



July 2012

eNewsletter

Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators

To apply for the next luncheon, you will need to print this first page and complete the printed booking slip. It can not be emailed to Jack Harrison but must be posted with a cheque to his home postal address.

Peter Robinson
Editor

Booking slip

3rd August 2012 Meeting

Complete and return with your cheque by 12th July to
J.T. Harrison, 2 Amalfi Place, Longueville NSW 2066 (phone 9427 5399)

Here is my payment of \$_____ (at \$40.00 per head)

for _____ and me to attend the ARISSEA luncheon
at 11.30am for 12.30pm at the Bowlers' Club, 95 York Street, Sydney on Friday 3rd August.

Please provide _____ vegetarian meal(s).

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone No. _____

* Print your surname here. _____

Make your cheque payable to the *Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools* and cross it 'Not negotiable'.
Money cannot be refunded for cancellations made after 19th July



July 2012

eNewsletter

Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators

From the President



It was a great honour for me to be elected President of ARISSEA for 2012 at our May AGM luncheon. A few days later with Immediate Past President, Alan Rice, we attended the Annual Presentation Ceremony at Stewart House. It was an inspirational, moving occasion involving school students, teachers, parents and community representative from many schools across the state. A choral group from Dee Why Public School began the ceremony.

The Chairperson of the Stewart House Committee, Mr Barry Johnson, reported proudly on the current state of the school's financial situation. Through an endowment of over \$700,000 left to Stewart House by a local resident and many fund raising

activities, the healthy bottom line was a cause to celebrate particularly as essential roof and building upgrades could be undertaken.

This exciting news was continued in the announcement of an important new strategy for Stewart House, the decision to send a Stewart House representative out to schools and staff members across NSW and the ACT to commit salary donations for Stewart House. This strategy is already bringing significant results for those children in need of the short term respite care available to our schools through Stewart House.

The presentation of Awards to the student representatives from those schools who had organized fund raising events and made the highest per capita donations to Stewart House revealed not only the confidence of the students in their acceptance speeches but also the variety of enjoyable, imaginative and challenging activities, that involved students, staff and communities from Western Region, Riverina Region, New England, Illawarra South East and North Coast Regions.

The Central Schools Shield for outstanding achievement went to Bulahdelah, while the small schools award went to Russell Lea Infants School. This is particularly noteworthy when one reflects upon the number of enrolments and the amount of money they were able to raise.

Schools in the Metropolitan Regions not only demonstrated a friendly fund raising rivalry but a determination to focus on increasing their financial contributions next year. Those of you who know my background would not be surprised at my joy when the Sutherland Shire Schools Music Festival received the Public Schools Festival Shield for their significant contribution to Stewart House. While those present were impressed by the efforts of NSW and ACT schools, the Special Support Presentations were particularly heart warming. The short notations that accompanied the presentation of each plaque, revealed an amazing level of support from business groups, community groups and associations, numbering fifty one in total.

I felt particularly proud to accept the plaque on behalf of all ARISSEA members. It is my sincere hope that our financial contribution will continue to be sustained and that Marilyn Bourne, the Principal of Stewart House, can be assured that the support that ARISSEA provided in the assessment of the after-hours program will also continue. A recruitment drive and members' participation in our August luncheon would constitute a great start to our year.

In conclusion I would like to thank Pat Morgan who, after many years of dedicated effort, has relinquished the leading role she has played in ARISSEA. We all wish her well in her new home in Goulburn.

Very best wishes

Dr Deanna Hoermann

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4 May 2012

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been a year of continuing fellowship among members and we have continued to maintain the activities that have characterized our organization over the past few years. Events in education remain of deep interest and during the year the State Government announced increased responsibilities for local school management by school principals while the Gonski Report at the Commonwealth level challenges current arrangements for financing education.

Our engagement in education is to encourage current senior educational administrators and to recognize their achievements. We sent congratulations to Dr Michele Bruniges on her appointment as Director-General for the Department of Education and Communities in NSW. Our members have supported Stewart House particularly in the Out-of-School-Hours Program Assessment and have given assistance to Departmental Committees and Projects from time to time.

The ISEA with whom we have a strong association has announced that the inaugural Ron Ikin Memorial Award for Excellence in the Administration of Public Education will be presented on

Wednesday 6 June to Ruth Still, Manager of Student Counselling. We congratulate Ruth on this award and members may be available between 4 and 5 pm to attend the function in the Atrium on Level 2, 35 Bridge Street Sydney.

The luncheon meetings help give us a physical identity and are well supported. We have received positive member feedback about the occasions. Jack Harrison has made excellent contact with the new manager of functions and is ensuring that we continue to be well looked after into the future. Jack gives close attention to detail about our bookings and his good relationship with the club has enabled us to meet here without difficulties over many years. Thanks Jack.

