



April 2012

e-Newsletter

Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators

From the President



I have at last started cleaning out old files of reports and papers, accumulated over the past 50 years in education. As you can imagine they represent a history of investigations into important educational issues.

I have been very interested for personal reasons in those that have focused on rural education and it remains an interest to steal time and look at the many reports and their findings and recommendations. I know you have all been exercised by what to do with old documents. I have accumulated so many reports over the years that my shelves bulge with interesting material that is not very relevant to my current lifestyle.

Whilst the cleanout has been initiated by my partner, Joyce, in a search for space it comes with a reminder that we are engaging with family and friends in different ways and have our time occupied with other interests.

But I still get sentimental enjoyment from reviewing the history of recent education and of my involvement in it. I have located reports that addressed the establishment of the Public Service Board and the Education Commission, both of which appear to have returned to the agenda.

What have been the most influential developments in public education? I know the historians would refer to the major changes under Peter Board. Some would focus on the Wyndham Report and its achievements in changing the educational structures as well as creating new opportunities for students.

Others would nominate the Carrick Report of 1989 that was a most comprehensive review of education in NSW and resulted in legislative and many program changes of considerable importance for the learning of students. I am open to your views.

The challenge to look at documents arose from Minister Piccoli's announcement about the greatest change in 100 years of education, the increase in the power and responsibility for principals over their budgets and the extension of a pilot program for school based decision making.

I returned to the documents that were prominent in initiating the Schools Renewal Program and was reminded of the giant strides forward that occurred at that time to change the management structures of the system and schools and increase the decision making responsibility of principals.

Of personal note, I found a paper written in about 1976 in which Brian Caldwell and I had argued for School Based Budgeting, a concept that had begun in Edmonton, Alberta as an innovation in school management. I think the recent trial of Principal autonomy in NSW and its proposed adoption for school leadership and management are a welcome further development of the strategic approach that commenced in North America, encouraging strong educational leadership and management at the school level whilst facilitating co-existence and development within a system of schools.

School based decision making has been occurring in NSW schools in different areas of administration for the past forty years (remember school based curriculum development). This key change in NSW can be considered as a continuation of the devolution that played such an important part in our lives as senior educational administrators. And it will remind us that making changes of this order require careful implementation to ensure that wise decisions meet the educational needs of our students.

As principals engage with this challenging educational initiative, I hope that the best available research in teaching and learning will be used in making decisions that affect our students. Our experience would suggest that by connecting and collaborating with other schools and engaging with the broader community, principals and staff are able to benefit from the successful practices of others and continue to build corporate knowledge about ways to improve student learning in this technological era.

On a second front, the release of the Gonski Report on school funding has raised complex issues but has given a strong lead to politicians by recommending a large increase in funding. An issue however is that management is vested in another tier of government as well as involving community groups.

The Report has opened debate in the media and press on issues we have known about for a long time but have found too difficult to resolve but the matters with which it seeks engagement have important ramifications for all schools and students. The Report has potential to reframe education in Australia. I am sure that each of us will follow this debate with great interest.

The Report has been released into a changing educational environment where influence on strategic policy and decision making in school education, vocational education and higher education is shifting from State authorities to the Federal level. National frameworks are setting directions for the operational decisions of system authorities. Policy and funding issues provide the life support for the purposeful changes that can be anticipated across Australia. In this context serious debate on Gonski may not be far off.

Back to our purpose of fellowship and renewal of contact among colleagues. We look forward to our next luncheon on Friday 4th May 2012 with registration details outlined in this Newsletter. We hope you can join us. Jack Harrison is anticipating a fine warm autumn day. Our other luncheons for 2012 occur on Friday 3rd August 2012 and Friday 7th December 2012.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts of Pat Morgan, George Green and Geoff Walton in supporting Stewart House, including through the Out of Hours Program assessment. There is a standing invitation to ARISSEA members from Graeme Philpotts, General Manager, Stewart House, to contribute their expertise to its work including to the assessment process.

I also thank Noila Berglund for giving her assistance to the ISEA selection process to determine the award for Excellence in Public Education. Thank you for supporting these significant activities.

Alan Rice

Christmas Lunch



Cate and Ian Vacchini

THE FORT STREET MODEL SCHOOL

In his excellent, nostalgic and perceptive article in *The Newsletter* Graham Sims spoke fondly of his secondary school *alma mater*, Fort Street Boys' High School. The following text tells something of its historical antecedents.

Governor General Sir Charles Augustus Fitz Roy's promulgation in *The NSW Government Gazette* (No.4, p.23) on 7th January 1848 provided for the establishment of government schools in New South Wales, which were to be conducted, regulated and inspected by a Board of National Education centralised in Sydney.

It was not until the Public Schools Act of 1866, when this Board gave way to a Council of Education, that the National Schools became known as Public Schools.

The Board with its three commissioners was legally incorporated on the 15th June 1848, but at a meeting on 29th April of that year it had drafted its first set of regulations, which were published in a special edition of *The Government Gazette*.

