



July 2011

# Newsletter

Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators

## *From the President*



I wish to thank the members of ARISSEA for electing me to the position of President for the coming year. I also wish to thank George for his leadership over the past year and to say we have enjoyed his stories and fellowship at our Committee meetings.

The action in Education has appeared to be at the National level with the State leading in operational matters. This may be appearance before the storm as we now are experiencing a new State Government in place and observing that it is making major changes to the functioning of the

public service. We can anticipate that there are more plans ahead to make changes to well understood administrative practices.

In the coming year there will be opportunity to continue our focus on building our membership by attracting those who are eligible to join – from past years and from current senior educational administrators. Members are invited to pass on to the Secretary or President, the names of contacts for follow-up.

We will maintain our links with ISEA so that retiring Departmental Officers can be personally invited into ARISSEA. There are other benefits also of continuing to build strong links to ISEA including the Union Shopper initiative and I believe, like George, that the ISEA/ARISSEA agreement will develop in importance over the years.

The Secondary History Project has received some wonderful reflections from our members that are helping to shape the agenda and the issues to be addressed. I believe we will see more detail about the directions for this project in the coming months.

Our efforts in supporting Stewart House will continue to be our practical way of supporting students with special social and educational needs and demonstrating to the staff and friends of Stewart House that as former senior administrators, we recognize the importance of their work for students in our public schools.

Travel is on the agenda for many of us and undoubtedly there will be reflections and stories in following journals about these escapades.

For some of our members and their families the situation has been less happy with illness and hospitalization to confront. Our best wishes are extended to those who are suffering from illness and bereavement.

**Alan Rice**

**ARISSEA 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
6<sup>th</sup> May, 2011  
PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**George Green**



This has been another great year for ARISSEA. We have successfully maintained our core functions and activities and made progress in some new areas.

The luncheon meetings continue to be well-supported and member feedback is very positive. Jack Harrison has developed a good relationship with the Bowlers Club and we are well looked after.

The newsletter is going from strength to strength, thanks to the efforts of our editor, Peter Robinson. For the first time, those of us who prefer an electronic version can receive one and enjoy the bonus of stunning color photographs. I am grateful to the growing numbers of members who provide such interesting and varied content.

ARISSEA continues to strongly support Stewart House. The efforts of Pat Morgan and the Friends of Stewart House are greatly appreciated. We provide valuable financial support through contributions from association funds, individual member contributions and directing any 'profits' from activities to Stewart House.

Richmond Manyweathers and I are also working towards developing links between Stewart House and Rotary clubs across New South Wales. At a practical level, our members also undertake the assessment of the Stewart House Out of School Hours Program.

The Secondary Panels Project is making “slow but steady” progress. As in most undertakings of this kind, the process is probably just as important as the product.

It was very pleasing to be able to finalise the agreement between ARISSEA and the ISEA. For many of us, “The Institute” was an important part of our working lives. As a result of

the new agreement, all financial ARISSEA members are now “retired” members of ISEA. The benefits of ISEA membership, such as study tours and seminars, can now be enjoyed by ARISSEA members.

Another achievement for the year was the acceptance of ARISSEA as a member of Union Shopper. This has the potential to deliver significant savings to our members for the cost of a phone call. The executive will be very interested to receive feedback from members. Throughout the year I have been privileged to work with an outstanding executive. Each makes a significant contribution to our organisation. While I have mentioned but a few in this report, I would like to put on record my appreciation of the contribution of each and every member of the executive.

I wish Alan Rice, and the incoming executive for 2011-2012, every success.

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**  
**May 6th May 2011**  
Bowler’s Club, 95 York Street, Sydney.

**Opening**

The Meeting opened at 12.30pm with President, George Green, in the chair.

**Attendance** 33 members and 5 guests in attendance.

**Apologies** were received from; Joan Healy, Geoff Walton, Vincent Delany, Eric Flood, Trevor Harrison, Ron Ikin, Arthur Buchan, Chris Carroll, Bill Summers, Jean Koshemakin, Margaret Hopkins, Fred Cook, Laurie Craddock, Alan Pratt, Doug Swan.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on May 7th 2010, which had been published in the July 2010 issue of the Newsletter, were taken as read. Brian Ford moved they be accepted. Seconded by Peter Robinson, the motion was carried.

**Remembrance**

A period of silence was observed in remembrance of former colleagues who had died since the last annual general meeting.

**President’s Report**

George Green moved the president’s report be accepted. Seconded by Graeme Nicholls, the motion was carried. Report attached.

**Secretary’s Report**

Brian Ford moved the secretary’s report be accepted, seconded by George Green, the motion was carried. Report attached.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Richmond Manyweathers moved the treasurer's report be accepted. Seconded by George Green, the motion was carried. Report attached.

### **Stewart House Report**

George Green and Pat Morgan will attend the Stewart House Annual Presentation Ceremony as our representatives to accept an award for our significant financial support from your donations supplemented from our luncheon funds.

### **Welfare Officer's Report**

John Dugdale presented the report of his activities on our behalf, seconded by Richmond Manyweathers. Report attached.

### **Election of Officers**

Graeme Nicholls as acting Returning Officer, conducted the ballot.

