



A PUBLICATION  
OF THE ALUMNI OF  
WAGGA TEACHERS

# TALKABOUT



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CSU REGIONAL ARCHIVES, BLAKEMORE BUILDING, WAGGA WAGGA



If you are visiting Wagga you may decide to have a nostalgic visit to the site of the Wagga Wagga Teachers College. Sadly, the old place looks dilapidated and forlorn and is now known as the South Campus of Charles Sturt University.

The prominent brick building near the old hall is the Blakemore Building, named as a fitting tribute to George Blakemore, the first Principal. It now houses the Regional Archives and is well worth a visit.

You will be able to view many documents and memorabilia about Wagga Wagga Teachers College from its beginning in 1947 to its close in 1971.

There are publications which include:

1. copies of Talkabout from 1952 to 1971,
2. copies of Contact and Balinga,
3. the Wagga College Songbook.

Memorabilia such as badges, blazers, plaques, Intercollegiate sports patch, table cloths, ties.

Photographs.

1. Photograph albums of staff, students, buildings and activities, 1947-71
2. Photographs of staff, students, buildings and activities, 1947-71.

Records relating to assessment including individual and official schedule of results (transcripts), 1947-73.

Opening hours are: Mondays to Fridays 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

## ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

The response to the Anniversary Lunch has been promising.

So far 45 people have expressed an interest in attending. The venue can accommodate up to 70 people so there is plenty of room for those who are still making up their minds.

The majority of acceptances are from the early years but there are a few from the late fifties and a few from the sixties - one couple from 1967-68 and another from 69-70.

Why not contact someone you would like to catch up with and suggest they meet you at Icons on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September for a mini reunion.

The Acceptance/Payment Form is on Page 15 and money is due by 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

# REUNION PAGE

## WWTC 1952-53 SESSION 60 YEAR REUNION



*Ruby Riach and Helene Hotchis (Graham)*

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the last week in February 2012, the ex-students of the 1952/53 Session of WWTC held a reunion in Sydney to celebrate the fact that it was exactly 60 years since they started college. Thirty eight ex-students, some with partners, attended at least one activity during the three day event.

This was the ninth reunion of this Session, the first of which was organised by Darryl Walker assisted by Bruce Taylor, Peter Croker, Eric

Draper and Les Noon and held at the Bronte Inn in 1984. Since then two or three have been held at Wagga and Sydney and one each at Canberra and Bundanon, organised by either the “boys” or the “girls”. This reunion was a combined effort with meetings of between 2 and 16 people being held over many months at various locations. Our chairperson was Robin McKinnon (Williams).



*Bruce Taylor, Greg and Helene Hotchkis*



*Ian Davis, Bob Muir, Jim Tweddle*

The celebrations commenced with a dinner at Club 99 ( the former Bowlers’ Club) in York St. Registration was from 5.00pm onwards in a special area set aside by club staff where guests were presented with a commemorative spoon and a copy of the college songs. There was the opportunity to mingle and catch up with old friends before dinner was served at 7.00pm.

Grace was said by Barrie Wright and MC Tony Davis welcomed everyone, read out the apologies and outlined the planned activities.

Greg Hotchkis, the President of the SRC in 1953 proposed a toast to the college.

A special guest was Ruby Riach, former lecturer and warden who has been so supportive and interested in our welfare since 1952 and who cut the cake provided by Helene Hotchkis (Graham).

The only planned activity for Wednesday was a trip to the Capitol Theatre to see “Love Never Dies” but some people made their own



*Yvonne and Darryl Walker, Ian Davis*



# REUNION PAGE



*Tony Davis, Carmel Davis, Elva Nye, Ann Whitfield (Walton), Ruby Riach, Jacqui Raine (Barnes)*

arrangements with friends for lunch, coffee and/or dinner.

On Thursday approximately 30 people visited the Sydney Rowing Club for lunch. Many travelled there by ferry and we all appreciated the opportunity to enjoy sitting by the water, eating good food and talking with old friends. Dave Lyons travelled all the way from Halliday's Point and back that day just to say Hullo!

It has been decided that this will be our final organised reunion and that in future those who are able to will meet at 11.30am on the first Monday of September each year at:

The Sydney Rowing Club

613 Great North Road

Abbotsford

Transport is from Circular Quay by ferry or by bus Route 438 along George Street.

This year the date is Monday 3 September.

We hope to see you there.

Phyll Lembit (Clancy)



*Ellenor Armstrong (Thompson), Val Heath (Plumb), Phyll Lembit (Clancy)*



*Harry and Anne Bunton*

# REUNION PAGE

## WWTC 1963-64 REUNION IN THE ILLAWARRA



*L-R: Bernie Fitzpatrick, Marion (Smith) Giddy, Lauren Warfield, Janice (Kerin) Fitzpatrick, Colleen (Brophy) Cureton, Rob Hughes, Tom McKibbin, Russell Warfield, Dennis Forsythe, Bob Cureton, Julianne Hughes, Nola Forsythe, Gerd King, Beth Robertson, Jan (Ferguson) Smart, Sue (Upton) King, Anne McKibbin, Helen Smith.  
Absent: Gerard Say.*

On the weekend of 13-15 April 2012, a group of 19 WWTC retirees spanning the 1962-1965 era – mostly 63-64 people – gathered in Wollongong for a great weekend together. Hosts for the weekend were Bernie and Janice (Kerin) Fitzpatrick.

The event began at around 5:00pm on the Friday, with gathering, fun and frivolity prior to a home-cooked evening meal at the Figtree home of Janice and Bernie. Their spacious, enclosed back patio provided a very cosy environment for all to renew friendships and re-live memories.

Saturday began at 9:00am with a bus tour of some of the beauty spots and spectacular views of the Illawarra coast and immediate hinterland. Rob Hughes, group member and experienced outback tour coach driver, kindly agreed to drive the 22-seater locally-hired bus.

