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WAGGA TEACHERS

TALKABOUT



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Farewell, Norm Stanton— a fine example to us all



Norm Stanton and his wife, Jean 2016 (Photo Greg Totman, Andy Zakeli: Courtesy Southern Highland News)

The Southern Highlands saw Norm Stanton as an institution in their Community.

A familiar face around the cricket fields of the Highlands, Norm was a dedicated player, coach, volunteer and official over many decades.

Away from the sporting field,

many will recognise Norm for his advocacy following the disappearance of his and wife Jean's son, Ian near Bundanoon in 2003.

Despite this personal tragedy, Norm continued to be an exceptional and selfless asset to the Highlands community.

Norm was a member of our *Talka-*

bout Committee, making the journey by train from the Southern Highlands each time and being largely responsible for the good number of his cohort (1964-65) who attended the 2017 WWTC Celebrations and the main conduit for them.

(Adapted from *Southern Highland News*)

Across the Secretary's Desk - Lesley Forbes



Peter Whelan (1969-70) My first appointment in 1971 was to a one-teacher school midway between Guyra and Ebor in the New England district. The official name of the school was 'Rock Abbey Provisional School'.

Does anyone know what the Dept of Education's definition was of 'Provisional' and how long the term was used in reference to schools?

Raelene Farrell let me know that her father, **Kevin Farrell (1963-64)** died on Nov 20th. He was peaceful and surrounded by love and close family. His memorial service was on Sat 11th Dec at Nelson Bay Bowling Club. If you reply, please write to raelsfz@hotmail.com.

Ray Griffiths (1964-65) Thank you – I am particularly sad to hear about Norm. We used to play on the same team. I so enjoyed reading his articles. Pauline and I have been well COVID wise but have basically lost our business. Pauline was knocked over by a dog whilst walking through Hyde Park two weeks back. Hospitalised at Sydney and yesterday transferred to Wolper for rehabilitation. Fractured pelvis, some major skin loss that may need grafts but is still smiling. A tough woman.

Thank you greatly for your efforts

with *Talkabout*. When I read the articles the faces come back to me. Many I have not seen since November 1965.

John Roberts (1964-65) Elaine Saunders was posted to North Broken Hill Public in 1965. I met her then because that's where I did my Home Prac (6B on the Deputy's class) He loved it because he was able to get a lot of organizational work done at the beginning of the year. I loved it because I was able to teach a couple of full days.....that's probably a reason I got Kookaburra!

Anyway, my Broken Hill mates and I joined the schoolteachers' social scene consisting of many 1st year outs and a few of my born 'n' bred mates. Parties, day visits to Menindie, dropping into small pubs, like Quondong Creek - Elaine was always with us. She got to know my dear Mum very well and exchanged Xmas Cards up until Mum passed away.

Those two weeks of Home Prac, every day was over 100 degrees F.

Dorothy Tanner (Williams 1948-50) Nigel her husband writes: On the way out of the George Street, Sydney, cinema, Dot was briefly interviewed on this recent Vox Pops (vox populi – voice/opinions of the people/public) promotion video for the movie (She comes up just after 6 minutes 14 seconds). Dot was one of the boarders at Buttenshaw (Butts) Hostel in Hay when attending the War Memorial High School there during and just after WW2. One of the other boarders, Janet McAlpine, now Pinney, is the sister of the internationally famous cinematographer of this movie, Don McAlpine, ("My Brilliant Career"; "Breaker Morant"; "Romeo and Juliet"; "Moulin Rouge"; "Mrs Doubtfire).

Michelle Luke let me know that her father, **Murray Luke (1960-61)** of Moruya is in a Nursing Home and can no longer read *Talkabout*. Our thoughts to his family.

Les Sutherland (1961-62) Trust you

are keeping well in these exciting times. Here in Austria our 3 week lockdown has just ended today... I have had 3 shots and don't agree with this mass punishment at all. Keep up with the good work, and stay well.

A note from Bruce's family: **Bruce Cockerell (1951-52)** passed away on 4 June 2021 in Newcastle.

Graeme Henry (1964-65) Sad news about Norm. He was a great bloke and will be sadly missed. Apparently he had a tattoo on his arm saying: "with you, Dad" in memory of his missing son. I would like to go to his funeral but am unable to do so. Seems the only time we catch up with old friends these days is at funerals! Say hi to Bruce for me please. You and he are doing an excellent job with *Talkabout*! Thanks again,

Brian Langworthy (1953-54) I have not sighted the last issue of *Talkabout*. In a recent issue of *Talkabout* I noticed an article written by Dave Long. Dave was my room mate at Wagga Wagga 1953-54. First year out I was appointed to a small school situated outside Bombala. The first thing I saw as I entered the town was Dave who was teaching at Bombala Central before appointment to Ando. Later I went to his wedding and sang at his wedding etc. All of this is leading up to a request for Dave's contact details or for privacy reasons let him know of my contact details. (*Request granted and I hope you have now caught up with one another*)

I've just let my Kambu roommate of **1962-63, Bill Weatherstone**, know about the publication, *Talkabout*. I've forwarded copies of all my past issues and he will probably contact you to get on the email list. (*Email now added to the Alumni list*)

John Watt (1962-63) A happy and holy Christmas to you and yours with many thanks for keeping us up with memories of WWTC.

Judy Morrison (Noble 1959-60)

Having read so many interesting stories in *Talkabout*, I felt bad when you said the coffers are empty for the next edition, so I set to work. Thanks to you and Bruce for the amazing job you do.

All the best to you and your family for Christmas and the New Year. May 2022 be the year the world says goodbye to COVID!

(Most of you know that my mail merge program let me down with the December mail-out and took some fairly tedious hours to ensure you all received your copy. It is messages like the following couple that make continuing the Talkabout publication worthwhile)

Kevin Hennessy (1955-56)

Thank you for your email, and especially our thanks for keeping us in touch with college friends and activities via *Talkabout*. At this stage it seems we have missed out on the Nov/Dec issue and value your offer to forward a copy. Christmas wishes, and we hope for a better and safer 2022.

Pauline Balazs (Cummins 1969-70)

Thanks for letting me know! I have looked through my emails and can not find another email from you regarding *Talkabout*. So I am assuming that it didn't arrive. You do a wonderful job. If you could re email it, I would very much appreciate it. I put them into a folder to read when time allows.

We should have more time to do these things as we get older but that doesn't seem to be the case.

Have a wonderful Christmas and hopefully a better New Year than these last two. LOL

Bruce (1964-66) & Cecily Chittick (Greason 1968-69) Thanks for that. We will look into whether we can go to the funeral on Thursday. Maybe they will have restricted numbers and online link. If it is pouring rain though we

won't want to drive down. Bruce is emailing Graham Keast for more details. Graham had sent a few of them a list of past Australian Cricket Captains and they had to pick their own first three. Norm had emailed his pick back to Graham on Friday night. Graham said he died just after sending the email. Keith Jenkins had sent Graham the email on the Saturday morning to say about Norm passing the night before. Shock was an understatement. Here one day and gone the next is so, so real, as we have all known, but to have it so close is very illuminating.