We gain a sense of our uniqueness from our Newsletter. More copies are being delivered by email which is useful financially whilst our range of articles is quite extraordinary. In fact we have grown to 12 pages in recent issues. Graham Sims inspired us with his account of Dr Struan Sutherland while Brent Corish brought back reflections of a past era through his family reminiscences. Alan Pratt reminded us of our experiences in a one teacher school (Whoever has heard of Seelands now?) whilst John Dugdale focused on the school on Observatory Hill and the rich history that has been part of the experience of educators in NSW. In his article on The Fort Street Model School, where William Wilkins served as its first principal in the 1850s and led the way into teacher training, he pointed to the beginnings of a new educational system. Thanks to David Maher for his recollections on the careers of the late Geoff Falkenmire and the late Bill Nay. Well done, Peter Robinson for a wonderful effort in producing such an interesting journal.

I wish to thank the Executive Members for their contributions and ideas. We are planning to undertake improvement in our computerized membership data base in the coming year and have allocated some funds to this project. This will support our financial database, our newsletter mailouts and the work of the Secretary.

I wish to convey our very best wishes to two important Executive members, Brian Ford and Laurie Craddock who have been through extended periods of illness yet continue to contribute to ARISSEA. Of course we wish Deanna Hoermann and Syd Smith best wishes for the coming year as President and Vice President respectively. The best wishes of members and the wisdom of the Executive will be there to bring support.

Our Welfare Officer, John Dugdale has brought care and support to our members at times when this has been most needed. We have appreciated his concern and sensitivity. Thank you John for your efforts: they have been greatly appreciated.

For the coming year, we will continue to support Stewart House and ensure that disadvantaged young people across the State will be able to receive opportunities through public education that will have an important influence on their educational future. We have a number of areas in which we engage to assist Stewart House so please join in as you are able.

After giving sterling leadership of our efforts to support Stewart House Pat Morgan is stepping down. I believe that we will need to rethink our strategy with Stewart House to accommodate changes in ARISSEA leadership.

We will seek to make our ISEA links stronger so that there is an automatic connection in membership with ARISSEA. A number of new members have joined this year and we appreciate this as it helps us to maintain an active membership. In the coming year we will focus on growth in our membership.

Our Secondary Panels Project has a great deal of data and it is proposed to focus on writing it up in the coming year. We would value any suggestions of themes that we might pursue that would be of wider interest and our Convener and Project Leader, Geoff Walton is the person to contact with ideas. I will convey expressions of interest to Geoff as well as ideas for the content of the report.

Finally may I thank members for placing your trust in me over the past year. I have valued the opportunity to serve as President although my year came so much later than was first proposed. You will recall that I enjoyed an interlude at Macquarie University that prevented me serving as President at that time.

I have valued the great spirit of collaboration amongst members, reminiscent of our time together in education where despite the significant tasks we undertook, the support of colleagues paved the way to success.

Alan Rice

Treasurer's Financial Report 2011-12 Income and Expenditure, year ended 31/3/2012

	\$		\$
Balance b/f	2528.07	Lunches	4581.50
Subscriptions	2930.00	Newsletter(print)	609.02
Stewart House	3230.00	Newsletter(post)	487.80
Lunches	4830.50	Stewart House	3505.00
Interest	336.61	Union Shopper	121.50
Other	<u>149.78</u>	Bank Charges	<u>2.50</u>
Total	<u>14013.04</u>		<u>9307.32</u>

Balance c/f to 2012/13 4705.72

Lunches	Banked	Payment	Surplus (257.00)
	\$	\$	\$
May	1518.50	1463.00	55.50
August	1280.00	1193.50	86.50
December	2040.00	1225.00	115.00

Recommended final payment to Stewart House 2011/12	
Lunch profit	257.00
Member contributions after May 2011	655.00
Association contribution	<u>288.00</u>
Total	<u>1200.00</u>

Previous individual 2011 member contributions to Stewart House of \$2505 were paid in May 2011. Total member contributions to Stewart House for 2011/2 was \$3160. (c/f \$3120 for 2010).

Comments:

1. Payment, as above, to be made to Stewart House.
2. Costs are being contained within the current subscription (\$15)

Note: As at today's date members have contributed \$2025 when paying their current subscriptions.

Richmond Manyweathers
Treasurer
4 May, 2012

Welfare Officer's Annual Report, 4 May 2012

Once again it is my melancholy duty to remind you of those who have been taken from us by death since I last produced a statement similar to this.

I list them as follows:

Max Sell	6-5-11
Alex Tod	20-8-11
Allan Findlay	26-10-11
Bill Nay	30-11-11
Ron Warne	11-12-11
Al Smith	17-1-12
Ron Ikin	21-1-12
Geoff Falkenmire	24-1-12
Merve Dunkley	9-2-12

In most of the above cases, sympathy notes were sent to the relevant relatives if contact details could be established and similar expressions of condolence were sent to members whose partners had died.

As appropriate from time to time during the year telephone calls were made or notes were written to colleagues whose welfare circumstances were made known to me.