The group left Wollongong via the well-known Mt Ousley Road ascent from the coastal strip and headed along the F6 Freeway to Helensburgh. The Sri Venkateswara Hindu Temple on the edge of the township was a point of interest. A short trip along Lawrence Hargrave Drive from Helensburgh took the tour group to Bald Hill, the hang gliders' magnet, from which uninterrupted views out across the Tasman Sea as well as south across Stanwell Park to Port Kembla and beyond towards Bass Point could be had. Bald Hill, adjacent to the family home of Australia's famous aviation pioneer, Lawrence Hargrave, and the location of many of his flight experiments, is an extremely significant historical landmark.

The steep and winding descent by road to Stanwell Park led to the ideal spot for

the morning tea break – just near Stanwell Park beach.

From there the journey was south along the Grand Pacific Drive, the spectacular and scenic old coast road running from the Royal National Park to Bulli. At Coalcliff, Rob stopped the bus to give the opportunity for the sightseers to walk across the 665 metre-long Sea Cliff Bridge, between Coalcliff and Clifton.

The off-shore and parallel-to-coast Sea Cliff Bridge forms part of the Grand Pacific Drive and is located on scenic Lawrence Hargrave Drive, 60 km south from central Sydney and 23 km north from Wollongong. It was opened on December 11, 2005, at a total cost of \$52 million.

The bridge provides road and pedestrian access, and spectacular views. Like the



# REUNION PAGE

Sea Cliff Bridge, the Grand Pacific Drive never loses sight of the sea. It hugs the coast between the high battlements of the Illawarra Escarpment, looming like the great wall of a lost world, and the vastness of the Tasman Sea, an ocean view so wide the curve of the Earth can be seen. Looking south, the “Coast with the Most” is scalloped with bays and world-class surfing beaches all the way to Wollongong and beyond.

The bridge was built after a large embankment slip in August 2003 indefinitely closed Lawrence Hargrave Drive between Coalcliff and Clifton, a stretch of road area notorious for rock falls and closures. But community protest at this permanent closure was fierce, and a permanent fix was demanded from the NSW Government. Over two years later, Sea Cliff Bridge provided that fix, and the road re-opened, finally Bridging the Cliff and the Sea and Community.

Coach driver, Rob, having parked the bus at the southern end of the bridge, walked back to join the ambling group, still only about half-way across. There was much to see and talk about, and clearly no-one was in a hurry to be rushed. Many spoke about other spectacular places they had visited, and general consensus indicated that the Illawarra’s Sea Cliff Bridge is amongst many of the best of them.

Along the road south, the retired schoolteachers were envious to see the idyllic locations of the cliff-top schools at Scarborough and Coledale, and the “crows nest” lookout location of the school at Austinmer.

A detour towards the beach immediately before Thirroul took the group into seaside suburban streets to a pretty little park with a bronze plaque suitably dedicated to DH Lawrence, who spent a part of the year 1922 living in a house nearby, where he wrote his only Australian novel, *Kangaroo*. The plaque’s short excerpt from the novel indicates the author’s impression of that part of the Australian environment: “and so the great tree-covered swoop upwards of the tor to the red fume of

clouds, red like the flame flowers of sunset.”

From there it was on through the historic “black diamond” township of Bulli and thence to Wollongong itself, to appreciate the many spectacular vantage points around the harbour and the lighthouse. The now scaled-down industrial complex of Port Kembla, and the twin sentinels of Mt Keira and Mt Kembla were viewed respectfully from the vantage point of Flagstaff Hill.

From there a short trip took the group to the botanic garden-like grounds of the University of Wollongong, where a picnic lunch on the eastern terrace of Building 30 awaited the group. From lunch, a short walk across tree-studded lawns and up to the third floor of Building 67 brought the group to a display of a dozen or so portraits of past and present heads of education, including that of Maurice E Hale, former Principal of Wollongong Teachers College (1973-74) and former Director of Wollongong Institute of Education (1974-77).

After lunch, Rob drove the group to Port Kembla’s Hill 60 for further scenic Illawarra views, and for the hoped-for bonus that had eluded them in the morning at Bald Hill – hang gliders taking off and flying. On a good day it would be expected to see any number of these pilots taking off and landing at Bald Hill, but on the day the necessary wind strength did not eventuate until mid-afternoon. So, at Hill 60 it was possible to get up-close and conversational with a couple of the intrepid fliers.

After a very big day out it was time for a “nanna nap” before hitting Keira Street’s restaurant strip, so Rob delivered all and sundry back to Langson Avenue, Figtree where vehicles lay in wait. As the punters alighted from the bus, Janice handed each an 18-question quiz based on the events of the day, to be answered before re-grouping for the evening meal.

The House of Thai Cuisine, an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century cottage suitably modified, in Keira St right opposite Victoria St, provided just the perfect setting for the

evening’s formal dinner. A room suitably furnished for the group’s number was set, and the owners, Bean and Friends, and catering staff welcomed the group warmly. The privacy of the room allowed considerable jocular and repartee as the questionnaires were marked, classroom style – “now swap papers and mark the test of the one sitting next to you” – and prizes (bottles of wine) awarded.

Sunday began with a 10:00am appointment at Berkeley’s Nan Tien Temple, Nan Tien being Chinese for Southern Paradise, the largest Buddhist temple in the Southern Hemisphere. The temple and its pagoda are clearly visible from many parts south of Wollongong, but not so obvious is the 96-room motel complex with rooms costing less than \$100 a night, and the Wollongong City Council-approved plans for the building of an international Buddhist university on the western side of the F6 Freeway directly opposite the temple, the two to be connected by a pedestrian walkway above the freeway.

The WWTC group of tourists spent four and a half hours at the temple. The guided tour and explanation, very clearly delivered in competent English, occupied the first 90 minutes, and that was followed by a half-hour tuition session in each of origami and calligraphy. A simple but satisfying vegetarian cooked meal was served in the large community-style dining room. Time in the small museum and art gallery rounded off the visit.

Feedback during the days that followed indicated how much members of the group enjoyed the experiences, adventure and camaraderie of the weekend.

Bernie Fitzpatrick (1964-65)  
(on behalf of Bernie and Janice  
Fitzpatrick)

# COLLEGE MEMORIES

**NEVILLE HENRY LATHAM**

## **A SPECIAL YEAR - AN INSPIRATION**

While doing historical research trawling through old newspapers, I come across items that either intrigue me or bring back memories.

