



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS' COLLEGE

TALKABOUT



Volume 12 No 3

November 2009

PASSING ON THE BATON.

This journey began in 1997 when the Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni was formed.

It was not an auspicious start.

The path to be followed was unclear.

Hurdles to be overcome were not at that time apparent.

There was no 'cheer squad' or indeed expectations of success.

But there existed a strong bond and dedication that had been engendered in our college years that allowed us to overcome the uncertainties associated with our origin.

Goals were established. Commitment and genuine affection enabled us to gather together and surge forward until we have reached a point in our journey where we have achieved recognition and respect and made certain that the WWTC with its history, memorabilia and support for Charles Sturt University will not be forgotten.

Along the way, we lost many valued friends whose contributions will always be treasured.

Now we pose the questions. To whom will we pass the baton?

Is the journey about to end?

For most of this alumni pilgrimage, the responsibilities have rested on the shoulders of the early sessions.

The management committee, editors of 'Talkabout', the committee that interview and select scholarship candidates, manage our funds, secretarial duties together with a host of other activities cannot continue forever.

Sessions of the 60's and 70's now entering the retirement phase of life need to be ready to receive the baton.

Alternatives do not exist.

We need to find alumni to continue our work.

If not the journey will be over.

Perhaps that is how it should be!

We will have passed through this world.

We will have done our best - and now?

Bob Collard.

President Wagga Wagga Teacher's Alumni.

VALE ESSIE SIMPFENDORFER



I met Essie in June 1948, at college. In June 1949 she and I shared a table, with 6 others for one year. At this time also, we moved from one dormitory to another. Essie and I shared a bedroom with June Triggs (Somerville) until we left college a year later.

Essie sang contralto in Gilbert and Sullivan productions at College. She was always calm and spent her life with a minimum of fuss.

Essie and I kept in touch by letter and phone all the time she was in NSW. Joan Johnson (Armstrong) drove me to visit her and the family in 2005. I received my last letter from Essie a month before she passed away. So now I say goodbye to Essie. She was so easy to share her life with me. I remember her dry humour and her lovely auburn hair.

Audrey Schaecken (Sear) 1948-50)

Audrey enclosed the following obituary of her friend Essie, taken from the funeral service.

Esther Luthilde Simpfendorfer, affectionately known as Essie, was born at the family home 'Triangle', Walla Walla on 2nd December, 1924.

Essie attended Walkyrie Public School, a mile and a half west of the family home, until class 6, then two years at Walla Walla Public School, gaining her Intermediate Certificate. She then spent two years at the family home assisting with home duties and farm work. In 1941 and 1942 Essie attended Immanuel College, North

Adelaide, where she gained her Leaving Certificate.

She again helped at home and in 1947 Essie accepted a teaching position at Woodstock Girls School, Albury.

In 1948 she accepted a scholarship to Wagga Wagga Teachers College. Upon graduation in 1950, she was appointed to Cowra Migrant Centre. This was followed by a short time at Moree, NSW.

In September 1953, Essie went to Hermannsburg Mission, NT where she taught in the school for Aboriginal children, for 10 years. For five years, she was the teacher in charge of the school.

In 1963, Essie moved to Alice Springs and did Welfare Work with Finke River Mission for Aboriginal families. Essie returned to Albury in 1973 and in 1975 commenced work at the Lutheran Rest Home, Riverview Terrace, as Administration Officer until she retired in 1984.

In Alice Springs Essie was involved with the YWCA executive and was always involved with church activities such as choir and Sunday School. In Albury she was involved with the Ladies Guild, and Age Concern Cottage Day Club.

During 2002 Essie underwent surgery for the amputation of both legs, and after recovery was admitted to Lutheran Aged Care, O'Brien Court, in October of the same year.

She died in the early hours of Monday, 1st June at the Albury Base Hospital.

In Memoriam

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

Lance Giddings
1948-50 4/6/09

Shirley Thomas nee Trent
1952-53 17/6/09

Cecily Wright (Brownlow)
1949-50 July 2009

Esther Simpfendorfer
1948-50 1/6/2009

Brian Bate
1952-53 21/4/2009

Frances Pearn (Bouchier)
1949-50 June 2009

Gillian Reineker (Hovey)
1966-67

Edgar MacMicking
1947-49 August 2009.

Lorran Mary Hall (Burns)
1957-58 27/9/2009

Noreen Eugenie Brown (Nevin)
1956-57 August 2009

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TEACHING MEMORIES

EXCURSIONS

I would have to say that I never felt very relaxed on school or class excursions. I seemed to spend half my time counting heads and making sure no one was missing. On some excursions, it is just not possible to continually check that everyone is there.

When I was teaching at Glenfield Park Special School, I arranged to take my class to Luna Park one Sunday. When we arrived there, each of the children was given a sticker with "Guest" on it. This meant they could have as many rides as they liked free of charge. I told them what time they had to be back at the entrance and said a silent prayer.

Most of the children headed for the Big Dipper. The boys soon worked out that they would get more rides if they ran from one ride to the next. Some of the boys had ten rides on the Big Dipper and then ran to the Wild Mouse. I had to go on the Ghost Train with someone who was too scared to go on his or her own. One of the boys wanted to go on the Rotor - it spins round and you stick to the wall. He was scared so I went on it with him - not a great idea! His yelling and screaming were greatly enjoyed by the people who were watching from the viewing platform around the top. When it was time to go, I counted heads and someone was missing. I left the children near those big teeth at the entrance with a warning to stay there until I returned. In my efforts to find Cheryl I had to go on some of the rides. I managed to get lost in the Mirror Maze and had to run around in Coney Island. I finally found her chatting to one of the guys working the Dodgem Cars. Needless to say, we were VERY LATE getting back to school

Another Special School excursion was to visit an American aircraft carrier in Sydney Harbour. This began badly when some of the children - and teachers - were left behind on the platform when

we changed trains at Lidcombe. On the train, one of my boys asked the man sitting next to him how much his hat had cost. Another of my boys sat next to a lady who wore an expression of terror until we got out. When we reached Town Hall station, a number of my children wanted to go to the toilet. The boys were out very quickly but the girls took ages. It turned out the girls had to pay and as only one girl had any money, they held the door open and all used the one toilet in turn. Whilst we were waiting for the girls, a man climbed into one of the display windows, which used to be on the concourse and started to undress and then dismantle the female dummies in the display. To say this had an unsettling effect on the boys would be an understatement.