President	Alan Rice
Past President	George Green
Vice President	Alan Pratt
Secretary	Brian Ford
Treasurer	Richmond Manyweathers
Assistant Secretary	Jack Harrison
Welfare Convenor	John Dugdale
Publications	Laurie Craddock
Newsletter Editor	Peter Robinson
Committee Members	Geoff Walton Vincent Delany Graham Sims Deanna Hoermann

Syd Smith, John Edwards, Barry Higgins and Bill Grant volunteered to be Observers at the Committee Meetings.

### **General Business**

Cliff Cowdrey reported on the Scholarships the BCF provides for many country children. No further General business was conducted.

The meeting closed at 2.00 pm.

### **Secretary's Report May 2011**

Whilst we continue to send out 273 Newsletters including 46 to widows this year has seen the introduction of the E-Newsletter. Peter Robinson has been busy producing this in a variety of formats to accommodate the needs of particular members. With the April Newsletter the secretary conducted a survey of the widows on our books to determine whether they wished to continue receiving the newsletter at the addresses we have on our books.

To date only half have responded and of these, half have thanked us for keeping them informed but asking to be taken off our list. I will try again in the next newsletter mailout to contact the remainder before declaring their addresses out of date. It was the discovery of out of date addresses which led to this survey. Volunteers to assist in the mailout of the Newsletter and have a cuppa and chat, are always welcome. Call Peter on: 9872 2178 or email: peterrobinson7@gmail.com.

We are having some success in discovering and inviting those now retiring from a system quite different to the one the majority of us knew. Our membership increased by three this year but a greater effort is needed to attract eligible members.

#### New Members

31-Mar-10 WARD JM (John-Kay)  
18 Margaret St Fairlight 2094  
(02) 9949 4652 jkward@digisurf.com.au

16-Apr-10 DIXON K (Ken-Anne)  
7 Norma Cres Woy Woy 2256  
(02) 4344 6051 kdicko74@hotmail.com

01-Jun-10 MEAD RF(Ray-Elizabeth (Will))  
3 Grimison Ave Griffith 2680  
(02) 6962 3857 rayfmead@bigpond.net.au

01-Aug-10 GILLETT B (Brian)  
5 Yates Avenue Mount Kiera 2500  
(02) 4228 7413 brian.s.gillett@gmail.com

10-Aug-10 MORRISON NR (Neil)  
37/6 Hale Road Mosman 2088  
(02) 9909 5350 neilmorro@bigpond.com

14-Oct-10 YOUNG A (Alan-Leah)  
40 High St Hallidays Point 2430  
(02) 6559 2569 alanleahyoung@optusnet.com.au

19-Jan-11 GORE JL (John-Elizabeth)  
7 Yamba Close Marsfield 2122  
(02) 9805 1261 jgore5@bigpond.com

12-Apr-11 DAVIES B (Brian-Rosemary)  
24 Olinda Cres Carlingford 2118  
(02) 9872 5280 briandavies09@gmail.com

28-Apr-11 PUFFETT RJ (Bob-Wendy)  
107 Taylor St Woy Woy Bay 2256  
(02) 4342 9171 rpuffett@bigpond.net.au

#### Deaths

2/07/2010 DOCHERTY RL (Ray)  
27/6/2010 AKED LA (Lindsay)  
9/8/2010 WHITE FA (Frank)  
6/10/2010 GOODSIR OAM DH (Don)  
23/4/2011 REID T (Tom)

I especially wish to thank George Green for his efforts in leadership over the past year. The executive express their appreciation to Dorothy for entertaining us at their home for meetings.

Thank you all for your continued support and assistance. The secretary's role in this association is rewarding and the contact with members continues to be most satisfying. My personal thanks to the many who wished me well in my battle with cancer. Their prayers and good wishes have enabled me to beat it.

**Brian Ford. Secretary**

### **Treasurer's Report for 2010/11**

Income and Expenditure, Year ended 31 Mar 2011.

	\$		\$
Balance b/f	11,739.49	Lunches	4,987.00
Subscriptions	2,590.00	Newsletter	1,141.22
Stewart House	2,640.00	Stat/Pty Cash	69.99
Lunches	5,167.50	Welfare	0.00
Interest	18.69	Stewart House	3,320.00
Projects	0.00	Union Shopper	109.40
	noteTerm Deposit		<u>10,000.00</u>
Total	22,155.68	Total	9,627.61

Balance C'd fwd 2,528.07

Lunches	Banked	Payment	Surplus
2010 total	5,167.50	4,987.00	180.50
May 10	1,463.00	1,368.00	95.00
Aug 10	1,426.00	1,463.00	-37.00
Dec 10	2,278.50	2,156.00	<u>122.50</u>
		Total	180.50

Recommended Final Payment to Stewart House for the 2010/2011 year

Luncheon profit	\$180.50
Individual member donations	\$590.00(balance of 2010/11 contributions)
Ass'n Contribution	<u>\$229.50</u>
Total	\$1,000.00
+ \$2,120.00 from member donations in subs to May 10 already forwarded	
Total support for 2010/11	<b>\$3,120.00</b>
We provided \$2,755 in the previous year.	



## Comments

1. Newsletter costs appear to have stabilised at approx. \$1,200 - based on new policy of four editions per year.
2. Payment to Stewart House (\$1,000) to be made asap together with the new 2010/11 contributions to date of \$2,505.
3. Two bank errors noted in accounts. They debited a cheque for \$538.55 instead of \$538.33. Then a mystery deposit of \$150. Discussions with bank proceeding. Not a lot of interest!