While researching an incident in the Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, I accidentally came across such an article that answered many questions for me concerning the one member of staff who I knew little of, but admired as I saw him move about the college.

Like many others who failed only one subject in an exam, I was automatically given an appointment with Mr. Latham, the college counsellor. For me it was my first experience of sitting face to face with a person who was blind, who led the conversation, and in front of you made his notes.

Other students only saw him as his wife dropped him off for work and he made his way to his office, never putting a step out of place, or at college dinners and assemblies etc, where members of the staff discreetly assisted him if needed.

So, here is the item from The Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, of Tuesday 21-12-1954:

### **BLIND, BUT HE MAY RESUME HIS TEACHING**

**A Wagga man whose life medical science had given up all hope six months ago has now returned to his family and may resume his duties as a lecturer in the faculty of Education at Wagga Teachers' College despite the hardship of total blindness.**

**He is Mr. Neville Henry Latham, B.A., of Macleay Street.**

The help Mr. Latham received from friends and colleagues played no small part in the battle which surrounds his gradual recovery from a near-fatal illness.

Mr. Latham suffered a stroke on Sunday, May 7, of this year, which deprived him of the use of all his faculties.

For six weeks he lay in a coma, and his wife was told there was no chance of his coming out of hospital alive.

### **"Vacuum"**

Yesterday, Mr. Latham said, "This period of time was a complete vacuum for me, and it took me a long time to make up for the time lost."

A short time before he became ill, Mr. Latham had started to build a home for his family. A garage had been erected and the foundations dug for the house.

"What are we going to do about the house?" he asked his wife on one of her daily visits to the hospital.

She told him his friends at the College had written to ask did "she mind if they finished the house."

### **Operation Home**

Operation home-building soon began.

The staff and students of the College have been at work for some months now during their spare time, wielding hammers and paint brushes, and mixing concrete.

Even the Principal (Mr. G. Blakemore) and the women folk helped.

The firm of John Danks, in Sydney, suppliers of builders' hardware, not to be outdone by the generosity of the "builders", landed supplies in Wagga at reduced rates.

Now the walls have been completed and the roof timbers are in position, a source of deep satisfaction for the Latham family.

It is expected that the house will be completed early in 1955.

"The people of Wagga have been amazingly good to us," Mr. Latham said yesterday. "I received excellent care from the doctors, and the doctors and staff at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital were extremely kind and helpful at all times.

"Matron White and her staff, of the Wagga Hospital were also very good to me."

Mr. Latham was for a long period a patient at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, to which he was transferred

after spending a week at the Wagga Base Hospital.

The trip to Sydney was made by train, and a number of students of the Teachers' College who travelled on the same train on their way home for a holiday refused to leave Central Station before receiving assurance that the patient was as well as could be expected.

This gesture, which was reported to Mr. Latham weeks afterwards, as well as all the incidents that followed his collapse, moved him deeply.

Towards the end of June, Mr. Latham was taken out of his bed and made to sit on a chair for a while.

### **"Slow Pull"**

Then the recovery began.

It was a "slow pull" (complications set in) but he made the grade.

His weight was by then reduced to six or seven stone, and it took him several weeks to learn to walk again.

Gradually, he had overcome a state of sheer and complete weakness.

### **Now Blind**

But his blindness has posed for him a serious problem. In order to be able to resume his normal occupation in the teaching profession, he had to acquire a new technique, new means of placing his training at the service of his fellow men and earning his family's livelihood.

That is the next "hurdle," said Mr. Latham yesterday, and he is hard at work finding ways and means to overcome it.

He is very grateful to the Royal Blind Society for their assistance in his study of Braille, and for the instruction given in and out of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

### **Braille letter**

Mr. Latham showed a letter he had written in Braille on a "brass and style" to a blind friend in Sydney, and he asked the Royal Blind Society to obtain for him a Braille machine from England.

This machine is a typewriter with six keys and a space bar.

# COLLEGE MEMORIES

There is a key for each one of the dots used in Braille. All Braille characters are a modification of a basic six dot pattern.

The various patterns in which these dots are arranged have to be memorized by the student without his ever having seen them, which is a real problem for one who had previously relied on visual memory as an aid to study.

Sensitivity in the fingers has to be developed as well, which is a slow process.

Meanwhile Mr. Latham expressed his determination (*to make*) as much use as possible of the opportunities given him by the help and encouragement of his friends, students and colleagues.

\*\*\*\*\*

For me the article was both an eye-opener and an inspiration.

I feel that the special relationship developed between all those involved must have been something that other college students never got to experience. Most of us never knew the full story, and I feel that all those who knew Mr. Latham would appreciate reading these details.

I am sure that some of those who were involved would have stories that they could share with us about that very special time. I also wonder how many became inspired by the experience to go into working with the blind.

To complete the story, sadly I must report that Mr. Latham passed away in March, 1989.

(Notice in SMH, 29-3-89).

Ken McCubbin (1957-58)

*The following excerpts regarding Mr Latham were taken from previous Talkabouts. Ed.*

We also worked, completely voluntarily, to help build Laxy Latham's house after his cerebral haemorrhage and his subsequent blindness. I can remember being up in the joists looking at him trying to master the Braille machine down below.

John Briggs (1953-54)

I was sorry to read of the death of Neville Latham. Before becoming a student, I had worked for nearly two years as an assistant in the college library mostly with librarian, Robert Langker.

Having already completed a secretarial course, I was asked to assist Mr Latham by typing of reports, etc. I remember him as ever a thoughtful, considerate gentleman – and gentle man – who set a wonderful example of getting on with life despite the setbacks that life can dish out.

Shirley Luttrell (Johnston) 1957-58

That first year was wonderful, one of the most enjoyable in my life, despite the inconvenient intrusions of prac' teaching and lectures.

The lectures and lecturers left their mark too, "Dutchie" Holland introduced me to TS Eliot, Owen and Auden, and Steinbeck, "Laxy" Latham introduced me to Psychology and "Speed" Gammage left some indelible memories of biology.

Lionel Gailor allowed me to stretch my wings a bit with stage and décor design.

David Lyons (1952-53)

## COMING EVENTS

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The next quarterly meeting of the Alumni Association will be held at 11 am on: Tuesday 14th August 2012. The meeting will be held at: NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre. 37 Reservoir Street Surry Hills. All welcome.

