



April 2015

# Newsletter

Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators

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## *From the President*



Colleagues, every so often an organisation should look to tidying up its governance and making its operating principles clear to all members. ARISSEA last amended its constitution 14 years ago.

The 2001 constitution is minimalist, leaving many operational details to the memories of a few key people and general goodwill. This one-page constitution has served its purpose.

Your committee has done the hard work of drafting a new constitution. Our purpose was to clarify what we stand for, set down our membership rules and detail our policies and procedures.

The new constitution is a little more overtly aspirational, codifies how we operate, explains the roles of the management committee and is a comprehensive statement of ARISSEA as a professional association.

You will have recently received a copy of the new constitution in the mail for your information, comment and, hopefully, endorsement.

A notice of motion to accept the new constitution will be moved at ARISSEA's AGM and luncheon meeting on Friday 1 May 2015.

The committee initially set aside the question of whether ARISSEA should seek registration as an incorporated association. That is, whether to become a legal entity in itself. However, in drafting the new constitution, we realised that ARISSEA is much more than a group of friends and ex-colleagues who keep in touch and meet occasionally.

Committee members had experience with other organisations with similar characteristics to ARISSEA that had moved to become incorporated.

ARISSEA collects fees, uses bank accounts, maintains a register of over 200 members, provides financial and in-kind support to Stewart House, runs events and operates in a business-like way.

Yet ARISSEA cannot enter into contracts and does not have responsibility for bank accounts as a legal entity.

Members do not have the normal protections from legal liability that would be afforded by incorporation or the oversight of a regulatory agency. While ARISSEA would remain an association of volunteers, we could consider broadening our scope with greater confidence.

There are some costs (fees) in registering ARISSEA's name and registering as an incorporated association with NSW Fair Trading, and there are annual fees to maintain registration. These fees are relatively low and should not put significant pressure on our resources.

With the constitution drafted, as it is, on the NSW Fair Trading model, the main work has been completed. The members of your committee are well able to manage the little extra effort of being an incorporated association.

A second notice of motion for the May AGM is to enable the committee to take the steps necessary to register ARISSEA as an incorporated association.

I commend both of the notices of motion to you for approval on 1 May 2015. I trust that you will appreciate why I have used my President's column to address these two important matters for ARISSEA's future.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks for the opportunity to be the ARISSEA President for the past year. It has been wonderful to have worked on the executive committee with so many outstanding and committed ex-colleagues.

I look forward to continuing my involvement with ARISSEA in different roles.

**Ray Gillies**

## *December 2014 Lunch*



Rex Gardner and Doug Swan

## *From the Secretary*

The Agenda for the executive committee meeting on Monday 2 March focussed on consideration of two items of business; membership and the Draft Constitution Version 3.

*Renewal of Membership for 2015 forms accompany this Newsletter.*

Allan Mills and Richmond Manyweathers have been working hard to ensure that the information about your financial status of membership is accurate.

Please contact Richmond (15 Panorama Drive, Alstonville 2477, [manys@bigpond.com](mailto:manys@bigpond.com)) if you have a concern about the information recorded on your form.

To maintain our financial member status, most of us will need to pay our 2015-16 fee (\$15) before or at the AGM on 1 May 2015.

Draft Constitution Version 3. By now you should have received, by *Australia Post*, the notice of motions to be moved at the AGM and a copy of the *Draft ARISSEA Constitution Version3*. Please let me know if you have not received these.

Remember that with the exception of the positions of *President*, (Chris Carroll accepted the nomination for and was elected Vice President at the 2014 AGM and will move into the President's role for 2015) and *Immediate Past President*, all committee positions will be declared vacant at the AGM on May 1, 2015.

Please let me know if you need a Nomination Form.

Geoff Walton  
Ph. 9639 6847  
mob 0418 241 406  
[geoff\\_walton@yahoo.com](mailto:geoff_walton@yahoo.com)

### *December 2014 Lunch*



Ian Vacchini

## HOW OVERSEAS TRIPS USED TO BE

**Syd Smith**

In 1972 my then wife gained a teacher exchange position in London and while they tried to find me a position as well. It became too difficult so they found me a normal appointment to a secondary lower school in North London. The school located in Tottenham was quite a challenge but I managed to survive by teaching English and, to my chagrin, Religious Education. Most of the students were West Indian with a few East Africans, a small number of Irish and one or two London born boys. After I eliminated the rhythmic banging of thirty eight black hands thumping on desks, I was able to begin my lessons.

