



# Newsletter

July 2017

Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators Inc

---

## Booking slip      4th August 2017 Meeting

Please complete and return with your cheque by **12<sup>th</sup> July** to:

**John Allsopp, 23 Lyndon Way, BEECROFT, 2119** (phone 9980 2114)

Here is my payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (at \$45.00 per head)

for \_\_\_\_\_ and me to attend the IRSEA luncheon  
at 11.30am for 12.00pm at '**99 on York**', 99 York Street, Sydney on 4th August 2017.

Please provide \_\_\_\_\_ vegetarian meal(s).

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Please 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**

# IRSEA 2017 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

## **Why survey IRSEA members now?**

Our last survey of members was in 2008 and the IRSEA Executive Committee is still referring to that information. It is time to refresh our information on what members think about some specific aspects of IRSEA. Please tick the boxes or write in the spaces in the questions below.

## **Membership information**

- 1) Membership Type: ☐ Retired Inspector/Senior Officer  
☐ Widow/Widower of Retired Inspector/Senior Officer
- 2) IRSEA Membership: ☐ less than 10 years  
☐ 10 to 20 years  
☐ more than 20 years

## **Communication**

The Newsletter is our formal communication between IRSEA members. It is despatched by mail and email four times each year, at the end of January, March, June and October.

- 3) I would prefer to receive the Newsletter by: ☐ email  
☐ mailed paper copy

If this is not the way you currently receive the newsletter, please provide your name and email address here so we can send it your way:

Or, if you wish to keep these survey responses completely anonymous, please email your request to the editor at [peterrobinson7@gmail.com](mailto:peterrobinson7@gmail.com)

- 4) Which sections of the Newsletter do you look forward to reading (please tick all that apply)
- ☐ From the President
  - ☐ Members say . . . (information about what members are up to)
  - ☐ Members say . . . (reflections with an educational focus)
  - ☐ Notices re address changes etc.
  - ☐ Photos and captions
  - ☒ Special features eg. luncheon guest speaker report
- 5) If there are any other features you would like to see in the newsletter, please specify here:

## **Institute Luncheon Meetings**

Three luncheons are held each year, on the first Friday in May, August and December, at the York function centre near Sydney Town Hall. They are attended by about one in eight members. It has been a concern that more members could benefit from the collegiality and support that the luncheons provide.

- 6) I have attended an IRSEA (ARISSEA) luncheon meeting which had a guest speaker: ☐ Yes  
☐ No
- 7) I am in favour of a guest speaker once a year:
- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
- 8) I would be more likely to attend the August meeting if there is a guest speaker:
- ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

### **Objects of IRSEA**

The IRSEA constitution provides two objects for IRSEA. The first is to preserve friendship and a sense of identity for those senior men and women who have spent their professional endeavours in the field of public education.

9) IRSEA is meeting its first object at a high level:

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

The second object of the constitution is to make whatever donations possible to Stewart House or other tax-exempt charitable organisation for children, as a continuance of this traditional support:

10) IRSEA is meeting its second object at a high level:

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree

Any other comments:

---

**Thank you for your interest & support.  
Kerrie Ikin, President IRSEA**

Please send this completed survey by post to.:

IRSEA Secretary, 44 Bellotti Ave, Winston Hills 2153 or email to: [geoff\\_walton@yahoo.com](mailto:geoff_walton@yahoo.com)



# Newsletter

July 2017

Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators Inc

---

## *From the President*

*Kerrie Ikin, President IRSEA 2017-18*



I remember distinctly the day that I first thought about becoming a 'school inspector'. I was in 4th class at Bronte Public School. It was 1963. On this particular day, our teacher, 'Sir', (I will call him 'Sir' because that's what we called him) had decided that for a joke we would play percussion instruments really loudly—so that the children in the class next door would not be able to hear their teacher.

After we had been playing for a little while and trying to get louder and louder at Sir's insistence, the district inspector appeared at our door. He had a bemused expression and Sir looked a little taken aback. After he left, Sir told us (with a bit of a sheepish grin) that if he had known that the district inspector was in the next room he wouldn't have played the joke on the teacher—well not right at that moment anyway.

I don't know what it was about that particular incident that appealed to me, but from that moment the spark of interest in aspiring to the role of school inspector was ignited.

