



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS

TALKABOUT



Volume 15 No 1

March 2012

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF WAGGA WAGGA TEACHERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

It all began in 1997:

Do you remember?

In June 1997 the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of Wagga Wagga Teachers College was celebrated at the Wagga campus of Charles Sturt University.

It was on 14th June that a meeting was held in Joyes Hall and the Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni Association was formed. The first office bearers were: President, Bob Collard; Vice President, Bill Grant; Secretary, Henry Gardiner. Our beloved former lecturer, Vic Couch, and David Asimus OA, Chancellor of CSU, were appointed the first Patrons.

It was decided to establish a Scholarship Fund in the name of Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni Association to provide educational opportunities for alumni and children of alumni at CSU.

As a means of communicating with alumni, the College newsletter *Talkabout* was to be resurrected, and Lew Morrell and Lew Crabtree were appointed editors. They had been editors at College, submitting articles under the pseudonym of Lautrec. (Two Lews, get it!)

At the subsequent meeting in Sydney, Ann Smith was elected Secretary after the resignation of Henry Gardiner, and June Hadley was elected the first Treasurer. The first edition of *Talkabout* was published in December, and the Scholarship Fund was up and running.

The first few issues of *Talkabout* were collated and printed by the Alumni Office at CSU in Bathurst, but then Lindsay Budd took over the production and after the demise of Lew Crabtree became joint editor with Lew Morrell.

Originally the mailing list was about 900. Thanks to the incredible tenacity and investigative skills of Ann Smith the mailing list reached a total of over 3,500. Sufficient articles have been contributed for *Talkabout* to have been published three times a year for 15 years. Interest has obviously fallen off for a majority of alumni, but over 800 have, through their subscriptions, expressed a desire for *Talkabout* to continue.

The Scholarship Fund has reached its objective of raising \$60,000 and has already provided scholarships for 22 Education students.

To celebrate the 15th Anniversary, a luncheon has been planned for 18th September in Icons Brasserie and all alumni are invited to attend to acknowledge this significant event.

WAGGA WAGGA TEACHERS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14TH FEBRUARY 2012

PRESIDENT BOB COLLARD'S ANNUAL REPORT

As we enter our 15th year as an alumni association we can reflect on the path we have followed and the trails we have blazed.

Perhaps one of the more notable achievements has been the status of the WWTAA that now exists.

From a barely acknowledged beginning for which its detractors held no promise it has evolved into an unique, vibrant and decisive group determined to leave a legacy that has raised the image of Wagga Wagga Teachers' College from the dusty shelves of being inconsequential to a position of eminence and influence not only to Charles Sturt University but also to the City of Wagga Wagga.

We have been faithful to our commitment to CSU through the Wagga Wagga Campus.

From this commitment has emerged our attendance at most of the ceremonies conducted by CSU.

To those who gave, and those who continue to give, of their talents, time and economics, normal recognition is not enough.

Attendance at CSU ceremonies is important.

Perhaps it is an area where those who attended WWTC in later years can step up and offer their services particularly if they reside in the Wagga Wagga locality.

Is there a need to establish a committee to deal with the representation of the alumni at these events?

There are still many important decisions to be made.

The planned 15th anniversary lunch is worthy of your consideration.

Talkabout is in need of your support.

The welfare of your management committee and the work of Stacey Fish, our Faculty Advancement Officer, Adrian Lindner, Head of Wagga Wagga Campus, and Karen

Jamieson, Executive Assistant to the Head of WW Campus, are worthy of your support and best wishes.

Bob Collard MBE

REPORT FROM THE FACULTY ADVANCEMENT OFFICER, EDUCATION CSU.

2011 and the start of 2012 has been an exciting time for the Advancement Unit and CSU. The two major highlights during 2011 for the Advancement Unit were the 'Get Connected' engagement campaign for alumni and the streamlining of Scholarships.

The "Get Connected" campaign included the design and development of a new alumni website including the use of social media platforms and the launch of a registration campaign to increase the number of email address within the database. As a result of this campaign, emails within the database increased from 10,000 to 22,082. Of these, 806 belong to WWTC with approximately 40 for ex-staff members. We have over 2,000 'Likes' (ie. People have registered their support and interest) on the CSU Alumni Facebook page.

The *Free* Member Benefit Programme was also launched offering alumni discounts on a variety of University and externally provided benefits and services. Thank you to the WWTAA for encouraging its membership to get involved by registering **online**.

2011 also saw CSU achieve many great things. Some of the highlights were the University opened their School of Dentistry on the Albury, Bathurst and Dubbo campuses, CSU launched their Doctors for the Bush School of Medicine campaign, completed the 'Contemporary Classroom' (interactive classroom) and opened RYSO (underground laboratory) on the Wagga Wagga campus, as well as completing a re-branding of the University.

At the beginning of 2012, CSU received a new Vice-Chancellor and President of Charles Sturt University, Professor Andrew Vann, (as profiled in the November issue of *Talkabout*).

TALKABOUT

The *Talkabout* magazine in 2011 was, as always, exceptional. The publication increased its readership online and also saw the successful introduction of subscription recipients. The WWTAA also undertook the organisation of printing and mailing of the publication for the first time with the November issue, saving money and making the process more efficient.

CSU and the Head of Campus, Wagga Wagga, Adrian Lindner, were pleased to be able to contribute a total of \$1,800 (\$600 per issue), to WWTAA, in 2011 towards the printing costs of *Talkabout*.

Charles Sturt University once again pays tribute to the dedicated editors, Lindsay Budd and Lew Morrell, who produce *Talkabout* three times a year, providing a valuable means for fundraising, recalling teaching memories, advertising and reporting on reunions as well maintaining a vital link to the University.

THE WWTAA SCHOLARSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

Applicants for the WWTAA Scholarship are currently being processed and will be forwarded to the selection panel for assessment shortly.