### ALUMNI LUNCHEONS

The next Alumni luncheon will be the Anniversary Lunch to be held at the Icons Restaurant in the Marriott Hotel, Pitt Street Sydney (near the Quay) on Tuesday 18th September, 2012.

The Acceptance and Payment Form is on Page 15.

## CONTACTS

**President:** Bob Collard MBE: 2 Louise Close, Ourimbah 2258  
Phone 02 4362 2764

**Secretary:** Dorothy Tanner: 282 Doncaster Ave, Kingsford 2032  
Ph 02 9663 3204 email: netanner@optusnet.com.au

**Research and Records Officer :**  
Gerard Say: Unit 3, 822 Pacific Highway, Chatswood 2067  
Phone 02 9412 3267 email: gsay@bigpond.net.au

**Treasurer:** Lindsay Budd: 4 Flemington Close, Casula 2170  
Phone 02 9601 3003 email: lbudd@bigpond.net.au

**Talkabout Editors:**  
Lindsay Budd: 4 Flemington Close, Casula 2170  
Lew Morrell: 25 Grandview Drive, Newport 2106  
Phone 02 9997 1506 email: lewismorrell@gmail.com

**Faculty Advancement Officer:** Stacey Fish  
The University Advancement Unit,  
Charles Sturt University, Bathurst NSW 2795  
Phone 02 6338 4832. (Preferably Monday and Wednesday)  
Email: sfish@csu.edu.au

# TEACHING MEMORIES

## WOULD YOU BELIEVE ....?

College days had ended and the commencement of the 1961 school year was a few weeks away. Over that Christmas/New Year period all of us who had recently graduated probably experienced the same range of emotions – excitement, curiosity, apprehension and not least of all, impatience. What would official notice of our first appointment do for us or to us? In my case I also hoped that all the fines I had paid for College rules infractions had completely wiped my slate clean. In short, I hoped my appointment would not contain any hint of Muir’s revenge or Birrell’s payback. Wanting to get my country service over as soon as possible I had nominated Bourke, Hay and Broken Hill as my preferred options. When I told my mother about this her reaction was: “Hay, Hell or Booligal, eh!”

Being from the Riverina, this was her often used expression when referring to somewhere farther out than the Black Stump or the Back O’Beyond. Finally, as excitement and impatience both became almost unbearable, IT arrived. I ripped open the envelope and read aloud – Wakool, Deniliquin Inspectorate, Rail via Melbourne, no accommodation available, suggest Wakool Hotel.

I wondered where on Earth it was because the Deniliquin Inspectorate probably covered a large area and Mum said: “Well, it isn’t Hay and it isn’t Booligal, it might be the other.”

A frenzied search in my old Primary School Atlas failed to shed light on Wakool’s existence. It was too late to go to the local Library before it closed, so I contacted some friends and relatives. Some knew that Deniliquin was somewhere near the border but none of them had ever heard of Wakool. Then the light dawned. The obvious place to go was Meadowbank Railway Station. They would be sure to be able to tell me

where it was. Alas, there was no answer to my quandary there. I was told by the Station Master that no Wakool station was listed in their records so they wouldn’t be able to provide me with a ticket.

When I mentioned Deniliquin and S.W.NSW one of the Assistants said that if it had a Station at all it might be on a Victorian Line which came up into NSW and I would have to go to Sydney’s Central Station. It would be the only place with that information and I would be able to buy a ticket if Wakool was listed. I had never heard of this – Victorian railways coming into NSW. I thought my leg was being pulled. Nevertheless, a few days later, armed with my Rail Warrant I went to Central and I bought my ticket – rail via Melbourne, Bendigo and finally Echuca to Wakool which was indeed on a Victorian Line within NSW. I looked at Railway maps and there it was, between Echuca and Moulamein.

Feeling that I was now finally on my way to the rest of my life and being in the City I decided to do a few things for the last time for a long time. I went to my favourite menswear store and bought a new shirt. I went to my favourite barber, Angelo in Angel Place, to have my crew cut smartened up. Then I went to Adam’s Marble Bar, a favourite meeting place, for one last visit. What happened over the next couple of hours made this day the most amazing day in my life. I do not tell of the following incidents very often because they are so amazing that I feel people find it hard to believe me.

As soon as I walked into Adam’s I noticed 3 men at the bar. I recognised one as Tony Kelly who had been a year or two ahead of me at M.B.H.S. Eastwood. We exchanged hellos and he asked me what I had been doing since leaving school. I told him I had just been appointed to Wakool P.S., my first appointment. He then introduced me to his companions – Gerry O’Brien and

John Wheeler. He then added that both were teachers at Wakool P.S. the previous year. Gerry would be there again next year and John was the teacher I was replacing. We were all flabbergasted to say the least.

The most important information I gleaned from this chance meeting was that accommodation was not available. Gerry and John had spent the previous year living in a caravan parked in the main street, using power from a private home and showering etc at the Club. They told me that one family, the Lanes, had a boarder for part of the previous year but had a bad experience when he unexpectedly disappeared and caused a bizarre, large-scale search by the townspeople. They had now sworn off boarders for life and the Hotel really did seem the only solution.

Having located Wakool I now knew where I was going but there was now a very serious worry about what I was going to find when I got there. On my way home I bought the afternoon newspaper to read on the train, the Daily Mirror if I remember correctly. I did not often read the afternoon paper and if I did it was most often The Sun. On the front page in very large print was the headline “Country Town Destroyed By Fire” or something equally dramatic. It caught my eye and I began to read the article. The town was Wakool.

My spirits had been buoyed at finding out where Wakool was and I had been amazed at meeting Gerry and John. I had been made a little apprehensive in learning that finding accommodation would indeed be a problem and now I was freaked out by reading of The Great Fire. Was there a hidden message for me in these events? Mum’s words came back to me immediately.

