.

In these cases I ask if they went to WWTC and if they get **Talkabout**. That is the most useful question I ask. Sometimes they call it "Walkabout". If they do not get Talkabout then they are not on the CSU Data Base.

The CSU Data Base provides addresses for the mailing of Talkabout and so its accuracy is vital. To get your name on to the Data Base it is necessary to fill in and sign an Information Form and return it to the **Records and Research**

Officer (myself). I send the completed form to **Michelle Fawkes (Alumni Relations Officer)** at CSU Bathurst who adds the information to the Data Base. Our magazine, **Talkabout**, having been produced and edited by **Lindsay Budd** and **Lew Morrell** is sent to CSU to be printed and posted.

My job can become quite frustrating when people are not prompt in their replies. I ring someone up to confirm that they went to WWTC and that they are the person I am looking for. Next day I send them an Enrolment Form, a Talkabout, an envelope and sometimes a letter and ask that the form be returned promptly so it will go in the bulk posting.

Details on the Information Sheet can be altered at any time and if you do not want to be on the Data Base then write **CHOICE** on your form. Please remember to post it back promptly so that I do not have to try and remember whose form I am waiting to receive back after sending it to you two or three months ago.

Our Alumni Data Base is used when reunions are planned. This is a good time to bring your session up to date. My request is that newly found members fill in the Information Sheet and return it promptly. If you move house then send me your new address.

Inform me if anyone is deceased. Keep sending articles for Archives and Museum displays. As you are already doing, keep sending items for Talkabout. Keep sending your **donations for Scholarship Fund and production of Talkabout**.

Our Talkabout goes a long way. In the November 2005 copy **Ian Donald Sharman** whose name was among thirteen out of 31 from the 1970-71 session for whom I needed information. He sent me an email from Alaska telling me that he had found his name when he made a search of the web. He had discovered that Talkabout was published on the CSU website. After 26 years he and his wife Linda and two boys have already bought a farm at Murwillumbah and are retiring there.

I received an email from our Scholarship winner of two years ago, **Blair O'Meara** who sent me a "Catch up Letter". It is printed in another part of this Talkabout. **Wilma Kentwell nee**

Worland 1950-51 rang to change her address. She is very happy in her Aged Care Unit at Tweed Heads.

During the last half of 2005 I spent a lot of time looking for some of the 1971 session who had never been contacted and thus were not on the Data Base. I would point out that there were quite a number already on.

These are the college names of some whom we have found. They might jog a memory for you to send some more to me. If you know anyone on this list is not getting Talkabout please let me know.

Please send me details of anyone you think should be on the 1971 intake list.

Here are the ones I have found:-
Please excuse any errors.

Wayne **Bradley**, Robyn **Cameron**, Claire **Cooper**, Ann **Dalliston**, Dianne **Dodd**, Lynette **Dowse**, Robyn **Dye**, Frances **Egan**, Russell **Edwards**, Diane **Cloak**, Susan **Hinley**, Paul **Hone**, Annette **Johnston**, Vojislav **Jovanovic**, Janice **Lee**, Christine **Maggan**, Beverley **Mallon**, Lynda **Ramage**, Jennifer **Robinson**, Glennis **Smith**, Ross-Lyn **Stein**, Kerri **Taylor**, Frances **Turk**, Madeleine **Turkington**, Peter **Williams**, Helen **Ziebell**.

I shall look forward to some help. This applies to all the sessions. Do you know any married names or addresses of colleagues not on this list?

In Memorium

Moirae Mae Brien (Walker) 1949-50
On 5th January 2006

Shirley Bricknell (Williams) Pioneer
November 2005

John Carlton Clark 1948-50
17th December 2005

Colin McKinnon husband of Robin
Williams 1952-53

Malcolm Taylor husband of Fernanda
Centofanti 1961-62 5th August 2005

"GRADUATION" A GREAT SUCCESS



Bill Hauville, Kev Leys, Ray Writer, Allan Slater, Dick Winnett, Ross Hosking, Jack Tierney, Geoff Peters.

The reunion and the belated "Graduation" at Moruya was indeed a great success. The large number of ex-students attending and the camaraderie expressed would, we hope, wipe away any bitterness that has existed from the injustice imposed all those years ago. We feel that those parents so cheated would have been pleased with the occasion. Ed.

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, a gregarious old wassailer, Sir Toby Belch, confronts a judgemental, authoritarian Puritan, one Malvolio. The Puritan is offended by Sir Toby, his high-spirited friend Maria and company enjoying themselves with food, drink, laughter and song. He tells them so and threatens to use the full force of his authority to punish them for the heinous crime of - enjoying themselves. Sir Toby's indignant reply is a classic: "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" And some people wonder why Shakespeare was the Man of the Millennium!

On Thursday, February 16, a number of Sir Tobys and Marias met to celebrate their defiance and ultimate victory over their clashes with their Malvolio at WWTC in 1961. The cake was a splendid mudcake, brought along by our 1961 secretary Ronnie Hancock (Kelly to us). The ale was provided by the Moruya Golf Club. Adorning the cake was a cardboard 'clockface' with the 18 year old faces of the 'thirteen martyrs' replacing the numbers. Written on the clockface was:

Graduation 1961 completed 16/02/06

Gaudeamus igitur

So Shakespeare was right once again. Cakes and ale will not succumb to puritanical judgementalism. The spirit of *gaudeamus igitur* ("let us therefore rejoice") was well and truly alive. One of our fellows felt he'd never experienced a happier event. We were delighted to see each other again and we rejoiced to see a triumphant closure to a series of injustices.

We were taught, quite rightly, that a child's sense of injustice is very strong. More accurately, *everyone's* sense of

injustice is very strong. The catalyst for this reunion was the thirteen men being suspended for confessing to two drinking episodes even though they were over the legal age. The charge was 'persistent disobedience' even though two events hardly equates with persistence and two confessions would suggest the disobedience was hardly flagrant. So our 'graduating ceremony' in 2006 was seen as closure to a considerable injustice.

Despite the disappointment of many parents, the despair of the females who were to be the escorts of the young men and the protests of many of the lecturing staff, the rules were strictly applied with triumphant, puritanical zeal at WWTC in 1961. And what did it achieve?

It achieved a magnificent 'graduating ceremony', almost 45 years later. Ray Petts, adopting the persona *Professor Hale'n'Hearty*, presented beautifully created certificates to eight of the thirteen. Ken Eggleton and Don Hammond are deceased, Mick Gow cannot be found, Mark McCulla sent his apologies from Canada and Ron Sadler and his wife were damaged in a car accident on the way to the reunion and could not attend. Happily, they are expected to make a full recovery.

At the time of the suspension, our Malvolio expressed little hope that these people would succeed in teaching. Most did further degrees, one taught in tertiary institutions, others became principal, vice-principals, Head Teachers... Each graduate received a bottle of Charles Sturt Cab/Sav; the irony was not lost on anyone that Charles Sturt university, which sprang from the ashes of puritanical WWTC, now produces a very passable red.