One time we took the boys to Westminster Abbey to pay our respects to Lady Somerset who was responsible for establishing the school in the Fourteenth Century. Her grimy covered tomb was in a dim corner of the abbey, a quiet remote spot, where we could say a prayer for her and thank her for creating the school. If she was looking down on us, part of her was probably spinning vigorously in the tomb below, never ever having expected coloured children to attend her school.

I have to say life was very laid back at Somerset Lower School in those days but this was to my advantage. I could do no wrong, I taught what I wanted and no one seemed to care what I did anyhow. The deputy principal was overjoyed that I kept coming back every day and said Australian teachers were the best he had known.

I had only one crisis and that was the day a student pulled a knife on me. I knew I had to do something in this situation and managed to quickly grab his arm and hit it against the wall until he dropped it and then ran from the room to return two days later. Maybe that wouldn't work in Australia today but these were different times in another country. Because the school was so flexible it was easy for me to take leave and do some travelling. I asked the principal for 3 weeks leave to go to Scandinavia and Russia to which he replied, "Of course Mr Smith, but why Russia? It's so far away but please come back to us when you return." This trip was nothing like the ones I might take today. It was a camping venture in a bus with a wagon attached containing food and luggage and tents. The bus left London with a young group, mostly Aussies all prepared to see what it was like behind the Iron Curtain.

These were the days of Breznev and Kosygin, the Berlin Wall and the Cold War, all exciting stuff to someone who had never left Australia before. We were to go to Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia and back through the Eastern Bloc ending up in Berlin and finally France and Britain.

There are many stories I could reminisce about but perhaps the most interesting was the tour of East Berlin. In those days as you left the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc you were dazzled and overjoyed to finally arrive in West Berlin. The weeks of drab grey buildings, the unhappy faces and dismal cities of the Communist bloc were in sharp



contrast to the neon lights, the rush of traffic and bright advertising signs of the west. Never before had I been pleased to see a Coke sign.



Looking into East Berlin in 1972

There were certain peculiarities about Russia as well. In Minsk the post office sold you stamps with no glue on them. On the counter was a pot of glue that you had to paste onto the rear of the stamp before placing it onto your letter.

In Moscow itself a six lane highway devoid of traffic divided the city, yet five kilometres further on the road became a two lane route with potholes. Army tanks were abandoned along the road with their engines boiling making one to wonder if this was really the enemy.

While I was in Moscow it was my turn to buy food for the group but this was a nightmare as you walked from the source of your purchase to another counter where a person using an abacus scribbled on a torn piece of paper and handed it back to be then taken to the original salesperson. People queued up in a long line for a black syrupy beer enclosed in a barrel supported by a cart where they drank from the same glass to be handed on to the next person in the queue.

Although it was 40 degrees and I could have done with a beer I passed on it for once in my life. People would constantly come up to you in the street asking if you had any gum, jeans or even drugs. Fortunately I was unable to help with any of those items but I noticed the guides were able to make a small profit on alcohol, clothing and confectionary that they had bought in Finland.

One night while I slept in my tent in Moscow my QANTAS bag was stolen with all my undeveloped film in it. I spent the next half day at the police station reporting the theft where I was given the assurance by the head detective that all crimes in Russia were solved and my bag would be returned. I wrote to this detective for the next 10 years reminding him of his promise but 43 years later I have given up.

In those days you went to Russia for educational purposes only. You went to learn how the Communist system was superior to the capitalist and why everyone was happy in that country. Obviously we weren't convinced except to note the underground rail was certainly superior to Sydney's transport system of even today.



People lining up to see Lenin in his underground tomb.

But I digress, it was the adventure we had in East Berlin that I found quite educational. In those days the Wall was alive and well. At night you could walk beside the Wall and hear the Russian guards talking in their watch towers but tourists could get into East Berlin through the infamous Checkpoint Charlie.

There was a museum there in those days depicting the struggles of people who had tried to cross into West Berlin and a wall of items describing every bit of anti Russian propaganda you could imagine.