Soon enough the time for waiting and wondering was over and I set out on the long train journey. The trip was uneventful enough for the most part, but



# TEACHING MEMORIES



*Wakool Public School Athletics Carnival 1961. Billy Hulands on the left.*

after leaving Echuca aboard a small rail motor the country began to change and I started to take more interest in it. There wasn't a hill to spoil the view and settlement became much more dispersed. By the time we had passed the Black Stump and had left the Back O'Beyond well behind the small number of original passengers had dwindled to two. I decided to speak to the elderly looking gentleman in the front seat. He asked if I was the new teacher at Wakool P.S. and introduced himself as Mick Lonergan, the School Principal. He smiled broadly all the time and I thought he was friendly enough and we seemed to be off to a good start.

At Wakool we descended from the train to ground level, just as they did in countless Western movies I had seen, but we were not met by John Wayne or James Stewart. We were met by Murray "Wotta" Pitty. His nickname was well earned. He had once shot the bottom out of his tinny with his shotgun when a tiger snake emerged from under the rear seat, while fishing in the middle of the Wakool River. He had also "sunk" his car on another trip when he forgot to park the car in gear and to apply the hand brake. The town's collective finger was also pointed at him as the culprit

for starting the town's great fire. It was believed he had fallen asleep in bed with a lighted cigarette in his hand.

My first view from the railway station revealed a Hotel, a store, a couple of houses and little else. Perhaps the fire had almost wiped Wakool off the map. I was impatient to have a look around and see the damage. I booked into the hotel for an open ended stay then went for a walk to survey what was left of the town. Within a short period of time I discovered the fire damage was limited to the rear of the Post Office and part of the residence and so it hadn't lived up to the Mirror's description in any way.

I saw the school. I passed and nodded to several of the locals who smiled and appeared very friendly. They of course knew instantly who I was. I think I may have stood out as a city slicker because I didn't meet anybody that day dressed in the latest Ivy League fashion and sporting a crew cut. In retrospect, Mick Lonergan, may not have been smiling to be friendly. He may have seen a square peg that was about to be put into a round hole.

I had five days before school started and in that time I met many parents and their children and I had persuaded Mrs Lane to take me in as a boarder,

(4 pounds p.w., 3 course breakfast and 2 course evening meal every day, all washing and ironing). I also managed to get into Barham and Deniliquin to see what the nearest big towns had to offer. Nobody made fun of my city clothes. I quickly felt accepted and at ease.

Wakool was certainly no Hell, the people were very accepting, friendly and helpful, the children were delightful and Mick and Gerry proved to be great people with whom to work. My time spent there was most enjoyable and it was filled with people and events that have given me many wonderful memories and several stories that I have related over and over again.

The awarding of a Scholarship to Lisa Hulands (see Talkabout, July 2011) was pleasing to see. Her article brought back vivid pictures of a little Billy Hulands, perhaps Lisa's father, starting school in my first ever class.

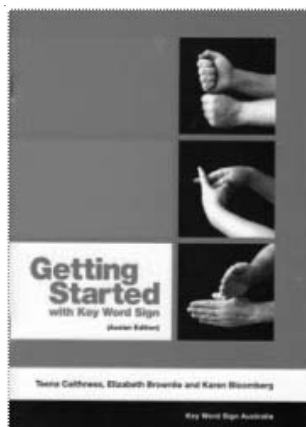
Lisa and Janet Stephenson (Letters, Talkabout, March, 2012) enthused me enough to pen the above about the almost unbelievable series of coincidences which occurred with my first appointment.

Alan Lake 1959-60

# AFTER TEACHING MEMORIES

## From Primary Teaching to Producing and Editing Books of Manual Sign

### Ella Keesing (Redpath) 1950-51



*Getting Started with Key Word Sign* is the latest production from Key Word Sign Australia based at Newcastle University. It contains over 100 line drawings and descriptions of manual signs to use with children and adults who have complex communication needs, that is, they have no speech or their speech is very difficult to understand. Key Word Sign is a method of using sign and speech together to enable participants to communicate their needs. The signs used are based on Auslan, the language of the Deaf Community, but with Key Word Sign, the words are also spoken in English word order by the teacher/trainer. The vocabulary chosen was based on research and word frequency studies in communities around Australia. I was a member of the panel which produced this publication.

So how did I make the transition from primary school teaching to helping to produce a number of books and CD-Roms for Key Word Sign? I trained at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College 1950 – 51, taught for 3 years at an outer Sydney suburb, had a year at Wagga Dem School, then back to Sydney where I married and had three daughters. My husband was transferred to Melbourne and we established a home in a new city.

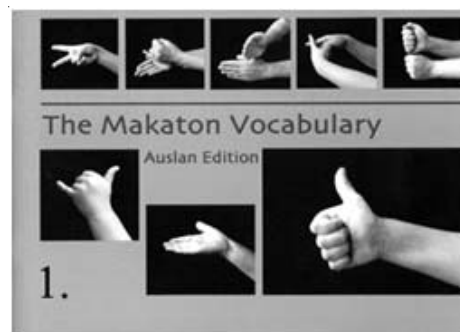
When the girls were at school I decided to upgrade my qualifications to three year trained status in the Victorian system. Following graduation I obtained a position in a Special Education setting and became hooked on the diversity of programs and the colleagues who were so committed to education of intellectually disabled children. After 3 years in this setting I applied to complete a Graduate Diploma in Special Education at Deakin University. I was granted part time study leave and part time work at a Special School. Because I was working at the school part time, I was given the role of Speech and Language teacher. One of the grades had 6 out of the 8 children who were non-verbal or who had speech which could not be understood. "Help!" – what to do? With a Speech Pathologist visiting only one week each term, my challenge as the Speech and Language teacher was to develop programs to cater for the school's 120 students.

I decided to complete a 4 day Makaton course, a language program using manual signs and pictographs which had been developed in the UK for people with communication difficulties. After attending this, I introduced the Makaton vocabulary into the school and to the families. I was indeed fortunate that I had the support of the administration and all the teachers. It worked! I held sessions and activities in the classrooms so the teachers and the verbal students could learn the signs and communicate with their hearing but non-verbal peers. Soon I was running workshops for parents and teachers from other schools.

Several submissions to philanthropic organisations were successful in obtaining computers and electronic speech aids to assist communication in addition to signing. Again, as speech pathology services were minimal, I had to program the electronic aids. However the parents were fantastic as they could see such a change in their children.