Ross Hosking welcomed the assembly (101 of them) and gave apologies and thanks, plus an overview. Reference was made to the written support of Mr Mike Smith and Mrs June Whittaker, two excellent lecturers of our time and genuine role models for many of us when we entered the classrooms of NSW.

Dave Martin took the chair and, tongue firmly in cheek, complained how the

martyrdom of the 13 made the respectable, sober lads who remained look like the cowards who stayed behind in WW1 when the real heroes departed. His self-esteem didn't seem too shattered and, in truth, had he the two pound levy he would have been at the notorious keg party too! He invited anyone who had been a CC to come up on stage to be acknowledged by Professor Hale'n'Hearty. In 1961, Conditional Certificated people were not allowed to graduate formally even though they were to teach the next year. There was an enthusiastic response to David's invitation.

Ronnie Kelly and Gwenda Starling (to revert to their single names for a moment) then cut the cake. Ronnie represented the girls we were unable to escort to the 1961 graduation and Gwenda represented the parents who were prevented from a proud moment. Bob Haskew's DVD revealed images of life on the campus on the big screen accompanied by the music of our College band. They did a fine 'Lion Sleeps Tonight' and 'Virgin Mary'!

Previously, 18 men had played golf in the Moruya competition (congratulations to Frank Leonard – fifth on a Thursday at Moruya is no mean feat!), others had lunch with Beth McLaren at Mossy Point and still others enjoyed themselves at other venues on the lovely South Coast. Wednesday night was a barbecue at the Tomakin Club and Friday a sausage sizzle throughout the day at Hosking's in Broulee. Many wore the commemorative T-shirts Allan Slater had organised. And still people needed more time to catch up on those 45 years!

Ronnie Kelly is compiling folders for the thirteen or their loved ones. Bob Haskew is compiling DVD's of memories. These two can't be thanked enough for the contribution their technical expertise made to our event.

We had a wonderful time. Other speeches and conversations confirmed that the spirit of Malvolio breathed on the campus at WWTC well before 1960-61 and well after but it could not stifle the joy and delight we took in each other's company, then and now.

Ross Hosking 1960-61

LETTERS PAGE

LETTER FROM BLAIR



Ann recently received the following letter from Blair O'Meara.

Blair was the recipient of the 2003 WWTC Alumni Scholarship and he and his wife were our guests at the Reunion Dinner in Bathurst at the 2003 reunion.

Hi Ann,

You would remember me as the 2003 scholarship recipient of the WWTC. I would like to fill you in on what has been happening over the last two years since we met. I was posted to Urana Central School in 2004 and taught a range of subjects within my discipline and outside it, including maths. During this year I was approached by the DET scholarship unit to see if I would participate in promoting the scholarship scheme they were running. I was uploaded to this address:
www.det.nsw.edu.au/employment/teachnsw/schrecipients.htm

The two years flew with highs and lows, however Urana had a profound impact on me as I became more and more committed to Public Education and the students I was employed to serve. I was lucky enough to receive a range of training within the Department, including OH&S Consultative, Bronze Medallion, Merit Selection and Web Services.

I participated regularly in community activities but found it difficult to break out beyond the limitations that all men must play football which in itself was a culture shock. Small, isolated, rural communities was certainly a new experience and I can gladly say it's not bad living in a place that gets its Sydney papers one day late because if the world ended you would have one more day than everybody else.

At the beginning of term 4 I was offered work at the university as a replacement for one of the lecturers, so I have put the academic hat on for the year and will be sharing my experiences as a beginning teacher to the prospective teachers at CSU. It is funny that I am back here however my wife and I have bought our first house and are trying to start our family but I can't help but pinch myself that I am here because there are so many great teachers within the Department that for me to be selected to work at CSU I feel very honoured.

If you want any more information, drop me a line.

Blair O'Meara School of Education,
Charles Sturt University,
Locked bag 588
Wagga Wagga, 2678

HELEN PATTON NEE WRIGLEY

Dear Ann,
I am writing to let you know that I have once again changed my address.

To fill you in with a few details – I graduated from Wagga TC in 1952 and taught with the NSW Education Department for 3 years (1953-55) at Duntroon Public School ACT. From 1956 – 60 I lived at Jervis Bay married to a forester from Victoria, Brian Patton, and giving birth to two children, Susan and Michael.

During that time I taught RE as a visiting teacher in local schools and also ran a kindergarten at the Naval College for 2 years. In 1959, Michael, who had been sickly from birth, died of kidney disease, and on the death of my husband in 1960, as the result of a forestry accident, I returned to Canberra where I taught for 7 years at the Canberra C.E.G.G.S and completed a part-time degree in Oriental studies at ANU.

As a result of that and requests from my husband's relatives, I moved to Melbourne, where I taught Indonesian (1968) at MLC, Kew. During my time at MLC, I was fortunate enough to be able to spend 3 months in Japan as the result of receiving a Travel Grant given by the Commonwealth Government for teachers of Asian Languages (1972).

In May, 1976, I was involved in a traffic accident, when my car was hit by a train at a Railway Crossing in Ringwood East. This forced me to give up teaching for a while! However, I was able to work again and in 1978 accepted a position with the South Australian Education Department, teaching Japanese at Stuart H.S. Whyalla, where I also taught part-time, teaching Japanese at the S.A.I.T.

During my time there I received a Japan Foundation Scholarship (1979) to spend 2 months in Japan studying with 35 Japanese teachers from all over the world. This was a most wonderful experience for me and one that I appreciated very much. It gave me the impetus to decide to live in Japan, which I did in 1980, working at a two-year College for women called Nanzan Short Term University, teaching English and studying Calligraphy, Flower Arrangement and Tea Ceremony in classes with Japanese people as well.

On my return from Japan I took up a position teaching Japanese at Geelong Grammar's Junior School, "Glamorgan", in Melbourne, a wonderful position for a primary trained teacher of Japanese. I taught years 2-7 from 1981-7. I would have to write another letter to describe how wonderful it was to teach Japanese to Junior School students. However, after 7 years, I began to wish to teach Japanese again at a higher level and as my daughter had settled in Gippsland, I decided to accept a position at Gippsland Grammar School where I taught Japanese to Year 7-12 from 1988 until I retired at the end of 2000.

In 2001 I moved to Bateman's Bay where I enjoyed being close to the rest of my relatives again. I became a tutor in Japanese language and culture for the U3A, teaching small groups and tutoring in my own home. However, even though I loved life there I have this year returned to Gippsland to be close once more to my daughter in Bairnsdale.

I am no longer teaching but am living in beautiful Paynesville on the Gippsland Lakes and spend my time here singing in choirs, attending U3A sessions in Bairnsdale and doing all those wonderful things one can do in retirement.

I am very grateful for the training I had at Wagga T C, which gave me the basis for a totally fulfilling and interesting career in teaching which both good luck and misfortune thrust me into. I often think of my fellow WTC students and eagerly read every word of "Talkabout" when it comes. The latest issue brought back memories of Michael Wilmot. We traveled on the same school bus to Canberra H S and he always teased me about something or other. I had not seen nor heard of him since that time. I also enjoyed reading Hugh Varnes' memories of his first school appointment.