On the day we crossed back into East Berlin we changed buses and were greeted by a tall German guide who spoke excellent English and welcomed us to his lovely city. In one way he was correct. East Berlin had all the famous and best architectural locations in the city.

*"Now I will take you to a quiet spot after a quick tour and we can have an honest talk about East Berlin. We can take as long as you like because I will say we got delayed by a flat tyre, and you can ask me any questions you like,"* he said.

This worked out well for a while until the less diplomatic people in our group began to ask the questions I knew we would not get an answer to.

*"If East Berlin is so great why do people try to escape?" one asked.*

*"We don't care about them. They are rubbish and we are glad to get rid of them." he replied.*

*"Why are people poorer here than in West Berlin?"*

*"Why are the buildings so drab?"*

*"Why did you build the Wall in the first place?"*

And so the embarrassment intensified. As one penetrating question followed another our guide's voice slowly reached fever pitch making him sound like a Gestapo major in a concentration camp. For some time I began to wonder if we would ever get back to the west and hoped the questions would finally cease.

Luckily they did when the guide gave up on us and said it was time to go back. Since I'm telling this tale you can assume I did get back but still remember that day as though it was only yesterday.

Yes I still love overseas travel and will still continue to do it for as long as my health and energy allow it but there is still some regret that no longer will I have the same adventures of 43 years ago. Maybe just as well because I can't run like I used to.

### *December 2014 Lunch*



Jack Baseley



## To Sleep, Perchance to Dream...

Graham Sims

Linked perhaps with my lifelong love of languages, I've always been fascinated by dreams.  
The CONCEPT of dreams,  
the NATURE of dreams and  
the "REALITY" of dreams.

I've cogitated upon such questions as :

- \*Are dreams simply 'sleeping thoughts'?
- \*Are dreams dependent on language ?
- \*Are there different KINDS of dreams?
- \*Do pre-language cognizant babies dream?
- \*Do animals dream? (Dog owners know the answer!)
- \*Does EVERYBODY dream? Is dreaming 'normal'?
- \*How long do dreams last?
- \*Do multi-lingual people dream in more than one language?
- \*Do language-deprived people dream?
- \*Where do dreams end, and hallucinations begin?

Unlike the study of language, which has expanded significantly over the years, our understanding of dreams still has many gaps and mysteries.

Dreams are a kind of THINKING.... A somewhat bizarre and 'disconnected' kind of thinking, it seems. And, by the way, we still don't fully understand 'thinking', anyway.

Conventionally, it's considered that as long as we engage in this "dreaming" kind of thinking only while we're asleep, we're "normal". We can, indeed, even "daydream" while we're awake, and ,generally, no harm is done. (unless we're a brain surgeon or a pilot, for example.) However, when dreams get confused with reality, the term 'hallucination' comes into play, as an accepted symptom of mental illness.

The western mindset doesn't quite seem to have come to terms with many indigenous traditions of (self) induced trances, 'visions' and 'realistic' dreams about 'the spirit world', AND regarded as completely normal by the culture concerned. (By the way, some quite significant Biblical figures had dreams or visions... and the Good Book doesn't seem to regard them as mentally ill.)

Now, folks, some very dark and mysterious issues are involved here, far beyond the scope of this humble article, so let's return to the 'language' vs 'non-language ' dichotomy supposedly characterizing dreams.

Some dreams clearly involve language. We may dream about meetings, conversations or confrontations between ourselves and other people, either known or unknown to us in real

life. Other dreams seem to revolve around IMAGES, pictures or events, with little or no language component per se.

Of course, in trying to recall or describe such dreams, we have no choice but to use WORDS to try to share our dream experience with other people, who did not share our dream, (even though they may have been 'in it'... and we face a dilemma, as we use conventional, externally articulated language, to try to describe a private, 'internal' experience. This may explain why it's often so hard to describe a dream afterwards.

Most parents are convinced that tiny, pre-language aware(?) babies dream. Their facial expressions and body movements, (the babies'.not the parents'), show happiness, even ecstasy, puzzlement, fear, etc.

Even more adamantly, the overwhelming majority of dog owners are convinced that their dogs dream, showing in their sleep such actions as running, barking, howling and trembling, and such emotions as joy, excitement, fear etc. And yet conventional wisdom has it that tiny babies don't (yet) have language, while dogs don't have language, as we view it at all.