GOLF is part of the answer for sure.

Go

Out and have

Lots of

Fun

We are all on the second 9 of life so having fun while we can still cast a shadow is vital as we all already know. 🎅🎄🎁🎅🎄🎁

Denise Shakespeare (Jarratt 1966-67)

I didn't receive the *Talkabout* or multiple copies but don't stress if it doesn't work out. These things are sent to try us! I look forward to reading the latest edition if and when it arrives. Thanks to you and Bruce for all of the work you do in putting the *Talkabout* together and sending it out. I hope you are both well and looking forward to Christmas after the year it has been. We have been quite lucky to be living in Queensland during COVID times - Anastasia has kept us safe by keeping the border closed!! - so it will be interesting to see what happens after the 17th.

Joan Kirkham and request for people to contact Anne Sheerin

Caroline Baker (1958-59) My husband, Jim lived near the Sheerin family for the early part of his life, and he actually roomed with Brian Sheerin at WWTC '58/59. Jim knows Anne well

and would like to ring her and keep in contact.

Would it be possible for you to give me Joan's phone number or email address please, so that we can arrange something?

Ray Petts (1961-62) After checking my emails etc I can find no *Talkabout* for November/December being forwarded to me and can only assume I have not received such.....I may have been a victim of the said "gremlins"! So in response would it be possible to remain me a copy. As it is that 'busy/frantic' time of the year I can appreciate your frustration.

May I also take the opportunity to thank you (and Bruce) for your time and work you both put in over the year/s.

Merry Christmas 🎅 and All the Best for the New Year.

Beverley Richardson (Roberts 1958-59)

Thank you, and many thanks to you and the committee for the wonderful work you do in continuing the good work with the magazine.

I have my contribution ready just waiting an opportunity to get it in the post.

I am at present engaged in writing my very detailed memoirs - am nearly up to my two years in WWTC in 1958-1959 as Beverley Roberts.

I taught until 2015 - began on a Kinder class (I could play the piano) ended with HSC English Advanced and Extension. Incredible career as teacher, teacher librarian, English tutor, graphic designer, writer, reviewer NSW judge for CBCA. Only ten of all those years I wasn't teaching and seven of those I was reviewing for the Education Department and writing educational texts and books. Thank you WWTC. Still keep in touch with lifelong friends met at college.

Recent news of the passing of **Richard Munro (1966-67)** in Canberra. His very interesting career in the Diplomatic Service was in a *Talkabout* publication in 2017.

I remember we were asked to name a couple of choices for our first appointment after graduation from WWTC. As always, I was on the fence. Should I go country or city? I hedged my bets and opted for both. I can picture the public servant scratching his head as he wondered what a recent graduate had in mind when she chose eastern suburbs as first choice and Dubbo as second. He decided he'd give her a little of both - country in the city. More or less.

I was working for the summer at a chemist in my home town of Dapto when the missive arrived, brought to me excitedly by my mother. Wetherill Park. The chemist pulled out his NRMA map book, and after much searching we finally spotted it - in size 6 font somewhere near Fairfield. Of course I'd never heard of Fairfield either. What were they thinking! I had pictured myself either living with my aunt in Watson's Bay, or renting a house with a bunch of girls in Dubbo. How had they gotten it so wrong!

Anxious to see this "Brigadoon" of the western suburbs, I asked the chemist if I could take a day off to suss the place out. Given the fact that his curiosity almost equalled mine, he nodded vigorously.

So the next morning I boarded the old steam train in Dapto (you know the drill - stopping at Unanderra, Corrimall, Wollongong, North Wollongong, Fairy Meadow etc etc etc) finally arriving at Central an hour and a half later. I grabbed a soggy tomato sandwich and a Coke from a kiosk and set off for the trains bound for Fairfield. I remember thinking as the electric train sped through (it seemed like) thousands of suburbs, how could this be so far away and still be inside the city limits?

Exiting the station in Fairfield, I thought to myself, could Dubbo be much different from this? Surely this is a country town. I asked around about transit to Wetherill Park. People laughed. Haha, you've missed it, love. Bus only runs twice a day. By the time I climbed into a cab asking to be taken to Wetherill Park, I must have looked like a deer in the headlights. Obviously the driver thought, we've got a live one here, so he said, "Do you have a passport? It's in aboriginal territory." He burst out laughing at the shocked look on my face. I tried to appear nonchalant.

As we drove along, houses became further and further apart, till in the end you had to look hard to find any signs of habitation. When we arrived at the school, I was amazed by how small it was. It was a beautiful, solid old brick building - typical of schools built before the war, but oh so small. The teacher accommodation was right next door. I asked the cab driver to wait while I went and knocked on the door. I knocked for quite a while till finally the door opened and a figure appeared. I say "a figure" because it was impossible to determine whether it was male, female, or for that matter, even human. I quickly introduced myself and then it spoke. "I'm Mr. Bathgate, the headmaster. I apologize for my state. I was cleaning the chimney and obviously dislodged a mountain of soot. Sorry we can't ask you in. You'll be teaching kindergarten, first and second class. I'll see you on the 31st."

Taxi, electric train, steam train and home again. I'd had lots of time to think, and none of the thinking was positive. How could I do this? I was sure I wasn't cut out to teach three different levels in one room. This wasn't what I'd imagined for myself. And so far off the beaten track, too.

Neither city, nor country - the worst of both worlds. Woe was me.

Fast track to the end of my first month at Wetherill Park. I absolutely loved it. The kids were amazing. Many were immigrants. I could now sing several songs in Italian and German and could count to ten in both those languages. Some of the sixth class kids had asked me to play cricket at lunchtime because, as one of them said, "You look like a kid anyway."

The bus schedule worked out for me which was great as I had no money for a car. Did any of us? It took me an hour to get to school, and the same coming home, as I had a long walk at either end. I enjoyed the walk as it gave me time to think about the kids and my lessons. I had found room and board with a woman in Guildford. She was a bit of a busybody, but had gone to culinary school, so the meals were heavenly. The *train smash* and *yellow death* of college days became a dim memory as I dined on Wiener Schnitzel and Chicken Kiev. My lunches were the envy of all the kids - many of whom brought very thick slices of peasant bread with fillings that smelled strongly of garlic. One grade two boy told me he had vino in his water bottle. I kept an eye on him, but nothing seemed amiss so I let that pass.

As I look back on a career that was as diverse as a teaching career can be, I think very fondly of my time at Wetherill Park. I guess I owe a word of thanks to that public servant who saw fit to interpret my vague wishes into a country in the city placement.



Judy and her Wetherell Park class 1961

President's Report - Bruce Forbes



The AGM has been cancelled for 2022!

Once again, the AGM for WWTCAA has been cancelled. However, we still manage to exist and operate as an organisation serving our alumni, supporting CSU teacher scholarships, fund-

ing various organisations including CSURA and Yalari Indigenous Scholarships. Your committee members have elected to remain in office but we all regret the sad sudden loss of Norm Stanton (1964 -65).