Thank you for all the work you are doing to keep us up to date with news.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Patton (Wrigley) 1951-52.

TEACHING MEMORIES

MY FIRST APPOINTMENT

Well, yes, the Headmistress was of the Old School, but the lady had a lot of good points like serving us freshly poured tea in the playground with all the children playing happily around us. We could see them all. It was a public school ladies' college!! They were beautiful!

I liked her perfect punctuation and the polite but triumphantly humorous way of letting us know that in actual fact "A meeting of the Boys and Girls' Departments" was correct, and that the extra apostrophe added in pencil by one of the teachers after the first noun was actually wrong. "You only need the apostrophe after the last owner, she explained. I know I didn't change her work! Later on I got an 'A' in my language assignment at Sydney University. Language was my thing!

And then the assemblies! Good for her that she told the children the news that Sibelius had died! History in the making!

Some time in those three years I found myself in Bowral on some conference, probably a Christian one. A delightful High School Maths teacher who shared our staffroom showed up. To my surprise she told me that Miss C (my headmistress) had invited us to her beautiful country home where she went every holiday to companion her dear mother. Sloping lawns and tulips, and of course a stylish afternoon tea! Having been a Maths Remedial student at our wonderful Wagga TC, I thought simply and carefully about Arithmetic lessons. I loved "ten to the top and ten to the bottom" in takeaway sums. You know: $6 - 4 = 2$ and

$$16 - 14 = 2.$$

Add the same both sides and the difference is always the same!

Another love was teaching division! Plainer than day was the fact that grouping was easier than sharing.

One afternoon our staff, including the Head and Deputy, were sitting at the children's desks throwing twinkling little glances at each other, and wriggling a bit, waiting for the

Inspector to come and have a chat about Educational trends etc. We were all a bit big for the desks. The blackboard and chalk were ready for him.

In he comes. He's very nice. He just has a few things he'd like to share. He gets to teaching division.

"Now which do you think is the easier concept: grouping or sharing?"

My voice rings out, "grouping!"

Oh, the happy silence of the next few seconds! His sheer delight as he exclaims, "Do you know I hardly ever get that?" He beams at the Head, the Deputy and all of us.

"Yes, grouping is a much easier concept! That's the right answer!"

And I am the star of the show!

Thank you, WWTC, you were the best!

By the way, I was also offered a full-time Arts Degree scholarship at S U, plus another for Food Technology! But I thank God that He led me to where I could reach my best potential, and, after all, isn't that the aim of all true education?

Rosemary Johnson (Errington) 1954-55

A BIG DECISION – WHICH OPTION?

Decisions bring change. Remember choosing your "Option" (the term used in 1953)? First Monday of first term, sitting in the Assembly Hall, listening to lecturers one by one advertising their option. Deciding, Recording preferences; 1, 2, 3. I got my first preference, turned up to the first Option lecture and found I was the only first year girl; but there were plenty of first year boys and plenty of second year girls and boys! The subject was Religious Education and the lecturer was Mr Gordon Young. And this happened in the old days when class teachers were supposed to teach Scripture.

Looking back after 53 years, I see how my choice that morning turned my life around. A Churchy person, I thought I would be learning to teach

Scripture, but the Scripture began to teach me. Could people have a personal experience of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? A scary prospect. The stories about other people were OK, but me? And what were God's terms? Anyhow, a few months later, I had a "conversion" experience, rather like John Wesley's. To put it simply, I trusted Jesus Christ wholly, as Saviour, Lord and God. And the Holy Spirit began to change me. I began to understand the Bible and things of the Spirit. Everyone was surprised; they had assumed I was a believer.

Option lectures were lively, with reviews, quizzes, practical advice and demonstrations (flannel graphs), and of course, study of the Bible, its history, message, centrality, and the different versions thereof. I can remember some fiery arguments too. but our group learnt so much. We became and have stayed good friends. Four boys from that 53/54 group became Anglican ministers. I taught at a Methodist High School in Fiji from 1963 to 1966.

Then came marriage in Australia and five children and a shortage of Scripture teachers in the local public school. So back I went, taking our youngest – a four year old daughter – with me. And I've been teaching Scripture ever since. The 4 year old is now 31! Last year I had five classes and got a promotion (C List?) C for Co-ordinator of SRE at Taree West School.

I'm glad I was at College when "Religious Education" was an Option, and I place on record my eternal gratitude to Mr Gordon Young., What he taught me has been tried and tested for 52 years and it works, and I'm looking forward to another year of Scripture teaching .

God is good.

Margery Bonsor (Bollen) 1953-54.

Those Were The Days

We are printing some extracts from Talkabouts of long ago. These two stories are about prac teaching. Send us a short piece from a Talkabout of your era, preferably humorous or representative of the time. Ed.

Holiday Headache

Well, I was sitting reading, i.e., trying to decipher Stout's Manual of Psychology, when there was a knock at the door. I jumped three feet (after two weeks' Home Practice, it's a wonder it wasn't 30 feet), and went to open it. I screamed, for there before me stood a school pupil on whom I had been "pracing." He grinned amiably and handed me a note from the Headmaster.

The message was short but foreboding. The Kindergarten teacher was away ill and would I help them out. Feeling a great martyr, I hurried up to the School, and was shown to the Kindergarten room that was to be my "little world."

Blood-curdling shrieks were coming from the corridor, and I hurried out to find a little Kindergartener who had been enrolled only that morning and could not bear to tear herself away from Mummy.

I looked into the child's face and bared my teeth; she paled visibly and was silent. The mother, surprised, hurried away and I ushered my latest victim into the room along with the 50 other little gremlins.

I had heard somewhere that a noisy teacher begot a noisy class, and I was quite willing to believe the opposite. I became quieter and quieter and the children grew noisier and noisier. After several years, playtime arrived and the children tripped out.

Drinking tea in the staff room, the Headmaster commented that "such teaching experience is what all young students needed." I thought to myself if we all had such experience there wouldn't be too many "young students."

After playtime, I decided things would be different. I would tell them a story. I put everything I had into that story. I out-acted Sarah Bernhardt (Miss Moore

would have been delighted to see such a display of ability). The story completed, almost hoarse, I asked them if they had liked it. The little "dears" were most non-committal in their replies. One of the more softhearted ones confessed it was "all right."

There was a shortage of art equipment in the school, and the children supplied their own coloured pencils, so I asked them to bring their pencils after lunch.

By some miracle of chance, 40 out of 50 of the kiddies brought their pencils, but strangely enough these were all blunt. After wearing out three razor blades, two sharpeners and one finger, there was still a multitude of broken pencils, and I resolved that this could not go on.

I turned to the timetable. The next lesson set down was religion, "The Story of Noah's Ark." After gathering the children around me, i.e., kicking and shoving them in a crude (very crude) semi-circle I began telling the story.