The first school to open under the Board's aegis was that at Kempsey in September 1848, primarily in rented makeshift quarters

During 1849 fourteen more National Schools were opened and in the following year an additional twenty began to operate. Among these was that at Fort Street in Sydney whose *official* birth was in April 1850 (but see later) in a building on what is now Observatory Hill, once known as Fort Phillip or more popularly "Gallows Hill", that had formerly been the Sydney Military Hospital for the New South Wales Corps.

This was in an area now on the western side of the southern approach to the Sydney Harbour Bridge where from January 1911 until December 1974 Fort Street Girls' High School was housed in the original buildings that currently feature the National Trust's NSW headquarters and its S.H. Ervin Art Gallery.

When teaching actually began at the Fort Street Model School has been a matter of debate. The school's formal opening is officially given as in April 1850, but there is firm evidence that it was operating with teachers and pupils in 1849, maybe beginning in August or a little earlier that year.

On 20th January 1848 Governor Fitz Roy gave his approval for the Military Hospital to be taken over by the Board of National Education for its school purposes. The Board took formal possession of the property on 4th January 1849 and eleven days later a contract was formalised with a Mr McBeath for necessary "alterations, repairs and additions" in conversions to the building to cost £849.

Despite delays these were completed to the Board's satisfaction as the Commissioners found when they visited the site on 1st September 1849. This was a Saturday, a non-school day maybe chosen so that pupils' lessons would not be interrupted by the visitors.

A further indication of a 1849 beginning date of the school's operation at Fort Street lies with the Board's statement in its annual report for that year that it had procured overseas-experienced teachers for the Model School, but there is no record of names or salary payments for these.

However, the Board's Minute Book for the time reveals that between 5th February and 2nd April 1850 it had appointed five teachers to the school, four of whom were unmarried women at £40 p.a. (one resigned later) and one was a man at £100 p.a. They would obviously be earning their money from the dates of their appointment or very shortly thereafter.

As the NSW Department of Education's publication in 1998, *Government Schools of New South Wales, 1848 to 1993* put it on its page 7, Fort Street National School had been established to be what the Board deemed to be "a model school to serve as an example to new teachers of how a good National School should be operated and managed."

It was also to become the State's teacher-training institution—a "Normal School"—in 1850 first offering only one month's such preparation.

Over the years this was periodically extended until in 1883 it was twelve months for most Fort Street trainees. This continued to be so until March 1905 when Sydney Teachers' College began operating temporarily at Blackfriars Public School, Broadway, Sydney with its two year course for primary school teachers.

In August 1850 the Board appointed applicants Daniel O'Driscoll and his wife to be teachers at Fort Street. He had been trained at the Dublin Model School in Ireland and was to act as Fort Street's temporary headmaster. The school's first permanent headmaster was to be William Wilkins, who had been specially imported from England for the position and who entered on duty there in charge on 23 January 1851.

It will be remembered that Wilkins became the Board's first full-time inspector of schools on 1st July 1854 and continued to rise in position and influence in public education in New South Wales until his retirement as education departmental under-secretary on 31st May 1884. He died on 10th November 1892 and a special monument to his memory stands on his grave in Rookwood Cemetery..

Fort Street was designated a national school, then from 1866 a public school until the passing of the Public Instruction Act of 1880, which provided for the establishment of high schools. Its provision of secondary education classes over the years, usually for two years beyond primary grade levels, entitled it to the official name of "Superior Public School" (SPS) from March 1881, then of "District School"(DS) from January 1906 to December 1910 when separate girls' and boys' high schools were formed to operate from January

1911. As from January 1975 these were amalgamated into the one co-educational Fort Street High School on the original boys' high school site at Taverner's Hill, Petersham.

In a telephone conversation with the archivist of the present Fort Street High School the writer was told that the new boys' high moved into its Petersham location on 12th June 1916 yet the official record gives both it and its girls' counterpart as beginning in January 1911.

The fact is that the boys' high school had been obliged to occupy a share of the standing old Fort Street location for nearly five and a half years until its own premises at Petersham were ready for use, the outbreak of World War I probably contributing to this delay. As has been shown, the girls' high school continued to inhabit the Fort Street buildings until the close of 1974.

Having been re-named as a Junior Technical School from January 1917 until December 1927 and including a Home Science School from January 1918 until December 1927, the bridge approach site on Observatory Hill has, since January 1928, been the address of the primary Fort Street Public School. It is now conducted in its own two-storey brick building, the foundation stone for which was laid on 24 November 1958 by the then Minister for Education, Robert Heffron. It is adjacent to the historical one—the National Trust's and its art gallery's present locations.



This photograph of the “Old Fort Street School building” probably dates from after the girls' high school began its occupancy in 1911 as all the students shown are girls in uniform.