**Richmond Manyweathers, Treasurer**

## Welfare Officer's Annual Report 2010-11

It is my melancholy duty to report that during the past twelve months we have lost the following colleagues to the grim reaper:

27 June 2010	Lindsay Aked OAM
2 July 2010	Ray Docherty
8 September 2010	Frank White
6 October 2010	Don Goodsir
23 April 2011	Tom Reid

In each case, sympathy messages were forwarded appropriately and in due course appreciation cards were received for each of these.

During the year contacts were made by telephone with Fran Leacy and Doug Swan sadly regarding their respective family losses. Betty Swan being one of them. Phone calls were also made to Brian Ford enquiring after his health and to Laura White regarding Frank's death. A last minute call has also just been made to John Lambert on the receipt of the news of the death of his wife, Jan, after Easter.

As frequently emphasised, members are asked to inform the Welfare Officer of any cases of death or illness related to ARISSEA that could require his attention.

My Petty Cash account for this period is set out below>

### Petty Cash Account 2010-11

April 6 2010	Balance brought forward	Cr <u>\$22.20</u>
Expenditure:	Postage	\$5.00
	Stationery	<u>0.18</u>
May 7 2011	Balance carried forward	Cr \$16.85

Reimbursement to this account is not required.

**John Dugdale, 7 May 2011**

The State Council for the ISEA 2011-2013 has been elected and is as follows:

President: Barry Laing

Vice President: Kerrie Ikin

Secretary: Brian Powyer

Treasurer: Kerry Weston

Committee Member: Lorraine Rowles

Committee Member: Rob Asser

Committee Member: Graham Wood

**Members say**

**Tony Negline**

Mention in recent ARISSEA Newsletters of teaching machines, the influence of Tom Ingersoll, and his presumed attitude toward them, reminded me of my first years of teaching, beginning in 1963. Such machines were part of the educational debate then and in small ways, my teaching was influenced by that debate.

As part of my career records I kept a copy of the Education Gazettes of 1963. I browsed through them recently and found an article on Teaching Machines by T.W.Ingersoll, B.A. The article promotes the promise, confusion, interest, and experimental nature of such machines, and presents Tom's view toward them.

Quoting directly Tom says:

"Teaching machines as an adjunct to subject instruction, both in the Primary and Secondary School, hold promise of increasing efficiency in teaching and learning. This statement is indicative of the "open mind" approach to machines after considering the limited evidence put forward "for" and "against".

Those "for" tend, because of enthusiasm, to mix wishful thinking with validated conclusion; and those "against", in the main- the traditionalists- put forward arguments tinged with opposition to the new, to any kind of change, rather than considered "open mind" conclusions backed by sound experiment. Both groups would do well to join forces and try by experiment with the "new" before over-praising or condemning it."

His article presented a balanced view of the subject.

Such was not the case in the December issue of the Gazette where a report from a Mr John Carroll, an exchange teacher in the USA, stated bluntly:

In reference to teaching machines little use being made of them in any of the schools visited. Many of the schools that possessed machines did not appear to utilise them to any great extent and teachers in those schools did not seem to understand their function even when they were interested in their use.



Mr Carroll reported that, there were concerns about them; about their programs; about their cost; and about the machines being pushed beyond financial and practical limitations.

As a classroom teacher I made my own Tachistoscope. I remember demonstrating its use when the Inspector visited. He sat among the students and I could hear him respond as the students did during moments of interest, fun and stimulation. I hope though that his response was more because of his observations of positive teacher-students interactions than the functioning of the machine that was only ever at the margin of my teaching of reading.

The proper and detailed use of the school magazine, and the library, was the core of the classroom reading program at the time and was never replaced by a non-core tachistoscope, radio or film projector and their accompanying resources.

Now 50 years later, Teaching Machines from computers, electronic interactive boards and their connection with the internet to TVs and digital cameras are in place in most classrooms across the state. But the extent to which they are effectively influencing student learning is still associated with the quality of the connection existing in teaching and learning situations between teachers and students.

On another matter of possible interest, separate and unrelated to Teaching Machines, was that when browsing the February issue of the 1963 Gazette I noticed the name Swan, Douglas A, from Walcha Central being successful in gaining placement on the Fourth Primary Promotion List from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1963; and then in the same issue, under the heading "Inspectors of Schools and Districts- Country, the following inclusion, " Young- Mr D.A. Swan B.A (25 Yass St, Young)."

In my view, it is now a matter of history that the Department's path, so positively influenced by Doug's career after 1963, changed direction following his retirement and after the abolition of the Inspectorate in 1990.

Great leaps backward occurred then and subsequently, leaving the Department struggling to regain the positive influence, the goodwill and the approaches to effective management that existed prior to those backward leaps. The struggle continues.

**Don't forget the next ARISSEA lunch meeting**

**5th August 2011  
11.30am for 12.30pm  
Bowlers' Club,  
95 York Street, Sydney**

**Complete the Booking Slip and post with your cheque by 14th July to  
J.T. Harrison, 2 Amalfi Place, Longueville NSW 2066**

### *May Lunch*



Brian Davies and Richmond Manyweathers

### *Friends of Stewart House*

**Wednesday 20th July 'An Introduction to Genetics'** Jennifer Philps on the work of the Children's Medical Research Institute, Ryde/Eastwood Leagues Club 10.30 for 11am. Cost \$10. Lunch own expense.