All was going well until I reached the stage where they put a coating of tar on the ark to make it waterproof. One small boy raised his hand. "Please, Miss, it was pitch," he said.

"Yes, dear, that's what I said."

"No, you didn't. You said tar: My Mummy....."

"But tar and pitch are the same thing."

He did not believe me. "Pitch," he murmured under his breath. That child was convinced I was lying.

"Rhythm", a radio session, was the next item. I switched on the wireless, and the children, used to the lesson, followed the instructions. My part in the proceedings was to stop the children from trampling one another to death. In the line of duty, I had my stockings laddered and received two bruises.

The session over, the children began putting on their shoes again, and for the next couple of hours I was engaged in tying laces and buttoning straps.

It was now a quarter to three and I began lining the children up for dismissal. When the three o'clock bell sounded they were almost in line, and I marched them out - happy moment.

However, the first four days were the

worst, and on the fifth day there was some semblance of order in this Kindergarten chaos when their right teacher arrived and took over.

I struggled home again, and now (with Mr. Blakemore's permission) shall continue my convalescence at W.T.C.

"THE DREAMER" 1949

Live Specimens

During the forthcoming practice all second year students should use live specimens for their Nature Study lessons. The following may help. First years must refrain because the practice is too dangerous.

Those requiring yabbies should have a muddy pair of shoes; if not, bare feet will do. Yabbies may be found in the dam, and by placing the finger, or in the case of bare feet, the toe, below the surface of the water, a strong nip may be experienced. That is the time to draw in the toe or the finger, whichever applies, and place the specimen in a bucket which has been acquired. This will prove to be a good specimen for some time, but after two or three weeks tends to become rather inactive and if misplaced can readily be found.

The frog is another excellent subject. These are plentiful on the edge of the lagoon. All that is required is a torch, patience, good neuromuscular co-ordination, a natural liking for frogs and a change of clothes. The procedure to adopt is to approach the lagoon at night, sweep the torch along the water's edge, make a quick grab at the frog squatting expectantly on the bank, slip and fall into the water.

This is repeated several times until you come up with the live specimen. This can be kept in a bottle with some water and ventilation for some days. After that it tends to become inactive unless freed in suitable circumstances.

If that plant specimen you are using appears to move in an agitated manner, don't worry, remember it is a live specimen - another possible explanation is that it is a supervised lesson and you are nervous.

(Arthur Cornell - Biology lecturer 1949)

HISTORICAL MEMORIES

(The barefoot kid returns with her recollections of growing up Back -o- Bourke during World War II.)

MY WARTIME MEMORIES.

Once again I stir the memories of childhood and those memories of a barefoot kid would not be complete without recording the impact of WWII on my family and me. It was 1939 - and I have memories of peritonitis, my holiday at Grandma's and our involvement in war - and I was still 8 years old.

Kids heard their elders talking of fighting in Europe and somewhere in China, but those places were far away, so we took little notice. I knew that those who had returned from WW I still suffered anguish and scarring - and drifters looking for work still trudged The Wallaby Track on the tail of the Depression - but what I didn't know was that my own world was about to change.

That change came when I saw my kinfolk wearing military service uniforms. I see their faces now-cousin George, Flying Officer, navigator of bombers and transport DCs, posted to Britain; my bachelor uncle from Grandma's house, anti-aircraft gunner, first guarding the Owen machine gun factory at Port Kembla, later, after amphibian training at Trinity Bay, attached to the 9th Division, off to Morotai to reclaim Tarakan and Borneo; my Dad's two cousins, brothers - Clarrie fell the first night of attack on the island of Singapore and Les kept death at bay in Changi until the last two days of warfare: and I remember my friend Marie, at boarding school - so excited that her father was coming home- but he had been coming home on the hospital ship, "Centaur".

I was present at George's farewell when I sang and danced "Knees up Mother Brown", kept in time by the notes of the old piano in the Church of England Rectory. Some older people just sat watching, perhaps thinking of those not-so-distant yesteryears when they had attended similar functions for husbands, fathers, sons.

There was not much the barefoot kid could do to help during those war years. I posted letters to George, conscious that it was my hand that started them on

their long journey and hoping that there would be someone to claim them at the other end; at the counter I sent "comfort" parcels, always containing a fruit cake for George to share with his mates; and I knitted many khaki woollen scarves to help warm bodies, especially hearts, against the chill of European winters: and I tried to be good and say my prayers every night.

Because of blackouts and brownouts - dimmed house lights, no streetlights and rarely seen car headlights, we retired early and woke at sunup. We were reminded of the reality of change when we arrived at school to see our play areas disfigured by slit-trenches and heard the sound of the siren calling us to air-raid drill, but from the bottom of the trenches the sky above remained clear and clean in our area.

A cousin told me one school holidays that a local resident had noticed a man regularly cycling out to the cemetery and reported it to the authorities. Police investigation showed he was an enemy sympathiser, sending information to his colleagues. You may well ask why he was interested in a small far western country town. Perhaps that was the time when there was much talk and rumour about the Brisbane Line- that imaginary line stretching through to Adelaide- a line to defend if bad times came. The barefoot kid was aware that her country home was in the wrong place-outside the line by just a little- but it seemed like a thousand miles. The local interest was centred on our airport, which was to be upgraded to service bombers and we witnessed the arrival of much heavy machinery and many trucks, and were hosts to the drivers and supervisors until the work was completed. My Dad made a minor contribution to the airfield - he had a contract to supply 6ft. 6in. posts for its perimeter to keep out straying stock and large bush creatures.

My Dad had tried to enlist, but was rejected on two grounds-as a youth, he had shot off one of his toes while getting through a wire fence and it was assumed that he would not manage long marches-and as a primary producer he could better serve his country by helping to feed the nation especially the quarter million Aussies and Allies gathered in North Queensland preparing for the latter stages of the war.

The rationing of consumer goods hit hard. The Government through its various bodies kept an iron grip on many commodities and took years after the war slowly releasing that grip. My parents were young during WWI, newly married during the Depression and were well-schooled in adversity and austerity for the testing time 1939 onwards.

Petrol was rationed within a few months of the outbreak of war - 12 gallons per vehicle per week, but this was tightened in 1941 - with enough for just 16 miles per week but police were given authority to approve extra in special circumstances. There was no way we could travel our distance to town on such a meagre supply, so my Dad had a gas producer fitted on the tray of the ute- one of 12,000 in NSW. The kid knew little about how it worked. He started on petrol and when the gas was ready in the charcoal-burning contraption, he switched over to the gas. There were reports of gas producers exploding, so when the six members of our family went to town, three kids had to travel in the back, seated near the tailgate in case of accident.

We were not afraid because we knew our Dad was keeping watch in the rear-vision mirror. On the 160 mile round trip, the ute used 6 bags of charcoal so we had a few rests from the bumpy tailgate area while our Dad got himself very dirty putting each bag of charcoal into the mini-furnace.