Christmas Lunch



Bill and Shirley Grant

Christmas Lunch



Trevor Harrison and John Ward

**Anecdotes from the life of
Nicholas 'Nick' Corish
NSW Government School Teacher
Part 4 of 4**



Nick's Family, Christmas 1929

[Back Row L. to R.] Mavis 18, Ron 22, Ril 28, Alan 24, Hazel 26,
[Front Row L. to R.] Nick 54, and Lilian 50 (holding grand-daughter Val

The two years at Greta were hard for Nick as a Principal. The year that Nick left Greta the District Inspector wrote to the Department of Education seeking what was effectively to be an increase in staff for the school because:

"...there is no school like Greta. Practically every parent has been on the dole for over seven years. There is little parental control, and all the evils of prolonged idleness are reflected in the homes and the school. The Greta children are very hard to discipline owing to their parent's attitude towards all control and government."

Greta would not return to relative prosperity until there was an increased need for coal which came about with the outbreak of World War II – some five years after Nick had moved on.

After two years at Greta Nick was transferred to another depressed Hunter Valley town school taking up the position of principal, in January 1935, 13km away at Abermain. Nick's parents had lived in the area before he was born when Nick's older brother and sister – 'Will' and 'Sis' –(the twins) were born in Abermain in 1870 when his father was a railway contractor at Blandford.

Mavis had found country life at Greta and Abermain so dull that her mother, known as Ma-Ma to her grandchildren, had suggested that Mick come up for a weekend. He did – and for most weekends thereafter. Mavis and Mick became engaged while she was living in Abermain and were married in 1935 in St. Georges Church of England at Hurstville where Nick and Lilian had been married 34 years earlier.

Nick and Lilian's grand-daughter Val stayed with her grandparents and attended Abermain Public School while her youngest brother Brent was being born in late 1938. Val remembers being the "smart city kid" who actually knew all the answers to the questions the Principal asked on his regular visits to the classroom. Despite putting her hand up to answer every question the Principal (her grandfather) never once chose her to answer – Val still hasn't forgiven him.

Nick and Lilian remained at Abermain for five years until Nick's retirement on 16 November 1939.

Narrabeen

With retirement, Nick and Lilian moved into their newly acquired beachside home in Clark Street, Narrabeen. Like many school teachers who had moved about the country, occasionally having access to a vested residence where rent was very low, they were able to save a little and this was Nick and Lilian's first house that they owned.

Lilian told most of the grandchildren that Nick was a champion snorer and so he was banished to sleep on the verandah for the rest of his life while Lilian maintained her own bedroom indoors. Nick loved life at Narrabeen where he became a local identity as a beach fisherman, a regular at the local hotel and a teller of tall stories. He was so regular at the hotel that he had a special spot at the bar and a stool.

For some time one of the barmaids kept a tray especially for any unsuspecting stranger who took the stool next to Nick. The tray contained cotton wool balls for the ears and headache tablets for the pain. She would silently get the tray out and place it in front of the stranger – locals knew better than to sit next to Nick.

On the side of the Narrabeen house was a small holiday flat. In the winter of 1948 the flat was occupied by Geoff and Gladys Cowling. Gladys was Ron's Sister-in-law and had just been married. Because of the war there was an extreme shortage of housing so Nick and Lilian let Geoff and Gladys use the flat.

In his unpublished memoirs, Geoff says "I look back on those few months as a very happy period of our lives, not only because of our close relationship with Ron and Sylvie, but with very fond memories of Ron's father, Nick, who was a humorous and delightfully mischievous old villain"

As well as being renowned as a villain Nick was a renowned beach fisherman. He used only a handline – never a rod. Like Captain Ahab, or The Old Man and The Sea, Nick was always after the great fish. Many of his stories were about the times he hooked it but it broke his line.

One night he hooked what he thought was a bigger one than usual. He played that fish and fought it for hours. He walked along the surf edge from Narrabeen to Collaroy and back again. He walked half-way to North Narrabeen and back again.

That night all the other beach fishermen knew that Nick had at last done it. As he approached their spot they would reel in their lines and let Nick fight his fish without let-up or interference. Some actually walked with him, quietly giving advice, offering encouragement, but mostly silently admiring his skill with a handline and his persistence.

Some were on the side of the great fish – some were for Nick. Eventually, after many hours in the dark, Nick landed the fish. It was indeed a monster. What a fish it was.

Nick proudly took it home in a large hessian sugar bag from which the tail of the fish protruded and in the morning triumphantly took it inside and showed it to Lilian – who immediately told him to take it outside – it could come inside when it was cleaned, filleted and ready to eat!

But first Nick wanted to bask in the glory of the catch so he took it to the hotel to show it off. It was greatly admired and some of the locals said that Nick should “bring it back tomorrow when so-and-so would be here as he would love to see it”. So the fish went home and came back tomorrow. And the next night several beach fishermen, who had heard about it, but not seen it, asked to see it tomorrow. And so it went on.

Eventually Lilian told Nick that the fish had to go because it stank. It was buried in the sand of Narrabeen beach and no one ever got to eat the great fish. Nick told the tale of that fish to any one who would listen for years – and, of course, it got bigger as time went on. Pass the cotton wool please!