Fundraising was again a highlight for the Association in 2011, with an additional \$4,759.00 being contributed to the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College (WWTC) corpus. This brings the total amount of funds raised by the WWTAA to \$78,902.80 (accurate end January 2012). This brings the total funds over and above the \$60,000 for the WWTAA scholarship to \$18,902. From the Minutes of your previous meetings, it is understood that suggestions for allocation of these funds is currently with the Head of Campus, Wagga Wagga and the WWTAA. The Foundation awaits your decision on this matter and the Advancement Unit is happy to assist you in your wishes to support the students of CSU.

In relation to WWTAA request for database numbers for a fundraising appeal to Wagga Wagga campus Teaching alumni from WWTC, RCAE, RMIHE and CSU, I have provided Dot

Tanner, WWTAA Secretary, with the following numbers; the University database has 8,384 people with 'good postal addresses' ie. those that are not deceased and have not returned as a bad address previously. We have an additional 1,775 with an email address. This is a total of 10,159 alumni from WWTC, RCAE, RMIHE and CSU. As explained to Dot via email, CSU could send out a request for these alumni to join the WWTAA and make an appeal for fundraising. The cost to send the emails (1,775) would be free. However,

to send a letter with a labelled envelope is \$1 each (\$8,384). This invitation to Alumni and the appeal could also be placed up on the web site.

WWTC MEMORABILIA

As the WWTAA is aware, there is a large holding of WWTC memorabilia within the CSU archives. Mr Wayne Doubleday, Manager of CSU Archives, would be able to provide the WWTAA with an inventory listing upon request.

The University and the Faculty of Education is always looking for articles, photographs and other interesting things, such as choral recordings, to go on the CSU Alumni web site and Facebook page. When WWTAA receives the listing of items held in CSU Archives, the Advancement Unit would very much welcome being notified of anything you feel may be appropriate for the website.

Stacey Fish

Faculty Advancement Officer

1947 - 1997 - 2012

WWTC - RCAE - RMIHE - CSU : WWTCAA - WWTAA



**Celebrate the 65th Year of Teacher Education on the Wagga Wagga Campus
and the 15th Anniversary of the Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association**



at a smorgasbord lunch at noon on Tuesday, 18th September 2012
at Icons Brasserie, Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel

<http://www.icons.sydneyharbourmarriott.com.au/restaurant/hotels/hotel-information/travel/sydmc-Icons-Brasseries-sydney-harbour-marriott/>

30 Pitt Street (near the Quay). Bookings: \$55 each, beverages extra.

Please send expressions of interest, with (married and maiden) names and College Session, to Lindsay Budd, 4 Flemington Close, Casula 2170.

Email: lbudd@bigpond.net.au.

Please reply as soon as possible, by 30th June at the latest, with group preferences if any, to facilitate venue and seating arrangements.

Bob Collard, President, WWTAA.

REUNION PAGE

REUNION 1957-58 – TINGED WITH SADNESS



1957 – 58 REUNION GROUP PHOTO AKA THE MAD HATTERS TEA PARTY

*Back Row: Nancy Munro, Denis Woodward, Hans Horak, Don Piper, Rob Bruce, Graham Mebberson, Bob Anderson
Second Row: Max Cowdroy, Marion Edwards (Scott), Daphne Read (Hutchison), Pam Piper (Platt), Dale Hell (Lette),
Marlene Mebberson (Willoughby), Janice Horak (Brown), Barry Briggs.
Front Row ; Jan Bruce (Cochrane), Jan Cowdroy (Hayes), Janet Gardner (Cane), Cynthia Piper (Sutton), Coleen Anderson.
In Front: Jenny Briggs (Mould)*

The WWTC students of 1957-58, the first year of the Junior Secondary Section, have been meeting annually since the 50th anniversary held at Wagga Wagga. Later reunions have been held at Ballina, the Whitsundays, Binna Burra (in the Lamington National Park) and, in 2011, in the Blue Mountains during the week 23-28 October. For reasons outlined below, we can't confirm that the mountains are 'Blue' as – apart from a short time on Tuesday morning – we didn't see them.

Those of us who drove along the Great Western Highway to Katoomba knew we were in for a different sort of week when we were overtaken by police cars, police rescue vehicles, fire

engines, and a bushfire mobile operation centre. Soon the cause of this surfeit of emergency vehicles became obvious: we were heading towards a major bush fire in the Echo Point – Scenic Railway area. The fire was essentially in the valley but flames were reaching the top of the escarpment. There were rumours that three houses had been burnt and that there were evacuations occurring. The visible flames were quite close to our motel, and the motel was beyond the barriers set up by emergency services personnel. Some of us sweet talked our way past the barriers, others had to go back later and bring their cars to the motel.

Despite the cacophony of sirens, the smoke and a number of water-bombing helicopters, the intrepid members of the years of 57-58 did what was best in the circumstances: we unpacked, had a quiet beverage or two and settled into a fine evening of dinner followed by a Max Cowdroy-led musical evening.

The next day was quieter, smoke had almost disappeared, the number of emergency vehicles was much diminished and we had a reasonably clear view of the sights as we went on a bus tour of Govett's Leap, the Rhododendron Gardens, Cox's Lookout (where Max told of the opening of the road westwards to Bathurst and of his great grandfather's

REUNION PAGE

part in that process), the historic town of Hartley and back to Blackheath for lunch and a wander.

That is when the rain set in and the mist totally obscured the view. We followed the, so they say, scenic route to Leura, dodged the raindrops as best we could, had afternoon tea and then back to the motel for dinner and frivolities. The dinner was a 'funny hat' themed occasion and we all (well, most of us) wore funny hats and explained the occasion to which the hat was relevant. The adage that 'what happened on the field stays on the field' prevents any further discussion of the stories told. However, one cannot ignore – but will only allude – to the 'Case of the Neapolitan Pom-Pom'. After dinner, we had another good night of song and (attempted) dancing, led again by Max with his trusty guitar, augmented on occasions, when he swapped to a piano accordion.