Hopefully, committee meetings will resume in 2022. Attendance from members is always welcome.

This edition of *Talkabout* includes the treasurer's financial report for 2021. Jenny and Chris Blake will continue to liaise with Stacey Fish (CSU) on selection of scholarship recipients. Lesley will continue to accept, edit and publish articles for *Talkabout* as well as keep a track of "snail mail" membership payments. I will continue in this onerous role unless there is someone out there who wants the task!

John Ferguson and Chris Fox (Wagga Residents) have "volunteered" to liaise with Wayne Doubleday at CSURA to identify and digitize WWTC Archival material.

I often reflect upon the *Talkabout* when the previous executive was contemplating their attendance at their last meeting.

Headings were:

Can Talkabout Continue (Mar 2006)
Reprieve for Talkabout (July 2006)
Passing on the Baton (Nov 2009)
Talkabout has reached Crossroads (Mar 2011)

Is it the End of the Road? (Nov 2011)
Goodbye, Farewell and Amen (Mar 2013)

Reprieve for the Alumni Association (July 2013)

Thanks to the continuation of your financial support and written contributions our Committee and *Talkabout* continues to survive. Keep those stories coming and you may also wish to check out and contribute postings to the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Facebook page.

Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree

John Roberts (1964-65)

In January 1966, I was home in Broken Hill. I had been working at North Broken Hill Ltd after graduating WWTC to get a little money together before notice of my first teaching appointment came through. It arrived: "Appointed to Kookaburra Public School via Toorooka. Mail Truck from Willawarrin." Short and maybe not so sweet. On the map of N.S.W. I found Kookaburra and the thought occurred that maybe the spelling was incorrect. Surely it couldn't be? Bureaucrats don't make such errors. Wondering "where in the hell?" a visit to my local post office confirmed that Kookaburra was west of Kempsey, up The Armidale Road, through Willawarrin, turn left at the Toorooka sign post, cross over the bridge on the River MacLeay and continue on. I managed from working over the holidays to put down some money on a car and so the mail truck mode of transport would not be necessary.

On the Monday of the long weekend, I made my way to Kempsey. Just to double check my directions, I dropped into The Police Station to make sure that I would not get lost. When I asked for directions to Kookaburra, the constable behind the desk looked extremely amused and immediately called The Sergeant, who took one look at my fresh just out of college face and said, "the bastards have done it again!" Even at a tender nineteen, I knew which government department he was talking about but did not expect such blatant transparency. He knew that the last two teachers-in-charge appointed to Kookaburra, were fresh out of college. Sympathetically, he drew me a mud map of sorts. At times he hesitated, stabbed the pen at a spot on his map and offered a piece of advice. I could not miss the indelible intention that the police of Kempsey and the district, were well aware of a reputation for Kookaburra. What it was, I had no idea.

I began my first journey up the mountain and onto The Carrai Plateau, the first of many. After successfully negotiating my way across Toorooka Bridge, I came to the first of many forks on the road, checked

Searge's map and took the road to the right. A few minutes more and I smiled. There on the road was the typical departmentally designed small school. Maybe Searge got it wrong. Was this Kookaburra? Optimistically I leapt from the car, strutted to the building and saw the school sign, "Warbro." A glance at my map and the realization that I still had a long way to go was a mixture of disappointment and curiosity.

Further on, I came to a large clearing with black cattle munching happily on the rich grass. A homestead appeared and there in front of me was a girl on a white horse. As I recall the conversation went something like:

"Hi, am I on the Kookaburra Road?"

"Yes, you must be the new school-teacher."

"I am. Where is it from here?"

She pointed to the high plateau in front of me. "Keep following the road, you can't miss it."

"Thanks."

I was ready to climb. The girl on the horse gets a mention later.

Climb I did, up and up following the single dirt track. A line of fencing wire staked to the trees on the side of the road was noticeable. It turned out to be the phone line down to Toorooka Post Office. I came to a clearing with three or four abandoned timber huts and cattle leisurely owning their lush green piece of paradise. There was not a building that resembled a school and I went further into the unknown. A drop in the air temperature was prominent. I pondered as to what height I was above sea level. Later, I was informed that Kookaburra was at an elevation of approximately three thousand feet.

Finally, I came to a habitation with quite a number of huts and a timber mill. On the side of the road near the mill, stood a man in shorts, short on teeth, a singlet and ulcerated legs.

"Hi, where can I find Kookaburra?"

"You're in it. Are you the new teacher?"

"I am, I didn't notice a school anywhere."

"You drove past it, first building on the left when you came in."

He pointed up the rise a bit, "that's your house up there, the blue one. The P & C Secretary, Mrs. Coachwood, lives over there on the other road and she has all your keys."

"Okay."

While collecting the keys, Mrs. Coachwood's husband arrived home carrying half a dozen dingo scalps. There was a bounty on dingoes at the time and Ned Coachwood supplemented his hard-earned paltry income by claiming the money. I am not sure of the payment, but he seemed happy with the impending extra cash. They had three girls, two at school and one still too young to attend. Mrs. Coachwood, after a brief conversation about the school, added that I was to eat with them at a reasonable cost. She forewarned me that the job of chef to the teacher could be shared around. I headed for my house.

My house on timber supports at the front (a virtual Queenslander), had a one door entry at the rear. I opened the door. Timber floors with the occasional draughty gap, no covers, a kitchen table, a wood stove and oven. To the right were two bedrooms. The 'master suite' was at the front overlooking the mill and gully, known as Frogs Hollow; very *The Wind in the Willows*. My hut con-

tained one single bed with a mattress, which was thinner than a college rasher of bacon and a pillow without a slip. On the bedside table was a kerosene lamp and two paperback Westerns by Zane Grey. The realisation that all the homes had no electricity struck home. Under the dim light of the lamp, I started my first Zane Grey. My first night proved restless; covered by some clothes I used as a blanket. It was summer. Freeze I didn't, but at that altitude I could feel the chill of the night air. School was to start the next day.

On lining up outside the school to commence 1966, I noticed that the only pair of shoes to be seen was on my feet. The kids possessed brick-skinned soles. True to tradition, I wore a tie. No one would doubt that I was the teacher (TIC). In this environment, I was an alien.

There were two vital pieces of information I kept in my mind from our Small Schools Lecturer, Mr. Byrne. The first was that on the initial day of school to draw a map of the local area with the pupils help. That proved to be of some help, although the kids were more interested in telling me about the waterfall nearby. I agreed to be taken there after finishing the first day of school. *Do everything by the book.* Day One was negotiated and we were soon off on my first ever school excursion. Standing near the top of Kookaburra or Stockyard Creek Falls (either name) and watching the water tumble into Kunderang Brook in a steep canyon below, was a surprise. How could it be that these falls hadn't been listed in Australian Geography Books?

