



A PUBLICATION  
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WAGGA TEACHERS

# TALKABOUT



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Examinations in the Auditorium 1965

## VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is indeed a pleasure to open the second edition of *Talkabout* for 2015 while President Bruce enjoys a well earned trip as he and Lesley travel around our great nation.

I am sure that all in the Alumni were sorry to hear of the passing of Lew Morrell in July. As a founding member, Lew was a wonderful supporter through his work as editor of *Talkabout*, firstly with Lew Crabtree and later with Lindsay Budd. *Talkabout* has kept alive the history of the graduates of Wagga. In addition to his efforts through *Talkabout*, Lew was a force behind the Scholarship Fund encouraging donations and then every year, until this year, being involved in the interviewing of candidates and the presentation of scholarships. Lindsay Budd gave a wonderful eulogy at Lew's funeral highlighting his contributions to the Association.

It was pleasing to note that the Scholarship recipients this year were two final year students from small Riverina towns. Ryan Heffer from Temora is completing his Dip. Ed. in Secondary Science and Jayde Hounsell from Lockhart is finishing her Primary training. She has a strong Mathematics background. We wish them well for the completion of their studies and career in education.

After consultation with Wagga Wagga City Council the dates for the 70 Year Reunion in Wagga Wagga have been set for Friday, 27th October, 2017 to Monday, 30th October, 2017. Lesley Forbes would love to hear from volunteers for the Steering Committee.

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## EDITOR

Welcome to the second edition of *Talkabout* 2015.

Our thanks to those who have shared their memories and stories with us. I am sure that the articles and stories in this edition will be enjoyed by your friends and colleagues and will encourage them to do likewise.

Apologies to those whose article has not been included. I still have a number of stories that I will include in the next edition.

Despite the backlog of articles referred to above, additional material is still needed for the next edition. Please put fingers to the keyboard, or if you prefer, pen to paper and we will have them typed up once we receive them.

When submitting articles please consider sending along photos as they add to the story. Whilst older photos help enrich the story more recent shots are appreciated by those reading your article.

If you haven't the time to write a full article just a few lines to the Secretary can be included and it will inform friends and colleagues that you are still connected to the Alumni.

**Brian Powyer**

## VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Cont'd

The 50 Year Reunion for 1965 - 1968 will be held in Wagga from the 15th to 17th of May 2016 and planning is well under way. Make sure that your contact details are up to date.

Nancy Blacklow's book *South Campus - A History* has sold out and will be reprinted. A corre-

tion to the preface now correctly states Wagga Wagga was operating in 1947 well before Bathurst, which began in 1951. It is anticipated that this edition will be available later in the year.

**Chris Blake**  
Vice President WWTCAA

## ACROSS THE SECRETARY'S DESK



Thanks for all your letters and emails. They make the most interesting reading. I have included many in my column below.

**Harry Gibbs (1947-49)** I would just like to add my thanks and congratulations to all those involved in reviving *Talkabout* and thus giving us oldies a link to a past life. It was great to read a contribution from the lovely Marie Hulme in the November edition. It is nice to know that Marie is still out and about and enjoying a happy barley-water free life. Stay well, Marie.

**Jenny Atkins (1956-57)** On 18th October 2014 I attended a reunion for students and teachers of the 50's and 60's of both Kemps Creek and Badgerys Creek Schools. There were over

200 people there which made it a little difficult to circulate. However I met several of my Lower Division students as well as older brothers and sisters and 5 teachers who followed after me (I had been the first assistant appointed to Kemps Creek in 1958). It was certainly an interesting "blast from the past". The organiser (who had started school the year after I was transferred) had spent many hours researching. He put an advertisement in *The Sydney Morning Herald* with a school photo and I just happened to see it and recognised the Headmaster. Best wishes.

**P.S.** After all these years I found out that my time at these schools counted as country service.

**Secretary's Note:** My great grandfather was principal at Kemps Creek at the turn of the century, 1900s. *cont'd next page*

### CONTACT US

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## ACROSS THE SECRETARY'S DESK Cont'd

**Barry Ewert (1953-54)** Many thanks for *Talkabout* issues and an appreciated thanks to all who have helped to write and collate it. I'm sure there are many like me that the only contact with the college and colleagues is through *Talkabout* where we can read the many stories and relate them to our own experiences. On reflection, College days bring back many happy memories and it's pleasing to see *Talkabout* continuing.

**Bruce Molloy (1962-63)** Many thanks for all your work in taking WWTCAA from strength to strength. The efforts of you and your committee are very much appreciated. This view is appreciated by my ex-student friends and myself. Whenever *Talkabout* is received it is always a topic for much discussion... Keep up the great work!

**Geoff Gorman (1950-51)** My first appointment was as Lithgow District Relief Teacher. I had a stint in the middle of winter at Portland. My class was 3C-4C-5C-6C and the classroom was the C.W.A. room adjacent to the school playground. On the first day there, the boss gave me a shilling to put in a meter in the room for an electric heater. The class soon told me that if I took the heater to the back of the room, I could plug it in and it would go all day for nothing – and I could keep the shilling! Not so dumb after all!

**Pam Harris (1957-58)** Many thanks for sending back copies. I know I will enjoy reading them.

**Liz Farley** just letting you know

that **Ian Thomas (1947-49)** is suffering health problems since a turn last November.