In high school, my favourite subject was French, and so although I considered a range of university options, I kept coming back to a degree that allowed me to include French. As a result I became a teacher of languages and ESL.

Although I didn't realise it at the time, this began a long, circuitous, and (courtesy of Departmental restructures) largely unplanned path through the Department, arriving eventually, via a succession of CEO positions, at my final destination in The Hills, in what was then Western Sydney Region, as School Education Director (SED). The Inspectorate had long been superseded, but through my CEO and SED roles I had achieved the closest equivalents to my childhood aspiration.

What I never envisaged, however, was my long-lasting affiliations with so many senior educational administrators through my roles in first the ISEA and now IRSEA. I feel very privileged to have been elected President of IRSEA for 2017-18. I look at the distinguished people who have held this role before me and feel somewhat humbled to take on the role.

In particular I would like to acknowledge Alan Laughlin and his team for the admirable work and achievements of the past twelve months. A lot of this work has been focused on ensuring the ongoing health and currency of IRSEA and on our continuing support of Stewart House. I hope that in my year as President, we will be able to encourage more newly retired senior educational administrators to join IRSEA so that they too will reap the benefits and collegiality that membership can afford them and so that IRSEA, and the charitable work that it supports, will flourish well into the future.

While our long-term future depends in part on attracting newly-retired senior officers, we are also very mindful of continuing to support our current members, many of whom have been part of the institute for many years. To this end, at our last executive meeting it was decided that it was time to refresh the information about what members think about some specific aspects of IRSEA.

A short survey that can be either returned in hard copy or by email is included in this email newsletter, just after the Booking slip for our next luncheon which is on the first page as usual. You can print the survey by printing pages 2 & 3. I sincerely thank Peter Robinson and Barry Laing for developing this survey and encourage every member to take a few minutes to respond.

In addition to thanking him for his work in developing the survey, I would also like to welcome Barry Laing to the IRSEA executive as Vice-president and introduce him to the readership.

Barry began his secondary science teaching career in the NSW teaching service in 1974 and then, in Barry terms, 'moved all over the shop'—an American international school in Scotland, teacher and bursar in small and large private schools in NSW, principal of a government boarding college in Vanuatu, principal of Bourke High, Director of Quality Assurance, and then CEO (School Improvement) till retirement.

It was in this last position that I met Barry and worked closely with him. After retirement, Barry undertook contract work doing analysis and planning in state and private schools. In his last few years in the Department, Barry was elected President of the ISEA (while I continued as Vice-president) where he supported Ron Ikin and the executive committee in negotiating industrial agreements and workplace conditions for the remaining CEOs in the Department.

These were harrowing times as, with each successive restructure, more and more CEO positions were lost, and people's futures were placed in jeopardy. There were, however, good times with ISEA study tours being organised and senior educational administrators being recognised annually through the ISEA's Ron Ikin Memorial Award.

After such a varied and distinguished career, Barry says he now undertakes 'Grandpa jobs...'. I look forward to working with Barry again and know that he will be an invaluable asset to the executive of IRSEA.

It seems appropriate to profile all members of the executive, especially those who may not be so well known to those who are newer to the readership and I will do so in each of the following issues.

In this issue, however, it is my very sad task to acknowledge the passing of Richmond Manyweathers and pay tribute to his outstanding dedication to IRSEA, most recently in the role of Treasurer. Although I only met Richmond in person when I joined IRSEA, I had heard of him through an acquaintance of mine, who only spoke in glowing terms of a knowledgeable and compassionate man. Richmond had been the DI when my acquaintance had begun his teaching career in the early 70s. Richmond will be greatly missed from IRSEA.

Since the last Newsletter, I have also been made aware of the passing of Arthur Frost and Marita Hurley, Jack Hurley's widow. My thoughts and condolences are extended to all the families.

To conclude, I extend my personal invitation to our next luncheon meeting on Friday 4 August. The booking slip is at the beginning of this Newsletter so that you can print it by just printing page 1.