Other consumer goods rationed were tea, sugar, butter, many cuts of meat and clothing. While my Dad watched his petrol gauge and counted his bags of charcoal, my Mum managed the ration books. Usually, it was quite straightforward. Out of butter? Use dripping. Out of tea? Drink water. Out of sugar? Do without. Out of meat? Go shooting or fishing or trapping rabbits. We were able to do that in the country but there were families who bought cat meat or dog bones and owned neither a cat nor a dog- and many small businesses owned by big-hearted shopkeepers, closed their doors and paid the penalty for extending too much credit to the "have-nots".

My Mum's main problem was with the clothing coupons. With three kids at boarding school, she had to decide what was merely needed and what was

HISTORICAL MEMORIES

essential. I was told, "Don't run! Walk!" - just in case I fell over and took the knee out of my stockings - and I had to sew my initials on my handkerchiefs in case I misplaced one. I think my Mum was secretly pleased that she had a couple of barefoot kids because their school shoes would last another term. Some families painted the soles of their shoes to save wear on the leather — others were forced to use thick cardboard inside their shoes to save wear and tear on their skin when holes had to be covered.

Many other consumer goods - not rationed - were almost impossible to find - items like building materials, car parts, tyres. In 1938/39 there were 86,000 new vehicle registrations- in 1942/43 less than 6000 bought by civilians. Many car owners put their cars up on blocks for the duration- others simply walked away when their older cars broke down on the road. Out on the property, my Dad was given strict instructions what to do should there be an invasion. He was to remove vital parts from all machinery and vehicles and bury all fuel. He had a 44-gallon drum of petrol that he kept in reserve in case he needed to move his family to a safer location some time in the future. He buried it - we didn't know where - perhaps he envisaged a trail of little footsteps checking daily that his "treasure" was still safe. When he unearthed it, much later, he found the contents had evaporated.

There was that one time I was home on holidays, sleeping under the stars as usual, when I noticed a bright orange glow in the sky to the north. I was older and should have known better, but my child-mind insisted that the invasion had started. Jerked wide-awake by the sight, I went inside and found my parents were watching it too. I was assured there was no need to worry- it was only a bushfire - a rare occurrence in our area because of the scarcity of fire fuel.

I pass over land and sea battles - over the raiders, submarines, mine layers and air-raids that scorched our coastline- all well known parts of our history - and come to the cessation of hostilities. The grown-up kid has looked at the costs - financially well over a trillion dollars. And the cost to humanity? I

borrow the words from Funk and Wagnall Encyclopaedia, Vol.25. "Thus the costliest and most terrible war in all history, which had involved virtually every nation in the world had at last come to an end. No mere summary of the statistics relating to the loss of lives and property ... can possibly indicate the enormity of the tragedy. The untold cost in suffering and sorrow, in broken homes and orphaned children; the travail of whole peoples rendered homeless; the years of imprisonment and privation undergone by millions of prisoners of war and inmates of concentration camps; the hardships borne by civilian populations because of curtailed production of everyday necessities; and the rigors of military service and combat suffered by the members of the armed forces of all the nations engaged in the war- all of these factors are not susceptible of statistical measurement or tabulation". I have no regrets about growing up during the war years and their aftermath – I just watched from a safe distance. Time has softened the ugly parts and those glimpses of Mackellar country remained untouched. I leave you with the hawks and the doves and the wolves and the lambs. Travel with safety.

Dawn Stewart (Andrews) 1950-51

Quarterly Alumni Lunches

23 Alumni attended the February luncheon at Icons Brasserie. All enjoyed the convivial atmosphere and agreed that the buffet was good value for \$30.

The next two luncheons are to be held at Icons on:
Tuesday 16th May 2006,
Tuesday 15th August, 2006.

All alumni are welcome. Why not come with a few friends.

Booking must be made a week before by ringing Ann Smith (9635 0449) or Lindsay Budd (9601 3003).

Venue:
Icons Brasserie, Marriott Sydney Harbour Hotel, 30 Pitt St, Sydney

POTTED BIOGRAPHY

Maureen Hathaway (O'Neil) Pioneer Session 1947-49

I started teaching at Morpeth Public School. Although primary trained I had a composite class of 49 children in grades Kindergarten, First and Second. In that group I had 3 sets of identical twins and this well before IVF! – (must have been the country air). Enjoyed my years in the Hunter district and was able to utilise skills honed at WWTC by acting with the Maitland Dramatic Arts Club, became president and umpire of the Maitland Basketball Association and represented Maitland at Country week Carnivals.

I transferred to Lakemba South Infants School in 1952. This school grew to become Beverly Hills North Public School. From there I resigned and reared a family of five, one of whom became a teacher.

In 1977 I acquired a Dip Special Ed from Kuringai CAE and spent some time doing relief work for the Education Dept in Special Ed situations, mainly at the Spastic Centre School. From there I went to Sydney Teachers' College to take charge of the Language Development Centre. This was a very cherished project of Dr Evelyn McCloughan, an early lecturer at WWTC. Its aim was to show teacher trainees that children with learning problems could be taught within the ordinary classroom.

Family commitments caused me to resign from STC but after obtaining a BA at Macquarie Uni I returned to teaching with Adult Multicultural Education Services and later changing to TAFE at the East Sydney campus. Finally after teaching English to Adult Migrants for twenty years – a most rewarding job, I "hung up my chalk" in 1999 and am now enjoying retirement with my GP husband and we focus on our eleven grandchildren between playing tennis and bridge.

I have never ever regretted taking up my scholarship to WWTC – I loved every minute of my two years there and have enjoyed the many avenues that opened to me as a result of that training.

ACROSS THE CONTINENT FROM SOUTH TO NORTH



John Riley had always wanted to travel to Darwin by train. As soon as the Alice Springs to Darwin link was opened John booked seats. In April 2005 John realised his dream. He and Joan travelled from Sydney to Darwin on the Indian Pacific and the Ghan. John lived long enough to record details of the trip and Joan has given permission for the story to be published in Talkabout. Ed.

THE INDIAN PACIFIC AND THE GHAN

Most people by now know that major interstate passenger rail services are run by a private company, Great Southern Railways, and that the link between Alice Springs and Darwin was only opened to passenger trains on 4th February 2004. Since then there has been a backlog of people wishing to travel on the *Ghan* from Adelaide to Darwin for the first time. Joan and I have been amongst these.

We took the plunge last September, trying for a booking from late April, to avoid the Wet season of course. Amazingly we were successful at first attempt, though one would hope so with nine months to pass before travel. As we declined to take out travel insurance recommended by the company, all we had to do was remain healthy!

I was less than satisfied, even frustrated, at the trouble I had phoning Adelaide about rail, accommodation and return airfare bookings, having to make at least eight phone calls and to send several email messages before all was settled. The main problem with making bookings was that one could never speak to the same person twice, and each new

operator in turn had to look up the necessary details to sort things out. Their plea was that they were very busy and had few operators working. But one should not dwell on unhappy aspects of our magnificent journey on two different trains, from Sydney to Adelaide on *Indian Pacific* and to Darwin on the *Ghan*.