**Barb Sawtell (1959-60)** I enjoy receiving *Talkabout*. I am happy to receive just the electronic version.

**Elaine Saunders (1962-63)** Sincere thanks for all your admirable efforts.

**Stan Fulker (1948-50)** Really enjoying the *Talkabout* so congratulations to the new team.

**Wayne Shaw (1955-56)** Thank you for all your time-consuming hard work for the Alumni.

**Ann Goninon (1954-55)** Is there any plan afoot for a reunion of our 54/55 session. Even a little one in Sydney would be great...lunch together or similar.

Thanks for *Talkabout*. Keep up the good work. Reading the stories though, I feel my life has been rather dull. My reward though is the kids that have made good citizens. I love the poem.

**Jim Lewis (1962-63)** I enjoyed reading them all. There seems to be very few from my session 60/61. Am I able to contribute something in the hope of reconnecting with a few from my section (32)?

**Cavel Payne (1967-68)** I enjoyed reading *Talkabout*. Congrats to you both. Your effort is appreciated.

**Warwick Bradley (1966-67)**

Thanks for the latest edition of *Talkabout*, especially with the news of Alan Maxwell's passing.

**John Grantley (1962-63)** Thank you so much for the latest edition of *Talkabout*. I do enjoy reading about past WWTC students and their varied and interesting lives. I look forward to searching through the digitised editions of *Talkabout*. A brilliant idea to have completed this project.

**Liz Meertens (1961-62)** Just having breakfast and read your mail. Thank you. This morning off to see my grandson in the presentation of his class sketches so will have to wait to peruse *Talkabout*. Dutch spring has more or less arrived. So sun and colour on the horizon. All the best wishes and thanks for the great work.

**Marie Curtis (1963-64)** Thank you for your hard work.

**Paul Nicoll (1967-68)** I am in Brazil where I have been pleased to receive *Talkabout*. WWTC's wings have travelled a long way. I am in Juiz de Fora. The Teachers' Union in this city is one of the strongest in the country. They have been on strike for months over their request for a fair wage and most parents support them – as I do.

**Alexander Abbotsmith (1953)** Thank you for *Talkabout* 2015. Always interesting. Good to keep in touch.

**Lesley Forbes**  
Secretary)



## NOW AND THEN: LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS



Members of the 50-51 Session together in 2015.



Members of 50-51 Session in the library.

*I could relate totally to the front of the November Talkabout and of course recognised Pam Clayton's head of hair in the foreground. As a consequence to this, I took a photo when meeting with some 1950/51 ex-students in Sydney in February (Pam being one of those attending) and hope it may bring back some memories for other ex-students of this era. Ella Keesing (Redpath) 1950/51.*

**Students of the 1950/51 year** meet once a year in Sydney in February. Pictured above Arthur King; Pam Holman (Clayton); Decima Pickles (Wheeler); Jeanette Jackson (Cowle); Margaret King (Wallace); Narelle Griffiths (Matthews); Ella Keesing (Redpath).

### **History after leaving college:**

**Arthur:** 1952–1962 small schools in the Riverina; 1963–1966 Mathematics teaching at Cootamundra High; 1967–1974 Mathematics Master Goulburn High; 1974–1978 Deputy Barham High; 1979–1984 Principal Hay Memorial High; 1985–1987 Principal Bomaderry High.

In his retirement Arthur travelled Australia collecting material for his family history of the King family, who migrated from Ireland, and in 1992 he published a book *A King from Tyrone*.

Arthur is in his 29<sup>th</sup> year of playing pennant bowls for the

Bomaderry Bowling Club. He is still a member of Nowra Rotary Club and has been awarded life membership of Nowra South Probus Club. Each year Arthur's Probus Club has an organised trip somewhere in Australia. He also enjoys tending a large vegetable garden on his acre of land on the south coast of NSW.

**Margaret:** (5<sup>th</sup> from left); married Arthur. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren) 1952–1953 Infants Henty; 1954–1955 Infants Gundagai; 1965–1966 Infants Cootamundra; 1967–1974 Infants in Goulburn area; 1975–1978 Infants at Wakool and Barham; 1980–84 Infants' Mistress at Hay; 1985–1986 Infants Shoalhaven Heads.

After teaching Margaret became very involved with spinning and weaving and attended statewide workshops. She also became an active member of the Australian Plants Society. Both Margaret and Arthur have attended Inter-

national Conventions of Rotary in Birmingham, Glasgow, Brisbane and Copenhagen.

**Pam:** Now lives in the Sydney area; she has 4 children and 11 grandchildren.

After leaving College Pam taught at West Parramatta (2 years); Bathurst Dem School (2 years); then at St Ives. She lived at St Ives and did casual teaching in the area for 12 years.

Pam's current interests include bowls at St Ives Bowling Club and at the Pymble Golf Club where she is President of a small group of ex-golfers who play bowls socially. Her other interest is swimming.

**Decima:** Married Ron Pickles, a student at Wagga in 49–50. They have 3 sons and 6 grandchildren, some in Sweden. Son, Tim, owns the highly successful *Tim's Garden Centre* in Campbelltown. Dec and Ron now live in Sydney. *cont'd next page*

On leaving College, Decima was appointed to Austral (a 3 teacher school), then Dubbo, Seven Hills, Rydalmere, Homebush, Toongabbie West and Metella Road where she became the Infants' Mistress and then Deputy Principal.