We proceeded to the Museum. I counted heads as we went into the Museum and I counted heads again as we came out. I was not aware that one of our girls had gone to the Dental Hospital with an escort and she had joined us in the Museum. We had lunch in Hyde Park and walked to Circular Quay. There we had to join a long queue to wait to be taken out to the aircraft-carrier. As we waited, a lady rushed up to tell us one of the girls was still in the Museum. We arranged for her to be put into a cab and brought to the Quay where we paid the driver.

On the aircraft carrier we were at liberty to wander around as we wished. We came to a large celebration cake with large knives to cut it. The children helped themselves very generously and one boy put a large slice in a paper bag to take back to the nurse in his dormitory. The boys enjoyed having a ride on the elevator platform used to bring planes up to the deck. Our very long wait meant we were way behind schedule and had to change trains in peak hour at Wynyard. We had to change trains at Liverpool and wait for a

Campbelltown train to Glenfield and a very late return to the school.

At Easter time only a small number of children remained at the school. Another teacher and I took six children to the Royal Easter Show in our cars. Everything went well until lunchtime. The children sat down and ate their packed lunches prepared by the ladies in the kitchen. When they had finished, one of the girls (who had bad epileptic fits) announced that she had thrown away her medication with the rubbish from her lunch. Ros and I tipped out the rubbish bin and proceeded to go through all the rubbish. While we were busy with our task, I saw two old ladies who had stopped to watch us. They obviously thought we were looking for something to eat. We did not find Robyn's tablets. I kept a close eye on her for the rest of the day.

When I was teaching at Deniliquin we took two classes to Ballarat. We were going to visit the gold-mining town of Sovereign Hill and Kryall Castle. We had not been travelling long when one of my girls vomited in the back of the bus. Sovereign Hill was fascinating and the children learned a lot. Kryall Castle is the third largest castle of its type in the world - the two bigger ones are Windsor and Edinburgh.

A very important ingredient in each excursion for the children was buying souvenirs. At the castle, many children bought sharp little swords, which were letter-openers. Some children bought wooden flutes, which made a rather irritating noise. Before they got on the bus, I collected the swords from the children who had bought them. A short distance down the road the bus driver stopped the bus and collected all the flutes.

John Cassidy 1963-64

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KEVIN WILCOX REMEMBERS

Dear Lindsay and Lew,

Winifred and I recently attended the reunion in Bathurst, which was reported in the last issue of Talkabout. Although the numbers were disappointing, it was a very enjoyable experience.

On the Tuesday morning, many of us went as a group to the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum and were privileged to have as our guide Professor Warren Somerville. What an incredible collection! We hope the plans for expansion to hold the full collection becomes a reality.

I was thrilled to find that the collection is at present housed in my old classroom at the old Howick Street Public School. I was disappointed that my two pen nib darts, so skilfully and audaciously placed in the ceiling in 1940, had been removed in the restoration.

I completed my school education at the various Bathurst schools in 1946 when I sat my Leaving Certificate Examinations at Bathurst High School. I had started at the Infants School in George Street in late 1935, and started Primary School in 1938 at the Howick Street Boys School. After completing Term 1 in Class 3A with our teacher, Miss Braham, we returned for Term 2 to find that Miss Braham was no longer with us. She had married during the May vacation and as a married woman could no longer remain as a teacher due to the Government Regulations of that era.

Her old class had been divided in two, half to 3B and half to 4B. I was in that latter group and found my

new teacher was Mr Braham, the father of my former 3A teacher. Our classrooms were in a block, since removed to allow the construction of the New Post and Telegraph building in Howick Street.



The old Post and Telegraph Office flanked the Court House in Russell Street and now houses the Bathurst Historical Museum and the Regional Music Centre.

At the end of 1938, the 3A Group in Mr Braham's 4B class sat the same test as the 4B, and did very well, so all were promoted to 5B. At the end of that year (1939), five of us from 5B were promoted to 6A in 1940. The 6A room, minus pen nib darts in the ceiling, now houses Section 1 of the Mineral Gallery. The Mineral Gallery was then classrooms for 6A, 6B and 5A. These rooms were separated by wall partitions with connecting doors. The high vaulted ceiling was as it is now and the sounds from each classroom wafted across the partitions.

The door to the small area under the bell tower was to the headmaster's office and only he used it.

Assemblies were held in the school playground at 9.30, 11.15 and 1.30 in all weathers. The only exception was during heavy rain.

Monday morning was a bonanza for the bakery opposite the school gate in Howick Street. Mengers Bakery was besieged by hungry boys and the standard order was:- "a pie, a sav, a roll and a cake". This translates to a meat pie, a hot dog (with the large saveloy not a frankfurt in a bread roll), and a cream bun. This snack cost five pence. With the penny left from your lunch sixpence you headed for Coles for a penny's worth of boiled lollies. "Please miss, could I have them in two bags?" This allowed you to flatten the packets in your pockets so they were less visible to the eagle eye of the teacher.