Wednesday was just like Tuesday PM.: no views, light drizzle, and low temperature. Daphne Read (Hutchison) was out buying thicker clothing as she was having difficulty adjusting from Darwin climes. She was also less than impressed that, having come so far, she couldn't see the three sisters.

Wednesday evening was enjoyable. We went to a Dinner and Show at the Clarendon Hotel. Food was good and the entertainment was very clever. Our illusionist gave a fine performance and then came around to the tables to show us at closer hand the tricks he had performed. Marlene (Willoughby) and Graham Mebberson were theatrical stars. Janice Horak (Brown) gave an 'interesting' cameo performance.

On Thursday, the only beneficiaries of the poor weather were the cafes and eateries which did well out of our patronage. The more adventurous, led by Barry Briggs, drove to the Lithgow Zig Zag railway and travelled along that section of rail. Our splendid final

dinner was interspersed with tales of humour by selected participants. Rob Bruce confused us mightily with his speech which was largely in PNG Pidgin (Tok Pisin) but at least Nancy Munro with her years of teaching in PNG chortled away at what Rob was saying.

After dinner, Max tried to set up some progressive dances. Despite his best efforts, the dancing was not particularly impressive, so we just had to sing and enjoy ourselves.

Friday morning was clear and Daphne Read did at last see the three sisters (just).

A location for the 2012 reunion is still being determined. When details become clearer the Alumni Office will be asked to pass on details to all 57-58 students. These reunions are a time of reminiscence and discovering more about those we met in our more unenlightened years at WWTC. We hope that colleagues who have not been to these reunions will give us the

chance to meet and talk with them when next we meet.

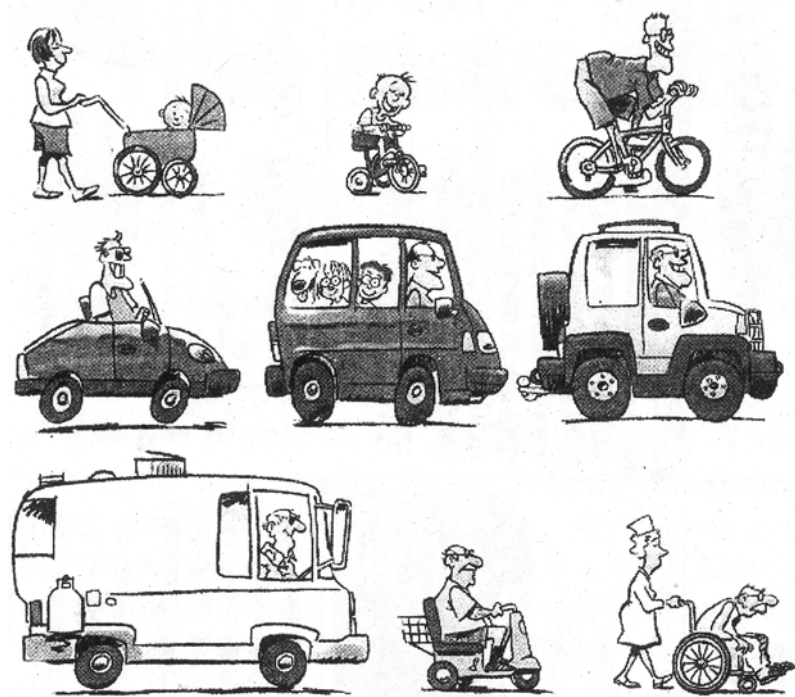
Dale Hell (Lette) and Eric organised the reunion from Airlie Beach and we are indebted to them for their efforts in getting us together for another enjoyable week. We are also indebted to Bob Anderson for his work in getting advice of the reunion to the wider WWTC community. Over the years, Bob was the driving force for the reunions: he has kept the group together with information on 57-58ers and with his always welcome stream of emailed funnies.

Sadly, Bob passed away unexpectedly on 12 December. His passing is mourned by all of us who knew him at WWTC and in subsequent years. We will miss him: we will never forget him and the role he played in bringing our group together again. We can treasure his memory by continuing the reunions which he played such a large part in fostering. Our thoughts are with his wife Coleen and their family.

Denis Woodward (1957-58)



The Wheels of Life



LETTERS PAGE

Dear Lindsay,

So, over 3 thousand ex WTC retired teachers have been receiving Talkabout without subscribing, what a slack lot they are, their names should be removed from the mailing list forthwith.

Not only are they sponging on the 800 odd subscribers, they must be making the production of Talkabout financially difficult for the dedicated editorial staff.

Lew wonders whether Talkabout has a future, he well knows the answer. In asking the question he is challenging (and shaming) the younger generations of retirees to put up their hands and take on the responsibility of continuing the sterling efforts of our editors...

No successors forthcoming? No future for Talkabout. The later generations apparently don't have the nostalgic sentiment that we oldies value; it's another indication of how much modern society had moved away from the social structures of tradition and value systems that our earlier society imbued.

Our ranks are thinning and the threads of communication are becoming increasingly tenuous; sadly, the demise of Talkabout is inevitable and imminent.

At the final edition of Talkabout, Lindsay and Lew will walk away into their second retirement and they, along with Ann, will have our grateful thanks and appreciation for their time and their unstinting efforts in maintaining the links to our college days.

Barry Michell 1950-51

Dear Lindsay,

Many, many thanks to Lew and yourself for the effort you make – as well as the others. Greatly appreciated!

I was speaking last week with Graeme Ferguson (from Coolah), he was in the last session at WTC and in his words “enjoyed the unique and wonderful experience” of being here. He has now been farming for more than twenty years but still keeps contact with some members of his session.

He said most of them will be retiring in 2012, if they had not already done so.

Anyway- his suggestion – in the next issue of Talkabout – place an ad: something like

Are you retiring soon?

Have you just retired?

Do you have a few hours of spare time on your hands?