In 1997 I retired from the Victorian Education Department but informed the Makaton Victoria committee, of which I was a member, that I would help out if required. This was the beginning of another huge phase in my life and 15 years later, continues!

In 2000 Makaton Australia wished to produce a book with Australian signs and a new vocabulary but it was decided to replicate the Makaton UK vocabulary as the task of revising the book and producing a new vocabulary would have been too big a task for what was essentially a voluntary organisation. After consultation with North Rocks Press and Trevor Johnston to obtain permission to use the line drawings from the book Johnston, T (1989) *Auslan Dictionary: A Dictionary of the Sign Language of the Australian Deaf Community*, I joined forces with Dr Judith Cowley from Newcastle University and Aileen Ryan, an Auslan Interpreter and mother of a disabled child to produce a new Australian book. We consulted with Speech Pathologists, Special Education Teachers and the Deaf Community around Australia to publish, through

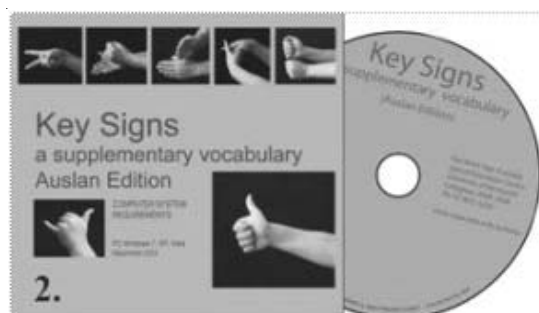


# AFTER TEACHING MEMORIES

Newcastle University, *The Makaton Vocabulary – Auslan Edition*. Finances were tight with the organisation so Peter, my husband, produced the photographs and the cover for this first book.

Aileen Ryan had developed an extension vocabulary to the basic Makaton vocabulary. She again accessed North Rocks Press line drawings and after consultation around Australia, Cathy Basterfield, a Speech Pathologist from Scope Victoria, and I wrote the descriptions to accompany the signs for *Key Signs: a Supplement to the Makaton Vocabulary – Auslan Edition*.

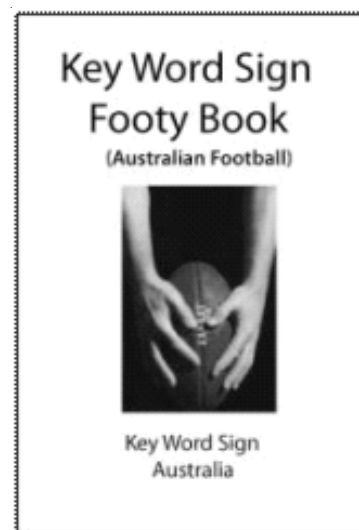
Next challenge was to make a CD-Rom which would demonstrate how to make the manual signs and how to use them in conversation. In collaboration with Latrobe University Media Unit, a script was developed and filming was completed. The first CD-Rom to accompany the Makaton book showed video clips of over 400 signs; a word search facility; repeat view options of all video clips; finger spelling alphabet; sample signing scenarios; stages 1 – 9 of the Australian Makaton Vocabulary and picture based multiple choice test questions. It was indeed an interesting experience watching the film crew and monitoring whether the speech pathologists were modelling the signs correctly and following the video cues. There were some interesting bloopers!



A CD-Rom was later made to accompany the Key Signs vocabulary. Just before this CD was put to bed it was decided to sever the licence agreement with Makaton UK and to develop an Australian vocabulary. So some hurried rewriting and refilming of certain sections had to be done to eliminate the mention of Makaton as it is a registered trademark.

When completing my Graduate Diploma of Special Education, the Advocacy unit I studied had been very practical and each student was matched with an intellectually disabled adult to enable them to participate in community programs. After completing my course, my family and I continued this association with the young man assigned to me through Citizen Advocacy Victoria. He is an avid AFL supporter as are many residents in Community Residential homes. So in 2009 I decided I would put together a *Footy Book* with signs for the AFL teams and associated words. Permission to use the club logos had to be sought from the AFL and the Deaf community consulted about signs that were used.

After many hours of consulting with a graphic designer for the line drawings to represent the signs, a grand launch of the *Footy Book* took place in 2010 at Etihad Stadium and was unveiled by Simon Crean, the then Minister for Social Inclusion. Over 120 disabled children and adults attended and most joined in the footy clinics which were held to accompany the launch. Representatives from the Marngrook Footy TV Show and the Football Integration Development Association demonstrated techniques of kicking and marking. Physically disabled students sang and signed “Up there Cazaly”. The book and launch received mention in the *Footy Record* as well as appearing on Channel 31. Quite an event! It’s still the family joke that I produced a book on footy! The NRL book is still in the pipeline!



Key Word Sign Victoria, in collaboration with other Australian states, is now beginning the process of producing a book with 700 manual signs, based on research and word frequency use. The vocabulary has been chosen but it will be a big task bringing it all together with many hours of studying the graphic designer’s drawings for accuracy, ensuring the descriptions for the signs are clear and concise and proof reading.

As a result of this research for the books, The National Training Coordinator, who is a member of the Victorian Committee, is delivering a paper in the US in August to ISAAC (International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication) titled *Vegemite, Beer and Kangaroos – Creating a New Vocabulary for Australia*.

I continue to assist speech pathologists in coordinating training and signing update workshops so the Presenters around Victoria and Australia can remain cognisant of developments in alternative and augmentative means of communication. It is exciting to be part of a highly professional and dedicated team (of much younger members!) and to know that the work will be of great value to many individuals and families around Australia.



# AFTER TEACHING MEMORIES

Who would have thought it? When Lindsay ordered me to write for Talkabout about my life post-school, (well actually he asked me timidly) I thought it was a good idea. We all know that the early days were maybe funny but always difficult, but what happened to us after our incarceration in the smelly halls of education? So here am I, a virgin after all these years. Writer that is.

Like everyone else, when I retired after 40 years from teaching at the age of 60 (yes its true I took the first opportunity I could, didn't you?) I was faced with the problem of what to do.

After getting the travel bug out of my system (didn't we all have to eradicate that) I was faced with the same question, 'What to do with my spare time.' The answer was volunteering.