Secondly, from Mr. Byrne's experience, was his advice to a previous years' small school student class of boys: "If they felt frustrated in their isolated predicaments, go get an axe and cut down a tree." One of his ex-students the following year, sent him a self-drawn cartoon of himself surrounded by fallen logs strewn all around the place. With axe in hand, the TIC was in the act of chopping frenetically at the last remaining tree. The coup de gras was the figure of a young lady standing in the background with a sexually alluring countenance, which would have stripped the tie off any young conserva-

tively dressed teacher. I grabbed an axe, couldn't see the trees for the forest, and so delayed attacking my first tree. My cleaning allowance needed to be earned.

After perusal of the record cards, I concluded that within Kookaburra's nineteenth century living and learning conditions, my first year of teaching may be a matter of to do what one is able.

College was based on teaching in the mid twentieth century with electricity, a wireless with which to listen when appropriate, lights to turn on when the storm clouds rolled in, a spirit duplicator and a library of reading material. There was not a sign of any of the necessities. As for my chances of studying externally at Armidale University, forget it! There were some redeeming features: the public hall (school) was of a large size and it had a large drum fireplace. With an abundant supply of firewood, that fireplace proved to be very welcome in the winter months. The area had a history of days when snow covered the ground. Nothing, not any one single teacher demonstration school lesson prepared a nineteen-year-old teacher for Kookaburra. I know I wasn't alone; there were plenty of other similar schools in isolated areas; all with their own stories, like Alumni President Bruce, at Oxley way out in The Never Never. While many commonly shared the aspect of isolation; their cultures were all different. Kookaburra was a timber mill culture. The mill closed early on each second Friday to give the workers a chance to get down to Kempsey and stock up. If the pupils joined the exodus, I was left to cut down a tree. School times were adjusted to suit.

On the first Friday, a mill worker asked me if he could grab a lift to Kempsey. I agreed as I needed to purchase bed linen, a blanket(s), a pillow and a light of the latest technology. We had a few beers in one of the local hotels, which another Kookaburrian told me was a "bloodhouse." Not an argument or a fight all night. Maybe the publican had discovered the art of adding a mild anaesthetic to the beer. I slept in a room upstairs, completed my shopping list on Saturday morning and drove back to Willawarrin.

Into the general store, come Post Office, come Telephone Exchange, I called. Harry, the owner, informed me that my predecessor boarded on weekends with Mrs. Alexander, just a bit up the road. It took a little time, but she finally agreed to accommodate me, after I gave her my poor lost puppy look, while at the same time giving her dog an affectionate pat. There was another boarder, a lad of my age from up Nulla Creek way, who was working at the Toorooka Butter Factory. He travelled home most weekends. Her son, a butcher, also of my age, flattened in Kempsey and came home most weekends. This wonderful woman deserved a degree in logistics. She was to become my second mother.

Word of my arrival at Mrs. Alexander's travelled around the village quicker than a kid could take the wrapper off a violet crumble bar. On Saturday evening, I was asked if I would play cricket for The Upper MacLeay Rep Team the next day at Kendall in The Camden Haven. They were short of numbers! Ed, the local garage owner - mechanic, picked me up. We were all out for sixty or so in the morning, spent a liquid lunch break at The Camden Haven Golf Club, apprehensively returned to Kendall Showground convinced we would be thrashed and proceeded to dismiss the best of Kendall for twenty. We only used our opening bowlers: Ed, who bowled so mechanically and the Willawarrin Baker, who punched down their dough every time it tried to rise. Both took five wickets. With ample daylight left, we made a popular decision to return via Port Macquarie and The Macquarie Hotel.

At the beginning of the second week, I decided that *Kookaburra Sits in The Old Gum Tree* would be fitting as a school song. At College, I dreaded the practical singing examination with Ms. O'Donnell. My singing voice was as sweet as fingernails on a blackboard. Geoff Hutchinson volunteered to perform a duet and Ms. O'Donnell agreed. We expected a, "that's all, thank you boys," but we received a "very good boys." With my confidence to sing in front of people

slightly elevated, every morning from that day on, the kids and I boisterously belted out that song. It improved when we progressed to what we called rounders: three groups beginning on different lines.

I was roped in to play cricket for Nulla Nulla at Bellbrook the next Saturday. Friday night, I was to stay in Nulla Nulla, so, as you do in the Upper Macleay, we diverted to The Bellbrook Pub. Inside the pub and pinned to the notice-board was The Bellbrook Team for tomorrow's match. On the list was M. Carney. The publicans informed me that yes, his name is Mick, he is the new teacher at Comara, further up The MacLeay River and is boarding at The Post Office. They rang. Two years of college with a great mate and here he was in the same inspectorate. We had a chat and awaited the local cricket derby tomorrow.

In the pub, enjoying a few week's end ales was the Bellbrook TIC. He was probably in his early thirties, married with children and lived in the Departmental Residence. He filled me in on the nuances of the one teacher schools in the region. What clearly stuck in my head was his inside information on the School Inspector. In bold type he told me that to make sure when I send my regular reports to The Inspector to add "B.A." after his name on the envelope. Allegedly, without the "B.A." your report could be returned. The cheeky side of me thought of promoting him to "M.A." "No," I thought, "with an M.A. he should be Principal of a Teachers College."

Mick turned up next morning and his team, Bellbrook, made two hundred or so. Why weren't some of their batters available for representative duty? This seemed to be a level up from last Sunday at Kendall. At the end of a long, hot morning, both teams adjourned to the pub for lunch. Following lunch, Nulla Nulla accumulated about the same number of runs and it was back to the pub for post match drinks, captain's speeches and presentation.

On that evening my naivety was exposed a couple of times. Firstly, Mick

and I were cleaned out, up and sideways at Euchre by pairs of wily locals, who took great delight in taking the new boys' money. This was Euchre Country and in time we learnt to play like Jacks, not the top cards in the pack but good enough to hold our own. My second example of ignorance came about when I was talking to a middle-aged indigenous man out the front of the pub. He was out the front because the indigenous were not permitted inside. If they wished to buy drink(s), they were forced to only buy from the rear of the establishment. He was rather insistent about telling me about his daughter, who he claimed lived away from home. Today we all know what he meant. She had been removed and taken to an Aboriginal Girls Home. I was too young to fully understand the drastic consequences. Later that evening, I drove Mick up to Comara and stayed the night at The Post Office Residence. In these parts, the people would always offer a bed. There was an innate maternal sense that young teachers were to be accommodated.

On Sunday, the next day, I sat out the front of The P.O. with The Postmistress' Father, a veteran of the trench warfare in World War One. He was telling me about how "bloody cold it was" and that he still suffered from being "iced." He was experiencing headaches fifty years after the freezing winters of 1916-17. "Iced" meant that the cold had caused the blood vessel(s) near his temples to freeze. Here he was, a survivor of The Great War, watching a lonely dirt road on which a handful of cars passed by; a sorry recognition of a veteran seeing out his days.