Let's consider, just for a moment, the nature of, and possible relationship between, thoughts, images and dreams. Thoughts may be regarded as non-articulated words...but they may well be more than this. Images maybe viewed as 'word pictures'...but they may also be WORDLESS pictures.

Dreams, as we've mentioned, involve THINKING, (subconscious thinking). They may or may not involve images and/or inwardly articulated language. As a multilingual teacher of French, German, Indonesian, Malay and English, both in Australia and overseas, to both children and adults, I've noticed that I often dreamed in more than one language. Over the years, I found myself asking my bilingual, or multilingual students "In what language do you dream?"

Almost without exception, their initial response would be bemusement that I had bothered to ask such an odd question, and a common answer was "I've no idea. I've never thought about it." Some would eventually say "I don't think I dream in a language at all", and, upon more reflection, some would indicate that they usually dreamt in their dominant language.

A word or two is needed here about "bilingualism", a term which, in my view, is far too glibly and loosely bandied about.

While the general understanding of 'bilingualism' is 'a knowledge of two languages', this is vague, almost to the point of uselessness. If, for example I can say "Hello" in Mandarin and Indonesian, am I 'bilingual' in them? Clearly, I'm not.

While there is a concept called 'balanced bilingualism ', in which a given person has EQUAL proficiency in two languages, this is, in my long experience, a rare phenomenon. Most speakers/readers/writers of more than one language have ONE of these as their dominant language.

This is usually the FIRST language they acquired...

in simple terms their mother tongue...

and this is usually, though not always, the language in which they mostly dream...

or in which they THINK they dream.

ANY language known to an individual may, however, be used in, or form part of a dream. Logic suggests that if a person has only a limited or less than fluent knowledge of a given language in terms of using it consciously, those limits should equally apply to its use in a dream.

That is, if your 'waking' knowledge of, say, Indonesian is limited to simple greetings, counting etc, your fluency in the 'dream' use of Indonesian will parallel this. Here, however, I have encountered a strange phenomenon, both in my own dreams and in their recall of their dreams, as others have shared them with me.

It seems that in dreams, we often perceive a fluency and competency considerably higher than we would acknowledge or claim in the real, waking world. WHY fascinates me...but I think I've found a clue.

I've also perceived that in dreams about writing, or enunciating, for example, a complaint to a bureaucrat, official etc, my use of language seems to flow with a Shakespearean – like profundity. If, in the cold light of morning, I remember it at all, it resumes its normal mundaneness. Perhaps, when we do use language in our dreams, we use or conceptualise it in a different way from in our normal, daily use.

A few final thoughts: nightmares seem to be IMAGE-based, rather than LANGUAGE-based. That is, we tend to remember what HAPPENED in our nightmares, rather than what was said.

Speaking of remembering, I've just remembered some (long ago) research on what people dream about. As published in The Scientific American, in the 1950's, David, Stone and Martin interviewed over 10,000 people about their dreams. While they did not specifically address the issue of language Vs image-based dreams, the five dream categories they identified are intriguing:

*MOVEMENT	(34% of dreams)
*VERBAL	(11% “ “ )
*SEDENTARY	(7% “ “ )
*VISUAL	(7% “ “ )
*SOCIAL	(6% “ “ )
*RECREATIONAL	(5% “ “ )
*MANUAL	(4% “ “ )
*ENDEAVOUR	(4% “ “ )
*ANTAGONISTIC	(3% “ “ )
*OBTAINING SOMETHING	(3% “ “ )
*UNSPECIFIED	(16% “ “ )

In some other, internet reported research on the language of dreams, I noted these interesting observations;

\*"Dreams are weird things. I wish there was a way to reverse-engineer them, and see them thought by thought."

\*"It doesn't seem much of a stretch to me that you could trick yourself (in a dream) into believing you knew (another) language."

\*"Dreaming in (another) language is not necessarily to be trusted to mean you're fluent in it."

\*"If you can THINK in a language, and sustain it for more than an hour or so, THAT's something!"

\*"I've been learning American Sign Language for some years, and within the last year, I've begun to dream in it."

And research now indicates that there is one part of our brain dedicated to the acquisition and maintenance of our FIRST language, and another part used for our second and subsequent languages.

It all gives one something to think (or dream) about, doesn't it ????