On retiring, Decima and Ron taught swimming to schools for many years. Now their interests are golf and heading to the warmer climes of Noosa in their caravan in the winter months, golf and fishing being major interests.

**Jeanette:** Now lives in Parkes. Her daughter, Meredith, who lives in Lithgow, drove to Parkes to pick up her mother to bring her to the reunion.

Jeanette has 2 children and 4 grandchildren, including triplets Jeanette taught in Tottenham,

Victoria and Shellharbour. In her retirement Jeanette enjoys reading, playing bridge and dining with friends.

**Narelle:** Currently resides in the Sydney area. She has 3 children and 3 grandchildren.

Narelle taught for 3 years before leaving the Department to help her husband in his furniture business. Narelle says she and her husband lead a simple life in a house near the harbour but enjoy driving to the mountains.

**Ella:** Moved to Melbourne in 1967 for her husband's work. She has 3 daughters and 6 grandchildren.

Ella taught at Hammondville for 3 years, Wagga Dem School for a year, then at Collaroy Plateau. She upgraded to 3 year trained

status in Victoria and registered with the Victorian Education Department.

An interest in the disability field led to a Post Graduate course in Special Education at Deakin University. Ella's particular interest was in the language area as she worked with children who had limited verbal skills.

In retirement she has helped to produce several books and CD Roms illustrating manual signs (Auslan). Ella also works on numerous committees –Probus, Life Activities Club, Key Word Sign Victoria and enjoys walking, gardening, travel, reading, attending Melbourne Theatre Company plays.

**Ella Keesing (Redpath)  
1950/51**

## WWTC THE BEGINNING OF AN ENVIABLE LIFE ODYSSEY.

### Terence Lindsay Dwyer 61-62



March 1961: I boarded the express train to Wagga Wagga with freedom, a suit case and bank account

of £52. After retrieving my case from the station I headed to WWTC and my life's odyssey was underway.

After graduating from College I was appointed to North Wagga Public School. At the same time I signed up with Wagga City Rugby Union Club.

My North Wagga appointment

only lasted a year. Heather (Evans) was still at College and was a major partner in our black VW. It turned out to be a busy year, dodging Fanny B and getting to training etc. I was then appointed District Relief Teacher servicing an area of about 100km around Wagga.

Heather was appointed close to her home in Sydney in 1964. In those days the Wagga-Sydney trip involved around 7-8 VW hours on the old Hume Highway. Three of us had girls in Sydney and made the trip as often as footy would allow! My landlady packed us enough food for the trip both ways but didn't include the usual bottle of D.A.

Heather and I were married in January 1965 - it is our 50th anniversary this year. I had been appointed to Brucedale, a small school 8 miles north of Wagga, and Heather to South Wagga Public School. Brucedale had a 'vested residence' which had been condemned fifteen years previously. It was primitive but **CHEAP** and allowed us to build our first home at Koorngal in 1967. That same year Brucedale was closed and I had a further stint as the District Relief Teacher prior to a transfer to Ashmont Infants. Against my will I was subsequently moved to the GA staff of Mt Austin High. My **Small Schools'** training was considered adequate. Ho! Ho! *Cont'd next page*

Following completion of a my B.A. at UNE I was transferred to the Commerce Department of Mt Austin High, gained various listings and in 1976 moved to Canobolas High, Orange as Head Teacher Social Sciences under Principal Fred Dobbin. We built a large, beautiful home in Orange and enjoyed it for some eleven years.

*I think these were my happiest teaching years; great school, kids, staff and top social life.*

For some years I was involved with Service Clubs; Apex, Lions and eventually Rotary International. Heather has been similarly involved with her church organisations, View and Quota International.

We have also dabbled in enterprises outside pedagogical pa-

rameters as interests, and with varying outcomes! Over the years we invested heavily in Robb College, U.N.E. from which each of our three children gained their tertiary education (in comfort) and launched their subsequently successful careers in Education, Town Planning and Mining....*Well, two out of three ain't bad !!*

Mudgee High School gained me as Deputy Principal in 1987. A wonderful school, community and life style which we were sad to leave after only two years.

My next appointment (1989) was possibly the "**Best Ever**". As much as we loved Mudgee, Gloucester proved to be our favorite posting. We stayed there in various roles for 13 years – Heather as A.P. Gloucester Public and I as D.P. Gloucester

High with extensive periods as Acting Principal.

We eventually retired and moved to Forster in October. 2001. We have been fortunate in our travels both around Australia and O/S in that we have invariably enjoyed the company of wonderful people and between us have seen a lot of the inhabited world.

We still have much to see along with some parts of our own great Australia. Forster is a pretty good place from which to begin our future travels.

**Terry Dwyer, 1961 – 62**



## WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO JOHN ("JIM") CAROLAN 1954-55

Back in the late 60's and early 70's many WWTC teachers moved to western Canada. At the time most teachers in western Canada were trained like apprentices in the schools, they graduated from what was called "Normal School". However, the provincial (state) governments felt that to teach one should have university qualifications, so many hundreds of teachers left the classroom to go to university. This caused quite a shortage of teachers so advertisements went out to teachers in Australia and the United Kingdom to come and teach in Canada. We were offered almost double the salary we received in NSW and the Canada and Alberta governments gave us a tax free status

for the first two years !! No income tax!! Another encouragement was that teachers returning to NSW with overseas experience (e.g. exchanges) seemed to get promoted quickly (to our surprise !!)