On those two days I listened to contrasting stories of hardship; the daughter taken away from her indigenous family and the soldier in the trenches, but both with similar governmental mentalities and consequences. In the soldier's case, as we know today, there was little post war counselling and he had to be a man: to stand up, be proud, don't complain and keep the aura of the tough digger alive. In the indigenous father's case, the government's attitude of "live with it" was more like "live with-out it (her)."

During that first term, I drove the Wil-

lawarrin - Comara dirt road many times, because Mick had no car. Often on a Friday afternoon, we would meet at The Bellbrook Pub with The Bellbrook TIC, stay the evening in Comara, head to Kempsey for the weekend, take the long drive back to Comara and then I would return to Willawarrin. Thank goodness a car radio was installed and at night I could pick up a station with the latest hits of the sixties, although *Monday, Monday* by The Mamas and Papas, hit me with little enthusiasm.

One Sunday night, I was driving back to Willawarrin and on the road in front of me were several cars with their headlights on. I was waved through. Next morning the news was all over the village that a man, while dynamiting fish in the river, had an accident and was now in Kempsey Hospital. The method of fishing was probably illegal but common practice. My memory of the extent of his injuries is hazy, but I recall the mention of an arm.

A few weeks before Easter, I finished up in Kempsey Hospital. On a Friday evening, I returned home to Ms. Alexander's earlier than usual and complained of nagging stomach pain. The next day I went from a doctor in Kempsey to the operating theatre in Kempsey Hospital.

Early Sunday morning, I was gently shaken awake by a very attractive young nurse, whose first words were, "are you only nineteen?" Given that she was only sixteen or seventeen, I fleetingly thought that I may be considered a perfect match based on the small age difference. She hailed from a mid north coastal town, rather than a village and had probably been educated by older teachers, who once they had their feet firmly in the ground close to the coast, were staying forever.

The demographic of the region's teachers was that the further you travelled inland from the major town, the younger were the teachers. Mick Carney and I were the most distant from Kempsey. Even the one teacher schools located much closer to Kempsey, were staffed by middle-

aged men. The Warbo Teacher, lived in Kempsey and stayed in Willawarrin during the week. He was content with his lot; farm pupils, who rode horses to and from school. As a very experienced teacher, who was his own boss, he didn't strive for extra lists. He was past being inspected. The Willawarrin Teacher, with a residence, was not going anywhere. He'd been there for a long stint. Today, Warbo is closed, Willawarrin and Bellbrook absorbed those bussed in and have both increased their numbers. Closed just before 1966, were schools with first year out teachers; Lower Creek, Nulla Creek and Mungay Creek. With dwindling numbers, the bean counters assessed them as *up the creek, without a pupil*. The demise of the small school was well underway by this time. Previously I'd met Oscar, the casual relief teacher for the district at a party. I remember his parting words to me, "don't get sick." Here I was in hospital, with stitches like a stegosaurus and a tube protruding from my stomach. The doctors told me that I would be off work for a month. Oscar was not going to be a happy little camper. By the way, the cause of my illness was a twisted bowel and while untwisting that, they made the decision to remove my appendix.

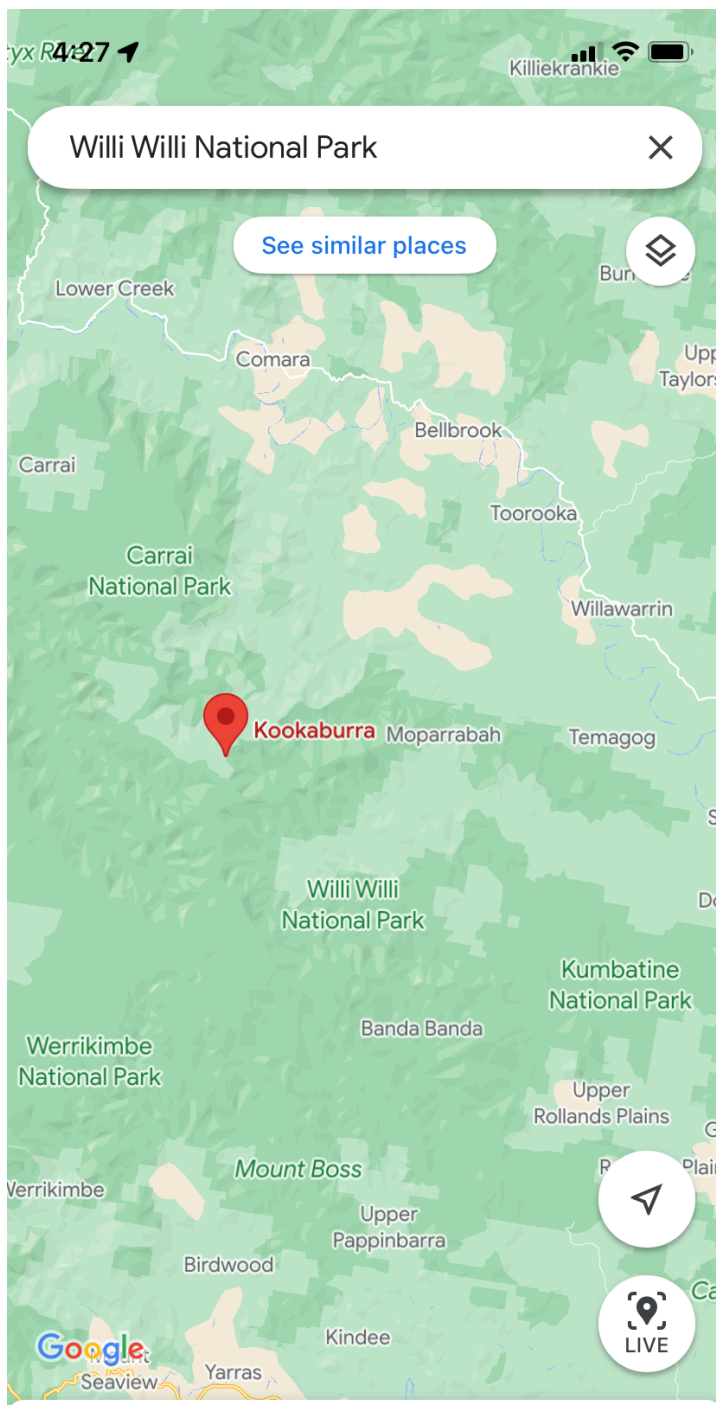
Oscar was a certificated teacher and was instructed to fill in for me for a short while. He spent his first and only few days and nights in Kookaburra, drove down the mountain, straight to The Inspector's House and told him that he was not going back. Allegedly, they compromised. He was to go up a couple of days during the week, open the school for a few hours and return to Kempsey on the same day. 'Be careful of the log trucks.' Also, he was given a travel allowance. The Kookaburra Kids experienced unexpected school holidays and very long weekends.