Would you like to help the “Talkabout Team”?

Graeme thinks you may get responses, particularly where a married couple met at WTC.

Thought the idea was worth passing on.

Yvonne Day (Harbrow) 1949-50

Dear Lindsay,

My history of contributions is a bit like what they used to tell us about the road to hell: paved with good intentions! Each time I received Talkabout I would remind myself that I should send in a donation. Then, of course, forgetfulness would take over. So, finally, I am acting before I forget. Attached is a small contribution.

I was very sad to read about the death of Don Wiburd. I hadn't remembered him very well from College; but when I was teaching at Bathurst, we became very good friends, and for some years he and I were respectively President and Secretary of the Western Branch of the union for teachers in independent schools (rather clumsily called, in those days, the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association). For someone who always seemed a non-sport type, he was amazing the way he threw himself into encouraging and coaching sport.
Vale Don.

With kind regards,

Gordon Bruton (1949-50).

Dear Lindsay,

I spent three months in hospital earlier in the year and have had to deal with sorting mail which accrued during that time so it is only very recently that I came across the July edition of Talkabout and later made time to read it. I was most impressed with the letter written by Helen Kidd, or rather the two letters, the first addressing people like me the irresponsible graduates of WWTC and the second addressing the issue of breast cancer. This letter is timely because today is Pink Ribbon Day. I have sent cheques along at rather irregular intervals but spurred on by Helen's words I will endeavour to be somewhat more regular with my \$10.

It was pleasing to read the three articles expressing thanks on behalf of the writers who were recipients of the scholarship fund. I found the article by Lisa Hulands particularly interesting as I am familiar with the town she grew up in, a mere dot on the map. However there are lots more dots on the map, many of which have had an ex-student of WWTC as the teacher at the one teacher school at that dot on the map.

From my local knowledge I can understand the difficulties Lisa faced each day travelling to Barham and back five days a week. My sister and her husband were among the first of the soldier settlers to take up blocks in 1950 (from memory) and she returned to where it all began when the 50th anniversary of turning the old Italian prisoners of war camp into a rice-growing area.

My sister enjoyed the experience greatly and enjoyed renewing friendships with those she knew in the early days. Sadly my sister passed away early this year but as she was acquainted with the Hulands family I am sure she would have been very proud of Lisa's achievements.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Stevenson (1958-59)

Those Were The Days

Research into bush schools was started by Hank Nelson with the aim of producing both a radio series and a book. The five part documentary first went to air on the ABC in 1989. The book has since been published and has been given the title "With Its Hat About Its Ears: Recollections of the Bush School", referring to John O'Brien's poem "The Old Bush School."

The following is an excerpt taken from the book.

Often at the end of the day teachers read aloud to the school. In July the teacher's voice might be accompanied by rain on the roof, wind in trees planted by another generation on Arbor Day and the shuffle of muddy boots on the board floor.

Cliff Green: Reading aloud was a real test of the quality of the writing. If a book survived being read to a school with pupils aged five to twelve then it was pretty good. Works of the calibre of *Wind in the Willows* always survived. *Tom Sawyer* always did. I could read them once every year, and I did, for the seven years I was at Torrumbarry. The interest-span of books like that is enormous. Ones who had heard them six times before, were still getting something from them. In fact when I come in contact with old students, that's what they remember.

At Glenlogie in the winter there might be twelve pairs of boots and shoes and twelve pairs of socks drying on the hearth, and when the sound of a car or gig was heard on the road, Henry in the back desk would look through a crack in the wall and announce 'Mr . . . , Miss!' Steaming footwear, the crackle of tyres on gravel, and a well-read story.

Poetry, a torment to both teachers and pupils in many schools, could captivate children in the bush.

Leith MacGillivray: I remember every poem we learnt. I lived upon them. I learnt them by heart. John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Newbolt. 'Drake's Drum' — I would say it to myself as I rode home.

Words might be strange, but children responded to rhythms and allusions:

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand miles away,

*(Captain, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombro
Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth
Hoe.*

From Cape Leeuwin to Cape York pupils heard and recited the verses of Walter de la Mare, Rudyard Kipling, John Masefield, Alfred Noyes, James Elroy Flecker . . .

*I have seen old ships sail like swans
asleep
Beyond the village when men still call
Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping
deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun . . .*

And children who had never seen the sea went dipping deep in their imagination for Famagusta of Nombro Dios Bay.

The Australians, Dorothea Mackellar, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall, evoked more familiar images. Roma Hill says Kendall's 'The Song of the Cattle Hunters' was the first poem she remembers learning, and she knows it still. Another girl at Payten's Bridge always had trouble with Kendall's aitches. She would recite:

*By channels of coolness the heechoes are
calling.
And down the deep gorges, I ear the
creek falling . . .*

The teacher corrected her, she tried harder, and the aitches scattered more wildly.

By the 1960s Cliff Green was reading aloud poems by Kenneth Slessor, Judith Wright and others. He often gave the last half-hour of the day to poetry. It 'was purely an experience. I never asked them questions about it. It was recreational; and it was more than that'.

But when pupils from the 1920s to the 1950s are asked what they were taught in the one-teacher schools they talk about the stories and poetry of Paterson and Lawson. Part of the culture transmitted in the bush schools had itself come through the bush schools.

In the 1870s Paterson had a little of his formal education in the Binalong school near Yass, and Lawson had nearly all his classroom schooling at Eurunderee

between Mudgee and Gulgong. The distinctive knowledge that the children of the bush schools hold in common is about the Loaded Dog, The Man From Ironbark, and the Snowy River, The Drover's Wife, Clancy, Harry Dale, Saltbush Bill, and That There Dog of Mine.

Bill Pitty, who had all his schooling at Bunnaloo, recently walked around a golf course 'reciting Paterson and Lawson by the verse. I don't know where my partner had grown up, but he could keep up with me for minutes.' George Piggott says that his wife will remember a line of poetry, and he will join in. When his wife was a child and went into the paddocks with her father they would recite poetry together.