ARISSEA's Welfare Account is still largely in credit in the sum of \$12.05 after \$4.80 for postage is deducted from its reported opening carried forward balance of \$16.85 on 1 May

2011. No reimbursement to this account is required.

John Dugdale
Welfare Officer

May Lunch



Jack McLean and John Dugdale

**Election of the Returning Officer
Joan Healy declared as Returning Officer**

The following members were nominated and confirmed in office for 2012/3.

President	Deanna Hoermann
Vice President	Syd Smith
Secretary	Brian Ford
Treasurer	Richmond Manyweathers
Past President	Alan Rice
Welfare	John Dugdale
Ass. Secretary	Jack Harrison
Publications	Laurie Craddock
Newsletter Editor	Peter Robinson
Executive Committee Members	Vincent Delany, George Green, Graham Sims Alan Pratt, Geoff Walton, Ray Gillies
Observers	Bill Grant, John Edwards

From the Treasurer

Richmond Manyweathers

Friends, when the last reminder of your 2012/2013 ARISSEA subscription was sent out some computer errors occurred in those cases where you had prepaid in recent years. Whilst some of you detected the slip up, many did not.

However, new contributions have been added to your 'account' so that some of you are now prepaid for several years in advance. If you have any enquiries, please give me a call or e-mail.

Richmond on 9524 4827 or manys@bigpond.com.

May Lunch



Joan Healy

Members say

Memories?

Mr Thomas (Tom) Dobinson has lived at Terranora for the past nine years. In that time Mr Dobinson has been active in a diverse range of educational, social and community activities. He has shown leadership, efficiency and foresight in executive positions in the U3A Tweed Coast.

Mr Dobinson took the somewhat unusual initiative of performing Stand-Up Comedy at the Gold Coast Arts Centre and the Twins Towns Services Club. Other involvements have been as a member of the Queensland Theatre Company, the Gold Coast Arts Centre, the Tweed River Jockey Club, Friends of the Tweed River Art Gallery, the Wine Society of New South Wales and the Tweed Fitness Centre Pole-walkers.

While not pursuing further formal academic qualifications, Mr Dobinson has continued to read extensively in the fields of literature, especially poetry, the genetics and performance enhancement of equine athletes, philosophy, history, politics and social theory.

Mr Dobinson writes poems and short pieces for birthdays, Christmas and special occasions for friends, associates and family. He regularly sends letters to the editors of local newspapers and the Sydney Morning Herald, though his relatively poor rate of being published could be due to the excessive cynicism and unrelenting vitriol towards the political and religious right that his letters always exhibit.

He has managed relations with a distant, disparate and growing family with varying degrees of empathy, intervention and acceptance. The vicissitude of family life has meant that Mr Dobinson has been challenged by the birth of grandchildren, even a great grandchild, weddings, modern and traditional, funerals, depression, cancer and autism.

Over the years, Mr Dobinson has furthered his knowledge and experience of places of historical, cultural and spiritual significance by undertaking travel within Australia and overseas. He has been to Uluru, Kakadu, the Great Ocean Road, Wee Waa, Carnarvon, Maria Island, The Gates of Hell, Troy, Gallipoli, Topaki Palace, the Blue Mosque, the Sistine Chapel, Pompeii, the British Museum, Covent Garden, the National Theatre, Windsor (the Palace and the racecourse), the National Gallery, the Victory and the Mary Rose, the Rock of Cashel, the Curragh, the Irish National Stud, and has seen house boats on the Mekong, barges on the Rhine and whales in the Pacific.

Mr Dobinson is generally well liked, if not always well understood, by neighbours, friends and colleagues. While there is documentary and anecdotal support for the position that he is morally sound, at this stage, promotion to a celestial position cannot be supported. This decision is based on the evidence that Mr Dobinson appears too healthy and that his long held and increasingly irreverent philosophical stance would need dramatic and fundamental revision.

It is recommended that Mr Dobinson's efficiency be determined as satisfactory for the position of retired Inspector of Schools.

Do you know any former colleague who is eligible to be a member of ARISSEA but has not applied to join the Association.

'eligible' means that at some time during their career they were appointed and served as an Inspector of Schools, a Chief Education Officer or in an equivalent or higher position in public school education.

If so, please invite them to contact me at:

deanna@hoermann.net.au

RELOCATING GOSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL

There has been a great deal of community support for the retention of Gosford Public School on its existing site. The school is a prominent feature of the Gosford waterfront and stands as a stark reminder of the importance of public education in the development of the Gosford area.

Why move the school? It sits in harmony with the Leagues Club park, the Leagues Club itself, Bluetongue Stadium, the thoroughfare to East Gosford and The Entrance and the waterfront. To understand the pressure to move the school, we need to revisit some of the recent history of this matter.

Firstly, some years back, the then NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), earmarked some \$12 million to rebuild the school on its existing site. These funds were factored into a future DET Capital Works Program.

Then came the debate surrounding the building of a new high school at Kariong. Despite the fact that projected student numbers could never support the construction of a new high school at Kariong at a cost of some \$25 million, the school now exists and is in its early stages of operation. The NSW Treasury argued long and hard that the better option was to spend a few million dollars on refurbishing Henry Kendall High School to provide better facilities for those Kariong-based students who were then being bussed down to the school.