The school playground was used for all the usual activities of those days. It followed the usual cyclical patterns, I imagine, of most schools: marbles, tops, tag, wolf, rounders, cricket and all in football. The playground surface was a sandy gravel.

In 1940, the new Boys School was completed next to the Girls and Infants Schools in George Street. It was mid-year and on moving day, we were assembled in the Howick Street playground for the exodus. The Sixth Classes were taken to a large pile of grey granite rocks. Each boy selected one and set off from Howick Street, up George Street to our new school building. There were many stops on the way as the granite rocks became heavier with each street block we passed; and by the time we reached our destination, weighed at least half a ton.

These rocks were piled next to the new incinerators for future essential use.

I went to Wagga Wagga Teachers College in 1947, and in February

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1948 was assigned a home practice teaching at Bathurst Boys Public School. On my first day, in playground duty at recess, I found these same rocks in the same pile next to the incinerators. I do hope that at some time after 1948 a good use was made of these rocks to justify the efforts of that gallant band of carriers in 1940.

I do not remember the girls section of the school at all. Third and fourth grade boys did not seem to take much notice of the opposite sex. Bathurst was one of the few country areas where I taught or with which I have been associated, where co-educational Infants were separated to single sex primary departments and then back to a co-education High School.

The bell and bell times of the old Howick Street School was quite a feature of the Bathurst CBD. I have heard since that the precision of the bell times was noted and that residents and businesses relied on them.

One room at the old Howick Street building was reached by going around the back of the now Mineral Museum. Memory of how to get there is not so clear but the reason for being there is. This room housed the epidiascope, and could be suitably darkened for projection. Oh the marvels of modern science, which allowed the projection of the image, (either black and white or colour), on to the wall from a book.

In 1951, Winifred and I were appointed to the Bathurst area. Winifred taught at the Girls School in George Street and gave demonstration lessons, and guided students during practice teaching. These students were from the newly opened Bathurst Teachers College, which occupied the site of the Bathurst Experiment Farm. The first Principal of the College had been our second Deputy Principal at

WWTC, Mr Lionel Allan. Our first Deputy had been Mr Griff Duncan, who left Wagga Wagga at the end of 1948 to open Newcastle Teachers College in 1949.

At this time, I was at Kelso Public School, then a four-teacher school with many students who came by bus from the Migrant Camp. The old Army Camp out along Limekiln road housed large numbers of European refugees. In payment for their fares and housing for three months while doing a crash course in English, they were required to work under contract for two years wherever a labour force was needed. Many took jobs within the camp for these two years as cooks, transport drivers, nurses, and gardeners. It was the children of this group who came to Kelso Public School. Kelso also took college students twice a year for practice teaching.

It was in 1952 that Barbara Bosler, Winifred and I, (all WWTC graduates) started an Amateur Drama Group we called the Bathurst Players. Barbara and I had been in the Dramatic Art option at College and Winifred in the Literature Option and on the initial editorial staff of the College paper, "Talkabout". Our first producer/director at Bathurst Players was Oliver Fiala, a Czech migrant and Prague graduate, and our first production was G B Shaw's "Pygmalion". Barbara and I played the same roles we played in the WWTC production in 1947.

In 1953, Winifred and I were transferred to Eugowra Central School. We were there seven years. During that time our first son, Matthew was born in 1957. I did my degree externally from New England University and was placed on the first promotion list.

In 1960, we came to Bathurst where I taught in the Social Sciences department at Bathurst High School. Two of my old teachers, Ron Learnmouth and Elmo Lavis, were now my colleagues. I gave demonstration lessons to the Junior Secondary students from Bathurst Teachers College, taught one evening a week at Bathurst Goal, and two evenings a week at Bathurst Technical College. Our second son, Nathan was born in Bathurst in 1961.

We were thrilled to find that the Bathurst Players were still going strong and we rejoined. It was during this time that the Players won the State Country Drama Festival several times, with such productions as:-

"The Love of Four Colonels" (Ustinov) – also best actor / best actress.

"The Matchmaker" (Wilder) – also best actor.

"The Birthday Party" (Pinter) – also best actor / best actress.

This Pinter production was the first one of a Pinter play in Australia. Terry Clark – best actor in The Matchmaker – was producer / director of The Birthday Party, and later became a staff member at N.I.D.A.

All these memories came flooding back from that Mineral Museum visit at the reunion. Other Bathurst boys from the 1947 session were Brian Webb, Don Boyle and Stan McEvoy, and from the 1948 session Don Newman and Don Wiburd. The latter I was so pleased to meet up with again at the reunion.

Kevin Wilcox (1947-49)

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The Editor *Talkabout*

Dear Sir,

I wonder whether you would print this letter in a forthcoming edition of the newsletter. I think it would interest some former students who may be on your mailing list.

Thankyou in anticipation,

Ron Vickress.

Lecturer in English & Drama

1966-72.

During my time as Lecturer 1966-7, I with Frances Tester, combined our Option Group to produce the first performance of my Musical *The Wheel of Fortune - or No Match for Mary*.

In 1980, we revised the script, adding dialogue, characters and songs. This revised edition was produced by Kendall Central School and Armidale Drama & Musical Society in 1981 and 1982 respectively.

The names of the main characters were changed, replacing them with the names of the students who performed their roles in Wagga Wagga. Thus Hero is now John Schofield and Heroine Mary Hayes; Naval personnel now Captain Barnes RN, Lt Waters and sailor Jock Pogue; Military personnel Colonel Chivers-James, Corporal Breen & Redcoat Will Reynolds; Civilians Mr O'Connor and Currency Lad Tommy Haines; Mrs Chivers-James & maidservant Jenny Davies.

The only character that did not undergo a name change, for obvious reasons, was King Bungaree, (played by an aborigine in Armidale); thus Henry Lohse omitted from posterity. I intend to publish the script, music and photographs in the near future.