**Contact:** Pat Morgan 9948 2162 by Friday July 15.

**Monday 29th August, Illawarra Knitters at St Judes Anglican Church, 106 Avoca St Randwick.** 10.30 for parade at 11.00. Cost \$25 includes lunch & morning tea.

**Contact:** Maureen Reeve 9546 3986 by Wednesday August 24.

**Wednesday 21st September, Pam Davis from Alzheimers Australia** will present a talk on 'Mind your Mind'. 10.00 for 10.30 start. Ryde/Eastwood Leagues Club. Cost \$10 Lunch at own expense. **Contact:** Hazel Grimmond 9980 7498 by Friday September 16.

**Friday 21st October, Talk by Elizabeth Mathews 'Women Transported'** The history of female factories in colonial Sydney. 10.45 for 11.00. Cost \$35 Lunch at own expense.

**Contact:** Kay Sara 9801 3555 by Monday October 17.

For further information contact Pat Morgan,  
phone 9948 2162

### Two Remarkable Aussies

This is the second half of the story commenced in the last issue of the Newsletter. It completes the story of two remarkable Aussies. The first rejoices in the name of 'atrac robustus', better known, and dreaded, as the Sydney funnel-web spider.

The second, who became its nemesis, is the late Dr Struan Sutherland (1936-2002), who as a former navy doctor turned immunologist, joined the former Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (now C.S.L. Ltd) in 1966, and founded their immunology research department in 1967.

Along with his other work, Dr Sutherland became fascinated by the Sydney funnel-web and its unique and deadly venom, so complex that other scientists had virtually abandoned any hope of finding an anti-venom.

So pessimistic were his chances considered, that Dr Sutherland had to struggle to receive even meagre funding for his research. He persevered for 14 long years before he was eventually successful.

Among his difficulties was the fact that obtaining the funnel-web's venom was dangerous, to say the least. With its known record of human fatalities, and with no anti-venom available, volunteers to catch and/or "milk" funnel-webs were "thin on the ground", as it were.

I might mention that many venomous spiders and snakes often deliver "dry bites". That is they do not necessarily inject their venom. Not so the funnel-web. It means business!

Furthermore, virtually all of the anti-venoms already produced for other poisonous creatures, such as the red-back spider, snakes etc, were trialled on funnel-web bites. None was effective! These facts were always in the back of our minds when we saw, captured or 'played with' funnel-webs when we were youngsters. No wonder our parents had a fit whenever they saw us with one.

When Dr Sutherland administered the venom to conventional laboratory animals (mice, rats, rabbits) it had little or no effect on them, because of its unique, primate-affecting atraxotoxin.

Monkeys are rare and expensive as laboratory animals in the Australian context, and, surprise, surprise ... there were no human guinea-pigs!

Horses were traditionally used to produce effective anti-bodies against tetanus, the red-back spider and various snakes. However, when injected with funnel-web venom, horses developed no anti-bodies.

Rabbits did appear to produce anti-bodies, but these did not counteract the funnel-web venom. An impasse!

In what I believe was an amazing piece of lateral thinking, Dr Sutherland hypothesised that the uniquely deadly, but critical atraxotoxin was somehow being 'lost' in the laboratory testing process, meaning that this essential element was 'missing' when the laboratory animals were actually injected, thereby rendering any results useless.

Incredibly, he discovered that atraxotoxin “attaches itself” to glass (i.e. test tubes, beakers etc) and is effectively neutralised.

He solved this problem by using only specially treated glassware and a more acidic solution, which kept the atraxotoxin active.

Over a period of years, Dr Sutherland tried a variety of test creatures, ranging from insects, to reptiles, rodents etc. He discovered that mice were, after all, suitable, but only when new born. After only 24 hours, they build up anti-bodies which somehow shield them.

As primates, we never build up these anti-bodies, and remain vulnerable, with our skin tissue and nerve endings 50 times more sensitive to atraxotoxin than is the case with non-primates.

Notwithstanding his significant progress, by 1978 Dr Sutherland had still not succeeded in producing anti-bodies against atraxotoxin, strong enough to prevent human fatalities.

He accepted, grudgingly, (and, thank heavens, temporarily), his colleagues' suggestions to look for an alternative medical treatment for the funnel-web's bite.

He pioneered the development and use of the restrictive, pressure bandage, wound along the length of the bitten limb, and replacing the traditional, tight tourniquet, which can cause gangrene. (The pressure bandage is now used universally and the tourniquet totally discredited).

For a short while, it seemed that this new bandaging technique and intensive care treatment would suffice, leaving the quest for a specific anti-venom unresolved. It was hoped that any victims so treated would have a reasonable chance of survival.

In early 1979, this tragically proved to be wishful thinking. In the southern Sydney suburb of Helensburgh, Christine Sturges, aged 31 and in perfect health, was bitten by a male funnel-web while making the bed. Although she reached hospital, she died soon afterward.

In January, 1980, a two and a half year old boy was fatally bitten by a funnel-web at Wamberal Lagoon, near Terrigal, on the Central Coast.

Spurred on by these tragic deaths, Dr Sutherland was determined to make one more attempt to find the elusive anti-venom. By mid 1980, he had clear indications that highly

concentrated doses of male funnel-web venom, given to rabbits, could produce antibodies strong enough to be effective for human victims.

With Sydney's summer the peak funnel-web season, trial batches of the anti-venom were produced as rapidly as possible, and, as events soon proved, just in time!