However, the political imperative was to build a new school at a cost of some \$25 million for a student demographic which could never warrant such a facility. Once more, the taxpayer lost out to political expediency. And the State and Federal politicians who pushed for this solution and achieved it are now nowhere to be seen.

So what happens next? As the Kariong-based students no longer have a need to hop on the bus down to Henry Kendall High School, the numbers at Henry Kendall High School decline. Hence, there is capacity to fill the Henry Kendall site with students from another school. Gosford Public School comes to mind. Why not sell off prime residential land on the Gosford Waterfront and move the highly regarded Gosford Public School to the Henry Kendall site? How convenient!

This is not a good solution for education on the Central Coast. Leave Gosford Public School where it is! Refurbish the school with the funds (\$12 million) that originally formed part of DET's Forward Capital Works Program. Upgrade Henry Kendall High School for the benefit of its existing students. Adding primary school students from Gosford Public School will only add to the traffic problems along Racecourse Road that is already a major thoroughfare due to the heavy interaction between Gosford Racecourse, Henry Kendall High School, Gosford Golf Club, Gosford Hospital and Gosford High School.

The local school community continues to fight the relocation of Gosford Public School to the Henry Kendall High School site. The State Government should invest in its refurbishment and provide facilities that can be enjoyed by the Community. Community performance spaces

can be incorporated in a refurbished facility that can sit comfortably in any redevelopment of the Gosford waterfront.

Gosford Public School is more than a collection of old buildings in need of refurbishment. The rich history of the School should not be trashed by banishing it to a backwater site on a busy road as an adjunct to an existing high school.

As Director of Finance at the NSW Department of Education and Training for more than 20 years until the end of 2009, I witnessed the poor decision-making that took place in relation to the construction of Kariong High School that has precipitated the potential demise of Henry Kendall High School and Gosford Public School.

Once again, political expediency has won the day.

May Lunch



Syd Smith

May Lunch



Graham Sims and Vincent Delany

Members say

Mandy Tunica

Poetry Tour

In March I received a phone call from Ian McNamara inviting me to go on his 'Australia All Over' program and 'talk poetry.' A week later I set off at 5am for the ABC Ultimo studios and spent several hours spouting the joys of poetry and sharing my concerns about the effects of NAPLAN on teachers who are focusing more on the mechanics of language - spelling, grammar, punctuation etc - rather than the joys of language found through imaginative and creative writing.

I read some poems on air and one of them "Here's to the Kids who are Different" so appealed to his audience that I received 30 emails from all over the country. I even received letters from 2 poets and an ex Wallabies coach!

Two weeks later I received an invitation from The Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Association inviting me to conduct a series of poetry workshops in North Western NSW. So, on the 5th May I set off on the long drive to Gunnedah. There I was met by members of the association, a local poet and some executives of Santos who were sponsoring my visit!

Early Monday morning I was picked up by my volunteer driver and taken to Narrabri High School where the hectic but thoroughly enjoyable tour began. From Narrabri we travelled to Moree, then to Wee Waa, Pilliga, Coonamble and Baradine. I did three sessions a day with students ranging in age from 6-16 years.

Schools in the area sent students to the nominated venue and non-government schools were well represented. Small schools travelled long distances to participate and being a city 'girl' I was amazed to talk with students from Bullarah, Pallamallawa and Wambagar. The highlight of the tour was my visit to Pilliga PS. where the 8 students entertained me with stories of their local Yowie. As one part of each session was devoted to poetry writing I have collected some superb poems which I intend to include in a small publication.

I feel blessed to have been afforded such a wonderful opportunity to work with children from such diverse backgrounds, to meet so many dedicated teachers and to enjoy the company of my hosts. As a bonus I learnt so much about the country - its flora and fauna, land usage, problems and achievements.

PS. Some schools were unable to attend as they were practising for NAPLAN!!!

Members say

Graham Sims

RAAF SCHOOL PENANG

“Jauh di Mata, dekat di Hati”

(Far from the eyes, close in the heart)

Brian Boyle's article on RAAF School, Penang, in our recent ARISSEA newsletter, came at a singularly appropriate time, and triggered a host of memories for me. Brian was Principal of this unique school from 1966-1968, and my then wife, Helen (now the Rev. Helenna Anderson) and I arrived there at the beginning of 1969.

Although I hadn't met Brian (and, regrettably, **still** have not managed to do so, some 40 years later), there is a bond between us, even over and above the fact that we both had “the RAAF School experience”, all those years ago, when things were so different. They were, indeed, the good old days.

As Brian mentioned in his article, prior to his return to Australia he was concerned about the welfare of the family dog, Lassie, and the family amah (servant), Angel. The RAAF School secretary, Jocelyn Tye, obviously did some detective work and, well prior to our arrival in Penang, “volunteered” us to inherit both Lassie and Angel, a decision we never regretted.