Hundreds of young Australian teachers accepted teaching positions in Alberta, Saskatchewan and in British Columbia. This included many teaching in the Riverina that I knew, most who were trained at WWTC.

In 1968, I accepted to teach math at a beautiful new high school at Warburgin Alberta. The classrooms and most of the school was carpeted, the staffroom was a dream, and we were given all the teaching

equipment we could possibly hope for.

In 1969 I met and married a wonderful Canadian nurse. My parents flew in from Australia. However, I was also able to invite to the wedding 23 Australian teachers I knew who were teaching in Alberta.

Most of my friends returned to Australia at the end of two years. This was despite reports coming back from returning teachers to NSW of the way the NSW Education Department treated them (unsatisfactory appointment offers) and the fact that the Australian Federal Government was taxing at least some returning teachers who stayed in - *cont'd next page*



Canada for less than two years, on the money they earned in Canada. There are only three of us left in Canada of the 23 who came to our wedding.

I had another reason to stay. In

1974 we formed a hobby company, *Koala Books of Canada Ltd* to import books for university bookstores and public and university libraries across Canada and down into the USA. It started small but it

grew and was quite profitable. From 1975, I taught in Edmonton high schools until I retired in 1997 to then work for Koala Books.

**John Carolan (1954-55)**

## OUR MYRTLE: A GODDESS REBORN

What are your memories of Myrtle? What mischievous deeds did you do to enhance her body?

Alas, she no longer stands in that exalted position, gracing the small garden adjacent to the Administration Building. She was “retired” to the grounds of the Boorooma Campus. Here she stands forlornly, like Atlas, labouring under the weight of a huge round globe and cowering beneath a eucalypt, which has been slowly succumbing to dry rot, thus endangering her very existence.

Following the 2012 Reunion of the 1960–1962 cohorts a plan to restore Myrtle’s dignity was hatched. A replacement globe, in keeping with the original, was purchased. Armed with this fitting Ray Petts revisited the

CSU. He met with Wayne Millar, Director Operational Services, CSU Riverina, who advised that the area around Myrtle will be developed into a natural parkland with water features to be known as the *Cliff Blake Pleasance*.



This area will also include the Rotunda. The offending eucalypt will be removed. Interpretive signs will be installed. Ray has suggested that crepe myrtles

be planted near Myrtle.

The support of former students is sought. Early photos (preferably black and white) of Myrtle and the rotunda would be appreciated so that an image could be placed on the interpretive signs. If you have any documentation or memories of their installation please forward them to The Secretary, WWTCAA.

The Mary Gilmour Gates also deserve preservation. Any photographs and/or information you may have together with your ideas as to their eventual location would also be appreciated.

We owe both Ray and Wayne Millar our thanks for their efforts in this project.

**Bob Haskew,  
Archives Officer WWTCAA.**

## WWTCAA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2015

The WWTCAA has been supporting the Charles Sturt University Foundation since 1997 and this year Jayde Hounsell and Ryan Heffer were chosen as joint recipients of the WWTCAA scholarship.

Both candidates displayed outstanding attributes and conducted themselves in a confident and professional manner during interviews. Ryan is completing

a Bachelor of Science/ Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) and Jayde, Bachelor of Education (Primary).

Both have also made impressive voluntary contributions to their local communities and possess musical and sporting skills. Their schooling has been in rural settings and both are hoping to find employment in rural areas.

Chris and I had the great pleasure of representing the WWTCAA at the Charles Sturt University Foundation Scholarship Presentation Ceremony on Wednesday, May 20. We were able to present Jayde with her Certificate but unfortunately Ryan was unable to attend as he was involved in a teaching placement.

**Chris and Louise Fox  
1968-69**

## THANK YOU: SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS' RESPONSE

### Jayde Hounsell:

I am the first in my immediate family to attend university and my parents and siblings recognise and are proud of the hours I dedicate towards my university studies. They have supported me through both stressful and rewarding times motivating me to always try my hardest. If it wasn't for this support I do not believe I would have achieved the academic grades I have.

Living out of town and having to pay expenses such as fuel, food and rent has meant that I have had to work increased hours in part time and casual employment positions. This scholarship will allow me to concentrate and dedicate more hours towards my study and professional development which I hope will better prepare me for my teaching career in the near future.

This scholarship will assist me in successfully completing my last year of university including my practical experience at Rand Public School. It therefore allows me to further develop an understanding of effective teaching pedagogies through the university subjects as well as applying these in my own classroom. This will greatly contribute to my confidence when embarking on my teaching career and will prepare me to implement successful rural pedagogies in the near future.

I would like to thank WWTCOA for providing me with financial ease and increased motivation to finish my last year at university. I will try my hardest in this last year to further develop both personally and professionally to become a successful educator. I am motivated to teach and inspire in rural and disadvantaged contexts and I am very grateful for the financial assistance that has brought me closer to this goal.