The Schools Inspector B.A. paid me a visit in the first month of the year. He was sitting on the doorstep of the hall before eight a.m. When I arrived, he looked rather relieved, possibly because I was still there, hadn't gone native, dressed in a tie and opened the school on time. He spent

a couple of hours and told me to throw out all the accumulated, outdated stationery in the cupboards. After he saw the first of the log trucks heading down the mountain, he left. Later, I was told that the first time he drove up to Kookaburra from Kempsey, he was unaware of one particular survival tactic on the road and that was to only ascend when the log trucks do and only descend with the log trucks in the same direction. Simply go up with them and come down with them. Apparently, on his first trip he was ascending when the log trucks were descending. A few times he was forced to reverse down a narrow dirt road with a sheer precipice on one side, hoping and praying to find some safety in a cut-in. There were many cut-ins, where you could pull over and allow the dinosaurian trucks to shave past your car. The trucks did two trips a day; one early morning and one early afternoon. Like the Inspector, I was once in a similar predicament. Once was enough.

The next time I saw him was 8 a.m. mid-year on inspection day. In a short time, he efficiently checked all the important paperwork, like the school roll, record cards and programmes. He managed to take an interest in many of the mill's historical objects, which the pupils had placed on

desks around the walls. History was his forte. The sound of log truck heading downhill was the catalyst for a swift departure. Obviously, in this remote habitat, he was never going to just drop in. He would do that at Warbro or Willawarrin on his way back to Kempsey for a yarn to teachers of a similar vintage. Never again in that year would he return. In



Kookaburra
2 reviews

Kookaburra, his job was done.

As forecast, I was transferred to another home in which to eat. For two nights all was fine and then I turned up the following night and the cook was in a state of inebriation. With a rumbling tummy, I returned to my hut.

Newcomers to the village had moved into the house next door to me and they agreed to take on the task of feeding the teacher. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards and their son, Ron, had moved to Kookaburra in the hope that the thinner air would be of benefit to Mrs. Edwards' failing lungs. They came from South-western Queensland, where Mr. Edwards had worked as a drover all of his life. They were true bush people, who if they had to, could live off the land. Ron's sharpshooting supplied an abundant supply of rabbits and Mrs. Edwards cooked them all ways. It was good tucker! She was a gun in the wood oven. Pastries and desserts resulted in my weight increasing. In the winter months, we would sit around the wood stove telling yarns until I went home to sleep. Once, Mrs. Edwards was bitten by a small red bellied black snake, close to her rear door. I couldn't believe that she toughed out the effects of the venom for nearly a week until she felt well again. On snakes, there were plenty, particularly the red bellied blacks. The Edwards' were fine people, truly what bush people describe as *salt of the earth*.

There was a loud knock on the school door. I opened it to the local district police officer, who was stationed at Bellbrook. His first rather blunt question to me was if I had been eating any steak lately. He proceeded to tell me that a couple of beef cattle in the clearing at Carrai had been shot and the steaks cut off them. It probably happened the previous weekend. The remains were left for the scavengers. This was serious; a case of taking living off the land a bite too far. Someone in the village may have been hungry on that weekend. Once, such an offence resulted in hanging or deportation. I knew nothing, the village knew nothing and the policeman found not an ounce of meat. He returned to Bellbrook empty-handed. The culprit(s) was never revealed. It was a silence worthy of The Sopranos. Did the police assume that the act was committed by someone(s) domiciled in Kookaburra

because of reputation? Searge's thoughts on Kookaburra came to mind. Alternatively, anyone could have driven up to that clearing from down the mountain and returned with a feed.

At the end of the May holidays, while I was staying on the Carney's property just north of Goulburn, Mick bought his first car. My routine, so imbedded in Term One, was to change. Comara, the Bellbrook Pub, the long drives and the hospitality of the families on The Further Upper MacLeay were to become rare occasions. Mick would now often pick me up on the way to Kempsey.

The Rugby League Season was underway and Mick was playing with Kempsey CYM (Catholic Young Men) There was another Kempsey Team, Kempsey Central, but for one reason or another all the Upper MacLeay boys played with CYM. Being a good Catholic made Mick's choice of a team very simple. Sundays were footy days. We travelled all over the mid-north coast, as far north as Coffs Harbour and as far west as Dorrigo. Sunday nights were a delight, although Mick would disappear for an hour or so to find a church. When he returned, we were only warming up the choir. One team member, familiar with Sydney University Rugby Union in his youth, knew all the Rugby songs. Late into the night we would belt out any song from *Dina, Dina*. to the more sedate *Molly Malone*. We must have been the only Rugby League Team, who sang Rugby Union songs.

There were two notable functions in the School (Public) Hall. The first was to be held midweek as a farewell to the number one sawyer and his family. He found a good job down the mountain, near a property, which he and his wife owned on a creek feeding The Macleay. I was approached by the organizing committee and told that they would be using the school. Hold on! The Handbook clearly stated that no alcohol was to be consumed on school grounds. The retort was

short, "It's a public hall, built by the workers and not on school grounds." The Handbook was shattered, searched through its pages for an answer and failed to reveal any semblance of a defence. This was no Kangaroo Court verdict but that of a higher court - the Kookaburra Court. The party was on!

As part of the preparatory committee, I was given an essential job and that was to drive down to the Willawarrin Pub and pick up the keg. I completed the mission much to the villagers' joy, the keg was soon tapped and the beer flowed. It was adults only; the kids were left at home. With all the lamps turned on and the fireplace roaring, it was a quiet start to the evening. The volume of the voices on low, the usual polite chatter about their real world in the village, low pay and all this politeness intermixed with the constant shaking of the Sawyer's hand for making the break to a home with electricity. Within an hour or so, the volume increased and the keg was under strain. Would it get the job done? Quickly the mood changed.

Amongst the cacophony of loud voices, one mill worker emerged from his scrum near the fireplace, darted across the floor and tackled an unsuspecting co-worker from behind, who went down like a bag of shirts. It was on: the co-worker retaliated and dropped the instigator and in no time, everyone was Johnny Raper. There was no anger; they were laughing like winners. The scrum, to which I was linked had not joined the melee. We smiled and laughed at the shenanigans. Our smirks were noticed and we were soon targeted. Even I, the local teacher was tackled! The sheer temerity! In P.E., at College, Arthur Tonkin, demonstrated the proper technique to tackle and not get hurt. With Arthur in my head, I tackled the bloke, who had nailed me. Then, I was tackled a few more times and I re-tackled the perpetrators. The fray continued until exhaustion set in and the release of pent up energies petered out. All the players were left lying on their backs and cackling like adolescent kookaburras. Now, it was back to finish the keg.

(to be continued next issue)

Wagga Wagga Teachers' Alumni Association

Treasurer's Report February 2022 Lindsay Brockway (1965-66)

The Association's accounting records, in respect of the year ended 31 December 2021, have been audited, according to the WWTCAA's Constitution and found correct.

Even though 2021 was a disrupted year due to COVID-19 and the "normal" activities of the Association were not possible, Alumni members continued their generous support, often with donations above the standard membership fees. As the Association had to cancel the regular quarterly meetings, discussion of support to worthy causes was not held. Hopefully this situation will be corrected when we are able to meet again face to face.