Responding to a flyer in the local library I enrolled with the National Trust and was trained as guide at Experiment Farm and Old Government House (OGH). There followed 15 years, sometimes arduous but never boring.

Once installed at OGH, it wasn't long before I was dragooned into acting for the kids. I was asked to play the part of Reverend Samuel Marsden in a programme called "Whispers, Tales and Gossip" for primary students. A heaven-sent opportunity. Not only had the wheel turned full circle, but was I was able to do something which I had never been able to do before (well perhaps I was, but never without the fear of recrimination) and that was to be nasty (if I felt like it, or if the occasion demanded) without fear of reprisal. The children were acting out the role of reporters with The London Gazette sent out to investigate the truth of the Bigge Report. In the OGH the children encounter various people from the Macquarie era such as Mrs Macquarie, Mr Fopp the Butler, Mary Jelly the chambermaid and so on.



*Graeme on New Endeavour*

Actually Marsden was not quite as bad as made out, but did shoot from the hip, so I was able to make outrageous statements which were based on historical fact, such as, (made to a group from Catholic schools) "You're not catholic are you?" or "You're not Irish are you?" Marsden had single-handedly delayed the establishment of the Catholic Church until as late as 1822, but I hasten to add, such belligerence on Marsden's part no doubt formed the basis of many a good lesson by the astounded teacher, on bigotry and religious intolerance.

Other highlights of my Marsden impersonation include a frightening enactment (admittedly while sitting down) of a Maori haka (Marsden was admired for his *friendly* disposition in New Zealand) and my explanation of the treatment meted out under Commandant Morriset in Newcastle (500 lashes) compared to my much more measured approach (50 lashes). The highlight of my work as Marsden will always be the day when I was

reported to the management, by a teacher, for swearing. Investigation revealed that I had actually said, "Not more reporters! They must have brought a shipload out here!"

Sterling work as Marsden led to other roles, Michael Massey Robinson, Australia's first so-called Poet Laureate, at Macquarie Feasts, whose main job was to bore everyone spitless by reciting actual interminable poems written by Robinson; Lieutenant Collins, Judge Advocate, swanning around in wig and gown; the Headmaster in a programme called "Slates and Chamber Pots" (What's a chamber pot?) other historical re-enactments, and to my enlistment as a guide on Ghost Nights. All good fun.

From the National Trust I graduated also to guiding for the National Maritime Museum, where duties

include guiding on the vessels Endeavour Replica, Onslow, Vampire as well as in the Lighthouse and the Museum itself. The Maritime Museum presents a challenge in that you have to learn a lot about a lot of things and is extremely interesting, once you settle in, because you meet a wide variety of people from all round the world.

So what is the moral in all this? If you are bored, finding golf too strenuous, tired of television and want to interact with new people, if you feel that you are becoming a vegetable, want to do something different, make a life change, give volunteering a thought. All the public institutions from museums to hospitals, and from cemeteries to historic houses and from art galleries to libraries, are crying out for volunteers. Take the plunge. And here's another thought, perhaps we can give Talkabout a new direction too: What have you been doing in the last 20 years? Write and tell us.

Graeme Wilson 1949-50

# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

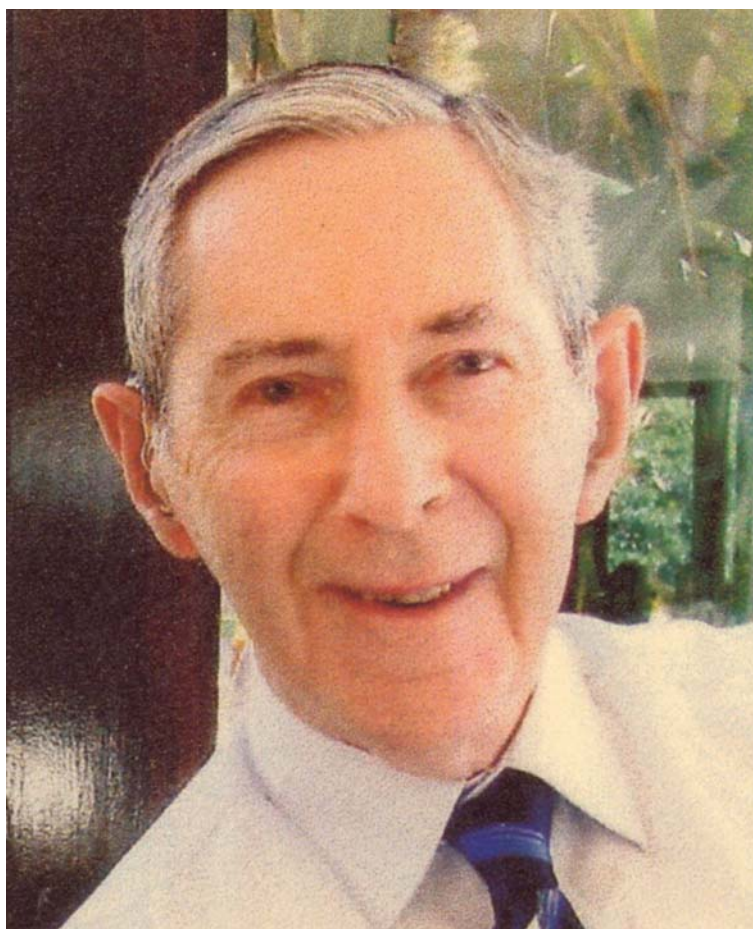
JOHN ALBERT ORANGE 1947-49

John grew up on the South Coast near Albion Park. His parents ran Orange's Poultry Farm. He attended Albion Park Public School and had to walk two miles each way in the morning and afternoon. He later attended Wollongong High School and after graduating then secured a place in the first (Pioneer) session at Wagga Wagga Teachers College.

Following graduation in 1949, John's first appointment was to Rosemeath near Bombala. After a couple of years John sought a move to the city as he wanted to commence a University course. He was appointed to Villawood and enrolled as an evening student at Sydney University. He graduated in 1957 and shortly after resigned from the Department. He wanted to travel overseas and the Department would not approve leave in those days.