Nick must have thought that those last five years at Abermain Public School were his farewell to teaching and that he could look forward to his retirement. But this was not to be. With the manpower demands arising from the Second World War, a shortage of teachers arose and retired teachers were asked to assist.

On the 19 July 1943, after four years of retirement, and at 69 years of age, Nick entered on duty as a teacher at Mona Vale Public School where he taught for the next three years. He was then transferred to Dee Why Public School on 12 March 1946 then, after only seven months, to Harbord Public School on 17 October 1946 and then back to Mona Vale from 11 April 1947.

Nick never retired again as he died at the end of the August/September school holidays in 1951 while still teaching – this time at Narrabeen Public School.

The Gravestone in Mona Vale Cemetery reads:

*In loving memory of Nicholas Corish
Died 10th Sept 1951 Aged 76
and his wife Lilian Corish
Died 26th May 1971 aged 92.*

As Nick’s funeral cortege moved from St Faith’s Church in Clark Street Narrabeen to the cemetery at Mona Vale, all the pupils of Narrabeen Public School and Mona Vale Public School lined Pittwater Road near their schools as a mark of respect.

Nick had been a public school teacher for a span of 59 years,

Lilian continued to live in Clark Street Narrabeen until her death 20 years later. She died on 26 May 1971 at the age of 92 having outlived her husband and all ten of her younger brothers and sisters.

Nick and Lilian's children had good genetic material and all were long lived. Nick died when he was 76 and Lilian died at 92. All their children survived to great ages: Ron died when he was 84, Alan when he was 85, Ril was 92, Mavis 93 and Hazel 99 (just weeks short of her 100th birthday). What changes Nick's children saw in their lifetimes.

One final story concerns the fairly recent discussion between Hazel, then in her mid-nineties, and the new wife of a family member. The ladies were discussing the recent effort by the younger couple to see Halley's comet that was on one of its passes of earth.

"Did you get up to look for it last night?" asked the younger. "No – I saw it last time!" was Hazel's reply. In fact she and the other children had been awakened by Nick (ever the good teacher and parent) on a wintry night at Collector and taken outside to look.

Thus Ril aged 9, Hazel 7, Alan 5 and Ron 3 saw a "once-in-a-lifetime" sight. Well, Hazel saw it twice in a lifetime.

Ron was unimpressed, his lasting memory of that night was of being cold and standing in the frost and complaining until his mother gave him someone else's socks – leaving them to stand barefoot on the frosty ground.

The country really owes a great debt to those many fine teachers (and to their families) who spent most of their careers in one teacher country schools.

Christmas Lunch



Vincent Delany and Jean Koshemakin

Dear Peter

I have gained approval for the reprinting of an article written by Dr Marilyn Chaseling about a 10,000 voice childrens choir which sang at the 1901 Commonwealth Inauguration Celebration in Sydney. Marilyn is a former teacher and now lectures at Southern Cross Uni. Her PhD was on primary school music/music education.

I wonder how many of our music maestros from the Department - over 'recent' years - knew that such an event took place. Imagine organising a similar event today.

Richmond

LOST AND FOUND: 10,000 VOICES

An inspiring 1901 choral spectacular

Dr Marilyn Chaseling

Imagine successfully organising a 10,000-voice school choir that performs successfully before an audience of 200 thousand—after only one combined rehearsal! Marilyn Chaseling describes the achievement of the 1901 Inauguration Celebrations of the Commonwealth of Australia in Sydney.

In 2003, when working through the time-worn pages of *The New South Wales Educational Gazette* in search of material about music in schools, one article simply leaped out at me. It was a story of a public school children's choir that performed in Sydney at the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. What was truly remarkable about this choir was its size—10,000 voices!

With no photographs or illustrations to provide visual information about the choir, the anonymous author used word images so vivid that it was just like being present back then as one of the spectators at Centennial Park on 1 January 1901.

Celebrating the birth of a nation

On 1 January 1901, after years of discussion, quarrelling, politicking and preparation, the six independent British colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland finally joined together to form the Commonwealth of Australia. Elaborate celebrations were organised in each state (as the colonies were now called), with the principal event taking place in Sydney.

After a two-hour procession from the Domain through a blaze of colourful flags, bunting, festoons, picturesque arches and vast cheering crowds, a grand and solemn ceremony took place at Centennial Park. This site was considered ideal, as its rocky ledges and grassy hills formed a natural amphitheatre from which an estimated 200,000 people could look down upon the specially-erected white octagonal pavilion and the unfolding panoramic scene.

The events of the day best unfold in the writer's words: 'The selection of the position for the school children in the natural amphitheatre formed by the regularly rising terraces

outside the enclosed reserves on the park was in all respects creditable to the authorities. From almost every part of the grounds on that side an uninterrupted view of the whole pageant was obtainable ...’.