Whether I was then, or ever, “the kind and gentle young teacher”, as Brian generously described me, is rather a moot point, but both Lassie and Angel endeared themselves to us and, in their own ways, were indeed good and faithful servants and friends to two young Aussie innocents abroad, far from our home and our comfort zones, Emu Plains Public School (for Helen) and Sydney High (for me).

Although trained as a teacher of French, German and English, I'd returned to university, part-time, after my initial appointment in 1963 to Sydney High, to undertake Indonesian and Malay Studies.

Notwithstanding the disparaging comments of my then colleagues, including my first subject

master, Alan Hodge, and my Principal, Murray Callaghan, I had a hunch that Australia's destiny lay in and with Asia.

Of course, in those days, the only **real** languages worthy of study were Latin, Classical Greek, French, and, if you really liked that sort of thing, German.

Both Helen and I applied for advertised positions at RAAF School, she for a Primary Assistant's position, and I for the position as Teacher-in-Charge, Languages. To our surprise we both got to interview.

As it happened, our neighbour in Edna Street, Warrimoo, was Pat Costello, then Primary Registrar. As Pat and I walked up the street early one morning, to catch "The Chips" into Sydney, Pat dropped a bombshell . . . actually, two bombshells. "Well, Graham," said Pat, "I've got good news and bad news for you. The **good** news is, you've been successful in being seconded to RAAF School. The **bad** news is, so has Helen." "Hang on, Pat. Surely that's **good** news for both of us." I replied "Afraid not, Simsie", said Pat. "The RAAF and the Department have a policy that married couples are not both appointed to RAAF School, so one of you will have to resign for the other to be appointed."

This policy, which makes no more sense to me, forty years later, than it did back then, was apparently based on the view that a married couple, both teaching, would generate so much income that it would cause envy, jealousy and tension in such a small and "closed" community. Our subsequent experience was part of the trigger that led not only to the abandonment of this policy, but to its complete reversal, whereby married couples were actually preferred . . . but that's another story.

In our case, we had to face the dilemma of **who** of us would have to resign. The prospect of abandoning the adventure altogether did not occur to us.

Even to describe our thought processes, and the mindset of those far-off days, seems almost Dickensian now, but the realities, as we had to perceive them, were:

- I was 4 year trained, Helen **then** only two year trained
- My salary was, and would continue to be, higher than hers
- My career, in potential, was "permanent". Prior to Penang, we had been, in that coy and quaint phrase, "trying to start a family"; hence, as a woman, Helen's career was likely to be interrupted by maternity leave etc (Ye gods, I can't believe I've been brave enough to commit the above to print!)

The upshot was that Helen resigned and I took up the appointment . . . but I'm getting ahead of myself, no easy task for a geriatric.

To get back to my immediate reaction, (ignoring, for a moment, the above complications), there came a day, in late November, 1968, when I raced into Murray Callaghan's office and blurted out: "I've got Penang! I've got Penang!"

Murray raised his massive, shaggy, leonine head and growled, (Murray often "growled"),

“You’re not going to **accept** it, are you?”

“Of course I am,” I replied. “It’s the most exciting thing that’s ever happened to me.”

“Well, all I can say is that if you’re prepared to walk away from a life-time career in a fine old school like this, to go and live among a lot of boongs (**his** word), then you’re a bloody sillier young fool than I took you for.”

And I don’t think Murray ever quite forgave me. I belatedly realised that, through Murray, himself a former Languages teacher, I was being “mentored” to spend my whole career at High . . . and I’d spoiled it all for him by choosing “to go and live among a lot of boongs”. However, years later, at the Farewell for Greg Bradford, Murray’s Deputy and successor at Sydney High, I made peace with the wonderful old man, who kindly referred to me as his protégé, and confessed that he actually thought I was going to Madang, not Penang.

So, although, dear readers, my sequencing may have confused you more than a tad, (I was, after all, in Languages not Maths), off went two young Aussies, from Concord West, Rhodes and, latterly, the Blue Mountains, to live and work in a fascinating, sometimes bewildering, tropical, only just post-colonial, multicultural and multilingual society, which could not have been more different from our simple life back home.

Not only were there over 2,000 Australian Air Force and Army personnel at Butterworth and on Penang, the **British** Army was still, although not for much longer, a significant military presence at Minden Barracks, on Penang, and in other garrisons throughout Malaysia, which had received its independence only eight years before we arrived at the beginning of 1969.

Indeed, the young Malaysia had still not entirely shaken off its last shackles from “The War of the Running Dogs” (aka “The Emergency”), during which many Malaysian Chinese, known as Communist Terrorists (or C.T.’s) fought a long and bitter civil war in their determination to have Malaya become a communist state.

Ironically, these C.T.’s fought with weapons earlier given to them by the British, in their attempts to drive the Japanese from Malaya during World War II.

Even though “the Emergency” officially ended in 1960, with the communist leader, Chin Peng, fleeing to the jungles of Thailand, some C.T. remnants still operated, one symbolic and provocative action being the sudden and mysterious planting of a communist flag in a prominent place, such as the summit of Penang Hill.