In keeping with the decision to invite a guest speaker at the August event, I am very pleased to announce that Mr Murat Dizdar has accepted our invitation to address the gathering. Murat has recently been appointed as the Department's Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Kerrie Ikin**

## 2016-17 President's Report

I would like to express my appreciation to you, the members of IRSEA, for the honour you have shown to me in electing me as the President of IRSEA for the 2016-17 year. In this position, I am acutely aware that all the office holders in the Institute continue to serve the membership with dedication and commitment to provide a forum for professional and social discourse.



I have been privileged to have an outstanding committee who have never held back from providing direct, helpful and energetic support.

Alan Laughlin

I would like to thank all committee members.

This organisation could not function without their unstinting and generous work.

It is always difficult to single out individuals but I would like to mention a few people. Firstly our secretary Geoff Walton. Geoff holds a critical position, he is the keeper of records and history but more importantly he monitors needs and responds rapidly, provides structure and materials for all meetings and is essentially the glue that holds the show together. Geoff thank you very much.

I would also like to single out Peter Robinson. The Newsletter is our most important platform to bind our membership together. Many of our members cannot attend the luncheon meetings and it is the Newsletter, that they read avidly, and to which so many contribute, that builds the networking and links. To put the material together, edit the contributions, format the newsletter and arrange distribution is a most challenging task. Peter we all admire your work and appreciate your dedication. Thank you very much.

Other members thoroughly deserve mention as well. Our Treasurer Richmond Manyweathers and Assistant Treasurer Ray Gillies have kept us more than solvent. They have also worked closely with our dedicated membership officer Allan Mills to iron out the membership data base and initiate new membership procedures. This is a difficult job and requires real tenacity from all. Thank you.

One of our major goals is to promote social interaction and collegiality between members. The membership is made up of senior officers who have dedicated much of their lives to serving the families of NSW through public education. We had all developed both a professional and social bond over many years that has found expression, on retirement, in this organisation.

The Newsletter provides the major vehicle for networking across the state. Our luncheon meetings provide a more personal social opportunity. These continue to be well attended and enjoyed by all. John Allsopp has taken on the organisational task here and I thank him for his work in this area. It has been a particular pleasure to have colleagues we don't see often come to these functions.

We have tried to develop opportunities for professional input and discourse as part of our luncheon program. We have had Ken Boston come and speak on the Gonski reforms and in August last year we had Dorothy Hoddinott speak on her experiences in supporting Refugee and New Arrival children at Holroyd High School. I believe her talk was very well received and I know a number of our members have contributed to the Public Education Foundation to help these needy children. The Newsletter has carried reports and information about these talks. Your continued feedback on the guest speaker concept is important for us to explore further such opportunities.

Stewart house continues to benefit from our contributions. I thank Eula Guthrie for her continued promotion of this organisation. I would also again draw your attention to our Newsletter which, each edition, has carried a summary of social activities for the Friends of Stewart House. Again many of our members do attend these functions and it provides the link across groups that is so important and may well provide a pathway for groups like ours to grow.

I have recently been in contact with the CEO of Stewart House, Graeme Philpotts, and he expressed his thanks for our support and would also appreciate more formal discussions with us re possible evaluations of some of their new programs. A future Committee will need to consider this. In reviewing our organisational activities, our new constitution has been bedded in, our new name accepted and membership renewal processes regularised. Regular Committee meetings have been well attended with robust discussion. The collective wisdom we have on our Committee is extraordinary. I would like to thank Committee members Kerry Ikin, Terry Burke, Vincent Delaney and Alan Rice.

So in measure I believe we have had a successful year. Our major task of *"preserving friendship and a sense of identity among senior men and women who have spent their professional endeavours in the field of public education"* has been achieved.

Unfortunately an organisation of our kind will experience sad losses during the year. This year some eight of our members have passed away. Their names were noted

earlier in this Annual General Meeting. We offer our condolences to their families and acknowledge each of them for their contribution, through education, to making this a better world. We also have a number of members experiencing ill health, we wish them well.

Our Vice President is Kerry Ikin. As is the tradition in this organisation she will be standing for President for the 2017-18 year. She will bring fresh ideas and commitment. She will make a wonderful President and I commend Kerry to you and I wish her well for 2017-18.

**Alan Laughlin**  
5th May 2017



Barry Laing

**Some ramblings from the Vice-President; or  
Let's Celebrate that we are a Fine Bunch of Educators!**

I once applied for the Principal's job at a high school in Lae, an International School in the Papua-Niugini education system. The date was in 1988.