George Piggott says, 'Those country kids loved that poetry. "The Man from Snowy River": they wanted to memorise it, they asked to learn it.' The children of a generation later were, Ian Willis says, 'great Australian patriots. They loved reading that poetry of the first flowering of Australian nationalism. That rang true to them'. Australians sitting in their school desks might see in their imaginations Drake on the Golden Hind, Wolfe scaling the cliffs of Quebec, or Gordon at Khartoum, but they knew and could be Andy, Our Andy, the one who went with cattle. The recognitions of people, place and behaviour could be intense:

*Our Andy's gone with cattle now-
Our hearts are out of order-
With drought he's gone to battle now
Across the Queensland border.*

Writing, pupils saw, could be about what was around them, and it changed how they looked at people and places. It taught them how to behave to those beside them and those above them:

*Oh, who shall cheek the squatter now
When he comes round us snarling?*

The bush children and the bush ballads celebrated the triumph of Saltbush Bill over 'the pluck of the English swell', and of the Man from Ironbark over the gilded city youths whose 'eyes were dull, their heads were flat, they had no brains at all'.

COLLEGE MEMORIES

THE COLLEGE TENNIS TEAM 1947



*Back: Colin Taylor, Morton Rawlin, Paul Rees, Keith Willard, Brian Webb.
Front: Gloria Robinson, Maureen O'Neil, Ruth Johnston, Nell Mitchison, Noreen Perry*

The photo of the first College tennis team and the following letter to her mother are taken from Ruth McFadden's Book "A Pioneer's Story"

Dear Mum,

This is during another lecture. I don't know if it's a boring one because I can't hear him properly, and to one girl who asked him to repeat a point, he replied "Don't bother about it" so says I - I won't. Letters to you are far more important and beneficial than straining ears to catch a word here and there of "Reasons for the history of Physical Education".

Last Tuesday week Edna and I had a rather embarrassing yet once you see the funny side, screamingly humorous experience.

The painters had been painting the window sills of all the rooms in our block and just as Eddie and I were changing for sport, one came to our window. I had just finished putting on my shorts and blouse, but Eddie had only her slip on. We had the blind down but the so and so blighter pulled it up and told me to take down the curtains. By this time Eddie had let out a hoarse little scream and crawled up between the beds where she thought she was

safe. But the silly oaf was standing up at the window and he spotted her.

The conversation between me and painter went as follows:

Me: "Hey, put the blind down."

Him: "I got to have it up."

Me: "This is a bedroom you know" (This broad hint passed him by)

Him: (peering in) "What's that girl doing down there?"

I gazed down and saw Eddie's petticoat and bare legs disappearing under my bed.

Me: "Oh, she's sick."

Him: "Funny place to go if you're sick." (Eddie had by this time disappeared from sight under my bed).

Me: (sarcastically) "When you've finished here I'll put her to bed."

At this juncture the giggles erupted and I just screamed laughing at him, tumbled off the bed and went flying up to Kimber's room to tell them of Eddie's plight. I returned in about five minutes and he was still at the window and, of course Edna was still ensconced in the far corner under my bed. She had to stay there for about another ten

minutes until the stupid painter had finished. Then we fished her out.

The talk of College is Graduation and more Graduation. The date is the 4th May. At the Ball at night there is going to be a special Grad Waltz and each Second Year man has to take to himself a Second Year girl and the names must be in by tomorrow. Unhappily for the girls, the boys are showing backwardness in coming forward and there are many worried countenances around.

I got in early and snaffled a married man (Ian Thomas) whom Betty (his wife) has to lend for the occasion. I also have at my disposal a partner for the Ball who if not very exciting, is passable. I didn't care who I went with, one is as good as another down here.

I went down to Ian's for tea on Tuesday night and inspected the baby who is really lovely. Betty is a good cook and it is a pleasure to escape from College food for a while.

It looks as though I may have to take notes now as I have run out of news.

Yesterday we had to fill in where we wanted to be sent. I put Forbes, Narromine, and Canowindra but I'm not worried much where I'm sent.

TEACHING MEMORIES

This story of Ray Osmotherley's first appointment was first published in "WWTC College and Teaching Memories".

TALES FROM CROOBLE

On graduating from Wagga Wagga Teachers College, my first appointment was to Crooble Primary School, via Moree, NSW. I had given my first three preferences as 1.Sydney, 2.Sydney, 3.Sydney, but to no avail. It seems The Department had other ideas! Notification came in the form of a telegram some six days before school started. My first reaction was to try to find Crooble on a road map, but without success. Finally I resorted to a NSW railways map, and there it was - a tiny pinpoint on the Boggabilla line some 60 km north of Moree.

I took the overnight train to Moree, and early the next morning boarded the rail motor for the last part of the journey and my introduction to my teaching career.

Crooble turned out to be an unmanned platform (you could hardly call it a station), a wheat storage shed, some cattle yards and in the distance a house and a shed-like building which turned out to be the post office. As the rail-motor disappeared into the distance, I surveyed my new surroundings - flat countryside as far as the eye could see, with small shrubs and here and there the odd tree. Not a person could be seen anywhere. I waited and waited.

Finally after about half an hour an old brown ute drove up and a voice shouted, "You the new schoolie? Hop in!" The driver was the postmaster, and he had been asked to meet me, but had been caught up with postal duties. He drove me back to the post office where I was finally met by members of the family who were to be the first of ten families to billet me in their homes over the next three years.

I had expectations of comfort and country living as we approached the large white timber family homestead. However this wasn't to be. We passed the house and continued through a gate and across a paddock to the jackaroo's "cottage", a corrugated iron shack with two small bedrooms, a bathroom, living room

and verandah. A fireplace outside was for heating up water for the bath. This was to be my home for term one. However, meals were provided in the family house. Later residences proved less spartan and more as I expected, but my memories of coming back to the "cottage" after a hard day at school with the thermometer showing 100 degrees Fahrenheit will stay with me forever.