Jayde Hounsell receiving her Scholarship from Chris Fox (WWTC 68-69)

### Ryan Heffer:

Attending University has been a great challenge that has allowed me to step into independence and grow in knowledge as well. My family and I are thankful for the blessing to be able to attend university to further my education and help equip me to take the next step in the journey of my life.

This scholarship will allow me to complete my practical placement subjects in my education degree without needing to worry about the expenses associated with accommodation and travel. This blessing will mean that I can concentrate on university study and my placement without needing to worry about where the money for the extra expenses will come from. This means less stress and worry as well as the ability to devote myself to study.

My personal and professional aspirations revolve around being the best secondary teacher I can be. I wish to remain in a rural setting and this scholarship will allow me to travel to these areas to complete my practical experiences which will help me develop as a professional for this setting.

I know that a lot of people contribute to this scholarship and I am very grateful for their support. I will likely not meet any of the several donors but their support and encouragement mean a lot to me. It is encouraging to know there are people willing to contribute financially to people they have never met and will likely never meet. For this I am very thankful.

**Congratulations to Jayde and Ryan from all members of the WWTCOA.**



## HANDS ACROSS THE WATERS—THE CANADIAN CONNECTION

Some years back, John Charles Ferris (aka Charlie Ferris) set up a WWTC egroup ( email ) via Yahoo, now incorporated within Yahoo groups.

Once it gained momentum, many ex-WWTC members joined, some of whom had never been in contact over the years. Subsequently friendships were rekindled and in my case new friendships were formed.

For my part, I was able to make contact with my first room mate, Leonie Hack and her husband, Kevin Mitchell, who now reside on the QLD Gold Coast.

Through egroup I met up with Deanne Churchill, also on the Gold Coast. Our paths had never crossed in WWTC days ( different section, different dorm and different sporting teams). We have become firm friends ever since 2000, when we first met for lunch, which we now do on a regular basis.

Further afield, I made contact with Brian Pettit in Canada and we stayed with him and his family several times. Once again, Brian and I had never actually "met" in 59/60. He and Bill Keast were both school principals in Nanaimo, where they both still reside. Brian had invited Bill to also catch up on our first visit. We all kept in touch over the next few years.

When in Vancouver, I had always stayed with Judy Morrison ( Noble ) and her husband Jim.

Fast track to Sept / Oct 2014 and this time I made the trip

alone, as my husband, Graham had recently lost his eleven year battle with Non Hodgkins Lymphoma, only three weeks before our only child Steven had presented us with our only grandchild, in Vancouver

The plan was to stay some of the time with Judy and Jim. Judy had liaised with Brian and Bill to travel by ferry to Nanaimo so that we could have our first ever get together as a foursome.

Unfortunately, Judy and Jim had to leave town, as their daughter who lived about nine hours drive away had to have emergency surgery. So, then there were three!

Judy suggested Bill and Brian come over to me on the mainland, as I'm a bit fragile and have a problem with stairs. This coupled with my non-existent sense of direction, made it a bit daunting for me and quite within the realms of possibility that I would get lost in transit.

Brian had to pass on that, as he is having health issues and really needs to stay close to home. So, then there were two!

I suggested to Bill that we also take a "pass" and hope for another time. However, he said we should go ahead as planned, so we two met for lunch and had a great few hours catching up. Thank you Bill, for keeping the "tradition" of catching up.

Brian had stayed with us for a few days some time back, so he knew Graham. I must say, it was great to be able to reminisce

over old times and various college friends.

Brian had been in touch with Pippa Ingram who also lives on Vancouver Island. I believe that she too is engaged in a health battle, so there was no chance of her joining us either. I have never really "met" Pippa, but I remember her from WWTC days and it would have been nice to make contact too.

Pippa, if you get to read this little tale "out of school" please know that I am thinking of you and having been in a similar situation recently, my thoughts are with you. It would have been nice to really meet and chat. Maybe another time. Maybe even another 59/60 reunion soon?

What a blast the fiftieth anniversary reunion was, in Mittagong. So, thanks once again to the wonderful organisers.

AND, thanks too to Charlie Ferris for the egroup, as it was the egroup that made possible the Canadian Connection.

**Best Wishes  
Joan Kirkham. (Robinson)  
WWTC 59/60**

### A POEM FOR DAD

Thank you for including Dad's Verse in your last *Talkabout*. The family was chuffed and dad would have been as well. Greatly appreciated.

**Lance Raskall**

## I REMEMBER JOE LONSDALE —Mervyn Whitaker 1947-49

I remember Joe Lonsdale quite well as the young bursar of WWTC in 1947 when the College was opened. He was highly respected and well liked by everyone – his peers and the pioneer students.

If Joe can claim to be the first bursar and first of the administrative staff to arrive at WWTC, then I believe I may claim to be the first student to arrive there.

This happened quite by chance. I was one of the returned servicemen from WWII who was offered a scholarship for tertiary education. On my return to Australia after service with the AIF in New Guinea and then in Japan with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), I intended to take up the scholarship at Sydney University's Asian Studies department, specialising in Japanese.

My initial career choice was governed by the fact that I already spoke some Japanese. While in Lae, New Guinea, I had been transferred to ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit) and ordered to study the Japanese language. Tutoring was organised for me by way of correspondence lessons from Melbourne. Later, I was transferred to Rabaul, recently retaken by the Allies, so that I could take lessons from a Japanese speaker. A Japanese Sergeant (same rank as myself) who was a prisoner of war there, was released every afternoon from the camp to tutor me. A few weeks after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I had been transferred to BCOF's Ed-

ucation Unit on the island of Etajima near Kure.