That was close to the time when the 'List' system in NSW was abolished, along with the 'stud book' which listed who was currently on which level in the lists of approved candidates for various promotions positions in the Department. The process of so-called 'Merit Selection' replaced it and many succession rules disappeared. Much

later it has even become possible for teachers not currently employed by the Department to apply for promotions positions, in certain situations.

Back to Lae, 1988. This was no normal job interview. At the time, no invitations to interview had yet been sent back to applicants. I was working then in an executive role in a boarding secondary school in Vanuatu. I sent an application in response to the public advertisement but I was not going to apply in another third-world country without seeing the school for myself. So I took myself off to see the school, flying to Lae at my own cost via the Solomons. I asked for an orientation visit to the school and the (Australian) Principal at Lae obliged. The President of the School Council (another Australian, from NSW) also was at the school to meet me and we strolled around with friendly chat about the school, its history and the job requirements.

Then the mood suddenly changed. There were several lurches in the conversation. He asked, a little pointedly, "I'm interested that you once worked in the Department of Education in NSW...were you in a promotions position there?"

"No, I was only working for them for 18 months, then I left Australia to go travelling. I got a job as science teacher in an American International school in Scotland." He stood still. First lurch; just a small speed bump. So with his curiosity aroused, he asked, "So where did you work in promotions positions?"

I said "In one private school in NSW I was Science coordinator and then I also became the Bursar after I had done a graduate Diploma in Educational Administration." He raised an eyebrow. "Then I was headhunted to be the Bursar half-time in a big Catholic College in Sydney as well as teaching senior Science."

He said, "Headhunted...not interviewed by a panel?" "No, just the Principal, one of the five Nuns who ran the school." Another lurch, this time more like a bump at speed against the roadside barrier.

I continued, "After that I was recruited by Price Waterhouse to be an Australian Aid funded officer, in charge of the Science faculty at a government college in northern Vanuatu with 400 boarders, and that's where I am now. I do a lot of training of local staff as well as building a computerised financial system for the school."

Lurching to a stop, he looked at me a little incredulously and gasped, "So you've come here to apply for the Principal's job and you've never been inspected?!" "That's right. I've always got my next position by relying on my presentation of the level and quality of the work I was doing as well as my referees." Much to my surprise, he found it quite astounding that I could be un-Inspected but nevertheless working in positions of responsibility.

The conversation petered out, he mumbled something like that the School Council really would need evidence by Inspectors and that he had another appointment to go to so thanks for coming all this way and goodbye, the Principal will show you the rest of the place...

I didn't proceed with the application. I had a nice look at Niugini, went back to Vanuatu and four months later was appointed Principal at the college where I had worked for two years already. I had to return to Sydney beforehand and go through a selection process, again for the Australian Aid funded position. No Inspectors.

That School Council President was on a good thing. He wasn't going to take my word for it that I could do anything, but he would rely on validation by a NSW Inspector. The Inspectorate had such power as the keyholders to promotion, that a mindset seemed to envelop the entire Department up to the 1990's; the mindset of that School Council President in Lae. It was that quality only existed where the Inspectorate validated it and when they did, you could rely on it.

The legacy of that Inspectorate was arguably a high quality, comprehensively assessed profession in the teaching service of NSW. Many of IRSEA's members were directly responsible for the meticulous development of processes and regulations aimed at ensuring that no child got second-rate teaching. And that no school was administered by an incompetent or negligent Principal. Of course, it was not a perfect world but most times it worked.

I often wonder, when our more longstanding members chat about old times and people, whether it's an unstated but common theme that inspection ensured quality but in the process of merit selection that's not so certain. If we want the best teachers and administrators in the system, isn't it better to watch a person at work, than just to listen to how they describe themselves at work?

Back to Vanuatu and my uninspected career. As a new Principal of a flagship Aid project school I was learning on the job with virtually no mentor and little support, at 39 years of age. With 500 boys and girls aged up to 19 or 20 years, all boarding full-time, you can imagine that life at the school had to be very well organised. All staff lived on site. I had to be an efficient administrator and leader. There was no other way!