He taught as a 'Supply' teacher in the UK and Europe returning home via America. (in the days of the great ocean liners). For the remainder of that year he had casual positions on the south coast. At the beginning of 1959 John was appointed to Guildford West. This was where he met his future wife, Olive. With John's best friend and travel companion, Arthur Kennedy, (another pioneer) as best man, they were married in December, 1960, at St Andrew's, Lismore and honeymooned on the maiden voyage of SS Oriana throughout the South Pacific.

While at Guildford West John went for his first list and in 1964 took the position of Assistant Principal at Ashbury. From there came a period in Head Office in Bridge Street in Research and Planning.



This was followed by a time at the School of Education at Macquarie University in the Master Teacher programme. During his time at Macquarie John gained the Master of Education degree at Sydney University, graduating in 1981. Early in the 1980's John returned to the classroom – still in primary education which he loved – firstly at St Ives South and then at Epping Public School retiring from there in 1988.

Again wanderlust struck and he and Olive moved over to UK for nearly seven years and lived in the Leicestershire market town of Market Harborough, where he became involved in the local Church of St Dionysius. Upon their return to Australia they settled in Pymble and curiously enough, perhaps reflecting his dry sense of humour and sober habits, opposite the Pymble Hotel.

Over a number of years John had done Theology subjects – some by lectures,

some by correspondence, and was awarded a Diploma in Theology in 1995.

He was involved in Parish Councils at St John's and St Albans as well as being Honorary Archivist at St John's Parramatta, which is the oldest Church in Parramatta with many of the original attendees being early settlers and convicts. He was at different times Church Warden, Parish Councillor, Synod Representative and nominator. For many years too he was involved with the Group Committee of the 2/3 Lindfield Scouts and was both secretary and treasurer. He was also active in the Prayer

Book Society, Anglican Historical Society and The Australian College of Educators.

He was fascinated by family history and spent a great deal of time on research. He used the time in the UK to actively research the Yorkshire roots of the family before Leamington Spa and the trip to Australia in early 1900's of his Father and the rest of the family that followed. He has completed a trilogy of work covering from around 1770 up to the arrival of the Oranges in Australia. When he was diagnosed with cancer back in October he was determined to complete the third part of these and they were completed just a few weeks ago.

In recent years John had been a member of the WWTAA and took over the position of Research and Records Officer from Ann Smith.

*Taken from eulogies by his children Peter, Victoria and Alexandra and his wife Olive. Ed.*



# A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

EDWARD DANIEL (TED) FOWLER 1951-52

Ted unfortunately was a victim of Kidney failure which in the end took his life and for the last few years deprived him of his lifelong love and joy - namely playing and coaching tennis. Ted will always be remembered as a humble player who excelled in tennis, was a member of the WWTC Intercollegiate tennis team and the winner of many tournaments in NSW, QLD and ACT.

He grew up in Young then attended the WWTC in 1951-52. Following his National Service in 1953 he was appointed to many Small Schools from near Dunedoo to Shannon's Flat near Captain's Flat. In fact he had 18 schools in 2 years. Ted always said that the Dept. thought he was so good that they were making the most of his many talents. He certainly had special talents in maths, spelling and language especially with his unique play on words.

He also was a relief teacher and a teacher in Canberra where he joined the ACT Teaching Service. Here he met his wife Marie, also a teacher. They had 5 children, 3 girls and 2 boys with 1 boy deceased at age 3 years. While in Canberra they built their dream home at Weetangera and you guessed it, with their own tennis court.

Ted loved tennis so much that he resigned from teaching and moved the



travelled extensively in the Asia Pacific region before returning to their home at Burleigh Waters for retirement.

Ted regularly pursued his love of tennis and was also a regular golfer and a keen gardener. During his retirement years he was also heavily involved in a Friendshipforce International Club where he again had trips overseas as well as hosting Overseas Groups. Ted loved returning to all the 1951-52 WWTC Reunions and valued the friendships that he made at the WWTC. He was devoted to his church and along with his Friendship Club and Sporting fraternity had a very big group of friends who all thought very highly of him. So quite appropriately Ted had a very big funeral service where many special tributes were paid to Ted.

Colin Curtis 1951-52

family to Brisbane where he bought a Tennis Complex. Unfortunately due to Council requirements Ted was forced to abandon this lifestyle and return to teaching in Brisbane.

Following this and with the family now grown up Ted and Marie resigned from teaching and bought a Milk Run at Byron Bay. However their desire to teach still existed so they applied for and were accepted to teaching positions in Singapore, at a private school. During their 3 years stay there they

## *In Memoriam*

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

- John Cummins 1947-49 August 2011
- John Orange 1947-49 February 2012
- Ted Fowler 1951-52 July 2011
- Ray Fielder 1950-51 June 2012
- Bob Anderson 1957-58 Dec 2011

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## CSU ALUMNI WEBSITE

From Stacey Fish, CSU Faculty Advancement Officer

### ***Alumni Facebook Time Line***

A recent update to Facebook has given us the unique opportunity of telling Charles Sturt University's story through major events in its history. The Advancement Unit and CSU Archives are calling for any photos of "Milestone Moments" ( *i.e. Opening of facilities, major events, not social events*), from the WWTC and BTC community to be included in the Alumni Facebook Time Line. You can view the way the time line is shaping up at [facebook.com/charlessturtalumni](https://facebook.com/charlessturtalumni) and click on the years on the right hand side of the page. If you think you have any photos appropriate please forward these (VIA EMAIL ONLY), to [lc Carroll@csu.edu.au](mailto:lc Carroll@csu.edu.au) with a subject line: ALUMNI FACEBOOK TIMELINE.

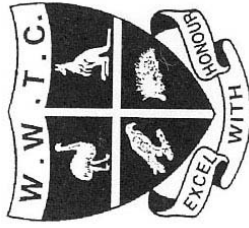
### ***Share your Story***

New developments on the website now allow you to share your career journey and we would love to hear from you. You may even get the opportunity for your story to be shared in the form of an Alumni Spotlight feature on the website. To share your story, visit the website and read a spotlight article or two by clicking on the main banner stories. After seeing the kind of content we are after go to the "Share your Story" web-form found at <http://alumni.csu.edu.au/about-csu-alumni/share-your-story> fill in the details. This exercise will capture your life experience so that it can be shared with CSU graduates of the future.





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