I returned to Australia in April 1947 and found my parents had moved from their farm near Tumbarumba to live in Wagga. After being away without leave for three years, I so much enjoyed being back with my parents, Vera and Jim, and my younger brothers, Doug and Bob, that I was reluctant to move on to Sydney to attend university. Then I heard about the opening of the WWTC. I hopped on my recently acquired Harley Davidson motor-bike and rode up to the collection of ugly old airforce huts on a barren hillside and, unannounced, knocked on the office door of the Principal, George Blakemore.

There is no need for me to describe the chaos that confronted me when the Principal invited me into his office. Joe Lonsdale's description of the muddle and confusion that greeted his arrival says it all. The Principal invited me to sit on one packing case while he sat on another and told me his tale of woe. He was expecting 150 students (75 men and 75 women) as well as a full complement of academic staff to arrive the first week in May. The newly named WWTC had a kitchen but no cook or kitchen staff; barracks with beds, but no housekeeper or domestic staff; and no assurance that any domestic staff would be forthcoming.

After we chewed over the problem for some time, I gallantly offered the services of my moth-

er, Vera. I told Mr Blakemore I thought my mother might help out until he could find permanent staff. My mother was used to cooking for large numbers – shearers and big family occasions on the family farm, "Clifton". I told him I thought she might be able to gather up a few friends to help out in the kitchen for a while.

And so it was that my mother was dragooned into becoming WWTC's housekeeper, a position she kept until her resignation five years later. What a challenge it was for her! But she took it in her stride. Numbers of permanent kitchen and domestic staff arrived just before the flood of students. Alas! They were all from Bonegilla Refugee Camp, recent arrivals in Australia from East European countries - the Balkan States, Yugoslavia, Poland, Russia. None of them had more than a few words of English.

None of the new domestic staff had much cooking experience. But what joy for my mother to discover one of the men was a butcher. Gross, a huge Croatian of fierce - *cont'd next page*



appearance, wielded a butcher's axe with dexterity, especially when the Principal appeared in the kitchen to make an inspection, which was always a very short one. Another young man, "Jimmy" Habul, spoke a little English and was interested to learn to cook. Under my mother's tuition, he became a first-rate cook and pursued a chef's career long after leaving WWTC.

My parents were given a flat in the college grounds. Jimmy Habul with his wife Clara and two

little sons were given the flat next door. My father helped the cleaners when they were short-handed. My mother was on call day and night, for ordinary and special occasions. Given a limited budget with which to satisfy the healthy appetites of so many young men and women was a greater challenge for her than communication. It was amazing how she managed to communicate with staff. She used her hands to good effect. Long after her time at WWTC, her family teased her, claiming that she could not communicate at

all, even in English, unless she used her hands!

Long after her time at WWTC she remained in contact with Mrs Blakemore as well as with many of the "new Australians" who had been members of her staff.

I was 23 when I sat with George Blakemore amid the chaos of his office. I am 91 now, and have a few years to go to catch up with Joe Lonsdale!

**Mervyn Whittaker**  
1947-49

## LIFE STORY: PART 1—BILL MURRAY 1960-61)

*Bill Murray was acknowledged in the last edition of Talkabout for his award of Order of Australia for services to the community. The following article looks at Part 1 of his life story.*



I was born in 1941 at Young NSW where I had the good fortune of growing up on a sheep and wheat farm. Farm life was a great lifestyle but it had many hardships that we had to endure e.g. drought, floods, bushfires and locust plagues. To make matters worse it was a 2 hour drive in an old Dodge utility to the nearest town for supplies and medical attention.

I was the eldest of 6 children (3 sisters and 2 brothers) and we all went to school at a one (1) teacher school at Tubbul. We didn't have anything and we didn't expect anything because we were used to going without. I was considered lucky if I got a dinky toy for Xmas. We were all happy and worked together as a family to solve our prob-

lems. We were all brought up as caring and nurturing people because of the difficulties that we had to endure with farm life and we quickly learned to support one another to survive.

Our school holidays were spent working on the farm to provide much needed help. I learned to drive farm machinery when I was 10 years old to help out at harvest time. Being the eldest I would have to drive everyone to school with whatever was available and not in use at the time because there was no school bus. This meant boarding with my grandmother in the nearest town for much of my High School days. At school I was Vice Captain, Sports Captain and senior athletics champion. Farm life meant severe exposure to the sun and I find myself continually visiting the doctor for removal of carcinomas and melanoma. I vividly recall lamb marking with my father. I had

to hold the lambs on a fence railing while he branded their ear, castrated the males and cut off their tails. When he looked at me all I could see was the whites of his eyes peering through a blood spattered face and he would say in that typical country drawl 'Ya don't wanna be doing this for the rest of your life, Ya wanna get a real job'. This was the drive that made me work hard at school and I was able to secure a scholarship and finally complete university.

**Joining the work force.** I completed a teacher training course at Wagga Teacher's College in 1962 and was appointed to Albury High School teaching senior Biology to Leaving Certificate candidates. I was then transferred to Narooma Central School to set up that school's first new science laboratory. Having spent all of my life in the dry, dusty heart of the western - *cont'd next page*



districts it was like living in paradise at Narooma with its wonderful beaches, great fishing and its natural forest backdrop.