Ron Vickress

TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed when I read the 'public toilet' article on page thirteen. Who on earth was responsible for its inclusion?

It is not only in bad taste, as is the case with most bathroom references. The article is also completely irrelevant. It has nothing to do with teacher training, teacher-practice or teacher-reminiscences.

The 'public toilet' inclusion lowers the tone of an otherwise admirable publication. I anticipate that I am not the only one who will draw this lapse in good taste to your attention.

(I do not mind if you publish the above complaint in your next issue of 'Talkabout'. The response could be interesting.)

Yours faithfully,

Noel Berrell. 1955-56

Dear Lindsay,

Please find enclosed my annual contribution to cover the cost of producing Talkabout.

I continue to look forward to each edition of the paper to learn of the happenings of former students and particularly of those belonging to my vintage.

The recent article concerning using public toilets was one of the most humorous ever included in Talkabout. I assure you that it received very wide circulation beyond our Talkabout readers.

Thanks to all the dedicated people who make the paper possible.

Yours truly,

Fred Rice 1951-52.

THE CANADA CONNECTION

To: Brian Pettit

Hi Brian,

I have just processed your contribution to Talkabout. Thank you very much.

I hope you still enjoy reading Talkabout, I presume you get it on the CSU website.

This is the 11th year I have been producing Talkabout and there are still stories coming in that people are interested in reading.

Unfortunately, as we are all getting older, there are going to be fewer of us each year.

I am trying to get some of the younger ones to contribute to let us know how different it was for them in their careers.

Hope things are going well for you over there and that you are enjoying life in Canada.

Best wishes,

Lindsay.

Hi Lindsay:

TALKABOUT found me in Canada some years back when the e-group was in its infancy and Joan Kirkham (Robinson) was chatting with the group. The printed edition has arrived regularly ever since and I look forward to it, hence this contribution to its production.

My two years at W.T.C. threw me together with people who have remained special throughout my life. I was home this August and had lunch with Phil Johnston, Dick Rowling, Bev Inall (Podmore), Gwen Delofski and Diane Shore (Charlier), none of whom I had seen since 1960 – amazing, everyone recognizable and all speaking at once.

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Your work with TALKABOUT these past eleven years is commendable. Imagine the pleasure it has given to so many.

Well done and best wishes,

Brian Pettit 1959-60

Dear Lew,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that my husband, Kevin Cowan, WWTC 1964-65 passed away on February 2nd 2009.

Kevin finished his teaching career as Principal of Gundagai South Public School in 2003. Fortunately, he opted to retire early and was able to travel to many of the places he wished to see before being diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis in May 2008. Sadly, there was no treatment and no cure for this little known but not uncommon disease.

Kevin's loss is felt deeply by me, his sons Daniel and Michael, grandchildren Ebony and Isaac, close family and many friends in the Tumut and Gundagai communities.

Kind regards,

Sandra Cowan.

POINTS TO PONDER

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.

H. Jackson Brown

The fellow who thinks he knows it all is especially annoying to those of us who do.

Harold Coffin

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE KIDS WHO WERE BORN IN THE - 1930's, 40's, 50's, 60's.

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they carried us. They took aspirin, ate blue cheese dressing, tuna from a can, and didn't get tested for diabetes.

Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright colored lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets, not to mention the risks we took hitchhiking.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

Riding in the back of a utility on a warm day was always a special treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and NOT from a bottle.

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and NO ONE actually died from this.

We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter and drank soft drink with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight because...WE WERE ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING!!

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on.

No one was able to reach us all day. And we were O.K.

We would spend hours building our billycarts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo's, X-boxes, no video games at all, no 99 channels on cable, no video tape movies, no surround sound, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms..... WE

HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broken bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

We ate worms and mud pies made from dirt, and the worms did not live in us forever.

We were given BB guns for our 10th birthdays, made up games with sticks and tennis balls and although we were told it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just yelled for them!

Football had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!!

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever!

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas.

We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned HOW TO DEAL WITH IT ALL!

And YOU are one of them!

CONGRATULATIONS!

You might want to share this with others who have had the luck to grow up as kids, before the lawyers and the government regulated our lives for our own good ...and while you are at it, show it to your kids so they will know how brave their parents were.

Kind of makes you want to run through the house with scissors, doesn't it?!

TEACHING MEMORIES

NORM STANTON'S FIRST APPOINTMENT

After graduating from WWTC in 1965, I was holidaying on the north coast with my family when the telegram arrived. It read rather bluntly: "Appointed Pinefield via Tullamore". I had no idea where Tullamore was, let alone Pinefield, but an NRMA map confirmed Tullamore was about 85 miles north west of Parkes. Pinefield was not to be found.

So began my teaching career. It was not unusual for someone who had applied for the city to be sent to the bush and indeed the opposite also occurred, all at the discretion of the Head Office's Julius Gaal, a gentleman with a foreign accent who one pictured sitting in front of a huge map of NSW with lots of pins stuck in it.

Following a phone call to the listed contact, it was clear I would need my own transport. Fortunately, an uncle sold me his FC Holden at a good price and I headed west. I should add that there were advantages to being in the Western Division: you received an extra week's Christmas vacation and a compensatory "heat allowance".

I was to stay during my time at the school on two wheat sheep properties, perhaps about two and a half thousand acres, and both families having two students at the school.

We had not been told about the realities of schools such as Pinefield at college, not even in the small schools course. The building was a condemned shearer's quarters in the

middle of a paddock. Its ramshackle appearance contrasted with the farmer's brick homestead about 100 metres away. Moreover, he had a telephone!

It was as flat as only the Western plains can be and everything was russet coloured including all the surfaces inside the building. A lean to with an earthen floor was the storeroom. My predecessor had bravely tried to establish a garden at



the front of the school, something of an exercise in futility!