### *December 2014 Lunch*



Graeme Nicholls

### ***Friends of Stewart House***

The April activity will be lunch at the International School of Management at Manly. This has been a most enjoyable function in the past and Members have requested that it be an annual activity. Barbara Kenny is organising a booking with the ISM. Any enquiries should be directed to Barbara Kenny Ph 9986 1718.

**Tuesday 19th May Graeme Marshall will entertain us with a presentation on 'The Floating Brothel'.**

This talk is about the 'Lady Juliana'. The ship was sent out from England with female convicts in an effort to balance the gender ratio in the early colony. Cost \$10 donation to Stewart House. Meet at Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club at 10.45am for an 11am start. Lunch at own expense. **Contact Barbara Kenny Ph 9986 1718 by Thursday 14th May.**

**Monday 22nd June 'Have bag, will travel - not necessarily so!' with Cheryl Cartwright.** Enjoy a light hearted look at life from behind the Help Desk at Sydney Airport and the comical situations that arise from among the 100,000 travellers that pass through each day. Cost \$10 donation to Stewart House. Meet at Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club at 10.45am for an 11am start. Lunch at own expense. **Contact Diane Hill Ph 9665 7202 by Friday 19th June**

**Thursday 16th July Lunch at Doyle's Restaurant at Watson's Bay.** Ferry for Watsons Bay departs from Wharf 4 at 12.07. Cost will be \$40 which includes a \$10 donation to Stewart House. Meet inside at 12.15pm for 12.30pm start. **Contact Barbara Kenny Ph 9986 1718 by 9th July.**



## *December 2014 Lunch*



John Allsopp

## *Members say*

**Will Robertson**

The political spin on the Abbot award to Prince Philip has not mentioned that in 1988, the then Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke appointed HRH Prince Philip as a Companion of the Order of Australia (then Australia highest honour).

This was a recognition of the source of Australian history and heritage to be celebrated on Australia Day.

We all need to speak up for the benefits we people in Australia enjoy from our British Christian Heritage.

1. Freedom and equality inherited from British Common Law established for and by the people .
2. Checks and balances on government through our Governor General, represents the Crown serving all people, independent of Political Parties.

[Not a powerful Political President who makes decrees and is subject to revolutions as in many countries today]

3. Heritage of Service for people in need through Christ's Law "To Love One Another" is our challenge and the Charity Focus of Prince Philip.

Let us celebrate future Australia Days recognizing the benefits of our British Christian heritage like the then Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke who appointed HRH Prince Philip as a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1988 and now in 2015 like Tony Abbot in again recognizing Prince Philip.

### ***Members say***

The following item was found by **Joan Healy** during her research.

Extract from" The Report by W. Wilkins, Inspector and Superintendent to the Commissioners of National Education in New South Wales for the year 1857".

- The number of Schools inspected during the year 1857, exclusive of the Sydney Schools, was twenty. My visits were confined to this small number, first, on account of the lateness of the period when I received my instructions: and secondly, because of the Secretary's illness, which rendered my presence in Sydney necessary for five months.
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- The past year was one of great trial to National Schools. It was generally expected that Parliament would give its sanction to some new scheme of public education. The agitation existing in the public mind on this subject was further increased by the efforts of the opponents of the National System. At no previous period since its first establishment in the Colony had they exerted themselves so strenuously to lower the National System in public esteem. It is, therefore, gratifying to find, that not only did the system maintain its ground, but it made rapid progress.
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- The disastrous floods which devastated a portion of the Colony injured some of the school buildings, and in other cases completely deprived the people of the means of proceeding with the erection of schoolhouses. Great numbers of children were also for many months prevented from attending School, communication being stopped by the floods.
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- Notwithstanding these drawbacks, I am enabled to report in decidedly favourable terms respecting ten of the Schools visited in 1857. Of two others, I was compelled to speak with marked dissatisfaction: while the remaining eight were found to be in varying grades of efficiency, but each exhibiting some promise of future improvement. As far as my observations extended, I saw reason to believe that the measures referred to in my Report in the year 1856 were producing considerable effect in improving the character of the School
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- The services of the Organising Master have proved very useful in disseminating information among the teachers on subjects connected with school management, and thereby enabled them to increase the efficiency of their Schools. His labours have further had the effect of bringing all the National Schools into closer relation with each other and with the central authority; of producing to some extent, unity of purpose in the exertions of the teachers; and of raising the moral and intellectual character of the Schools.