It was here that I met my wife Maureen. She was a descendent of one of the first pioneer families in Narooma and was working in the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney. Our courtship lasted 3 years and we were married in the historic heritage cathedral at Bodalla built by Thomas Mort. It still has the stone floor at the back of the church where the convicts used to sit.

We moved to Austinmer in a 1 bedroom flat opposite the beach and I taught at Woonona High

School while my wife continued her career with National Australia Bank. We built a new project home at Bulli where we live to this day. I was promoted to science master and appointed to Kanahooka High School.

I contributed 10 years to working with Illawarra rugby league, refereeing both senior and junior football.

My wife and I were never fortunate to have children of our own so we thought it best if we could help children in need and we decided to adopt. We now have 2 wonderful children. Bradford, who is of Canadian descent, completed a university education and Nadine, who is of Irish

descent, completed training as a nurse.

**Change in Career.** My life on the farm in those early days and my love of the land generated a 'mid life crisis' that resulted in a change of direction in my career and I became interested in property development. I completed town planning, land economics, real estate valuation and a post graduate degree before working as a consultant in a private company preparing environmental impact assessments for councils.

I then decided to join the Public Service .....

**Read Part 2  
Next Edition of *Talkabout*.**

## 69-72 SESSION: DID THEY CLOSE WAGGA TC BECAUSE OF YOU?

A small but enthusiastic group of those who attended WWTC in either the last (1971) or second last year met recently at Boyles Hotel in Sutherland.

After hearing some of the stories that were spun over a few beers the question of the closure of the College was raised. The consensus of the group was that it was not our fault, though

some of the shenanigans described might have suggested this.

What this impromptu meeting did was to spark a discussion about the need for another get together for those of us that saw the end of Wagga Wagga TC.

It is proposed to organise another opportunity for the *Enders*

(the opposite of the Pioneers) to gather together again.

The suggested date is lunchtime on Friday 11 September 2015. Depending on the availability of the venue. Possibly the Rugby Club, following our last function

What we need to know is that if any of the 69 to 71 group would be interested?

If so, email your expression of interest to:

Neville Keeley  
[nev.keeley@gmail.com](mailto:nev.keeley@gmail.com)  
or  
Bob Hogan  
[bphoges@hotmail.com](mailto:bphoges@hotmail.com)

Looking forward to hearing from as many *Enders* as possible so please spread the word.

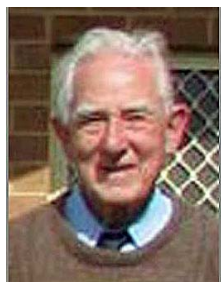
**Neville Keeley**



L to R Alan Symes (69–71), Bob Lamaro (69–71), Michael Riley (69–70), Robert Hogan (69–71), George Manojlovic (69–70), Joe Moore, (69–70) Peter Madigan (70-72)

## TRIBUTES POUR IN FOR ROGER CLEMENTS

### Roger Clements



Roger Clements was a “mongrel” on the rugby league field in his heyday but one of the nicest people you could meet off it, according to his closest friends.

The 83-year-old retired teacher was tragically slain in the backyard of his Springvale home shortly after midday on Tuesday. His 49-year-old son, David John Clements, faced Wagga Local Court on Wednesday charged with his murder.

“He was just a mighty man, just a wonderful bloody bloke,” Mal Hanratty, a friend of more than 60 years, said of Mr. Clements on Wednesday.

Mr. Hanratty and Mr. Clements, together with another close friend, Lew Morrell, all attended the Wagga Teachers College in the early 1950s,

where they forged friendships that would only be broken with Tuesday’s harrowing events.

Both travelled to Wagga and stayed with Mr. Clements for their visits to the town.

Away from teaching, Mr. Clements had been an outstanding sportsman according to his close friends. In his younger years he was a gifted sprinter and rugby league winger before becoming a keen lawn bowler as he got older.

He had spoken to Mr. Morrell on the phone just a week ago, who said he was doing well.

After finishing at the Wagga Teachers College, Mr. Clements spent some time in Canada working as a school principal.

Back home he worked at the Goulburn Centre for Advanced Education prior to moving to the Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education, one of

Charles Sturt University’s predecessors, as a senior educational designer.

Mr. Clements is survived by his wife June and four adult children.

**Wagga Daily Advertiser**  
**Alex McConachie**  
**May 27, 2015**

### CSU CONDOLENCE

On behalf of the Advancement Unit and CSU, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to the WWTCAA for the tragic passing of Roger Clements. I know Roger was such a valued and loved member of your Association. He was a character and friend that will be dreadfully missed. Our office has forwarded a card to his family to extend our sympathies and gratitude for the contribution Roger made to the Association and WWTCAA Scholarship.

**Stacey Fish**  
**CSU Advancement Unit**

## IN MEMORIAM

### **Pam Martin ( Georgeson)** **1948-50**

Born in Sydney, 26 April 1931. Passed away in Burwood Heights, 8 June 2015. Late of Burwood Heights, Marrickville, Roseville, Northbridge. Laid to rest 17 June 2015 in the Macquarie Park Lawn Cemetery, together again with her much loved late husband Kenneth. Aged 84 years.