The Association had a credit bank balance, as at 31 December 2021, of \$21,066, representing an increase in available funds of \$4,627 when compared to the previous year. Total In-

come for the year was \$11,065 (\$11,069 in 2020) which included membership contributions of \$3,720 (\$4,020) and donations to the Scholarship Fund of \$3,600 (\$3,695), to Alumni Projects of \$1,840 (\$1,415) and to General Funds \$1,905 (\$1,895).

Total Expenditure for the year was \$6,438 (\$13,306 in 2020). Areas of expenditure included Scholarship Fund \$4,000 (\$4,500), Postage \$1,044 (\$1,397) and a Donation to Abbot-sleigh Indigenous Scholarship Fund (in lieu of *Talkabout* printing costs) \$400 (\$400). Audit Fees, Stationery, Flowers to the Stanton family, Printing and Out of Pocket Expenses totalled \$994 (\$1,150).

Alumni have once again been very supportive of the Scholarship Fund to assist students in their training years to become teachers of high quality. At

the end of the year the Scholarship Fund had a balance in excess of \$123,000 (est).

Membership Fees for 2022 will remain unchanged, that is, \$10 for Electronic Membership and \$20 for Standard Membership.

The Committee acknowledges and appreciates the substantial contributions made by the following Alumni Members: R. Armstrong, S. Barnes-Cooke, C&J Blake, J. Brown, W. Emmerton, K. Farrell, G. Ferguson, A. Foggett, A. Forrest, R. Grace, P. Gunning, R. Henze, M. Hope, W. Hyett, B. Lamaro, B. Lenehay, N. McAlpine, A. McNaughton, R. Morton, M. Phillips, C. Piper, R. Robinson, J&R Sadler, W. Sample, G. Say, C. Semler, G. Stanton, R. Stuart, S. Truin, B. Richardson, M. Maurer and P. Van Bergan.

Lindsay Brockway
Treasurer WWTCAA 2021

Vale

Bill Burrows (1954-55)

Another member of the 1954-55 WWTC Class has recently passed away.

BILL BURROWS living in Narrabri has recently died, aged 84. I met Bill when we both attended high school in a Goulburn boarding school

and then a group of six of us in the same class obtained scholarships to attend Wagga Wagga Teachers College in 1954. Upon graduating Bill taught in Wollongong, Oak Flats, Swan Creek and finally to Narrabri in 1973 where he taught until he retired

in 1994. He married Bev Langton in 1959. They had three children, 2 boys and a girl. Bill enjoyed golfing and being part owner of a very good race horse.

(Jim Carolan, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.)

Myrtle

(excerpt from Jan Pittard's Diary Sept 3 2021, referenced in Nov 2021 *Talkabout*)

Myrtle we encountered not long afterwards. She is not art nouveau, more classical, clad in drapery robes, one breast bared, holding aloft a torch and clutching a botanical specimen in her right hand. Her exact location is beside the Tabbita Walk on CSU's north campus close to a student accommodation block and a pair of dumpsters. She is perched upon a metal plinth significantly eroded at one corner by dog urine and a plaque on her base proclaims in a stylised font that would threaten to upstage her were it not so

tarnished:

Myrtle

Carrier-Belleuse, France

Donated to Wagga Wagga Teachers College

by

the Wagga Wagga Chamber of Commerce in 1954

she graced the lawn in front of the

Principal's Office next to a large crepe myrtle bush: hence her name.

It was downright puzzling to find a statue by acclaimed nineteenth century French sculptor, Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse (1824 - 1887) in the middle of CSU's expansive campus in the company of those dumpsters and approximately 100 metres away from a lonely unused bandstand. It was the bandstand that led me to *Myrtle*. My obsession with rotundas and bandstands dates back to my childhood playing in a neglected one in Valentine's Park, Ilford, Essex (see my blog)

[Post Strike Up the Band Once More](#)). It turns out that *Myrtle* and the bandstand have some shared provenance, but that is for another post.

The man who created *Myrtle*, Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, had a highly successful career in France and

Britain producing major works like his marble *La Bacchante* (1863), purchased by Emperor Napoleon III for the Jardins des Tuileries, and his portraits of cultural icons *Rembrandt* (1880) and *Dumas* (c.1883-87) as well as creating prototypes for multiple cast-

ings, usually on allegorical or mythological themes, for manufacture by British companies Minton and Wedgwood. His works are in the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in the USA, the San Martín Cathedral in Buenos Aires and in our own National Gallery.



A recent impromptu gathering at Shoalhaven Heads: Bob Prenzel (1967-68), Bruce Forbes (1965-66), Lesley Forbes (1966-67), Neil Wales (1967-68), George Harris (1966-67), George Manojlovic (1969-71)

An appeal to each of you:

I am happy to compile and edit an interesting newspaper for you but it is only as good as the material I receive.

May I suggest in these modern times of retirement that a couple of pages incorporating some of the wonderful vacational tours you have indulged in would make good reading for others, especially since COVID will mean some time before overseas tours can be resumed.

Perhaps some of the hobbies that you have now had time to pursue would be worth an account.

More than an Acquaintance Barry Michell (1950-51)

This wonderful letter came to me (The Editor) from Barry and it was such a thrill, I have chosen to let you all enjoy it.

After reading about you and your Suzuki, I have to say that I was disappointed — disappointed that your article was so brief; I wanted to read more.

I didn't know much about the South West but during the last years of the War, we lived at Griffith where Dad was Headmaster. The furthest south we ever went was to Darling-ton Point for fishing camps on the 'Bidgee. But a couple of years ago I had reasons to drive to Adelaide and back from Gunnedah three times over some years and that was my first experience of the Hay Plain. It left quite an impression on me with its brooding, lonely silence. It was always with some relief that the car started each time we stopped. I can only wonder how you must have felt at your breakdown.

I grew up in the North West but was always fascinated by such names as *Hay, Hell and Booligal* and *The One Tree Plain* and for you, as a young, first year teacher to make those crossings on your little Suzuki, stamps you as someone with great mental strengths. You certainly had the right name! I chuckled mirthlessly when you said that on a return trip to Buronga, your father drove you to Hay and let you off to cross that expansive plain of loneliness and then all the way to Mildura. That is one helluva trip by car but a twenty year old girl doing that on her own? On a step-through Suzuki? In the Sixties? I shakes m'ead dus.

I hope you have fully described those experiences in your memoirs, Lesley. The account of your injury was too brief for such a trauma. I'm sure that *Talkabout* readers would love more of your outback travels with Suzi, so Lesley, in the hope that you might write more, I'll have another year's supply of *Talkabout*. Thank you.

And how you and Bruce managed to

keep up your contacts, again is a great little read and not forgetting Bruce's appointment to Wilcannia; another great experience there. I wonder did he ever think of our Greoge Blake-more and Tibooburra while on his way to Wilcannia.