In my first year, I taught 13 children. Four were from one family, whose father was the quintessential laconic bushie. I can still picture the half-finished cigarette perched precariously on his lip as he stood at the school gate.

The families were very respectful of the schoolie (very humbling for a 19 year-old!) and went out of their way to provide hospitality and support. Their expectations were at times unrealistic. I remember a mother in the family I boarded with once asking me what the width of the Suez Canal was and being a bit miffed because I had no idea!

Contact with the Education Department was minimal. The District Inspector visited perhaps three times in my two years, once to conduct "the inspection". I can only remember one piece of advice: "Watch the use of the vernacular". I presumed this alluded to morning assembly where the children had stood ramrod straight (they had been well-schooled), recited the pledge and saluted the flag, then been told, "OK you blokes forward in".

Routines were established that were not strictly according to the book. Thank goodness for the radio programs, "Kindergarten of the Air" was a blessing! Extended lunchtime touch footy games were interrupted by the necessity to go inside for "Let's Join In", the basis of the music programme.

It was the changeover to decimal currency in 1966 (who can forget Dollar Bill!?) so a lot of time was spent on maths and I

was delighted to see the end of the pounds, shillings and pence algorithm.

I will never forget the arrival of a gleaming water cooler at the school, probably the 1960s stimulus equivalent of a school hall! The kids were of course delighted but it looked most incongruous in its dilapidated surroundings.

There was not a lot of contact with other schools other than through sport. The athletics carnival with Eribung and Bruie Plains was of Olympian proportions for kids, parents and perhaps teachers; I spent countless hours trying to get the Western Roll perfected for the high jump.

The best professional development came with attending monthly

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Federation meetings in Tullamore or Trangie. We were paid one dollar for travelling and that equated to four beers - but it was usual to exceed that number.

I was very fortunate to have two college mates in the vicinity (well, 60 miles or so away): Keith Jenkins at Bruie Plains and Jack Malone at Honeybugle near Nyngan. When Friday came we would often meet up for a B&S ball or a Scottish ball or some other social event within a hundred miles.

And sport was so important! I played cricket on Saturdays in Parkes and with a bush team, Top Woodlands, on Sundays. The ground was lightning fast: a concrete pitch and a quick outfield with not a blade of grass. In the winter, I played hockey in Parkes on Saturdays and rugby league with Tullamore on Sundays. Well, it was a designated footy competition but was more like organised thuggery. So too was the midweek basketball!

Unfortunately, my school's enrolment decreased to 11 in my second year, the decision was made to close it and the kids were to be bussed in to Tullamore Central School. This probably made sense but was sad for the local community.

There are many memories of my two years at Pinefield. The friendliness of the children and parents, and the constant challenge to cater for such an age range. The perilous crossing of flooded creeks, the necessary vigilance for snakes on the way to the pit toilet, the dust storms, farm life experiences, and I guess the clichéd "tyranny of distance" which impacted educationally and socially. What a learning experience!

At the end of 1967, I was transferred as Teacher-in-Charge to The Mullion near Yass but that's another story!

Norm Stanton 1964-65

A DIFFICULT TIME

(This story is taken from WWTC: College and Teaching Memories. John Shanks was Principal at Reiby when I was Principal across the road at Airds High School. Lindsay Budd)

It was no typical day, but it was on my third day as the first Principal appointed by Department of Education to Reiby, that I had my funniest experience at the school. There was a minor altercation between some of the older girls who, after being sent to the office, decided to bolt by jumping in the pool and taking their clothes off. Nothing in my training at WWTC prepared me for this contingency. The solution, though, was quite simple - leave them in the water until they became cold, and have big towels and lots of female staff available!

Schools had been taken out of the hands of Community Services and returned to the Department of Education. This was in 1984. Reiby was both a remand school for children waiting to be sentenced and a detention centre for children already sentenced by the courts. It contained about 120 pupils at the beginning of my time, with a complete turnover of pupils nearly every three months. That was their usual length of sentence. We had boys from about 12 to 14 years and girls from 14 to just under 18.

I did not have any murderers, but I did have a stripper (aged about 16) from the Cross. When I first interviewed her in my office her comment was, "Keep your f...eyes off me." I have to admit that after being told that it was hard not to keep your eyes on her.

The closest to a murderer was a girl who poured kerosene around her parents' bed and set fire to it. The parents were lucky to escape.

The girl was imprisoned, but the real culprit and abuser was the father. When you read the file, it was clear she was acting out of self-preservation.

This was at the time that Reiby went through a transformation. The courts were encouraged not to incarcerate children. Being exposed to moral danger for a girl was no longer a criminal offence, and the population of the school dropped to a very hard core. My claim was that it was my astute handling of the school situation that contributed to the declining crime rate. In reality, they were all still out there and not in here.

In this period, I also expelled a girl from the school. This just was not the done thing. The procedure at the time was to inform Community Services who liaised with the parents. In this case, Community Services was also the parents, and they had to get together with themselves to resolve the situation. After a long delay, her sentencing time elapsed and the problem solved itself with her release. She later died of a drug overdose at the Cross.

When the population dropped to 6-12 pupils, with a pupil/teacher ratio of 2 to 1 (it was 12 to 1 when I first arrived), I fortunately became 'a forced transfer', which was the greatest of blessings. I decided to give up on special education and spent my remaining years in the security and relative 'peacefulness' of regular schools.

Even in these schools, my experience at Reiby had its effects - I would regularly jump out of my chair in the office, suspecting there was a riot on, if anyone ran past the window.

John Shanks 1954-55

TEACHING MEMORIES

MICHELAGO/ MICHELANGELO?