This account of the two journeys is intended to be analytical, rather than chronological, though each of the features thought worthy of comment will be spoken of as they appear in notes in my diary. Comment is made solely from the point of view of a Gold Kangaroo (first class) passenger, as I would not know how people fared in Red Kangaroo sections of the trains.

WELCOME ABOARD

On both trains, various booklets and sheets are supplied so that the passenger has full knowledge of the train and its history, as well as day to day information while travelling. Some of these are mentioned below.

A **Welcome Aboard** booklet called Platform gives full details of the history of the lines traversed and of the trains run by *GSR*, *Indian Pacific* and the *Ghan* as above and the *Overland* between Melbourne and Adelaide. It also contains details of tours run by the company in conjunction with these three journeys. Passengers are also invited to take part in a Photo Competition (I wonder if my shot of Florence Falls would qualify!).

Timetables are also supplied, covering both journeys we were taking. A **Route Map** shows where the passenger is headed, in case his local geography is not the best. A complimentary **Toiletry pack** is also provided, supplying necessities such as toothbrush and paste, soap, shampoo and hair conditioner, in case he/she is not already equipped. The contents are packed in a distinctive pouch for each train.

Probably the most useful material supplied on a daily basis as the trips proceeded was the **On Track** page, distributed and signed by the "Hospitality Attendants" (once known as "Conductors"). These outlined activities planned for the day, such as meal time and services provided by the attendant; such as making up beds and transferring

luggage. For example we had only to indicate to Hazel that we were continuing on to Darwin and she arranged for our larger bags to be loaded to the *Ghan*. Other details such as available tours, facilities on the train, and details of its composition are also listed on the back of the sheet.

These On Track sheets were most useful in keeping passengers informed, though details in them frequently had to be overridden at times for organizational reasons by announcements over the PA system.

Probably I should have mentioned that before boarding a special WELCOME ceremony was held on Platform 1 at Central and attendance is apparently obligatory. We arrived in time for the advertised 14:00 boarding time for 14:55 departure on *Indian Pacific*, but were instead herded into a group till the welcome was completed through a loud-hailer.

I almost incurred the wrath of our Train Manager providing the welcome when I strayed beyond the assembly to photograph Joan in daylight conditions against a background of the train's emblem, an eagle. Rather officiously I thought, he came after us, saying he wanted everybody back in the group. I explained my reason, and since he was the only other person available, prevailed on him to take the photograph of both of us. Grudgingly he condescended, but managed to leave off the "ic" off "Pacific".

I cannot recall that there was a similar ceremony at Adelaide, but this would have been made more complicated by the fact that two segments of our train were located at an island platform opposite the platform into which *Indian Pacific* had pulled, and a walk down and up a ramp was involved.

Once aboard in both cases, there was a more dignified welcome in the Lounge car. According to On Track, those having the Sunset Dinner on *Indian Pacific* were scheduled for 17:00. That time came and went and still we had not been notified of our dinner sitting, but later it was announced that it would be held at 20:30 after dinner.

When the time came, our Train Manager distributed glasses of a blue-

ACROSS THE CONTINENT FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

coloured liquid that distinctly resembled the contents of mother's old "blue rinse" laundry tub. And it possibly tasted much the same, though the rinsing water probably tasted better. It was supposed to be some kind of champagne, but it was undrinkable, with most glasses being returned almost untouched. Neither were any "nibblies" supplied.

My mind went back to our trip on the *Ghan* from Sydney to Alice Springs in 2003, when we were served genuine sparkling wine, accompanied by nuts and dried fruits, and other delicacies of no use to me. During this session it was also announced that the pre breakfast Coffee Pastries and Fruit scheduled for 06:30 before arrival at Broken Hill next day had also been cancelled.

During the Welcome, one passenger (not I) showed some knowledge of railways by asking our host a probing question the latter could not answer. So the passenger was invited to expound on his knowledge and to tell something of himself. There was some suggestion that a karaoke session was to follow, so, being close to the exit door, Joan and I left, preferring the relative quiet of our cabin. More about the term "relative" later.

On the *Ghan* a welcome was scheduled for 17.00, but I have no record of any refreshments at all. Joan assures me that the "champagne" in this case was orange, with a strawberry perched on the rim of the glass. Most people consumed only the strawberry! I do recall that our Train Manager handed over to his trainee assistant to say something about the new railway on which we would be travelling after departure from Alice Springs.

Throughout both journeys a COMMENTARY about the countryside through which we were passing, as well as organizational matters, was provided by means of the PA system. Early on in the trip emphasis was placed on Safety Precautions, a feature of every long-distance trip nowadays. Some of the commentary was intended for all, and it was not possible to avoid it in the cabins. But one could at least turn the volume down to exclude the sound of unbearable music.

One segment that was well received by all was on the *Ghan* and the area it traverses. Its presenter was well known

Australian actor Bud Tingwell.

ROLLING STOCK

Anyone who has done interstate rail travel since the early 1960s would be familiar with the stainless steel carriages used on those services. In the case of our *Indian Pacific* train, we were told that it had 17 cars in the consist, for a length of 425m. Included were our Gold Kangaroo sleepers, Red Kangaroo sleepers and seating cars, a total of four Lounge and Dining cars, plus Staff Car, Power Van and Luggage Van. There was also the NR locomotive crewed by Pacific National drivers and motorail wagons.

On the *Ghan* our Train manager informed us that ours was a "treble consist", comprising 37 cars, including four Dining Cars. Other details I have not noted. What a logistical operation it must have been to feed everybody on board, considering that a "standard" train carries 244 passengers in 15 cars.

One feature of our 2003 trip in the *Ghan* that did not appear in either of our two trains was a video in the Lounge car, but perhaps I just did not notice or I was in the car at the wrong times. On one night after dinner when the place had cleared we did manage to find a vacant table for a four-hand game of 500 with Rod and Lynn.

Our compartment was similar in both trains of course, though perhaps differing in their condition. In *Indian Pacific* our carriage seemed to have undergone some refurbishment, its walls nicely panelled or stained. Everything seemed clean, as though just out of the shops. The toilet facility worked well in Indian Pacific, but that in the *Ghan* was difficult to retract without creating a very loud metallic din that must have been disturbing next door in the early hours. In both trains there was an abundant supply of hot water for shower and wash basin, a feature not always available in its predecessors.

One most unsatisfactory feature of our overnight journey between Blayney and Broken Hill could be blamed on the age of our carriage, but more likely on the state of the track. Our whole compartment seemed replete with NOISE of every description—rattling of the door, vibrations of unknown origin, and grinding. When we left the lounge to read

quietly in our compartment this proved impossible, partly because of movement and partly because our beds had already been set up. My reading light was then too dull and not in a good position.

Moreover, I barely slept a wink because of constant lateral movement of the train. This resulted in the body moving from side to side across the train. By the time morning came I was surprised to find I had any ears left after all night abrasion on my pillow. In the lounge later one portly gentleman was heard to say that he had to hold his stomach all night to prevent it from wobbling.