### *Members say*

## The Fish and The Elephant Part 2

**Graham Sims**

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Graham and I stayed back after school to supervise the Cadets' twice-weekly parades. While we both thoroughly enjoyed this, it meant an extra-long day for each of us, and given the sparse train service back to the Mountains, quite a late night home, especially in the cold and dark of winter.

We decided that, on one or both of these "late days", we would drive down and back, rather than rely on the infrequent train service. When I say "WE" would drive down and back, I actually envisaged that I would drive down and back, ostensibly on the grounds that since I lived in Warrimoo a few kilometres further UP the mountains than Graham's new home in Blaxland East, it was more logical for me to pick him up on the way down, and drop him off on the way back.

I was also sensitive to the fact that with three little kids and only one car, Jo needed daily access to their vehicle, for shopping, errands, medical emergencies etc. Only now, after all these years, does my conscience belatedly force me to confess that the REAL reason I wanted to drive was that dear, loveable Graham could not, I feared, be relied upon to WAKE up, GET up and DRIVE up to my place, in time to get me to school for Period 1, in which I had a senior French or German class each morning.

I got away with it for some time, until there came the inevitable day when Graham remarked, "You know, Gray," (he was one of only two people ever to call me this)", it's not fair that YOU pick me up and drive us down both days, every week. Tomorrow morning, I'll pick YOU up at your place."

My enthusiasm must have sounded underwhelming, particularly when I said "You'll have to pick me up no later than 7am, sharp. I've got 5A French Period 1, and I CAN'T be late! If you're not on time, I'll start walking up the street, and if you don't turn up, I'll have to catch the train."

I knew Graham's answer before he said it: "Not to worry, Gray. You won't have reached your front gate before I arrive."

Well, the morning arrived. 7am arrived...but Graham H. did not. So, true to my word, I started walking up our street. Indeed, I FINISHED walking up our street...but there was no sign of Graham. I turned left at the top of the street, and, more in hope than commonsense, began walking down Railway Parade towards Blaxland Station, about two kilometres away, AND the direction from which my supposed chauffeur would come.

Hot and cranky, I had almost reached Blaxland Station, wondering why the !#\$% I had not simply turned LEFT at the top of my street and walked the 200 metres to Warrimoo Station, when, in the proverbial cloud of dust, a yellow Holden Kingswood station wagon, with a grim-faced Hannan at the wheel, shot straight past me as if I were the invisible man, and headed UP Railway Parade, presumably heading for my place in Edna St. Warrimoo. I stood there, in teeth-gnashing disbelief.

I later learned that Graham had indeed screeched to a halt outside our house, horn-a-tooting, and asked a bewildered Helen, who was just about to leave for school, "Is Gray up yet? I'm a few minutes late, I think." (It was, by then, 7.45 am.)

"Up?" queried Helen. "He left at 7am. Didn't you see him walking down Railway Parade as you drove up here?"

"No, not a sign of him," replied Graham. "I'd better go back and look for him. Something must have happened to him." (This cheered Helen considerably...not!)

Off he drove, at breakneck speed, heading back down Railway Pde, where he'd already passed by me without noticing me.

THIS time, I literally leapt out almost in front of Graham's rattling rocket. Had I not, I've little doubt that he would have shot past me once again.

"Gosh, I'm sorry, Gray," he explained. "We had a bad night with the kids and didn't hear the alarm; but, not to worry; we'll take a short cut down the Old Bathurst Road and soon make up time."

Now, for non-Blue Mountains aficionados, I should point out that there are, in essence, four roads leading up into the lower mountains, from Penrith or Emu Plains.

\* The earliest was known as The Explorers' Trail, also known as Cox's Road, built by convicts between 1813-1814.

\*The second is The Old Bathurst Road, probably built between 1827-1830. This very steep climb begins to the west of Emu Plains railway station and zig-zags its winding way up to what is now Blaxland East.

\* The third is Mitchell's Pass, which starts near Knapsack Gully, using the historic Lennox Bridge and emerging at Glenbrook.

\* The fourth is The Great Western Highway, the main access road, which crosses Knapsack Gully by way of Knapsack Bridge, and thence up through Lapstone, Glenbrook, Blaxland, Warrimoo and so on.