Just after midnight on 1 February, 1981, doctors at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital prepared to administer the very first dose of the new anti-venom to 49 year old Gordon Wheatley, who had been bitten on the foot by a funnel-web spider in his northern suburbs home.

Fortunately for Mr Wheatley, his quick-thinking local doctor had bound his foot and leg in a pressure bandage and got him to hospital within 15 minutes. Even so, his condition was already serious, his heart and pulse racing, his body racked by spasms and his blood pressure at a critical level.

With an anxious Dr Sutherland on the end of an interstate phone link, doctors administered a first, then after 15 minutes a second dose of the new anti-venom. Miraculously, after about an hour, Mr Wheatley's terrifying and life-threatening symptoms began to reverse. He made a complete recovery, and has a place in history as the first, and successful, recipient of the funnel-web anti-venom.

The anti-venom is now widely available and on hand in major hospitals. Since its introduction, no known treated victim of a funnel-web spider bite has died. Most treated victims now go home after 1-3 days and fully recover.

Without Struan Sutherland's dedicated work over so many years, often against the judgement of his peers, I believe it is doubtful whether an anti-venom would even yet have been developed, meaning that, with Sydney's urban expansion into more and more bushland areas, many more victims would have died.

Dr Sutherland was an indefatigable researcher and author, contributing to well over 300 scientific and medical articles, many chapters in books and a standard reference work on the treatment of envenomation by toxic Australian creatures.

He was also very gracious with his time, as I discovered when I met him at Macquarie University, and was always willing to give advice to members of the public, on any matters relating to venomous creatures.

The 24 hour Envenomation Advisory Service he used to operate is now continued by members of the Australian Venom Research Unit.

Dr Sutherland's pioneering work in the development of the now universally used pressure bandage, together with his anti-venom discoveries, gave him international recognition.



At the time of his death in 2002, aged only 66, he was working on an anti-venom for the deadly blue-ringed octopus. His death received only limited coverage in his own country, and I find it sad that his name and contributions are known to so few of today's Australians. We owe him a great deal.

*May Lunch*



Graham Sims and Warren Fairfax

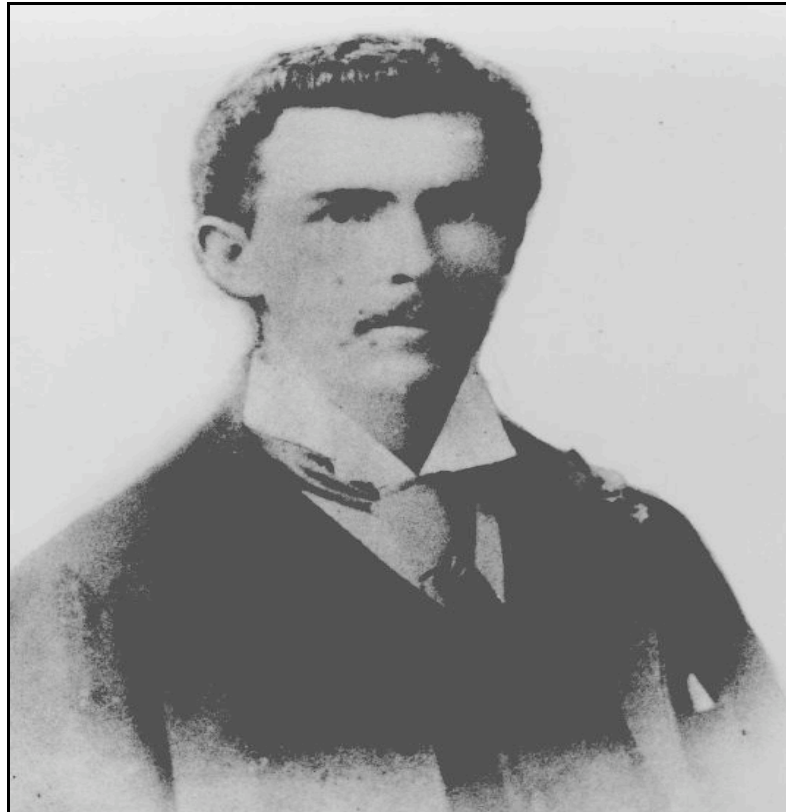
*May Lunch*



Brian Ford and Barry Higgins



Anecdotes from the life of  
**Nicholas 'Nick' Corish**  
NSW Government School Teacher



Nicholas Corish 1875 - 1951

My earliest memories of my paternal grandfather are of him blatantly cheating at mini golf (on a "jam tin" course in his backyard at Narrabeen) and of him being impossible to get out in backyard cricket. I guess it would have been around 1944 when I was starting school that I became aware that he was a teacher and it was a few years later, 1946 or '7 when I first became aware of the respect in which he was held by others.

It was much later in my life that I sought some of the facts regarding his teaching career. Nick was one of the thousands of teachers who spent the best part of their working lives in remote villages in the bush. Their teaching careers contained hard times, too often without recognition. I hope you enjoy these anecdotes from one ordinary teacher's career.

Nick was conceived at Hill End at the height of the great gold rush. His father Andrew Corish had previously worked for various companies building railway lines in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland but we don't know whether Andrew was at Hill End as a prospector or was building rail tracks for some of the deeper and bigger mines.

We do know that sometime early in 1874 Andrew and his pregnant wife, Gwenillian, and their family left Hill End so that Andrew could join the contracting firm of Wm. Mason & Co which, from 29 July 1874 through to 1877, built the rail line from Bathurst to Orange.