Despite the fierce heat of an Australian January day, the occasion began early for ‘hundreds of people on the ground, most of them aimlessly walking about viewing the arrangements, and only wondering where they could best realize their desires in the matter of obtaining a good view of the proceedings ... About 9 o’clock the rattle of a veritable procession of omnibuses along the road ... announced the arrival of the first detachment of school children. On they came amidst a hubbub of juvenile excitement, which found utterance in the singing of school choruses by the girls, and in the apparently quite unnecessary and indeed absolutely gratuitous cheering by the boys ...’.

When the first children arrived, the grass was still wet from overnight rain, which had now well passed. ‘But with the happy adaptability of childhood [the children] at once brought themselves abreast of the circumstances. School mates in each particular education institution foregathered in little groups of special “chumship”, while keeping in close general touch with the other pupils of their respective schools, and with their teachers. The latter kept a watchful eye upon the youngsters, but it was surprising to notice how easily they kept them under control. A word to the boys and a look to the girls seemed sufficient ...’.

The tedium of the long wait until the early afternoon start to the proceedings was relieved by the brass and string band of the Fourth Regiment of the new Commonwealth Forces which arrived early to entertain the growing crowd of children and spectators. But suddenly, a new appearance caught the interest of the children!

It was the arrival of twelve delivery vans laden ‘with all sorts of good things to eat, lollies, cakes, buns, and fruit, together with surely hundreds of huge milk cans and probably a dozen great barrels of ginger beer. Considering there were upwards of 10,000 children present, the promptness with which their wants were supplied was very creditable to the officers who carried out this important portion of the work of the day’.

For the anonymous storywriter, it was undoubtedly a treat to walk among the groups of children and to hear their excited and expectant chatter. Despite the heat of the day and the lengthy wait, there were no complaints to be heard.

When at last the parade of troops began to file onto the grounds, resplendent in their uniforms and with the sun glittering on their polished swords, bayonets and helmets, the children sat down to watch. Their appreciative applause came spontaneously.

The only episode to unsettle the children was when a terrified horse bolted with its rider and galloped frantically into the procession. The children rose as one, screaming in terror for the rider and for those in the crowd that the frenzied horse might encounter. Although the procession continued as if nothing had happened, it took some time before the children settled once more to watch the proceedings.

From the high rocks north of where the children were positioned, the storywriter described the scene of children: ‘The girls were as a rule dressed in snowy white, and most of them wore bright scarlet, blue or vivid green sashes. As they moved from place to place, they presented a kaleidoscopic scene likely to remain as a mental picture with the beholder for many a day. [At the] back of this ever-moving throng there were hundreds of girls seated on the grass and this mass, from the distance, standing out from the darker surroundings, ... strongly resembled a huge bed of white chrysanthemums’.

Carolling choirs

Three choirs performed at the ceremony that day. The proceedings began with the singing of *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*, then a Te Deum, also known as *Jackson in F*, by a chorus of 400 voices from church choirs supported by military bands. Despite the correctness of the harmonies and the richness of the brass sounds, a non-cooperative breeze meant that the hymns wafted fitfully to and fro—except for the impressive fortissimo of the last line, when the words swept distinctly across the grounds. The second choir, known as ‘the choir of a thousand voices’, again assisted by military bands, performed Handel’s ‘Hallelujah’ chorus with a reportedly ‘commanding effect’.

Notwithstanding the pomp and circumstance of the proceedings to that point, it was the colossal choir of 10,000 primary school children who ‘wowed’ the 200,000 strong crowd. Under the direction of Herr Hugo Alpen (Superintendent of Music, Department of Music, Department of Public Instruction of New South Wales), this massive choir burst forth in song with ‘Federated Australia’ from Alpen’s *Welcome Cantata*. This melodious piece was performed ‘with great spirit and feeling—the volume of tone was at last sufficient to make itself felt across all the plain to the encircling banks around’.

Despite a mistake, when the song began while the Governor-General was speaking, the voices of the children’s voices were crystal clear in the sustained harmony of the song.

When the children’s singing finished, a roar of approval was heard from the 50,000 spectators who were seated three-quarters of a mile (1.2 km) away on the side of the opposite hill. These people had apparently only heard murmurings of the other choirs and had barely responded, but the sound of the 10,000 children, whose singing was enhanced by sounds from the accompanying bands, ‘struck home to them’.

The proceedings ended with a combined performance of the British national anthem *God Save the Queen*, by the three choirs under the baton of Mr. Alfred Hill (Australian composer, violist and music teacher), with Alpen following Hill’s beat, directing the children from a second platform erected at a higher level to enable all of them to see. The children’s choir then entertained the crowd with a ‘precise and vigorous rendition’ of *Advance Australia Fair* and *Rule Britannia*.

The search

What else could be discovered about this colossal choir and its awe-inspiring performance? My research led me firstly to an online search of library databases, including the NSW State Library’s and National Library of Australia’s online picture catalogues, and secondly to the

index card files at Sydney's Mitchell Library. Curiously, no photographs of the choir or even any other references to it could be found online or in the card index.