I learned a lot about admin and leadership. The previous, founding Principal had done all the groundwork and I took everything to the next step. Millions of dollars more in construction, a plantation which I funded through the European Union, the introduction of Cambridge exams and lastly making the school self-sufficient in food (almost). I had a poor telephone line to my boss in the capital city as my only lifeline. The school was isolated and had its own powerhouse, water supply, transport fleet and plantation. Few of the staff were well trained or experienced. Teams of students did a lot of the day-to-day tasks of a boarding school, supervised by duty staff, my Deputy and me.

When I finished my contract and returned to NSW in 1991 things were changing. I hadn't worked for the State since 1975. But within a year I was a head teacher of science and within two years I was a secondary Principal. By 1994 I was a Director. In the bush, of course, not in a garden suburb or the north coast!

As an uninspected upstart, I somehow found my place in a system which ten years previously would have kept me at the start of the list, waiting for someone to retire at the top so I could get a leg up out of the bottom. How on earth did this happen? Well, I was employed into each of that quick succession of positions from 1991 to 1994, firstly by regional staffing officers who found a pathway for me so that I was eligible for permanent appointments. Secondly, by the selection panel under a school Principal who actually wanted me on his staff. Thirdly, by the selection panel for the Principal position, which was run by a Director of Schools who had been in the Inspectorate. Fourthly, by a panel for the Director position who also had all been in the Inspectorate.

It was remarkable to me that the same people who seemed to be the gatekeepers to successive doors of privilege as Inspectors, later became the talent scouts, finding the right person for each faculty or school or functional directorate. To put it another way, they changed from master of apprentices into the matchmaker for their village. The Inspectorate's men and women of outstanding skill, vision and adaptability had coaxed, cajoled and sometimes dragged their inspectees (?) into the next best ways of learning and teaching. Similarly with school leadership and administration. Then in the new world post-Inspectorate, those same men and women shifted the Department into a new mindset; an individual can be and should be matched to the position requirements and its environment.

I am glad that the world changed in the Department. In 1991 I wanted to put my hard-learned and diverse skills back into the public education system which had produced me, out of Berala Public School and Homebush Boys High. Post-Inspectorate and uninspected, I was given the opportunity to do that.

I retired, still uninspected, in 2011. Many things happening to public education now grieve me. However I am pleased to be in the company of those people who built it into the educational force it is today. We kept plugging away at it for as long as we could, didn't we?

We can celebrate what we did in our working lives. The Department has come through a lot. Most of the developmental and reconstructive work along the way has been done by our IRSEA colleagues. Now, funding cuts are thinning the ranks of the new generation of senior administrators. Many of them have reached senior level through pathways unknown to us and certainly unlike my pathway.

There are many who don't know of the existence of ISEA or IRSEA or who have even been dissuaded by their managers from associating with each other as education professionals. Nevertheless we have much to gain from trying to reach out to the next cohorts as they retire. The need for that outreach is I know, part of the reason why I was 'invited' to become Vice-President. Our new President Kerrie and I worked in the ISEA to retain the Education focus of the Department, against a paradigm of content-free management that is the flavour of the month in public services across the world. So we have had a lot of contact with the cohort of managers who are now retiring.

Let's hope we can bring more of them into the fold, where IRSEA can get them together for collegiate friendship and support.

**Barry Laing**  
Vice-President 2017-18



John Edwards and Allan Mills

## **THE FRIENDS OF STEWART HOUSE**

**Alan Laughlin**

**July 20, Lunch at Doyle's Restaurant Watsons Bay**

This popular event has been organised again this year for **Thursday July 20**

**commencing at 12.30pm.** The menu comprises of fish chowder followed by fish and

chips, accompanied by a glass of beer, wine or soft drink at a cost of \$45 which includes a \$10 donation for Friends of Stewart House. Please invite your friends. Ferries depart Circular Quay regularly for Watsons Bay; please check the timetable closer to July 20.

RSVP 13 July

Marketa Bird at [dgmbird@bigpond.com](mailto:dgmbird@bigpond.com) or mobile 0417 275 393 or

Judy Brown at [d\\_jbrown@bigpond.net.au](mailto:d_jbrown@bigpond.net.au) or mobile 0438 731 550.