At various times Andrew's occupation was described as "Overseer of Railway Works"<sup>i</sup>, "Railway Contractor"<sup>ii</sup> and "Inspector of Railways"<sup>iii</sup>. As each company made progress building their section of line the workers and their families moved their tent camps to keep pace with the ever-moving railhead. When the company's contract to build a section of the rail line was completed, Andrew and all the other workers would move on to find new work - usually with another track building company, for this was the era of the steam train.

Family legend says that while Andrew worked on the rail lines, his wife ran a small business. According to the story she ran a "grog tent" selling beer and spirits to the workers and their wives. If this is true, the experience would have been invaluable to them later when they bought and ran a small hotel.

Nicholas was born in May 1875. Sometimes, as Nick grew older, he claimed that he had a second given name and that he was really "Nicholas Michael Corish". But there is no written record to show this. In the family Bible Andrew wrote his son's name as just "Nicholas".

In NSW Department of Education records he is just "Nicholas" and – in his own hand – he is just "Nicholas" on his marriage registration. The claim to add the middle name "Michael" is probably only one of the many tall tales that Nick became famous for in his later years.

Two years after Nick's birth the family moved from Blayney. This time Andrew joined Wm. Watkins & Co in late 1877 to help build the Werris Creek to Gunnedah railway line. Two years into this job, on 10 March 1879 Andrew and Gwenillian's last child, Hugh was born.

Nick was 3 years old when his brother Hugh was born at Breeza. With this addition, the family consisted of 51 year old Andrew and 41 year old Gwenillian and the children John 18, Hal 14, Andy 11, Dick 10, the twins Will and Sis 8, Ned 5, Nick 3 and the baby Hugh.

The next move for Andrew, Gwenillian and the family of nine children was to go west so that Andrew could join the firm of Mann & Carey on the last of the great railway constructions in NSW - the Nyngan to Bourke line.

Although this contract wasn't completed until 1885 when Bourke station opened, Andrew had left Mann & Carey's employ when Nick was about seven and, in 1881/82. Andrew stopped working on railways and became the publican of *The Locomotive Hotel* in the little village of Swamp Oak<sup>iv</sup> about 25 miles SSE of Tamworth in NSW. Swamp Oak wasn't "little" – it was tiny. For some reason it changed its name<sup>v</sup> in 1917 to Weabonga!

We don't know why Andrew and Gwenillian decided to stop working on railways, but Andrew's age – he was then 54 – and Gwenillian's experience of selling grog may have been the reasons. Whatever the reasons, a small set of pewter grog measures from that time were passed down in the family.



The Locomotive Hotel 1881

A Hartmann, Travelling Photographer

Nothing is known of the movement of Andrew and his family between 1882 and 1887. These years cover almost exactly the years that Nick would have been going to primary school. However we do know that it was sometime during his primary school years that Nick first met and made a school friend of Lilian Pullen.

<sup>vi</sup>Lilian had been born in Wagga Wagga in 1879 and by 1903 she was to be the oldest of the eleven Pullen children. Lilian's father, Bill Pullen, also worked on the railways and the Pullen family was living in Orange in 1885, at Blayney in 1887 when their fifth child – and first boy – William Pullen was born and were still in the Molong area around 1893 when Percy was born.

In 1883 the Corish family, including 12 year-old Nick, returned to Sydney and was living at 4 Jones Street Ultimo where Nick's father Andrew was attempting to earn a living as a general contractor doing any building or construction work he could get. Times were tough as the "Great Depression" took hold.

In 1892 the family moved to 20 Mary Ann Street, Ultimo and it was from there on 31 May, as a 17 year old, Nick was confirmed in St Barnabas' Church of England, Broadway, where his younger brother Hugh was later to become church organist. Though not religious in later life, Nick attended his first Holy Communion on June 5 1892.

Two years later the family moved to 427 Darling Street, Ultimo, and it appears that Nick commenced teacher training as a pupil teacher at the age of 16 years and four months in October 1891<sup>vii</sup>.

As the depression became more serious, money became extremely short in the family so Nick left the teacher training course and spent some time working as a "dog walloper" for Anthony Hordern's store in George Street. His job was to keep the many stray dogs away from the sale goods that were placed on the footpath outside the store. But he still wanted to be a teacher.

When family finances began to improve he subsequently recommenced training. On 24 October 1894, nineteen year-old Nick was approved to commence training as a “pupil teacher” at Darlington Public School in Sydney, teaching 6 to 12 year-olds.

A “pupil teacher” was the method of training 13 to 16 year-old primary school graduates to become teachers. Pupil teachers taught a class full-time during school hours and then, for an hour or so after school, were instructed by the head teacher. As a pupil teacher Nick regularly taught classes of up to a maximum of 50 pupils – when he became qualified he could take classes of up to 70. Although Nick was 19 when approved, he actually commenced (or re-commenced) the course on 11 July 1895 when he was 20. Two and a half years later he sat for his final exams.

### **Mount Murray**

Nick failed his finals at the 1897 examination held at the end of the year. Despite not having satisfactorily completed his training, on 19 March 1898, he was appointed to his first school – Mount Murray Provisional School in the Camden district south of Sydney – at a salary of £72 (\$144) a year. Mount Murray had previously been a Public School catering for 5 to 14 year olds but had been closed for six months from July 1897 because student numbers had fallen to such a level that it could not legally operate.