This basic search then broadened to include the National Library of Australia, where I enlisted the assistance of the Pictures Reference Librarian who examined the library's picture collection of the ceremony. Close examination of one of the photographs revealed a mass of white behind the inauguration pavilion, which she thought might be the children's assembly.

I had the photo enlarged, which confirmed that the white image was indeed the crowd of girls in their white dresses. The librarian also located a copy of the Inauguration Program on the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federation website, which listed the two adult choirs and the 10,000-voice 'Public School Choir'.

The source of most of the information about the Sydney Inauguration of the Commonwealth celebrations came, as would be expected, from the newspapers of the day. Curiously, the colossal choir barely rated a mention, other than for two articles on 2 January 1901—one in *The Daily Telegraph* and other in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (part of which was reprinted without attribution in the January 1901 edition of *The New South Wales Educational Gazette* quoted earlier).

Three other newspapers afforded the choir only one sentence apiece, remarking on the magnificent volume produced when the assembled choir of 10,000 children sang the 'Federated Australia' chorus. Even the official film of the Sydney inauguration ceremony—Australia's first feature-length documentary—did not specifically refer to the choir, although, on close examination, the mass of children can be located in various scenes.

More than a week after the inauguration ceremony, the Sydney weekly newspaper, *The Town and Country Journal*, published a spectacular panoramic view of Centennial Park as a folded broadsheet.⁵ The photograph was taken in the late morning from the western side of the natural amphitheatre, looking towards Randwick, as the procession began to arrive at the park. There, the thousands of children were gathered for safeguarding in a fenced enclosure. While many children watched the proceedings while lined up against the extended post-and-rail fence, other groups of children stood or sat in the shade of trees.

Two boys in dark clothing walked determinedly across the slopes, while two female teachers stood together watching over the scene. To the left of the enclosure, two little girls held hands, while three others took the opportunity to play together.

Based on other reports of the choir, the first trebles—girls in white dresses and hats to protect them from the fierce summer heat—are in the centre of a mass of children. The mottled white to the left are the boy altos, dressed in typical school uniforms of the day—dark trousers, hats, lighter-coloured shirts and school blazers.

To the right are the second trebles in no particular order, mainly girls, and at least one female teacher distinguishable by her height and long frock. In addition, *The Town and Country Journal* included some close-up shots of the day. One photograph, entitled

‘Scenes in the Children’s Enclosure’, fortunately has survived as the only one to show the extent of the choir on that day.

Working back through each edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* from early January 1901, the story of the choir began to unfold. With less than seven weeks before the inauguration and without the benefit of modern day communication methods, the Government-appointed Organising Committee first met to plan a week of inauguration festivities. Their meetings were reported in the *Herald*. At its 28 November meeting the Committee decided that school children should take a prominent part in the celebrations—10,000 public school children at Centennial Park, while the Roman Catholic children were to be positioned along the procession route at St Mary’s Cathedral. Each group of children would sing ‘appropriate music’.

To allay concerns that some of the anticipated 10,000 children at Centennial Park might be injured or lost in the immense crowd, or in a rush as the crowd dispersed, a strongly-fenced space was planned for them. More than 80 police personnel were to watch over the enclosure, while 800 teachers were to act as the children’s guardians. A doctor and nurse were also to be in attendance. Plentiful supplies of drinking water and refreshments would be supplied and suitable latrines provided. Special trams would be organised to transport the children to and from the grounds.

It appears that the 10,000-voice choir had only one combined rehearsal. On 14 December 1900, the children, accompanied by their teachers, arrived by trams at Centennial Park. Then, under the direction of Herr Hugo Alpen, and accompanied by the Royal Artillery Band, they performed *Federated Australia* three times, to the delight of the large gathering of spectators.

‘Federated Australia’

I located the score of *Federated Australia* at the University of Sydney Library. This 72-bar, predominantly antiphonal song, is for a three-part children’s choir with piano accompaniment; although for the inauguration, a military band was substituted for the piano.

The girls sang the soprano part, and the two treble parts were sung by the boys. Alpen must have had great confidence in the singing abilities of the public school boys, as he entrusted them with the most challenging part of *Federated Australia*. It was their united voices that, without the benefit of an introduction, first captured the audience’s attention and established the song’s patriotic mood.

The boys were also given responsibility for beginning the second section. When their part is the only one to be heard, it moves by small leaps with the inclusion of a difficult leap of a seventh in bar 11. When providing the harmony, the boys’ part moves by step with some chromatic passages. On four occasions, the boys were required to sub-divide into a fourth part.

When describing the performance, *The Daily Telegraph* writer wrote: ‘One would hear a phrase sung by the left wing replied to by the right, or the centre, followed by two or

three sections uniting in a massive phrase in harmony. All done with perfect precision, and the unanimous observance of pauses, dynamical contrasts that told of well-ingrained discipline, the two concluding 'Amens' were so imposingly delivered that the hillsides rang out with applause'.

Why get so excited?

The reason why I find this 10,000 choir of school children so awe-inspiring is that it demonstrates what can be achieved when children are taught singing through what today would be called a 'sequential and developmental' music program.