We would suddenly see and hear a flurry of helicopters, police and military vehicles and troops, and, if judged necessary, the sudden imposition of a curfew.

In addition, the Vietnam War was coming to its inglorious, if not ignominious end, and Sabre-jets, Mirages, and the ubiquitous “Herc’s” were constantly landing and taking off from Butterworth Air Base.

To round things off, a state of armed standoff, called “Konfrontasi” (Confrontation) existed between Malaysia and Indonesia, so, with Sumatra only a few miles away, across the Straits

of Malacca, we did indeed arrive during interesting times.

There were, however, compensations. We had three servants, a cook, an amah and a “kebun” (gardener). Our shopping was done and delivered, our meals were prepared and served, our laundry and ironing were done, our lawns were mown, our yard and garden maintained, our house painted and maintained as necessary, our car washed, vacuumed and polished each week, and all our medical needs met by the RAAF, which had a full hospital on the Base at Butterworth, and other facilities at The RAAF Hostel on Penang itself.

We received our full Australian salaries, plus an overseas zone allowance of an additional 33.3%, **and tax free** . . . and all this in a country where the cost of living was one third, or less, of that in Australia. It was a hard life! (My salary, from memory was about \$10,000 + the tax free zone allowance of \$3,300pa).

Mentioning our salaries reminds me that the earlier mentioned fiasco in which my wife, Helen, had to resign in order for me to be appointed, soon came to an even more farcical conclusion. When the staff of RAAF School, 1969, was assembled, it became instantly obvious that we were three teachers short.

With a flash of blinding, if belated, lucidity, the RAAF allowed the new Principal, Wally Lee (from Victoria) to appoint three teachers, each of whom (surprise, surprise) just happened to be the wife of a recently arrived, “officially” appointed staff member.

Helen’s resignation from the NSW Department of Education was therefore in practical effect for **one school day**. Bureaucracies being what they are (or were), however, she paid a long-term penalty for this nonsense, as she had, perforce, forgone superannuation entitlements, continuity of service etc etc . . . but that was all in the future, folks.

And so to RAAF School. After the brilliant realisation that we needed more staff, came the next bombshell.

At interview, each of us (successful) applicants had asked about teaching resources for our particular subject or teaching area, and each of us had been assured, by senior Department of Air and RAAF personnel, that there was absolutely no need for us to bring personal resources from Australia, as RAAF School was “the best-equipped Australian school outside Australia.” In hindsight, we should have subjected this statement to more rigorous grammatical and semantic analysis.

The reality, we soon discovered, was that it was a **very** poorly equipped school indeed. Even worse, the Department of Air and the RAAF did not seem to **know** it was a **very** poorly equipped school indeed, and became extremely defensive when, teacher by teacher, we proceeded to tell them so.

I’d been assured, for example, that the school had “a fully functioning Language Laboratory”. In fact, it had a reel-to-reel tape recorder, some out-of-date textbooks, and **no** tapes.

Similar concerns were outlined across virtually all subject areas, and across the K-6

spectrum.

It was, for a while, quite a tense situation, some of us expressing such disappointment and frustration that we “threatened” to return to Australia.



This was smartly nipped in the bud when the senior RAAF officer produced a book of travel authorisation vouchers and offered to sign one for each of us so inclined.

We, however, weren't **that** crazy! We'd **seen** the sports and swimming clubs, we'd **tasted** the food **and** the duty-free beer. We weren't going anywhere!

Once we'd calmed down, we were invited to make a list of needed resources and, if we so wished, the RAAF would arrange special flights to pick up from home any “personal” teaching resources we really wanted to have with us (but, sadly, no language laboratory).

Having thought about this situation, it really was a case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing.

RAAF School was, throughout its 28 year history, a unique school. It “belonged” to the RAAF, was “accountable” to the Department of Air (as it then was), took its staff from the NSW and Victorian state departments of education, followed the NSW curriculum for the School Certificate and (by Correspondence), the Higher School Certificate, sort of followed the NSW primary school curriculum, but with some concessions to the Victorian system, **and**, at any time, had within its classes students from every State and Territory in Australia, given that their parents, as RAAF personnel, came from Bases all over Australia.

To compound its uniqueness, at any one time there would be **Victorian**-trained teachers expected to follow the NSW curriculum, there was an “in principle” policy to **alternate** the Principal between an appointee from NSW followed by one from Victoria and the Deputy was always from NSW.

Furthermore, since RAAF School was a Central School, the Principal was always from a Primary school background.

During my time there (1969-72), the school’s total enrolment (K-12) was over 1,200 each year, with quite a large secondary school component.

Perhaps its **really** unique (uniquest?) feature was the fact that no Principal or teacher, and virtually no student, ever stayed at RAAF School for longer than three years, and many for only two, the normal period of secondment or for RAAF appointment.

Continuity, stability and tradition, as perceived in a “normal school”, were quite problematic. In hindsight, it is a wonder that the school worked as well and as cohesively as it did.