What sort of place was Mount Murray? Where did the teacher live? Twelve months earlier, on 3 June 1896 the teacher, Mr Roxby, wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Education in the following manner:

*I have the honour to apply to have the ceiling of the residence of the Public School at Mount Murray lined with calico at a cost of one pound fifteen shillings £1-15-0 in order to keep out the cold westerly wind which causes the house to be very draughty. I could have the stripes at standard cost*

*I have the honour to be*

*Sir*

*Your most obedient Servant.*

The Inspector had commented in the margin

*. . . the residence is a local slab building without any ceiling.*

Potential enrolment numbers had increased so it was re-opened as a “provisional school” with Nick as the teacher. A provisional school was defined at that time as one where attendance was likely to be between 10 and 25 pupils.

Numbers were low because children were required to attend only a minimum of 70 days a year (now they attend for 200 days!) and parents were expected to pay 3 pence per child, per week (up to a maximum of 1/- per week per family). Provisional schools parents usually also had to provide the site, the buildings and all the furniture!

To get to the school Nick had to travel by train to Bowral and then find coach transport to Mt. Murray, which was near Kangaloon, quite a few miles away.

As he rode in the train to Picton he may have remembered that his father, Andrew, was overseer for Peto, Brassey and Betts when they built the track in the early 1860's. He may have also recalled that his older brothers Hal and Andy were born while the line was being built – Hal at Picton and Andy at Balmoral (later called Bargo Brush).

Nick experienced some difficulty getting to the school as he explained to the Department of Education in a letter dated 29 March 1898, which he wrote<sup>viii</sup> to claim a larger expense than usually allowed.

*Mt Murray  
East Kangaloon  
29<sup>th</sup> March 1898  
Sir,*

*I beg to state that the expenses for meals and lodging at Bowral were incurred in the following manner.*

*I arrived at Bowral on Friday midnight and stayed there intending to catch the mail trap which only carries two the next day, but as it had been previously booked I was unable to go by it.*

*I had not the money to hire a private conveyance and Mr Charker at whose hotel I was staying offered to hire a horse and trap "his own being away" and drive me out the next day (Sunday) to his son's residence which is the nearest dwelling to the school. This offer I accepted as I had no other alternative.*

*I have the honour to be sir, Your most obedient servant  
Nicholas Corish*

The enclosed account was:

Train fare Sydney to Bowral	10/-
Two nights lodging in Bowral	2/6
Five meals	6/3
Conveyance from Bowral to Mt Murray	<u>10/-</u>
Total	<u>£1/8/9</u>
Expenses allowed	19/6
Balance	9/3

A note on the file recommends payment of the 9 shillings and 3 pence to Nick.

#### Footnotes

<sup>i</sup> Marriage Certificate B12 of 1859, Government Statist, Victoria

<sup>ii</sup> Greville's Directory 1872, p.47

<sup>iii</sup> Sands Directory of NSW, 1862

<sup>iv</sup> Sands Directory 1882

<sup>v</sup> Government Gazette, 12 January 1917

<sup>vi</sup> Her daughter Mavis recalled being told how her parents met.

<sup>vii</sup> Department of Education employment card.

*Because of space limitations I have serialised Brent Corish's excellent article, rather than attempt to cut it down to fit 1 or 2 pages. This is Part 1 of 4. Part 2 will continue in the next issue of the Newsletter.* **Editor**



### *May Lunch*



Ian Vacchini and Deanna Hoermann

### *Members say*

**John Dugdale**

While recently disposing of papers I came upon this 1991 issue of the Association's predecessor of The Newsletter, which was generally composed by the President leading up to each of the luncheon meetings every year when it was distributed. It invoked a good deal of nostalgia in me and memories of those mentioned, almost all of whom are no longer with us. This Message Stick was composed by Doug Swan.

### **THE MESSAGE STICK**

Those members who attended our August meeting at the Bowlers' Club will be pleased to note we have booked the private function room once again for our Christmas luncheon on December 3. Your Executive was heartened by the support given by the members and partners to the August meeting which was followed by an informative and timely address by Vic Grant.

Several members were in attendance for the first time including Jack and Shirley Harrison and Kay Williams as well as valiant stalwarts such as Bill McPhillips and Maurice de Ferranti, who made the effort to attend despite their personal indispositions. Members will be pleased to know that John and Maisie Vaughan were at the luncheon. John is recovering from his recent illness.

"Gordonvale" was once again the scene of a happy gathering of fifteen of our members in July. There we enjoyed the renowned hospitality of Les, Patsy and their son, Iain. 'Twas Iain who received valued guidance from our retired Scouters, Rowley Dart and Bill Rose in the setting of barbecue fires while Barbara Rose looked on with a bemused air. By the way, Bill and Barbara are now proud grandparents.



In recent weeks Les has been recovering from an operation and faces more surgery in January, this time on his eyes.

In good spirits on that day was John Yabsley who was departing shortly for the Gilbert Islands to stay with son Rick and his family. Also enjoying the day was Ailsa Hawes whom many will remember for her contributions to School Library Services. Ailsa, who was accompanying Eula Guthrie, now resides in a quiet valley in Wales.

Members may have noted the recent passing of Charles Ferrier. His widow, Olive, has appreciated the expressions of sympathy from our Association.