We were not affected similarly in the *Ghan*, because much of its track is new. Something has to be done for the track to Broken Hill.

CATERING

"An army marches on its stomach!" Was it Lord Kitchener who said this? But so do passengers confined to a lengthy steel snake and unable to seek out their favourite "Maccas" or restaurant. In both trains I would have to say that most people would have gone away from meals satisfied. I do not think we had the same amount of choice as on our earlier *Ghan* trip, and none of those native animal delicacies such as kangaroo and emu steaks. Perhaps this is intended not to offend visitors from USA who might consider it *infra dig* to have our native wildlife in the pan.

Invariably there were two choices for entree, three for the main course, and two for dessert.

For our first meal on *Indian Pacific* I was assured that all main choices were suitable for me, as well as one entree, but there was no actual dessert I could have. The only alternative for me was a cheese platter - not especially good for one's cholesterol! Subsequently on the *Ghan* I asked for and was given a fruit platter - much better.

For our last lunch before Darwin I was not happy about main course choices, two being definitely unsuitable. I was assured that the third, a curry, would be OK though normally I would avoid such an item like the plague when eating out not knowing its contents in detail.

(continued on page 12)

ACROSS THE CONTINENT FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

(continued from page 11)

One item of food plentifully made available to me at every meal, usually two slices, was gluten-free bread. Normally I do not eat bread at dinner, and when there was a surplus I made a doggie-bag to make a between-meals snack. I quite enjoyed the bread supplied, so much so that I asked one of our attendants its source. I was told it was from a bakery in Mt Barker, S.A.

A meal I recall with particular distaste was lunch as we headed towards Adelaide. This consisted of smoked salmon and lettuce. Because of its lack of calorific content I had the effrontery to ask for some fruit. This was duly supplied. But it was indeed the worst meal in three days on board.

Often we found ourselves caught unawares for meal announcements, specially for this latter meal when I was in the process of packing for disembarkation at Adelaide when the early call came. I was affected similarly at breakfast that day when it was announced that the meal would be held at 06:30 instead of at 08:30 after departure from Broken Hill. When the call came at 06:10, I had to leave the cabin on the third call, unshaven and without attending to my medications.

On our last day, as we headed towards an off-train excursion at Katherine, a box breakfast was supplied to our cabins. This consisted of Just Right (I had supplied my own cereal throughout), juices, full-cream Devondale milk for the cereal, fruit and a small bottle of Seaview Brut. Also accompanying my meal were two slices of bread, but unfortunately nothing to spread on them. The food provided filled the gap, though I believe we left the Brut for an occasion in Darwin.

Throughout our *Ghan* journey we were fortunate to have with us the company of our good friends from Brisbane, who had managed to obtain a late cancellation for the train.

OFF-TRAIN TOURS

Normally a tour is available in Broken Hill, but in our case this was cancelled, possibly because our arrival was later than scheduled at 07:10, a matter we had been warned about by phone some weeks before. I believe track conditions were the reason given.

Instead the tour passengers were free to explore on foot this historic town and its amazing buildings, relics of the era when the city was a thriving mining town. Some did this, others phoned home, others bought a *Sunday Telegraph*, while others walked the platform to inspect the train. Joan and I took the chance to photograph some of the historic buildings, though probably I have done this on previous visits, reminiscing as we did about our previous experiences on these. One special feature we noticed atop the huge mullock heap above the station was the Mining Museum. This was only in the planning stage when we visited on a tour train some years ago.

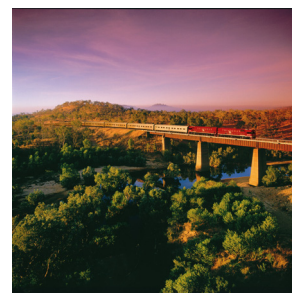
Tours were also arranged for the *Ghan* trip, which is not intended to be just a point to point north-south affair, with major refuelling and other logistical operations to be carried out at Alice Springs and Katherine.

We actually reached Alice ten minutes early at 11:45. Awaiting us there were coaches to take Gold Kangaroo passengers for lunch and a tour of Desalt Wilderness Park. This is included in the train fare and frees staff from having to prepare lunch while the train is being serviced.

Immediately on reaching the park we were ushered into the blessed coolness of the A.C. Madigan restaurant for a salad and dessert (cheesecake I believe). I had a running battle with a waitress because my salad had been placed on bread that was obviously not gluten free though I was assured it was. The matter was only settled when we went to the kitchen and were shown the packet from which the "bread" was made. The contents included "wheat flour". I asked for a fruit plate for dessert and this was willingly produced. As usual there were envious glances from others at the table (distant fields are greener!). I appreciated the helpfulness of those waitresses.

Some passengers chose to eat in the open under a skillion roof, but it was HOT after being in an air-conditioned train for all those hours.

After lunch passengers ("guests") were free to explore the park on foot or by electric car. As Joan and I had visited the place in 2003, we first went to the audio-



visual display in the theatre. This was an interesting presentation on landscape, wildlife and vegetation of the area. From there we went to the Nocturnal House, with its display of reptiles and mammals, then on to the native birds, trapped in a large wire cage.

Our allotted time having elapsed, our coach driver took us on a most interesting tour of the town, passing the Flying Doctor HQ, the School of the Air, and the old Telegraph station. Unfortunately we were not allowed to stop at these for photography. The last leg took us to the summit of Anzac Hill, from which a wonderful view of the town is available. Resplendent in the afternoon sun was the distant image of the silvery snake that was to be our home for yet another 24 hours. Wreaths laid at the Anzac memorial were still in good condition and provided a source of interest for passengers.

Bookings for optional tours at Katherine were taken soon after departure from Alice at 16:13. A long queue soon formed at the bar while passengers selected from six options, most paying by credit card (fortunately). The options were as follows:

- Katherine Gorge boat cruise,
- Explorer coach tour of the town and its various features,
- Katherine Gorge by helicopter (how I would have loved to do this, having done all the other options, but the cost was rather prohibitive),
- Nature cruise on Katherine River (downstream from the gorge),
- Canoeing on the river,
- Shuttle bus to the town to explore on foot.

Joan and I chose No. 4, though 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.

(to be continued in next issue)

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN CLARK (1948-50)

During an extended lifetime one has many acquaintances, many of whom become long-term friends but, if my experience can be regarded as a realistic indicator, one makes an extremely limited number of true friends. I believe these can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

To me John Carleton Clark was such a friend. I look back with extreme gratification at our association over almost 60 years. Jack was a person of indomitable will, absolute honesty, utmost principle and integrity who invariably set the values for those around him whether these were pupils, staff members who came under his charge, or persons associated in various activities.

I am without doubt that the standards by which Jack lived were those assimilated from his teacher parents, Charles and Dot, as they relocated to school situations around NSW. Herein, also, lay the foundations of Jack's Labor Party leanings, as he recalled his father, at times, providing food for those "down on their luck" and camped beneath a bridge during depression years. I visited comfortably on many occasions both their Gresford School residence and their holiday camp at Redhead Beach.