Having done some reflection, I think there were three reasons.

Firstly, Penang (and Malaysia in general), as we experienced it, was a beautiful, laid-back tropical environment, which our lifestyle meant that we could enjoy to the full.

Secondly, most of the staff, handpicked, genuinely enjoyed the unique experiences and opportunities, made possible by teaching in such a school, far away from the daily pressures of life (and teaching) back home.

Thirdly, and significantly, the RAAF School kids were, almost without exception, the most adaptable, well adjusted, outgoing and down to earth students I ever taught. The reality was that as the children of Service personnel they **had** to be. Their parent, specifically in most cases their father, was a full-time career-serving member of the RAAF, whose career might well take him, and therefore his family to every Commonwealth State and Territory, and, if he were “lucky” (as they saw it), to “plum” overseas postings such as Butterworth/Penang.

Some children had been to school in every State and Territory, with rarely more than three

years, and sometimes, much less, in any one school. Versatility had to be their middle name.

There was very little bullying in RAAF School. Students got on well with each other; “big kids” looked after “little kids”, easy friendships were formed, with an inevitable hiatus when, throughout the year, the tour of duty of individual families came to an end and they had to return to Australia, **sometimes** to their own home, but, more often, simply to another posting.

Despite this, some friendships became life-long, even if the friends finished up in different parts of Australia. After some 40 years, I, for example, remain close friends with a few of my RAAF School students, even being M.C. at two of their weddings.

I also now realise that RAAF School represented the best, most natural and tension-free **co-educational** school environment I ever encountered, perhaps, again, because of its unique nature and environment. Boys and girls mixed happily and easily, with very little of the exaggerated “macho” vs “sex-kitten” atmosphere often all too evident in co-educational school environments.

There were, of course, “deep” love affairs, rumours of “treachery”, individuals regarded as “hot”, “unfaithful” and so on, but it was all so relaxed and “normal” that today’s scandal was tomorrow’s fish and chip wrapping, or, more aptly, tomorrow’s nasi goreng.

Sadly, it wasn’t always so happy a situation in regard to RAAF parents themselves. I was told that the divorce rate among military service personnel was up to seven times the national average.

The reasons became all too obvious to us. A young, single, RAAF member would, for example, be offered a 2-3 year posting at Butterworth, a “plum” appointment because of the tropical surroundings, cheap living, duty-free beer, lurks and perks etc.

He would then discover, or realise, that the rewards, housing and allowances for a **married** couple were significantly higher than for a single man. He would then tell his fiancée (if he had one), or girlfriend (if he could quickly find one) of the idyllic life that was theirs for the taking . . . and there would be a speedily organised wedding.

He would then discover that the **child allowances** for a RAAF couple on an overseas posting were even more generous. It was not all that uncommon, therefore, for a young, newly wed RAAF couple, who may not even otherwise have married anyway, to try to have two, or even three babies during their Butterworth posting.

We experienced, in our own street some sad scenarios: for example. A young (impromptu) RAAF wife, barely nineteen, pregnant with a baby she was not ready for, without family support in an exotic country.

Having had the baby, it was “handed over” to the all-too-obliging amah to look after, while the young mother, no doubt bored and frustrated, had an affair with two of the local

grocery-boys. Her husband, also very young, spent his leisure time in the many available bars and clubs, and the marriage, perhaps doomed from the outset, ended before his tour of duty was completed.

There were at least three suicide attempts by young RAAF wives, in our street alone, in the time we lived there. Tragically, one was “successful”.

There was, we learned, a dark side to this paradise. We didn’t quite realise **how** dark until, within three years of our return to Australia, our own marriage came to an end, caused at least in part by our failure to readjust to the realities of life back in Australia, with demanding jobs in schools relatively far from home. (RAAF School was behind our back fence, and a short walk away).

We waited in vain for our clothes to be washed and ironed, our meals to be prepared, our shopping and housework done, our lawns mown and garden tended and for our tax-free allowance to reappear, so we could again live in the style we’d become accustomed to . . . and none of this happened.

Brian Boyle, some years ago, compiled a factual history of RAAF School, from 1958/9, when it opened, to 1987/8, when it closed.

Spurred on by this, I am currently writing a **personal** account of the school, and the opportunities, experiences, anecdotes and personalities I associate with RAAF School. They remain as fresh today as then. I have returned to Penang, with my wife, Judy, on several occasions, and each visit has triggered more memories.

With Peter’s connivance, I may share them with my colleagues in future newsletters.

Members say

Brian Dennis

SINGING PROVIDES EFFECTIVE THERAPY

My wife, Elaine and I are members of the "Sweet Tonic Choir", which meets each Wednesday for three hours singing, at Campbelltown Arts Centre. We are an a cappella choir, originally formed in 2007, through Musica Viva, as a means of creating effective Therapy for older persons (over 55).

This was to be a 2 Year Research Project, but it proved to be so successful that we have continued as a self-funded group. In August, this year, over 30 members will be joining with other choirs to sing Operatic Selections at Sydney Opera House.