### **September 26, High Tea.**

High Tea will be on Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am (sharp) – 12.30pm. You are more than welcome to stay longer for lunch if you wish. This will be at the **Beehive Cafe, Shop 4/ 1A Wongala Crescent, Beecroft**. This is a 7 min walk from Beecroft Train Station. Alight from train, turn left onto Wongala Crescent, turn left and walk 150-200m.

The cost is \$32 and includes high tea with unlimited tea / coffee and \$10 donation to Friends of Stewart House.

There is Limited parking at Beehive Cafe. Additional parking is off Wongala Cres, north of Hannah Street.

Train leaves Central at 9.20, arriving at Beecroft at 10.06

**RSVP:** 15<sup>th</sup> September

Marketa Bird 0417275393 [dgmbird@bigpond.com](mailto:dgmbird@bigpond.com)

Judy Brown.0438731550 or [d\\_jbrown@bigpond.net.au](mailto:d_jbrown@bigpond.net.au)

### **November 11, Newcastle Race Day**

This is a fundraiser for FOSH on Saturday 11 Nov 2017 at Newcastle Racecourse Chatham Rd. Newcastle;

Time; 12 noon until 5 pm. At a cost of \$80 per person.

The Package includes: Private marquee overlooking the parade ring and mounting yard close to live racing action, a buffet lunch (mains and desserts) linen tablecloths, racecourse entry, and private bar facilities, TAB facilities and one race book per two guests.

Names to Lloyd Hogg by Oct 10<sup>th</sup>. (Mb 0409 459 843) Email: [hoggy46@hotmail.com](mailto:hoggy46@hotmail.com)

Names and payment to Jane Lindsay also by October 10

Account Name Friends of Stewart House

BSB 062-001 A/c No 00908407

**Members Say**  
**A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE OF ATTENDING A TWO TEACHER SCHOOL IN**  
**THE LATE 40's**

**Syd Smith**

**How I ended up in Boambee**

In 1949 my mother was unwell so she sent me to my grandparents' farm at Boambee for a year. How my grandmother ended up in Boambee is a long story but, in a nutshell, it began after my grandfather was killed at the Somme in 1916. My grandmother subsequently migrated to Australia four years later via Brisbane with her three sons (one being my father) and took up a position as housekeeper for a German couple who had settled on a small farm on the then Pacific Highway.

In time the old German couple passed away leaving 3 sons and a daughter. Two of the boys had a debilitating muscular disability and had to be sent to a rehabilitation hospital in Lidcombe. The daughter married and went to live in Urunga, leaving the remaining son and my grandmother to run the farm. In 1941 my grandmother married the remaining son, (my step grandfather) and they managed the farm together until 1965.

Boambee is a mixed farming area 7 kms south of Coffs Harbour and once known for its bananas, pineapples, peas and tomato produce along with some beef cattle. To break the tradition my step grandfather became very successful at growing passion fruit, which he sold to the Mynor Fruit Juice Company. The bananas were sent to the Sydney Markets and, from time to time, he included a carpet snake in the packing case, a gift which the markets really appreciated because, once installed in the rafters at Paddy's, they kept the rat numbers down. To warn the markets of the packing case's contents a large S was scrawled on the outside.

**Boambee Public School in 1949**

But I digress. My point in writing at this time is to recall my impressions of attending a small school as a student in the late 1940s. I know many of you older members have pleasant memories of your early careers when, as teachers, you began your careers in these small schools and many of you may be able to compare your experiences, both as a student or teacher/ principal. I always remember the story from my step grandfather about Boambee Public School in the 1920s when the principal, a Mr Darcy, had to go to Sydney to report to the Department. In those days it was evidently quicker to go by sea but evidently the ship was hit by a storm en route and Darcy and all hands on board perished.

In 1990 I decided to look up other interesting historic events about the school and came across the Punishment Book. My step grandfather starred quite a few times, pulling girls' hair, speaking rudely and guilty of a number of other common offences at those times, all of which required the normal cuts of the stick. I also found my enrolment record for 1949 and a list of other children whom I could still remember.

Boambee had at least five teachers working there the last time I visited in 1990 but in 1949 it had only two. Mr Thompson, a terrifying man with a sandy red crew cut was the principal and Mr Chisholm, the teacher on the Lower Division. In those days a high percentage of the farm children aimed to leave school as soon as they could so I was one of those who was marked as different. Mr Chisholm was a returned serviceman and on wet Friday afternoons we children would persuade him to tell tales of his war experiences. It was a good way to get out of work and ease into a lazy weekend.