My school turned out to be a very pleasant, typical NSW one-teacher school, complete with 34 children from ages 5 to 14 who were anxious to begin 1961 with the new schoolie from the big smoke.

My three years at Crooble were mostly very enjoyable. Being the only teacher was not easy, but I had a lot of support from the Inspector who travelled out from Moree at regular intervals to keep an eye on me, and from other teachers of one-teacher schools in that vast area.

School life brought its share of achievements, frustrations, and satisfaction, as with teaching anywhere, but teaching in a one-teacher school seems to have more than its share of funny incidents. Many of these revolve around toilets and snakes. At Crooble School the toilets were the old-fashioned "long drop" variety, consisting of a pit over which was erected a toilet building. When necessary, one of the parents would arrive with a back-hoe, dig a new hole, transfer the toilet building over the new hole and fill in the old one.

One of my most harrowing experiences at Crooble was the day the Kindergarten girls decided to have a competition to see who was game enough to lower themselves "down the toilet". This was unknown to me until one of the kindies came rushing to me yelling, "Beverly's fallen down the toilet!"

I rushed into the building, and there was Beverly's head and elbows above the toilet seat. The rest of her body was "down the toilet". At that moment Beverly was about to slip the rest of the way. I grabbed her elbows and dragged her out, unhurt, a little shaken but not half as shaken as I was!

My second memorable incident involved both toilets and snakes. The parents had just finished painting the school building and the toilet. One of the children (again Kindergarten!) rushed into class saying she had seen a snake in the toilet. As snakes in the playground were often a problem and had to be taken seriously, I immediately went outside to sort out this particular snake. The child showed me the "hole" where she had seen the snake go. I poked a stick down the hole - no response - so I decided more extreme methods were necessary.

In those days we had those duplicators that used a form of methylated spirits to make the print, and I decided a dose of this fluid would probably shift the snake. I threw a couple of litres down the hole, but with no effect. Finally in a moment of madness I thought, "I'll get you", and threw a lighted match down the hole. Of course, the methylated spirits didn't burn down the hole but blew upwards, burning off the new paint on that particular wall of the toilet. This did not make a very good impression with the parents who painted it!

My three years at Crooble brought many memorable experiences, but none quite as dramatic as those mentioned. Teaching in city schools after that was almost an anti-climax.

Ray Osmotherley (1959-60)

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

Bob Anderson 1957-58 Dec 2011

TEACHING MEMORIES

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN THE CLASSROOM

1965 was a very good year to enter Teaching from WWTC. However, from the 2012 perspective, for those of us for whom the educational-technology employed in the classroom consisted mainly of the blackboard, accompanied by sticks of chalk and the duster, exercise-books with pencils or ink-pens, textbooks, readers, and the duplicator with its fluid, master- and carbon-sheets, might the current digital-revolution within the classroom just appear to be a little bewildering?



Anna Bay PS NSW students, 2011
[SMH]

Nevertheless, unless we have been tucked away in some remote corner of our continent, we are quite aware of just how adept even the youngest of our extended family-members or acquaintances are at manipulating the vast array of electronic devices that are a normal part of their daily lives.

Those of us who were subjected to teacher-centred blackboard-instruction for a significant part of our school-day as students ourselves, probably even then realised that there was something fundamentally flawed with the *one size fits all* mentality in many classrooms. From the behaviour of our peers and the class-teacher, it was obvious that, while some children in the classroom were totally deflated by

the regurgitation of concepts and skills they had already long conquered, others could not understand at all what was being presented and they, and the teacher, became increasingly frustrated by the constant failure.

If the teacher-lecture from the blackboard next moved to the same textbook-page for every student in the classroom, then the same failure to cater for the individual abilities and needs of each child continued throughout the school-day with occasional breaks for recess or lunch, library or sport or student-initiated distractions.

Those of us appointed to one-teacher or slightly larger small-schools in country NSW early in our careers learnt more quickly than most beginning-teachers that we must adapt the curriculum and learning-resources to the aptitudes and prior experiences of individual children and not attempt the reverse strategy of moulding the children to the shape of the centrally-determined syllabus and teaching materials.

For example, while reading-assessments indicated that the six-year-old girl in Year 1 had a junior-high school reading-ability and the thirteen-year-old girl repeating Year

6 had literacy-skills equivalent to Year 2, the younger one still took great joy in the fantasy world of Hans Christian Andersen while the teenager absolutely rejected anything that resembled *infant-school* material.

Although ACER in Melbourne in the 1970s had begun to make available many reading-series with easier sentence-structures and vocabulary but advanced themes, it was still at least twenty years away before photocopiers were readily available in schools to blow-up the print of stories from teenage-magazines, or from the newspaper sports-pages, for the sake of the older student with low literacy skills.

Another major influence on classroom learning-resources was the introduction of TV in time for the Melbourne Olympics and the rapid acceptance of television-sets in most Australian homes in the 1960s and 70s.

Not only were there a growing number of school-TV programs such as *Behind the News* [BTN], initiated in 1968, to join the comprehensive list of ABC Radio-Programs for schools, but, from hours of television-viewing from a very early age, most children were no longer willing or, perhaps, able, to



Miss Gosper and the children of Belubula – Burnt Yards Public School
[near Mandurama NSW] on ANZAC Day, 1917. [State Library of NSW]

TEACHING MEMORIES

persevere with books that were composed overwhelmingly of text with the very occasional picture or diagram.

Publishing companies and school-libraries very quickly learnt that they had a new type of reader with quite different expectations of book-contents and illustrators started to become almost as famous as the authors. The ratio of visual content to text became a major factor in all learning-resources and was no longer restricted to the traditional *Picture Books* for the pre-reading or young-reader groups.