My first appointment as a teacher, after graduating from Wagga Teachers' College in 1970, was all I could have asked for. In the period leading up to beginning my teaching career however, stuff happened.

I had a summer job at a metal foundry, the second worst vacation job I ever had. I worked my full shift standing at a grinding wheel, getting rid of the bits that should not be on the castings. My work position was very close to a huge furnace, which made my workday almost unbearable. However, the pay was good and I needed all the money I could get.

I was getting to work driving my wife's car, a Morris mini with recently installed seat belts. One morning a speeding soldier, late for reveille at the local army base, collided with me at an intersection two blocks from the foundry. The car was a write-off but the seat belts saved me from serious injury. Now we had no way to get to my first school.

However, where was I to go? It was late January and I still had not been

informed by the Education Department where I would be teaching. I knew it would not be a one-teacher school because I had requested, "anything but a one-teacher school" on the job application I filled out at the end of my time at Wagga Teachers' College.

I phoned the Education Department and the young woman assigned to assist said, "I don't know how to pronounce it. It looks a bit like Michelangelo. I'll spell it: M-I-C-H-E-L-A-G-O. It says here you should pick up the key from the Post Office. Good luck."

In those days, we did not have Google Maps and it took some time to find Michelago on our NSW road map, a small dot on the Monaro Highway between Canberra and Cooma. It occurred to me that someone in the Education Department with a warped sense of humour was sending me to a one-teacher school. All those college small school sessions I had studiously snoozed through would have been useful after all.

With the help of someone who knew a bit about cars, we bought the only car we could afford, a battered old Holden. Kerrie and I headed off over the mountains to Michelago. The school was pink. The residence was also pink. Both were built in the 1860s and had had little work done on them, apart from the pink paint job, in the years since. The NSW Department of Works, an organisation I was to get to know well, had an oversupply of pink paint a few years earlier and apparently, there were many pink schools in the Goulburn, Canberra, Cooma area in the late sixties.

As it happened, Michelago Public School was about the perfect place to begin a teaching career. I had eleven country kids who loved school and learning, a supportive community, a strong small-school network, and an understanding inspector. A big thank you to whoever it was in the appointments office who made the decision to send me there rather than to western Sydney, which was the other possibility that year.

During the next three years, I spent a good deal of my time attempting to get the school building and the residence brought up to standard ... but that is another story.

Greg Thompson 1969-70

Greg now lives in semi retirement on a small farm in southern NSW with his wife Kerrie, a dog, five chooks, a vegetable garden, lots of kangaroos and far too many rabbits. He teaches part-time at a local two-room school. His worst ever vacation job was in the basement offal section of an abattoir. He lasted one day. He plans to return soon to collect his pay.

TEACHING MEMORIES

SOME MEMORIES OF EARLY DAYS OF MY CAREER.

I graduated from Wagga Wagga Teachers' College at the end of 1953 after completing the two year Teacher Training Course.

I recall very well the first few days there, as it was my first time away from home. An initiation ceremony was the order of the day and I was bewildered at first at what we had to do. Of course, it was all a sham as I eventually found out, but during its enactment, I was frightened, bewildered and alone.

How unprepared was I for that College experience. I was socially inept and immature as well as having little self-confidence or self esteem.

Two people stand out in my memory in those first few weeks and months - namely Luke Livisianos and Wally Pleasant. Harry Taylor was in our dormitory and was, as those who were in that session remember, a mature aged student. Harry also was someone I looked up to.

At our table in the dining room, I sat with Cecil Williams, who was a member of the Salvation Army. Each Sunday, dressed in his uniform he cycled off to Church. He had the most incredible wit and repartee, making our dining experiences very enjoyable. I believe Cecil became one of the senior officers in the Salvation Army.

After two years at College, I was called up for National Service, serving my three months at Puckapunyal. I consider this the best three months of my life as I thoroughly enjoyed it as we had incredibly intelligent, sensible and capable officers. These Officers and NCOs were able to assess each and every one of us and treated us accordingly. I only wish I had been able to acknowledge their

contribution to my growing up in that three-month period. Some of you may recall Corporal Roberts, Sergeant Winstanley and Lieutenant Lancaster.

However, this contribution was to be only about my first appointment to a school but in thinking about it, I was forced to recall my early days at College.

After my three months at Puckapunyal, I returned to Griffith. I was appointed for a couple of weeks to Griffith Primary School prior to the May Holidays. My first appointment notice arrived in this period. On opening the envelope with fear and in trepidation, I read that I was appointed to Rufus River. I had no idea where Rufus River was. However, the next sentence of the appointment notice gave instructions on how to get to the school.

"Take the train from Griffith to Narrandera. Change trains there for the Tocumwal Line and proceed to Tocumwal. Change trains at Tocumwal for Melbourne. (Change of gauge of course) Stay overnight in Melbourne and catch the train to Mildura. Stay overnight in Mildura and catch the Mail Coach to Wentworth. Catch the Mail Coach from Wentworth to Rufus River.

Accommodation is provided in the form of a single room near the school and a parent who lives approx. one mile from the school can provide meals."

To get to Rufus River in time for the Opening of the school for second term it was therefore necessary for me to leave Griffith on the Wednesday before school opened. Fortunately, on the Tuesday, I received a new Appointment Notice cancelling my appointment to Rufus River and a new appointment to Gregadoo (near Wagga) was made.

What a relief.

Naturally, I wondered why the appointment to Rufus River had been cancelled and I was to find out a few years later when I met Wally Payne at Griffith High School. Wally's brother Geoff was the teacher at Rufus River at the time of my appointment. When he received his new appointment, he appealed against being shifted from Rufus River as he had met a girl there and was either engaged to be married or going to get engaged. The department acknowledged his request and he was left at Rufus River.