Pam was a member of the third session in Wagga. She was one of the people who helped organize the reunion of the first three sessions at Ku-ring-gai years later. One remembers kindly all the people we met along the way in WTC.

**Lindsay Budd**

### **Bob Brownlie 1950-51**

I wish to advise that Bob Brownlie (1950/51) died on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 after a

long illness. Before he retired he had a position at the University of Queensland.

**Ella Keesing (Redpath)**  
**1950/51**

### **Kevin "Rue" Street 1956 - 57** **Nashos Nostalgia 1957**

**Holsworthy**

Fastidious preparation and performance rewarded "Rue" throughout his life as an army conscript and in his teaching career. *cont'd next page*

Many of the men from WWTC were "drafted" into Nashos at Holsworthy Barracks near Liverpool in January, 1957. They shared with "Rue" the most unusual pleasures of army life and training.

In our barracks we were given the most awful shaped beds on which to sleep - their final form

was more like a wire mesh hammock surrounded by bent water pipes. The mattresses and bedding were probably discarded after WW 1 and we were expected to maintain them neat, flat and square in shape at all times. If they were not so, one received some punishment to occupy spare time. Kevin solved the problem by

"padding" the relevant corners with well hidden and disguised pieces of three ply cleverly inserted to ensure no cause for criticism was available to the inspecting sergeant who often arrived unannounced! Kevin's bed was always perfect.

Rest in Peace - Kevin.

*Roy Strange*

## CAN YOU HELP ?

### Missing Talkabouts:

A member is looking for the following editions to complete her set of *Talkabouts* : Volume 2 No's 17, 18 and 22 and Volume 3 No's 43 and 44. These would be 1948 and 1949.

### Contact Details

Helen Bradley (1960-61) forwarded her membership without including her address.

Please contact WWTCAA Secretary [bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com) or phone 0408587065

## REUNION ROUNDUP

### Ex-Students of Wagga Wagga Teachers College

#### 50 Year Reunion Years 1965-66; 1966-67; 1967-68

A fifty year re-union is proposed for Sunday 15 May to Wednesday 18 May 2016 to be held in Wagga Wagga.

We need:

- Volunteers to join the organising committee – much organisation can be done by email
- Suggestions for interesting activities
- Collection of memorabilia
- **Most of all, please register your interest in being there** by contacting:

Bruce and Lesley Forbes  
Unit 5/185 Albany St  
Point Frederick NSW 2250  
Ph: 0243225650  
Mob: 0408587065  
Email: [bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com)

### Ex-Students of Wagga Wagga Teachers College

#### 60 Year Reunion Years 1956-57

All ex-students and partners from 1956-1957 session are invited to attend the 60th Anniversary Reunion in 2016.

**Dormie House, Moss Vale  
Tuesday 8th - Wednesday 9th March**

**For Registration and Bookings**

**Contact:** Gwen Ravell  
**Phone:** 0242294706  
**Address:** 27/41 Smith St. Wollongong 2500

**All Welcome  
60 Year Reunion  
Years 1956-57**





# The Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association

KEEPING THE SPIRIT ALIVE IN 2015 TO SECURE THE FUTURE



## IMPORTANT NOTICE MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

To ensure the continued financial viability of the Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association the following membership contributions and services will apply from 1 January 2015.

### a) Electronic Membership:

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

### b) Standard Membership

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

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

### c) Additional Contributions

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

Opposite is a contribution slip for 2015.

## WWTCAA CONTRIBUTIONS 2015

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Former Name \_\_\_\_\_

Given Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Years at College \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Electronic Membership (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Standard Membership (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Alumni Projects \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Scholarship Fund \_\_\_\_\_

General Donation \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTION 2015** \_\_\_\_\_

Make cheques payable to:

**WWTC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

**Send Your Contribution To:**

Secretary WWTCAA

Unit 5/185 Albany Street

Point Frederick NSW 2250

## ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER

To credit of  
**WWTC ALUMNI ASSOC**

**Commonwealth Bank Casula NSW**

**BSB: 06 2329 A/C No: 10073789**

**Reference :** Member's First Initial, Surname and first year at college e.g. BForbes65

Please send a Remittance Advice to:

email: [bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com)

## CONTRIBUTIONS

**TALKABOUT**  
**(Including Photos )**

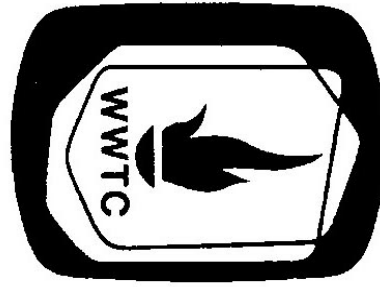
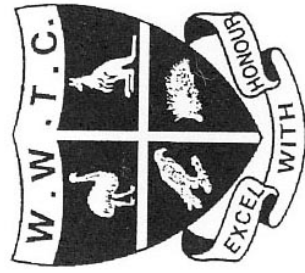
Please email contributions for Talkabout to

[bruceles@bigpond.com](mailto:bruceles@bigpond.com)

Or mail to

Secretary WWTCAA  
Unit 5/185 Albany Street  
Point Frederick NSW 2250

August 2015  
Volume 18 No 2



August 2015  
Volume 18 No 2

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