My initial contact with Jack occurred when we were each accepted for Teacher Training at Wagga Teachers' College. We were soon nurturing the beginnings of an association which was to become lifelong through sporting and other interests around the gymnasium and outside social activities, albeit we always had differing political ideals. We each worked during College vacations for BHP Newcastle, the return from which well subsidised the 7 pounds per week we received from the training scholarships, and which was twice what we were paid in our initial teaching appointments.

During training Jack was always held in the highest regard by fellow students. A mark of that regard was his election as President of the Students Representative Council during our second year - a function which he fulfilled with great credit.

The College was admitted to intertown 1st Grade Rugby League in 1949. The College was without a

recognised hooker. Jack, who had never been in the front row of a scrum, accepted the challenge. After a month's crash course he became a force in that position. Within two years he beat a future Australian hooker and captain (Ian Walsh) in the scrums at country trials. This was during his first teaching appointment at Curra Creek, a one teacher school outside Wellington.

In this same period Jack met and married, in 1954, Marie Devenish, a warm, caring and beautifully natured person. Their children were Jennifer and Ian. In 1961 Marie died from first degree burns caused by an exploding primus stove.

Jack transferred to Barradine Public School and Jenny and Ian went to live with Jack's sister Norma and her husband Ron Gow.

The following years were extremely stressful for Jack as he struggled with the mental anguish of his loss, the welfare of his children, his loneliness and a promotion to Deputy Principal at Narrabri Public School.

It was at this time that Jack was pre-selected as the State Labor Candidate for the electorate. Wise judgement prevailed and he declined to leave education to pursue an unwinnable Country Party seat.

In 1967 Jack was appointed principal of Moss Vale Public School where he lived in the school residence with his

children. From here he was able to visit mutual friends from Wagga days, Barbara and Jim Butler (both now deceased) who resided at Shellharbour. Through them he met and married Val in December 1969 and they were together until his death.

In 1970 Jack accepted a transfer again to Narrabri as principal. Jack and Val each had two children so it was simple to assume the confusion when the previously apparently single Mr Clark returned to town with a ready made family of wife and four children. They remained in Narrabri until the end of 1980.

In 1981 Jack became principal of Niagara Park Public School on the Central Coast where he remained until his retirement in 1985. Val and Jack bought a yacht to pursue a sailing career but after a disastrous storm the yacht sank and they spent 12 months in Nepal, India and Kashmir, returning to Australia to live in the Manning Valley near Wingham where Val was able to pursue her artistic endeavours in her own studio while Jack became a bee-keeper, for many years, with his own shed.

Eventually a lung disease which could not be diagnosed overcame him and he passed away on 17 December 2005.

Vale Jack Clark.
His Friend and Mate.
Geoff Spiller (1948-50)



A group photo of some of the 1948-50 session at the 1997 reunion in Wagga.

NEWS FROM CSU

The silent voices of drought

06 Mar 2006
story by Fiona Halloran

A new report into the impacts of drought on young people's access to education in rural and remote Australia has prompted an urgent call for a review of financial support to overcome the tyranny of distance at all levels of education.

Research conducted by Charles Sturt University (CSU) academics Professor Margaret Alston and Dr Jenny Kent



photo courtesy Lee Verell

concluded drought has had significant impacts on access to all levels of schooling from primary to secondary through to tertiary education.

The report, *The impact of drought on secondary education access in Australia's rural and remote areas*, was funded by the Federal Government and the Rural Education Program of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, which identified the need for research into the circumstances of children being educated in rural and remote areas.

"We couldn't fail to be impressed by the resilience, courage and wisdom of the young people during times of extraordinary crisis," said the CSU researchers.

"The children were more likely to be working long hours outside school in either paid work or farm work, they were privy to stresses on their families during drought, had experienced loss of friends from school, and often studied by distance and faced uncertainties in their future."

To capture the "lived experience" of the young people, the CSU researchers conducted in-depth investigations in 2005 with students, their families, teachers as

well as business, community and government representatives in seven rural and remote sites at Balranald, Cootamundra and Hay in NSW, Blackall and Longreach in Queensland and Cohuna and Kerang in Victoria.

The research identified a number of key findings to ensure equality in educational access for young people in rural and urban Australia;

- Increase Assisted Isolated Children (AIC) allowances to \$8 000 for students at primary through to tertiary level to help families overcome the financial burden of education
- Students who must leave home for tertiary education should automatically be eligible for the Youth Allowance
- Address pressures on mothers in remote areas to deliver quality education through home tutoring at the same time as they work on and off farms.

"The AIC allowances are simply deficient and rural children are really disadvantaged by means testing of youth allowance, particularly in drought," said Professor Alston.

"We found boys are more likely to leave school early and the limited availability of TAFE in the communities highlights an enhanced role for vocational training in schools".

The researchers have also called for a summit involving government agencies and community groups to discuss rural and remote education.

A robust approach to frailty

23 Feb 2006
Story by Fiona Halloran

"Frailty is regarded as a knife-edge condition, like a waiter balancing an overloaded tray. As long as the tray stays balanced, it may be carried safely but if one plate falls off and the balance is upset, it is likely the plates will fall," says Professor of Rural Pharmacy Patrick Ball from Charles Sturt University (CSU).

And it can be a small illness, even a common cold, which can cause that loss of balance and precipitate a cascade, leading to loss of independence and need for full-time care.

As Australia's population continues to age, a new two year project led by Charles

Sturt University (CSU) hopes to use a novel approach to increase awareness in rural Australia of the problems linked with the frail elderly.

Heading the project is Australia's first Professor of Rural Pharmacy Patrick Ball, who aims to highlight the complex nature of frailty by developing a training and educational roadshow for rural and remote health workers. He will work with the University of South Australia and local specialists from various professions.

The roadshow, to be developed by Professor Ball, will highlight the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to the available treatments by health professionals, such as pharmacists and medical specialists. It will be delivered by health specialists and academics and include training materials such as audio and video tapes and CDs, to allow those attending to take the material back to their own workplaces.

On his appointment to Charles Sturt University in 2005, Professor Ball flagged the importance of drawing together multidisciplinary teams of health professionals in rural communities to maximise the levels of service available to small and large country towns.

Funded through the Federal Government's Rural Health Support, Education and Training (RHSET) Program, the \$92 500 project entitled *Frailty: a team effort is the robust approach* will be initially directed to the rural areas of NSW and South Australia.

"Rural areas face particular problems in dealing with frailty due to a lack of support facilities and distances and the roadshow will emphasis how different professions can work together to bridge gaps where particular skills and services are not locally available," said Professor Ball.

The introduction of the first non metropolitan pharmacy course at Charles Sturt University in 1997 has contributed to a resurgence of the pharmacy profession in country areas where the health professionals are in demand.



photo courtesy Keith Wheeler



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