I suspect, looking back on it now that Mr Chisholm was probably in his first or second year of teaching. He had some disciplinary problems with a few of the more outspoken students and spent some lesson time preparing teaching resources and flash cards. I recall one of his major campaigns was to encourage every child to have a bath every day. Obviously some of us must have been hygienically unsavoury. At one time he had a group of us surrounding his desk when he suddenly stood up and shouted, "Right. everyone go away, sit down!!" Then he went on to explain that there was a terrible smell emanating from one of the children. At that time the then unknown, El Nino must have been rampant because water was in short supply and since most of the population was dependent on rain tank water or unpotable water from the creeks, it was understandable that it had to be handled sparingly.

Little wonder that children were not bathed every day and given all toilets were located some distance from the farmhouse, (the thunderbox system), one can imagine it was not all roses and sweetness in the classroom. So obsessed with cleanliness and daily hygiene was Mr Chisholm that when he marked the role each morning he would ask students if they had had a bath overnight or when was the last time they had had a bath. Showers were apparently unknown at the time given the excess water they would consume. I remember my younger cousin saying, "Yes sir", when her name was called but I knew this was not correct and yelled out, "No she didn't have a bath sir." This resulted in a shouting match between her and me across the room until Mr Chisholm intervened.

However, I was a comparatively good student and our half yearly and annual exam results were proudly listed name by name with place in class in the Coffs Harbour Advocate. There was always one girl, Jeanie Catlin, who came first. I often wondered what happened to her as she showed great promise.

When I returned to Sydney at the end of 1949, Mr Chisholm wrote on my report card asking if my parents would let me stay another year as he desperately wanted me to continue. I still have the report card and often muse how it was then possible to write such personal and emotive comments about students at that time, so different to the NAPLAN model we have today.

There are many other instances I remember in those times: the mosquito wrigglers in the school rainwater tank from which we drank with gay abandon, going to school barefoot being the norm, using pens with nibs long before Mr Biro revolutionised hand writing, mixing up ink powder with water and carefully filling up inkwells with the aqueous solution, the straight line of desks for each grade, the ABC radio broadcasts for music and Infants classes on 2NR Northern Rivers, the Friday sport afternoons playing rounders, eating lunch under camphor laurel trees (who planted all those camphor laurel trees in schools, visiting inspectors in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century?), walking home along gravel roads and Mr Thompson dropping in to give an excited and grateful Mr Chisholm his pay. (How they transported such huge amounts of cash to so many schools in those days still intrigues me.)

In the winter of 1949 I contracted pneumonia (caused probably by thinking I was invincible and being resistant to walking barefoot on the frosty grass) and was forced to spend several weeks in Coffs Harbour Hospital.

While my grandmother had plans for me to run the farm when she and my step grandfather retired, my mother had other ideas and so I was to return to Sydney at the end of that year.

### **Today**

The farm today is a housing estate completely unrecognisable from the time I lived there and any evidence of the past long obliterated except for a street named after my grandparents. Where the low lying flat that used to flood frequently is, a home now stands. One can only wonder who made that crazy decision to build on such a stupid location.

The school has grown to become a modern five teacher establishment, (maybe even larger now), and the old gravel road which once was part of the Pacific Highway now sealed and demoted to become a winding back road.

In many ways I regard 1949 as one of the most enjoyable years of my life. It was where my real education began, providing a valuable preparation for my first year of teaching in a similar two teacher school at Bethungra twelve years later.

Bethungra Public School was closed some 15 years ago, now magically converted to a coffee stop and café rest area for travellers on their way to Sydney or Melbourne.

Boambee, on the other hand, has continued to thrive as farmland gives way to the unstoppable spread of urbanisation.

**Syd Smith**



Joan Healy and Tony Re

### **Members Say AND GLADLY TEACH ???**

**Graham Sims**

I recently found myself on 2GB Talkback, in response to Ben Fordham's interview that afternoon with the newly appointed NSW Minister for Education, Rob Stokes. Ben had been trying for some days to get the Minister to respond to the 'no handshakes' nonsense at Hurstville B.H. (Thank heavens the situation at Punchbowl B.H. had not yet hit the press.)