I have been interested in Small Schools ever since Mr Latham lectured us in Small School Techniques.

As a member of our local U3A group, I have taken a group to Naradhan (between Rankin Springs and Lake Cargelligo) where the P&C provided lunch and the students put on a performance for us. There were so many One Teacher Small Schools in 1954, providing places for us to be appointed to.

The school building is still standing at Mt Hope where Lindsay Budd went to school and we will be visiting this site on one of our trips next week.

I prefaced this contribution with a little about myself and therefore wonder how I would have coped at Rufus River.

I feel I have been incredibly lucky being a teacher and meeting so many people in my lifetime and enjoying the variety of personalities one comes in contact with. My experiences have been limited to mainly one geographical area, namely the Riverina - I have no regrets about this as I was able to be exposed to different generations of the same family.

John Robinson (1952-53)

TEACHING MEMORIES

A HAPPY RETURN

When you reach 70, there are many things you cannot do any more. You cannot run up stairs, bound over the front fence or clamber over the rooftops to clean gutters. However if you are a 70 year old ex-schoolie, you can talk to your former kindergarten pupils about their grandchildren. Last Easter, I had the pleasure of doing just that.



Members of the aboriginal community from the Dubbo area who had attended Balladoran school in the 50's and 60's organised a reunion on the site of their old settlement in the village. I use the term "village" loosely as the Post Office, School and several homes have long gone. All that remains are the local hall and the wheat silos at the rail siding. Ex pupils came from all over the state.

After the major floods of 1955 in Gilgandra, aboriginal families were re-located to Balladoran. The existing one-teacher school could not cope with the increased enrolments so a second teacher, me, was appointed. I had no classroom for most of 1957 so taught in the supper room of the old corrugated iron hall. A new room was built and I spent six very satisfying years at the school.

My wife and I were more than happy to accept an invitation from the aboriginal organisers to attend the three-day reunion. One of the reasons the small community of whites and aborigines worked so well was that there was no alcohol use at the settlement. When we arrived at the venue, the first thing I noticed was a sign on the front fence, "No Alcohol or Drugs Permitted". Nothing had changed in fifty years. We were warmly greeted and enjoyed the organised activities, which involved many happy and well-behaved children...all of the same age as my pupils were so long ago. A small group of us walked across to the old hall to look at my supper room classroom. It was much as I had left it in 1963.

During our visit we were joined by a friendly little Shetland pony who had obviously been inside the hall before.

We watched the children enjoy their egg and spoon, sack and three-legged races, were amused as their grandparents attempted to emulate them and had many nostalgic conversations while partaking of a BBQ lunch. The weather was not very kind and it made things uncomfortable for all those families in their tents; however, no one seemed to worry much.

I climbed through a couple of wire fences and crossed the paddocks to the site of the old school. There were no signs of buildings and the bush had overgrown the playground areas. As I stood where my classroom had been, a sea of nostalgia washed over me and I could hear the laughter of the children coming down through the years, or was it the children back at the reunion area? The bush had reclaimed the old school site but not my memories.

I was so grateful for the invitation to relive so many happy times and, health permitting, will gladly return for the planned follow-up gathering at some time in the future.

Barry Cohen WWTC
(1955-56)



The Editors, Lew and Lindsay, discussing the next Talkabout at the last Alumni luncheon.

COMING EVENTS

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The next quarterly meeting of the Alumni Association will be held at 11 am on: Tuesday 10th November, 2009. The meeting will be held at: NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir Street Surry Hills. All welcome.

The AGM will be held at 11 am on Tuesday 9th February, 2010.

This meeting will also be held at the NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre.

WWTC ALUMNI LUNCHEONS

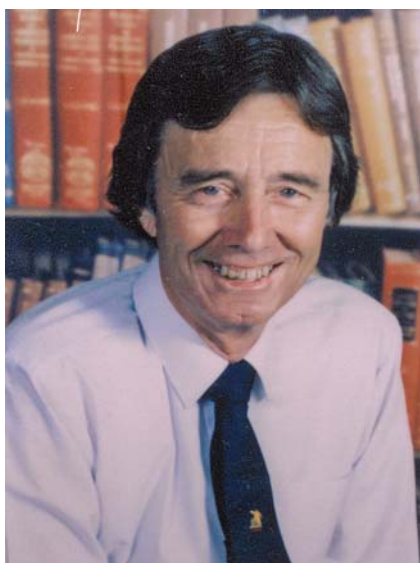
The next Alumni luncheon will be the Christmas luncheon and will be held at the Icons Restaurant in the Marriott Hotel, Pitt Street Sydney (near the Quay) on Tuesday 17th November, 2009.

For bookings contact Lindsay Budd on 9601 3003 a week before.

A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

BRUCE PHILLIPS 1948-50

28th October 1924 - 26th May 2009



Bruce was a student at Wagga Teachers' College in the 1948 intake. He always valued his college days and the friendships made there and was a regular at the Pioneer Session's Reunions and the Informal Get Togethers. In all Bruce gave 37 years of dedicated service to primary education but things could have been different.

Bruce grew up during the depression in the Kensington area where his father was a Real Estate Agent. From the local public school, he gained entry to Sydney Boys High School where he had not only a fine academic record but also great sporting success in Cricket and Rugby Union. Once playing cricket for NSW School Boys against the State Team at the SCG, he clean bowled test opener, Jack Fingleton (a story told by others — Bruce was far too modest to boast of such things).

On matriculation, Bruce enrolled in Dentistry at Sydney University. However, his studies were soon interrupted as at age 18 he enlisted in the Air Force where he served on Bougainville and Emirau Islands. There he earned the gratitude of some American Bomber pilots when, after a bombing raid on Kavieng, he guided them to safe landings during a sudden tropical storm and zero visibility (again a story told by others).