Since the Hannans by now lived at Blaxland East, The Old Bathurst Road was, indeed, a (sort of) short cut down the edge of the escarpment, to Emu Plains. It had, however two characteristics that did not exactly fill me with unbridled joy at Graham's suggestion.

Firstly, its gradient was VERY steep and "hairy", with several hair-pin bends (nearly 50 years later, it remains so.)

Secondly, it was, in the mid 1960's, still largely unsealed, with much of it being loose gravel or dirt.

Negotiating it safely demanded a vehicle in sound condition, with excellent brakes and steering, in the hands of a competent, cautious driver. Hmmmmm!

Nevertheless, Captain Hannan and his trusty (?) steed proceeded to tackle its descent with reckless derring-do, while, as passenger, I could do little but grip my seat (no seatbelts) in white-knuckled terror.

I soon felt and heard a strange, thumping noise, (not my heart...I checked), then a smell of burning rubber and a metallic scraping, apparently coming from the front left tyre and wheel. I also became frighteningly aware that our vehicle was pulling badly to the left, often coming perilously close to the crumbling edges, with the steep gullies looming below.

Glancing over at Graham, I noticed that his brow was covered in sweat, the sinews in his arms were standing out like Popeye's, and he was clutching the madly vibrating steering-wheel like grim death. (NOT the happiest of similes in the circumstances.)

"I think we've got a flat tyre, Graham," I yelled. "We'll have to pull over somewhere and have a look."

"Too dangerous to stop here, mate," said Graham ominously. "We'll wait till we get to the bottom of the hill. Not to worry!"

I did, of course, worry, as getting to the bottom of the hill, as a mangled wreck, seemed a distinct possibility. However, we somehow managed a (semi) controlled descent, without going over the edge. The doughty Captain would have it that "It doesn't feel quite so bad now" and that "we should carry on."

When he reluctantly acceded to my ashen-faced plea that we MUST stop and check for damage, Graham was gob-smacked at what we found. The front left tyre was not merely flat, it was shredded to oblivion, and the wheel itself scored and dented from our nightmare descent.

"Well, I'm blowed." remarked Graham, (or words to that effect). "It wasn't like that before!"

To my moans that we were still 50 long miles from my 5A French class, Graham's cheery response was, (Yep, you guessed it ,folks) "Not to worry, Gray. There's a spare in the back. We'll have it changed and be off again in a jiffy."



Now, dear reader, the next scene is etched in my memory as if it happened but yesterday, rather than 50 long years ago.

Graham and I walked around to the back of the Kingswood wagon. He lifted the tailgate, removed the fibre cover over the spare wheel well, looked expectantly inside, and there, instead of the aforementioned spare wheel, a dear little toy elephant, made of green felt, and with wiffly trunk and cute, red-button eyes, peered up at us from the depths of the otherwise empty recess. Never before or since did I see the normally imperturbable Graham so enraged.

With a strange and savage cry that seemed to rise from deep inside him, he reached in, grabbed the unfortunate little jumbo by its trunk, swung it around his head like a demented discus thrower and hurled it into the bush, exclaiming, "What in God's name was THAT doing in there? THAT'S of no earthly use to a man at a time like this!"

Indeed, the poor little pachyderm was not really an efficacious solution to our predicament. We had to call the NRMA, who had to replace the tyre and repair the damaged wheel. We eventually arrived at school just on 11am, to face the wrath of a less than sympathetic Deputy.

This saga would not be complete in its telling were I not to mention that, just before we had managed to resume our eventful journey,

Graham suddenly hived off into the bushes, rummaged around, and returned with the hitherto much-maligned little elephant nestled in his arms. "Can't leave the poor little bugger there," confessed a repentant Graham. "After all, he IS Davey's favourite toy."

For some reason, it was, henceforth, somehow always more convenient for ME to pick up Graham on our 'driving' days. He didn't seem to mind and neither did I.

### *Members say*

**VALE DR OWEN KENNETH DAVIES**  
**2/9/1943 – 25/12/2014**

Owen Davies was born on 2 September 1943 in Newcastle to Grace Elizabeth (Betty) and Ken Davies with a sister, Helen, born five years later. He attended Mayfield West Demonstration School and Newcastle Boys High School, then trained as a teacher at Newcastle Teachers College.