Well, Lesley, here's a story with a twist. At the end of 1946, Dad was appointed Headmaster at North Broken Hill. In early January, the family of six in a little Vauxhall, with luggage and a poodle set off to Broken Hill via Hillston and Ivanhoe. There had been some good rain in the Ivanhoe district and we had to do some worrying wheel-spinning and sliding before we camped for the night, stretched out on blankets and a tarpaulin. Then on to Wilcannia, shimmering on the horizon.

At Little Topar Tank, the radiator was drained and filled with solar warmed fresh water for the last long stretch ahead, with us finally arriving in the evening tired but very expectant. Then in the dark and with growing impatience and some irritability, we finally bedded down in a room at the Silver Dollar Hotel. But all was forgotten the next morning with the excitement of seeing Broken Hill in the daylight. Though I don't think Mum was too excited.

And there followed three great years that ended with myself, Allen Roberts and Laura King going off to Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in mid-1950. Laura was my girl friend. She was the top athlete at school and trained with a sprinter who later won the Stawell Gift. In 1952 at Broken Hill, she with three other Broken Hill girls, did an exhibition race against Marjorie Jackson.

Laura, who mixed with boys as easily as she did with girls, was popular with the fellas at College, so much so that I was sidelined and put out of business. But College activities enabled me to get over it, but more later than sooner.

Well, after fifty odd years of life's varied experiences, I left a good life in leafy Epping and bought a 500 acre

property near Gunnedah for health reasons. I had emphysema as a result of breathing in too much dust when I did five years of wheat farming for my father-in-law near Boggabri. I now needed clean air and a lot of hard work to keep my lungs flexing.

One day out in the field, exercising my lungs with a crowbar, I had a phone call; a female voice asking if I remembered Laura King. I said, I could never forget Laura King (and there were good reasons for never forgetting Laura King). Well, it was Laura, living in Adelaide and she had recently been widowed.

After chatting for a while, I said, why don't you come up and see me some time and she did just that. On her third visit, she said she wasn't going back to Adelaide and that I now had to put up with her whether I liked it or not. For the next eleven years we had the most wonderful relationship. We never left each others side, but she was much more than a loving partner. Over the years, she developed into a competent offsider, handling the tractor, chainsaw, wire strainers and pretty well the works.

Laura never called the property by name. She always referred to it as Paradise and the front entrance was always the Gateway to Paradise. She occasionally said that she wished she had married me. My reply was had we done so all those years back, we probably wouldn't be living in Paradise as we are today.

I drove Laura to Adelaide several times for her to spend time with her family. The third time I took her back to say Goodbye to her family for the last time. Laura was dying. She had liver cancer. I brought her back to her Paradise and she died a year later, a few months short of her 89th birthday. I have been in grief ever since.

I have kept in continuous contact with Allen all these years as well as Bert and Mary Fletcher (Doust). All are doing pretty well in their early nineties. I'm to join them shortly.

Eileen was born in Sydney, 10 days before the Wall Street stock market crash which heralded in The Great Depression. A small baby weighing only 4lb 8oz, she contracted whooping cough at 6 weeks of age and nearly didn't make it through infancy. From a very young age, she displayed a passion for learning and reading was her favourite activity. Her family could not afford to buy books, living in a crowded 2 bedroom house shared by 2 families. She could be found in a corner reading anything she could get her hands on, the newspaper, the back of food containers etc.

In 1948, aged 18, Eileen commenced teacher training at Wagga Wagga Teacher's College. Like many promising students who could not afford tertiary education, she was granted a teaching scholarship and lived on campus. At the time, many of the male students were ex-servicemen and the campus was a spartan conglomeration of huts formerly used as an Air Force hospital during World War II. The students were split into groups in alphabetical order for meals and accommodation. This explains why most of Eileen's friends had surnames beginning with P or R! Eileen's studies were interrupted after she contracted polio on campus in 1949 but she recovered enough to resume her studies and complete her training in 1950. She made lifelong friends at WWTC and remained connected to the wider alumni community through *Talkabout* and attending many of the reunions organised by the alumni. I have had the privilege to know many of Eileen's WWTC friends, all of whom were outstanding teachers and human beings. This speaks volumes for the standard of training they received and the scholarship system which allowed access to tertiary education and training to students with merit regardless of wealth.

In 1951, Eileen started her teaching career at Old Guildford Public School in what was then an outer Sydney suburb. The post war baby boom and migration programme resulted in a

scarcity of teachers and large classes with many migrant children from European nations devastated or displaced by the war. Eileen went on to teach at a number of other public schools in Sydney from 1951 to 1968 including Brookvale, Forestville and Wakehurst Public Schools. She did this while raising 4 children of her own which came along in quick succession between 1956 and 1962. Eileen and her children moved from Sydney to Canberra in 1968 where she worked at several Canberra public primary schools including Narrabundah (1968), Macquarie (1968-9), Lyneham (1970-1), Lyons (1973-82) and Village Creek (1983-5) primarily as an Assistant Principal. In the late 1970s, following the introduction of fee free education by the Whitlam Federal Labor Government, Eileen enrolled as a part time student at the Canberra College of Advanced Education (now University of Canberra) where she graduated with a Bachelor of Education in 1979.

Eileen was a gifted, passionate, respected, dedicated and hard working teacher. Teaching really was her calling. She loved young children and had a special affinity with them. Although she was well qualified for positions as Principal, she felt most comfortable in the classroom and even in executive roles, she found time for teaching children who needed extra help. She became a mentor for junior teachers and confidant for parents and was particularly interested in helping students who were struggling to regain their self esteem and realise their potential. Many

years after retiring from teaching, she would delight in running into former students in Canberra and engaging with them.

Eileen had a lifetime passion for learning and helping people. She was stylish and elegant with a beautiful singing voice which would delight children. She was a lover of the classics in art, architecture, literature, opera and music. In her early retirement years, she finally got to travel abroad and explore the places she had dreamed of seeing. She also did voluntary work for a local hospital and attended The University of The Third Age in Canberra and later Noosa. Even when voluntary work was no longer possible, Eileen was a regular donor to many charities. In true Eileen style these were mainly charities supporting children with special needs. Eileen believed that access to free education was the key to a better life for everyone and that well trained and caring teachers in a supportive school culture were at the core of this. Although I never had a school teacher quite like this amazing and inspiring woman, I'd like to think that the life lessons she taught me have made me a better human being. What a legacy she has left. *(her daughter, Rosemary Edwards)*



Back L-R Pat Carey (Plowman), Betty Punton, Helena Steizer (Hamilton), Eileen Garvan (Pickering)

Front L-R Dot McCombe (Ramsay), June Shaw OAM (Robson, Hadley) - outside WWTC gym 24/7/1948



Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association

KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE IN 2022 TO SECURE THE FUTURE



IMPORTANT NOTICE

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

To ensure the continued financial viability of the Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association the following membership contributions and services will apply from 1 January 2022

a) Electronic Membership:

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

b) Standard Membership:

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

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

c) Additional Contributions:

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

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