So today's class-teacher, depending on the financial power and expectations of the individual school-community, has access to an astonishing array of new packages containing CDs and DVDs, in addition to books, electronic whiteboards, scientific equipment, gymnasium and sports materials and various media and equipment for visual arts, craft, theatre, musical performance, and design.

Compared to the enthusiastic, but inexperienced, WWTC graduates entering the 1965 classrooms, today's teachers in NSW have been given three more years to prepare for the extraordinary challenges awaiting them in the complex learning-environment that is today's classroom – an extra year of high-school and two years of pre-service university teacher-education.

In 1879, in upper-primary school, my paternal grandmother, Mary Chifley, used stay behind at the end of the school-day in the bush-school at Wattle Flat, north of Bathurst, first as a monitor to fill the inkwells and clean the blackboard and all the children's slates, but then to be instructed more deeply in the concepts and skills that were the foundations of literacy and numeracy and in the core cultural capacities that were seen as essential for surviving in, and prospering in, that pioneering society. Later, she was on her own, running *Lower Lewis Ponds Public School*, nearer to Orange, where her two daughters

and two eldest sons were amongst her pupils.

The Digital Revolution has presented vast learning-resources to today's classteachers. If they are learned enough, they can be brilliant tutors for the individual children for whose school-learning they are responsible. How well do they understand the sequences and statuses of the thousands of curricular concepts and skills? How capable are they of challenging each child without undermining the student's curiosity and imagination?

Our future as a prosperous and confident nation depends heavily on their wisdom and determination.

Gerard Say (1963-64)

COMING EVENTS

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The next quarterly meeting of the Alumni Association will be held at 11 am on:

Tuesday 8th May 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 held at the Icons Restaurant in the Marriott Hotel, Pitt Street Sydney (near the Quay) on Tuesday 15th May, 2012.

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

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HALL OF FAME

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG'S OLDEST GRADUATE

Elaine Dunn (Graham) 1950-51 has finally completed her thesis on "*The Tyranny of Distance*" and has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy at the Wollongong University.

At the recent graduation ceremony in Wollongong she had an extra special reason to celebrate as, at 83, she became the oldest ever graduate of UOW.

Elaine grew up on a property about 40 km west of Wagga. There was no school close to the property so she received her schooling by correspondence through the Blackfriars Correspondence School. After completing Primary school she continued with lessons from Blackfriars and passed the Intermediate Certificate.

She really wanted to be a Primary teacher but Blackfriars did not provide instruction beyond the Intermediate.

She managed to find ways to study privately and in 1949 she sat for the Leaving Certificate as a private study student. She comfortably passed four subjects which was sufficient for the award of a scholarship in Teacher Training and she commenced at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in 1950.

Elaine started teaching Kindergarten at Tumut Central School in 1952. She became Deputy Mistress at Wagga Public School in Gurwood St and was seconded for two years to lecture in Infant Education at WWTC. Then she became Infants Mistress at Turvey Park and did some lecturing at the College of Advanced Education.

She then moved to Jasper Road Public School in Baulkham Hills and became Principal of Seven Hills West Primary School from where she retired.

She and her husband moved to Kiama where she completed a BA Honours thesis through the University of New England titled *A Study of the Kiama Region in the nineteenth Century*.



She continued her studies and was awarded a Masters Degree for a further study on *Kiama: Its Region and Community 1901-1938*.

She then embarked on her Doctorate thesis on *Tyranny of Distance*, a story of rural life and culture and the efforts of young teachers to bring education to children in the distant and isolated regions. She made an appeal through the pages of Talkabout and many teachers responded and provided her with much information to support her thesis.

Her supervisors were so impressed with her research that they have suggested that the project be turned into a book, so who knows, that may be her next project.

If anyone wishes to read the thesis it can be downloaded from the UOW website at:

<http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/3391>.

A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT

JOHN CUMMINS, A PIONEER.

August 1930 - August 2011

Taken from the Eulogy delivered at the funeral by John's son Peter.

Dad was born in Grenfell in 1930 and he had one older sister, Esma. Because his Dad worked on the railways he moved many times in his childhood - always to small country settlements. His happy childhood memories were of tiny schools, lots of cousins, rabbit hunting, practising race-calling and chopping wood (he had great aspirations to be a famous woodchopper).

Dad's life was profoundly affected by the death of his mother when he was just twelve. He was then sent to boarding school for his high school years at St Stanislaus Bathurst.

His father was a World War I veteran who lived at Canowindra. Dad was immensely proud of his father, his war service, his medals and his sense of responsibility.

After school Dad went to Wagga Wagga Teachers College where he made some life-long friends. He spent his first few years relief-teaching around little country schools, working at Cowra Migrant Centre and he eventually found his way to Sydney - teaching at Wentworthville Public School. He was very happy at Wenty, made some terrific friends and eventually began frequenting Friday night dances at Vics at Concord. It was at Vics that he met Mary Culhane and they were married on 9th January 1960: - 51 years ago.

With good negotiating skills they managed to pay the asking price for their house at Baulkham Hills, moved in when it still had an outhouse tin-can for a toilet and set up a happy home for the four children that would arrive quickly in the following years.

Our childhood was remarkably harmonious and happy. Mum and Dad surrounded us with love and support and our home was full of good humour and co-operation.



Dad was always worried about money, he often worked second jobs but somehow Mum and Dad always seemed to manage and we wanted for nothing.

Holidays to Canowindra and Crookwell were a big part of our childhood memories and we continue to have wonderful family holidays at the Crookwell farm with our cousins. Dad and Uncle John would sit in the front of the ute, smoking and listening to the horse racing and football while the rest of us would travel "cattle class" in the back of the ute. In later years Dad would sometimes stay at Crookwell on his own, and enjoy the peace and solitude.

As we grew into teenagers we also began to holiday regularly at the Entrance and Dad found a new passion — prawning. His patience was endless, his search for prawning equipment awe-inspiring. He continually analyzed the tides and moon and had ever-changing theories on when and where the prawns would run. Where prawning was concerned he was a man on a mission.