Chaseling, MJ 2010, 'Lost and found: 10,000 voices: an inspiring 1901 choral spectacular', *Music in Action*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 8-13. The article is based on the writer's 2003 research—M Chaseling, 'The great public school choir of ten thousand', *Proceedings of the XXVth National Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Music Education (AARME)*, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 25-43.

Christmas Lunch



Anne Eggins

Members say

English: As She is (No Longer) Spoke

Graham Sims

Like all of us, I have my biases, and, perhaps with the onset of that dreaded nemesis called "old age", mine are starting to show.

Having taught and loved languages most of my life, I respect and admire the beauty of language used well, and despair when it's used badly. At the risk of being labelled (once again) a cranky old man, language, and in particular, English is being used more and more badly. (I could no doubt now get away with "badder and badder".)

It's galling enough that some people are seriously suggesting that "text-speak" (R U 2 C me 2 nite?) should be accepted in the HSC examinations, in essays etc, on the facile grounds that it's "modern English". Literally every day, and without even wishing to, I see, hear and read journalists, reporters and a variety of public figures mangling and misusing English, with neither correction nor comment. I'm sick to death of hearing and reading "one in five Australians are (sic) too fat/rich/dopey etc." (One in five IS, please! One is singular!)

"Whom" now seems to replace "who", even when "whom" is demonstrably incorrect. One leading newspaper recently stated "....Joe Tripodi, whom (sic) Labor sources suspect is leading a move ...". It's not "whom"! "Who" is the subject of "is leading". Omit the "Labor sources suspect" bit, and it's "Joe Tripodi who is leading...". It's basic grammar, not rocket science!

A few weeks ago, a certain (blonde) ABC newsreader pronounced "scintillating" as "skintillating"! A TV reporter, in defending his source (for a story that turned out to be false), claimed "My source is impeachable!" (I wonder on what charge his source is going to be impeached. He meant, of course, "impeccable"!)

The recent editorial in my local newspaper bore the (supposedly smart-alec) headline: 'How a couch effects our seats.' The editor, who should know better, means "affects", not "effects". "Effect" is usually a noun, meaning "result". When it is used as a verb, "effect" means "to influence". The distinction was once known and understood by primary school students.

Malcolm Turnbull's now ex-P.R. man, on camera, had to look up "concocted" to see what it meant. He soon found out.

We have the laughable, if it were not so serious, dichotomy between a leading employer group, stating that too many résumés reveal sloppy and careless writing, lousy spelling and virtual illiteracy, while the popularist Principal of a private school fatuously states that spelling is old-fashioned and doesn't matter. I am unashamed in my belief that the clear, unambiguous, conventionally correct and accurate use of a language, be it English, Hindi, or whatever, does matter. It has long been one of the benchmarks of an educated, articulate member of any society that values such standards.

Are we on the brink of a purely technology-driven society that no longer values traditional standards? If, as I fear, we are, what has caused this collapse? What are its ramifications? And does anybody, except old fogeys like me, really care?

If a school Principal, supposedly an educational leader, actually believes that spelling and grammar are "yesterday's standards", what other standards are tacitly being allowed to decline in his school?

- Numeracy? (Because electronics can calculate for you?)
- Knowledge of History (Because today and tomorrow are all that count?)
- Dress and deportment? (Because fashion is set by the young?)
- Conduct and morality? (Because the individual is all-important?)

If our leading newspapers and our public broadcasters no longer seem interested in setting the language standards for which they were once respected, and if neither organisation (one of which you and I help to fund) even bothers to answer correspondence pointing out repeated errors in language usage, does this mean that their senior management no longer even cares?

The correct, clear and unambiguous use of language is not “pedantic” or “academic”. Surely, in a world of increasing complexity and internationalism, language awareness, usage and communicative accuracy needs to be enhanced, not glibly simplified as a mere tool of technology.

There is a documented story that, towards the end of World War II, and just prior to unleashing the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S. Allies sent an ultimatum to Japan, to the effect that if she did not surrender, a terrible and devastating new weapon would be launched against her. The Japanese government, wishing to buy precious time, responded to the effect that, for the time being, Japan chose not to act upon this ultimatum.

The U.S. translator used a secondary, far less common meaning of the expression “not to act upon”, and the translation read as “Japan chooses to ignore your ultimatum”. The atomic bombs were dropped forthwith. Whoever said that correct use of language is unimportant?

Of course, language is dynamic. It evolves and changes over time; but, despite what technocrats may think, it does so in general accordance with criteria and within parameters of which, as individuals, we may be unaware, but which do apply. The most obvious advantage of this is that, over the centuries, and despite many changes, there is some overarching continuity of form, structure and usage that enables us to have access to the language, and therefore the culture, of our forebears.

It is, after all, remarkable and significant that, in 2009, English speakers can still read and understand Shakespeare, and that, admittedly with some effort, the great works of Hindi, Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, German, Russian etc can still be accessed and appreciated by those who wish to, with lessons to be learned from their timelessness.