Owen commenced his teaching career in 1963 with early appointments out west in places like Gunnedah until he took up a position at Berkeley Public School in the Illawarra region. He was later appointed to Fairy Meadow Demonstration School as Deputy Principal. Alongside his educational career was a great interest in sport fuelled by a competitive streak challenged by few. As he completed a Masters degree, he was Principal at Pleasant Heights Public School and Moss Vale Public School until his appointment as District

Inspector (Sylvania) in 1988 based in the office at Miranda.

In 1990, Owen was appointed Cluster Director Bulli and joined a vital team of educational leaders in the South Coast Region with Dr Terry Burke at the helm as Assistant Director General. Owen worked from the Wollongong Education Resource Centre with colleagues Alan Cobbin, John Bladen and Dr Ron Broadfoot assisted by a team of education consultants led by Leonie Fleming. This was a vital and rewarding period for him.

He then furthered his studies in education under the supervision of Dr Brian Cambourne, beginning an Honours Masters degree which later he turned into a Ph.D in Nebraska under the supervision of Professor Al Seagram.

On his return from Nebraska, Owen soon moved to the position of Director (Quality Assurance) working with the Sydney West Quality Assurance Unit based at Parramatta. This work took him on a mission of school reviews and the subsequent production of review reports across western New South Wales and western Sydney. One highlight was when he led the team of reviewers on a review of The School of the Air in Broken Hill.

He forged a name in the conduct of rigorous school reviews and his expertise was sought in the setting up of frameworks for the review of state programs. He became an advocate of the particular circumstances faced by small schools and refined a model of their using data over a period of time to inform school improvement. He transferred to the Southern Quality Assurance Unit and carried on the same work in the southern part of the state and the south western area of Sydney.

In 1994 Owen became Chief Education Officer based in the Ryde State Office with particular responsibilities for the setting up of the new venture of *HSC OnLine*. This required all of the high level negotiating skills that he had, steering and massaging a new technology project for students through the then Board of Studies, the Department's Curriculum Directorate (with every HSC subject coordinator to be brought on side), and two major universities who were committed to regional and distance education. To his credit, Owen pulled this off and the students in NSW benefited.

The other major project Owen was assigned to was the *NSW State Literacy Review*. With David Ashford and others (initially) this major review was designed and data was collected from across the state under the watchful eye of a State Literacy Committee chaired by the Deputy Director General reporting to the Minister. The data was collected and analysed and recommendations were accepted by government and the *Literacy Strategy* was launched in every school in NSW.

Owen was appointed Chief Education Officer (School Improvement) in Campbelltown and later transferred to Wollongong. Owen retired from this position although he relieved as District Superintendent for a long period of time.

In retirement, Owen set up *Finepoint Consulting* with his wife, Tracy, and was contracted to work in a number of schools and undertake a number of statewide evaluations in the areas of literacy and mathematics. Owen chaired the committee that designed, organised and ran the highly successful *Educational Leadership Conference* for the University of

Wollongong's Centre for Educational Leadership for many years, including the final 2014 conference when he was in poor health. He also tutored post graduate students in the Educational Leadership Program and was still marking PhD papers until quite recently.

Owen was a formidable man with high moral values. He set high educational expectations and pursued them fearlessly. When he made friends he kept them for life. In a recent email from former Principal Robyn Cupitt and her husband, Gordon, she said: "Owen was a fearless, courageous supporter of public education. We are so proud to have known him and have benefited from his advice and example. PS. He was always good for a cryptic comment and a good laugh". Many others of his professional colleagues would echo these sentiments.

Owen was a strong family man. He married Barbara in 1966 and they had two children: Anne-Maree and Tony. Sadly, Tony passed away in 2012. married Tracy and In 1991, Owen they had three daughters: Ashlynn, Brianna and Cosette. He will also be missed by his six grandchildren. May he rest in peace.

Chris Carroll

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Members are reminded that material is needed  
for the **July 2015 Newsletter**  
Accompanying photos are most welcome,  
preferably as JPG email attachments.

**Copy deadline: 8th June 2015**

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Have you contributed in the last 2-3 years?  
If not, your ARISSEA friends may like to know  
what you've been doing,  
what you are thinking or  
what you remember.