During our recent pilgrimage to Mermaid Beach Belle and I visited Bob and Valda Blevin at Coffs Harbour. Both continue to enjoy the rural setting for their home and garden while Rex and Dawn Barlow, now retired from their role as newsagents, are enjoying the company of Keith and Edna Jones at Tweed Heads.

News of various travellers is rather sparse. However, Bill Toft has undertaken a tour with a difference – one by fifty-four Aussies in sixteen light aircraft taking one month to visit a number of cities of the USA. Bill reports that American TV was keen to cover the tour as it was the first time that “foreign nationals” had undertaken this type of tour.

The “travelling Enderbys” have also undertaken a sea voyage somewhat more sedate than they are accustomed to – a trip down the Murray River. This follows Bruce’s fascination with the locks of the Panama Canal earlier this year.

Ian and Mary Scott attempted an overseas trip to visit their son, Bill, teaching in Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, they had to turn back in Singapore when Mary suffered a setback.

Kit Macartney, the President of The Friends of Stewart House, has not been in the best of health, nor has our own Lyn Bottomley. In particular, we wish Lance Charlton well after his recent major operation.

I have noted in correspondence the doubts of many members as to their financial status with the Association. This reminded Betty Roberts of the admonishing of an elderly retiree that she should think of the Hereafter. The retiree responded that she did just that several times each day when she walked into another room and said to herself, “What am I here after?” To me that has a familiar ring.

Finally, your Executive wishes members and their partners the very best in the coming festive season and in the new year.

With regards . . .

Doug

### ***Members say***

**David Maher**

Some members will be aware that Geoff and Shirley Falkenmire have returned to live in Tamworth where Geoff attended school and where he was the District Inspector of Schools from 1965-'68. Geoff replaced John Dugdale. I was D.I. at Moree from 1967 to 1969 and hence worked in the North West Region during Geoff's service in Tamworth.



With Geoff and Shirley's return to Tamworth, we have seized some opportunities to share some most enjoyable morning teas together and understandably to engage in some meaningful reminiscences about times past. Geoff is eighty-nine. Shirley has had a stroke but is as effervescent as ever and is receiving speech therapy three times weekly to improve her capacity to communicate.



Always should we cry 'Carpe Diem' before it is too late.

### ***Members say***

**Clem MacMahon**

#### **LINDSAY AKED**

I was saddened by not knowing that Lindsay Aked was farewelled here in Ballina and also to hear of his OAM after his death. I was gunna write but Lindsay shares the free spirit syndrome with Charley Mullavey. With aircraft piloting added to his skills the pair of them were legendary at times, I have had the DSE ask if I'd seen them anywhere around the state or "where the hell are they".

Searching my museum records for background to the dilapidated MV Florrie, a wooden vessel which has what are now unique characteristics. I find that there is a claim that the then beautiful vessel built on the central coast and plied the Richmond River in many roles for many years, was named after one of Lindsay's beautiful forbears.

The report went further to tell of Lindsay's father being postmaster at Ballina in 1937. The two elder boys often used to sleep in the clock tower and the younger was noted as being an outstanding musician. How great it would have been to know this when the opportunity existed to have the man reminisce about his early life and the boat connection!

### ***May Lunch***



Brian Gillett and Brian Ford

### ***A Letter to the Secretary***

Dear Brian

I write to you belatedly to inform you officially of the death of my mother, Gwen Bennett and to request you not to send copies of your Newsletter to her last address at Brentwood Village.

Mum died in Gosford hospital on 9 September 2009 after a massive stroke a week earlier on Father's Day. Since then I have had her mail redirected to a post office box which I

have now relinquished. You are the last correspondent I have had to inform of Mum's death.

I have enjoyed the ARISSEA Newsletter - seeing the photographs of education colleagues of my father, Leslie (and some of my teachers, too!) and reading about the activities of members of your organization. Since Dad's death in 1997 the Newsletter helped Mum keep informed about the people who had played such an important part in Dad's professional life and in the social life of both of my parents. If you could put a notice of Mum's death in your next Newsletter I would much appreciate it.

I hope that the members of ARISSEA keep enjoying life and the fellowship of your association and that they continue to produce the informative Newsletter.

Yours sincerely  
Rosemary Coombs

**Address changes**

(Changes shown in Bold)

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### ***Death***

23/4/2011 REID T (Tom)  
104 Tarragal Place Village, Karalta Rd, Erina, 2250

### ***From the Editor***

This edition of the ARISSEA Newsletter has been produced in 3 versions.

1. The traditional version is the usual 2 column magazine layout in black & white that is photocopied for distribution by Australia Post to about 75% of members.
2. The 2 column version is also available as an email version in colour for members who want to receive it by email and be able to print parts of the Newsletter.
3. The E-mail version is in a single column, screen formatted, colour version that is designed to be distributed by email and read from a computer or video screen, although it can be printed in part if desired. This version is longer (in pages) than the other two because it has a different page layout, usually extra photos and late comments that the earlier versions can't include because of timing and page limitations. At present, approximately 25% of members have requested this version.

If you wish to change the type of Newsletter that is sent to you, please email a request to the Secretary, Brian Ford on [genecom@bigpond.net.au](mailto:genecom@bigpond.net.au) indicating the version that you would prefer to receive, (1, 2 or 3).

**Peter Robinson**

**Members are reminded that material is  
needed for the next Newsletter.  
Accompanying photos are most welcome,  
preferably as JPG email attachments.**

**Copy deadline: 17th October 2011.**

Contributions should be directed to:

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