Even before I retired as an educator, (if one ever does retire), I began to worry that the cult of immediacy and of instant gratification would impede, and eventually preclude our young people from having, or even wanting to have, such access.

It is surely not enough that today’s kids can communicate with each other. Kids have always been able to do so. Traditionally, at least, there also needs to be communication and understanding between and across generations ... or do we now tacitly accept that only today’s generation matters? It is now very challenging to get students to read and study a novel(s), especially one of the Classics. They see it as hard, boring and “irrelevant”.

Poetry and its appreciation are the province of a select few, and much of what now masquerades as poetry is mere doggerel, or arbitrarily divided prose.

It is a truism that, among migrants, the first generation struggles to adapt to their new environment, the second either “has survived” or not, and the third tends to yearn after the language and culture they have left behind.

If only the present, with its techno-speak, information and entertainment driven pressures, and the sloppy use of English by those who should know better, appears to count, will future generations even know what they have missed.

Christmas Lunch



Gwen Dalton and Nonie Cornford

Christmas Lunch



Joan Healy

Annual General Meeting

Editor

At last year's Annual General meeting held during the May Luncheon Meeting, the following Committee was elected for 2011-12:

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
Volunteer Observers.	Syd Smith
	John Edwards
	Barry Higgins and
	Bill Grant

The Committee for 2012-13 will be elected at this year's May Luncheon Meeting.

Members say

David Maher

The address shown for the late Geoff Falkenmire in the Feb. 2012 issue of ARISSEA is the one that he vacated about two years ago. Herewith is the address of Geoff's daughter: Miss Sue Falkenmire, 108 Piper Street, Tamworth, 2340

Geoff's final weeks were spent with Sue who looked after him ever so caringly after he was no longer capable of caring for himself in his Tamworth apartment. Geoff's widow, Shirley, is in BUPA, Tamworth.

Geoff wrote the following poem specifically to be read at his funeral service.

The body that I have occupied is dead,
But I am not! I still live in your mind
And when e'er you choose to call for me,
I'll come to you at once,
When e'er you need me.
I will come!

Geoffrey Falkenmire

VALE BILL NAY

During the years 1965 to my retirement in 1989, Bill was one of my much admired and respected leaders. I was privileged to have him as my DI at Warren and subsequently to have him as the ADG who developed and nurtured me as a fledgling Regional Director.

Bill was a rare individual who had a special capacity to win the respect of all who worked with him and under him.

His humility, gentle nature and ubiquitous sense of humour, coupled with his exemplary personal and professional qualities, enabled him to relate easily and naturally with people and to earn enduring respect.

He really cared about, and valued, his team of Regional Directors. Indeed, he was an exemplar of his profession and had the total and unequivocal support of all Regional Directors. I, for one, would have literally “walked over hot coals” to support and to defend him.

Those who reflect upon times in Bill’s presence will remember, too, his dignity and his quiet sense of humour. His story about Gus Bain’s biro breaker still has longevity among his professional acquaintances.

In my memorabilia is a very special letter that Bill wrote to me following his visit as Assistant Director General to my Region and there are at least two photographs of him in my autobiography.

Each member of your family, Gwen, can be assured that I cared for him deeply and am saddened that geography has kept us apart. I am so pleased that we exchanged lengthy letters about three years ago.

Vale Bill Nay, a truly great and respected educator and professional colleague, who served the NSW Department of Education with distinction.

Address change

(Changes shown in Bold)

COOK FW (Fred-Jann)
62 Yala Road Bangor 2234
(02) 9543 4926 **janandfred@bigpond.com**

Deaths

06/05/2011 SELL ME (Max)
4 Clarendon St Peregrin Beach 4573

30/11/2011 NAY W (Bill)
252 Vickory Village, 101 Port Hacking Rd
Sylvania 2224

11/12/2011 WARNE RF (Ron)
15 Mawson Terrace Moss Vale 2577

Computer Users

From the Editor:

Please note that this pdf version of this Newsletter is intended to be compatible with Windows computers of almost any type, all Apple Macintosh computers and the iPad.

Because the Newsletter email attachment is compressed into a small 'pdf' file, you need to have ADOBE READER installed on your computer or pad to open it. (READER is available online at no cost from Adobe).

If you experience any difficulty with this file please let me know by sending an email to:

peterrobinson7@gmail.com

Don't forget the 4th May Luncheon.

The booking slip for the Luncheon has been sent to you, with your membership subscription information, by Australia Post.

You will need to send the completed booking slip to Jack Harrison together with a cheque by 14th April.

HELP!

Members are reminded that suitable material is needed for the July Newsletter.

Without your continued support we will not have a Newsletter.

Accompanying photos are most welcome, preferably as JPG email attachments such as those produced by digital cameras.

Copy deadline: 11th June 2012

Post hardcopy to: Peter Robinson,
Newsletter Editor,
3 Corunna Ave,
NORTH ROCKS NSW 2151

Or Email to :
peterrobinson7@gmail.com