In 1946, after 3 years service, Bruce was discharged from the Air Force and resumed his studies in Dentistry. He was unsettled after the war years and after persevering for a further 2 years with Dentistry, decided Teaching had more appeal for him, (Perhaps his decision was hastened by the practical sessions, which included undertaking extractions on people who thought free treatment from students was worth the risk).

Thus, it was in May 1948, Bruce arrived in Wagga complete with golf clubs and overnight bag. Despite taking advantage of the freedom that ex-serviceman enjoyed as students, Bruce soon realized that College was not a holiday camp. He became committed to teaching and greatly attracted to a young student - Margot Wilson. Bruce's future life and career path, which at first had been so uncertain, was now clearly outlined before him.

Bruce and Margot became engaged at College and married in the Christmas Holidays in 1950. Having received no acknowledgement of their applications for transfer they went into Bridge Street to inform the Department that they were to live on the Central Coast and would appreciate appointments in the same area. In due course their transfers came — to Broken Hill.

They enjoyed teaching in such a friendly, country atmosphere but after 3 years transferred to Sydney. In 1957, they purchased a home in Coogee where they have lived ever since, raising three fine sons and continuing their teaching careers.

Bruce taught in the Eastern Suburbs at Daceyville, Rainbow Street and Matraville Soldier Settlement Public Schools. He was secretive about his University Science Courses and resisted attempts to transfer him to High Schools (where there was a shortage of science teachers). His passion was children rather than subject disciplines. In 1965, Bruce accepted the position of Deputy Principal at Chifley Public School where he remained for the next 21 years.

He was not interested in pursuing further promotion gaining satisfaction from classroom teaching and coaching school sporting teams. From his own schooldays, he understood that sport

played in the right spirit could have a positive influence on the development of children and he became heavily involved in the PSSA at local, regional and state levels. His contribution has been recognized by various life memberships.

Bruce excelled as a sports coach. Chifley is a relatively small school and did not have the luxury of numbers vying for selection. Talent, discipline, teamwork had to be developed from those available. Bruce did this with distinction and Chifley won many district and state titles in cricket and rugby league. He continued to support Chifley's sports programmes and PSSA Carnivals long after his retirement.

Retirement for both Bruce and Margot came on the same day 4 July 1986. Local newspapers marked the occasion by stating... "Mr Chips of Chifley has handed in his chalk - a very apt comparison (and catchy alliteration)

Bruce enjoyed a long and mainly healthy retirement. He and Margot were to fulfill their dreams to travel the world with overseas trips almost every year until 2005. They also saw their sons careers become firmly established, and experienced the great joy that grandchildren bring to older lives.

In delivering eulogies at Bruce's funeral at Woronora Cemetery on 2 June 2009, his sons spoke with emotion of Bruce as "the most wonderful husband", "the best dad" and "the most doting Pa". They recalled the support he had always given them (even helping them deliver newspapers in pouring rain), the great holidays they shared and the sporting matches they attended (especially to his beloved Rooster games). In particular, they recalled in later life meeting many of Bruce's ex-pupils who told them what a fantastic teacher and coach their dad had been and what a great influence he had on their lives.

A teacher could ask for no finer tribute. I wonder how many adults remember with fondness the name of their childhood dentist.

Col O'Grady 1950-51.

NEWS FROM CSU

CSU welcomes new partnership with schools



The Dean of the Faculty of Education at Charles Sturt University (CSU), Professor Toni Downes, has welcomed the announcement, on 30th September, by the NSW Minister for Education, Ms Verity Firth, of new partnerships between the University and schools in the State's Western and Riverina regions.

The NSW and federal governments had previously announced that they would partner with universities to turn 50 schools in NSW into 'Centres for Excellence' in order to develop high quality teaching and improve teacher training.

The minister announced that CSU will be partnered with Mudgee High in the Western Region, and Temora High in the Riverina.

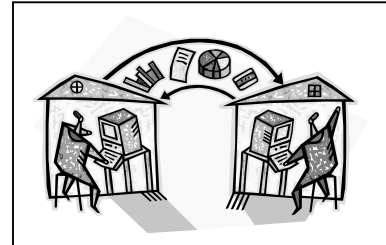
Professor Downes said CSU has excellent relationships with all schools in the University's footprint and she looks forward to closer relationships with these two in particular.

"We have some exciting ideas within our Teachers for the 21st Century Project to discuss with the schools, and we are setting aside the \$2.9 million teaching and learning capital grant to build the high-tech classrooms that will enable Charles Sturt University students and staff to interact online with the teachers and students in these schools," Professor Downes said.

The range of initiatives under the *Teachers for the 21st Century Project*, including work with these schools, will be led by Associate Professor Jane Mitchell at the School of Teacher Education at Bathurst, and Associate Professor Barney Dalgarno at the School of Education at Wagga Wagga.

Are you registered onto the CSU online Community?

It's free!



Go to www.csu.edu.au/alumni

Get TALKABOUT via email and all the latest news from CSU as it happens.

Alumni Information

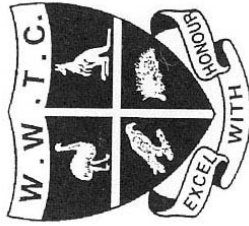
Just a short note to advise you of the change of address of the Alumni Office.

We have moved from The Grange, to the Ground Floor of the Phillips Building, on the Bathurst Campus.

The phone number is still the same 02 6338 4629 and you can still contact me on alumni@csu.edu.au.

Julie Brabham

November 2009
Volume 12 No 3



November 2009
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If undeliverable please return to:
The Alumni Office
Charles Sturt University
Bathurst NSW 2795 Australia

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If your address details are incorrect please notify Michelle at:

alumni@csu.edu.au

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