We recommend choral work for all our retired members of ARISSEA,

NB No previous singing experience is required

May Lunch



Alan Pratt and Richie Stevenson

May Lunch



Pat Morgan

Members say

BRIAN BOYLE B.A., M.ED (1919 - 2012)

Graham Sims

Since writing the article on RAAF School, Penang, I have learned of the death, at 93, of Brian Boyle, who was its Headmaster from 1966-68, just prior to my appointment to the school in 1969.

Brian returned to Australia as District Inspector, Broken Hill. DET records also refer to him as Inspector, Community Welfare Schools, in 1972.

He retired on 24 August 1979, after 40 years of service. Although, regrettably, Brian and I never met face to face, our RAAF School experience gave us a common bond, and we spoke and corresponded quite regularly.

In 2006-7 Brian undertook a personal project to document and record the history of this unique school, which opened in 1958 and closed in 1988, following the withdrawal of our RAAF forces from Butterworth.

Brian showed great determination, as neither the NSW or Victorian Departments of Education, which staffed the school, nor the RAAF, which “owned” it, seemed to have maintained corporate knowledge of it, some senior officials not even aware that it had ever existed.

With Brian’s passing, I intend ensuring that his structured record and history of this unique Aussie school is not lost. His commitment and research deserve no less.

Members say

Derek Howland

Not of interest to all but to many of those who knew us. Sadly Roma, my wife of sixty four years, died on May 29th in the John Flynn Private Hospital. She had a long battle lasting six and a half weeks before succumbing to what became the inevitable. Regards.

Members say

Ian Sinclair

I have been trying to alert members to the health problems of Peter Hazell. He has prostate cancer that ‘escaped’ and is attacking his bones. His movement has been severely limited by this illness. Added to that, six weeks ago, he had a second fall and it resulted in a long spell in hospital.

He is now greatly debilitated and at times in hospital, recognised few people. The matter that could be clearly recognised is that he didn’t want to be there!

On Friday last, Morna had him discharged and she is going to try to care for him at home. A most brave decision and the reasons were very clear. Their daughter is with them at the moment but the situation is sad and dire.

Many of you also know Terry Palmer. He, too, has a most worrying medical diagnosis and he is waiting for further advice regarding treatment. The latest is that the sarcoma in the upper leg is inoperable.

If you want more details on either Peter or Terry and you are reluctant to ring them direct, I am most happy to tell you what I know and convey your thoughts to both of them.

My mobile number is 0417665773; or you could ring my landline 02 69261237 if you wished, but we have a policy not to answer calls from unknown numbers (in an attempt to combat begging call centres). I will ring you back though if you left a message (no cost in Australia).

Editor: Peter Hazell passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday 12th June.

Queen's Birthday Honours

COWDROY Cliff OAM
For service to remote education

Address changes

(Changes shown in Bold)

BOLTE PA Phil-Robyn
rpbolte@bigpond.com

BOTHWELL NG Nev-Pam
jbothwell7@bigpond.com

CAMPBELL GA Gordon
komodo89@tpg.com.au

CAMPBELL RL Bob-Margaret
rcam.47@bigpond.com

COOK FW Fred-Jann
4/22 Gatenby Place Barden Ridge 2234
0488 222 829 jannandfred@bigpond.com

DUFF AJ Allen-Margaret
am.duff@bigpond.com

HOPKINS JC John-Doreen
34 Ku-Ring-Gai Ave Turramurra 2074

MARSHALL GA Graeme-Ruth
9489 8648 g.marshall1@bigpond.com

MATHERS Mrs AMAudrey
Apt 24 Laguna Estate 13-21 Lake Weyba Drive
Noosaville Qld 4566
07 5455 6425 audreymm6@bigpond.com

MORGAN PJ Patricia
4 Geoghegan Drive Goulburn 2580
02 4823 5709 pjmorgan1@bigpond.com

MURPHY L Laurie
0419 876 298

SINCLAIR AM Alan
alansin@tpg.com.au

STEVENSON R Richie
Unit 306, 2 Sylvan Ave Balgowlah 2093
9948 0803 randb.stevenson@bigpond.com

SMITH Mrs JM Joan
17 Muston St Mosman 2088
9969 7492

WASSON LJ Lindsay-Diane
9899 9685

Deaths

09/02/12 DUNKLEY Dr M (Merv)
23/77 Hawkesbury Rd, Springwood 2777

05/05/12 BOYLE BJ (Brian)
80 Myall St, Oatley 2223

12/06/12 HAZELL P (Peter)
57 Wollundry Ave, Wagga Wagga 2650

Newsletter e-version

Note that the e-version of this Newsletter is also compatible with the **iPad**. Members who would like to receive the e-version should send a request to the Newsletter Editor at:

peterrobinson7@gmail.com

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

Copy deadline: 19th October 2012

Peter Robinson,
Newsletter Editor,
3 Corunna Ave,
NORTH ROCKS NSW 2151
peterrobinson7@gmail.com