Dad's working life progressed from teacher level and when he retired he was principal at Rosehill Primary School.

Dad's easy-going and friendly manner was made for retirement. He was

gloriously happy. He loved his life with Mum, enjoyed being involved with his children and grandchildren's lives, continued to recycle his old jokes, and followed the horses. He liked to potter in the garage, he went to church more, he enjoyed bowls, joined St Vincent De Paul, could spend hours shopping, and in latter years had become a reality TV aficionado with Mum. For a man with a gentle soul he always had a strong opinion of who should be going home from: Survivor, The Apprentice, MasterChef, or Biggest Loser - just to name a few.

Dad has been sick with myelofibrosis for eighteen months and the acceptance and forbearance he has shown have been an example to us all. Like the rest of their lives, he and Mum have shown much grace and integrity in dealing with his decline and it has been a privilege to be part of their lives.

It's impossible to describe Dad and his life without noting his great faith, his fantastic, loving partnership with Mum, his great sense of responsibility in providing for us, his enormous pride in his extended family and his non-judgmental nature. In a world always rushing Dad was a man who gave off serenity and calmness. He was a good man, he was a gentle man and he was much loved.

John's grandson, Patrick has recently achieved prominence as a cricketer, making the Australian Test team at the age of 18.

He enjoyed a sensational Test debut, taking a match total seven wickets to set up a thrilling two-wicket win to square the series against South Africa. Not bad for an 18-year-old.

Dot Tanner recalls a conversation with John when he expressed great pride in Patrick's cricketing success even before he gained the baggy cap. Ed.

NEWS FROM CSU

CSU's New School of Education

In January this year, Charles Sturt University's (CSU) Murray School of Education, based in Albury, and the School of Education in Wagga Wagga merged to form a new larger and expanded School of Education. The amalgamation of two schools within CSU's Faculty of Education will offer students in the Border and Riverina regions more options and strengthen the University's ability to meet the needs of education providers in regional Australia.

"In the longer term, we intend to better utilise University resources to afford students, schools and early childhood services across the Border and Riverina regions even greater diversity of programs and support, and better access to expertise at Charles Sturt University," said Professor Toni Downes, Dean of the Faculty of Education.

"In Wagga Wagga we look forward to welcoming a large number of students into our two on-campus education courses, the Bachelor of Education (Primary) and Bachelor of Education (Technology and Applied Studies). We also look forward to opening our new early childhood education centre (on the Albury-Wodonga campus) and continuing our strong collaborations with schools and services in and around the Border and Riverina regions," she said.

Real Teaching in an Island Paradise

Each year, early childhood and primary education students from CSU can spend up to three weeks in Vanuatu in the tropical Pacific Islands completing teaching experience in a truly multicultural setting.

Ms Sam Whitehouse from the University's Murray School of Education based in Albury-Wodonga was one of 13 CSU students and two staff who worked in three very different schools in and around Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu in November 2011.



"Education in Vanuatu is not compulsory. Students sit a national exam every year to decide whether or not they are allowed to continue. Schools are not funded by the government so parents must pay."

Her first experience was at the Port Vila Central School. "We were introduced to Ni-Vanuatu culture and experienced teaching Island style when we commenced our practicum. The second and third weeks were contrasts in teaching styles and resources, starting at the Port Vila International School, where students attended classes from pre-school to Year 10. Teaching in the international school was no different to teaching in a private school in NSW. We had amazing access to resources and they followed the NSW curriculum with

which we were familiar," Ms Whitehouse said.

"For me, the highlight in the second week was the behaviour management strategies I learnt from a teacher passionate about classroom management. She was very inspiring!"

In the third week of the placement, the CSU students were able to contrast this abundance of resources with the more basic facilities offered at Pango Village School, a small school just outside Port Vila for children in classes from pre-school to Year 8.

News from Alumni

The advancement Unit continues to develop its campaign to encourage Alumni to register and build the accuracy of our records and provide you with access to CSU's *Free Member Benefit Programme*. Many of you have already registered online, however if you haven't, please do at www.csu.edu.au/alumni. While you are there, you can also have a look at the CSU Alumni social media networks on Facebook (facebook.com/charlessturalumni) and [twitter@AlumniCSU](https://twitter.com/AlumniCSU).

Stacey Fish



The Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association



KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE IN 2012 TO SECURE THE FUTURE

The Scholarship Fund has been closed with a grand total of \$60,000. Congratulations to all our contributors! This means that we can award Scholarships to a total of \$6,000 annually.

We also have a further \$18,902 which will be contributed towards our next Fundraising project.

You will note that our Association is now known as the Wagga Wagga Teachers' Alumni Association as all graduates of W.W.T.C., Riverina C.A.E., Riverina Murray I.H.E. and the C.S.U. Campus have been invited to join our ranks.

The next stage of the W.W.T.A.A. fundraising is still to be confirmed. The Committee is now considering applying the fundraising to assisting students with expenses incurred in practice placements.

However, while we consider the best way to move forward, we encourage you to continue supporting the WWTAA and we hope that the past generosity will remain strong.

**All donations should be made payable to the Charles Sturt Foundation at:-
Charles Sturt University, Panorama Avenue, Bathurst NSW 2795**

As you know, we pay for the printing of TALKABOUT as well as the cost of postage. The cost of each edition of Talkabout is now around \$2,000. It has therefore been decided that an annual subscription of \$10 per member is required and that this will fall due at the time of the March "Talkabout".

**Talkabout subscriptions should go directly to the Treasurer of the WWT Alumni Association:-
Lindsay Budd, 4 Flemington Close, Casula NSW 2170.
If you require a receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the University Advancement Unit on 02 6338 4832.

**Here is my donation to WWTAA Fundraising.
Donations over \$2.00 are TAX DEDUCTABLE.**

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