To say that the Minister's responses were inept would be to flatter them. Apart from his repeated references to 'MY Principals', he appeared inadequately briefed and determined above all else to say absolutely NOTHING substantive, helpful or educationally knowledgeable. Principals of public schools are NOT employed by, or directly accountable to the Minister of the day. They 'belong' to the Department of Education, and their ultimate boss is, or rather, WAS the Director-General of Education. This has been the case since the Public Instruction Act of 1880, with amendments.

For most of the 40 plus years in which I worked in Education, as teacher, Consultant, Principal, Inspector of Schools and Director of Schools, Principals had direct line accountability through a District Inspector, Secondary Inspectors, Staff Inspectors and Directors, and eventually through to the Director-General. They and their schools were regularly INSPECTED, to ensure that they met ALL requirements and standards, in terms of curriculum, assessment, conduct, teaching qualifications, resources, parental expectations etc.

The District Inspector, and ,in the case of high schools, subject Inspectors had a close, personal relationship with their schools and personnel, and the line accountability was so clear and unequivocal that aberrant leadership or school practices were picked up BEFORE they reached the stage of unacceptability so evident in the Punchbowl and Hurstville situations.

All this ceased when the Greiner/Metherell government came into being. I well recall the day when, as Inspectors, we were all unexpectedly summoned back from wherever we were, throughout NSW, to a meeting with the new Minister in Parliament House, where we were harangued, told we were useless, yesterday's people, and that 'the Inspectorate' was to be abolished, along with all our positions.

The Department was to be totally restructured, under the direction of a firm of management consultants, led by Brian Scott, father of Mark Scott, then adviser to the new Minister, later Chairman of the ABC, and now, ironically, the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education...the very department emasculated by his father. I still recall a meeting to which we were summoned, to be told by Brian Scott and his gang that THEY were now 'the new Department', and that if 'we' wanted to join the team, WE would have to change.

These were not arbitrary or whimsical initiatives. It was clear that Greiner and his acolyte (for a while), Terry Metherell, were determined to break the back of the largest and strongest government bureaucracy in NSW, the Department of Education. Despite the ironic fact that both Greiner and Metherell came to somewhat sticky ends themselves, they succeeded in this plan.

The traditional senior line structure of the Department was replaced by the so-called Senior Executive Service, involving Cluster Directors, Directors, etc. ALL of these were contracted positions, with contracts arbitrarily being for as little as one year. There was no guarantee of renewal and no automatic right of return to an equivalent, or even near-equivalent position. Within a very few years, the number of such senior positions began to be reduced, not once, but several times, inevitably leading to a collapse in morale, and the fact that schools had less and less guidance and supervision.

Even the position of Director-General, as the most experienced and senior educator in the state, was changed into a contracted, politically determined position under the so-called Chief Executive Service. Worse still, this absolutely key position of educational leadership appears to be a direct, Ministerial appointment, and does not even require a background in Education per se. Indeed, one such appointee, however worthy might have been his other talents, was, in his youth, a convicted drug-dealer. Because of this, as Director-General, he was technically not allowed to set foot in ANY of his schools.

Despite their great experience and years of dedication to public education, many of my colleagues never recovered from what they saw as the ignominy of the deliberate destruction of their self-worth. Others of us bounced back, but the last few years of our service somehow lacked the cohesiveness, camaraderie and structured support that were integral to the 'old' Department. Lest this sound like the bleatings of a disenchanted old boffin, let me add that there WERE aspects of the 'old' Department that needed to change. They were already beginning to do so, with merit-based promotion already having replaced promotion by seniority, with new positions recognising talent and particular expertise being introduced, and with a new, independent Board of Studies allowing a better and more professional relationship between government and non-government schools.

The emasculation of the Department of Education as the benchmark for school education, long characterised by wise, experienced, confident and credible leadership, is one of the more shameful and unnecessary political 'achievements' of the last 25 years or so. The significance of the Federation of Parents' and Citizens' Associations, in which leaders such as the late Totti Cohen worked so supportively with the Director-General and his officers, also appears lost...and more's the pity. Perhaps as a final irony, the already politicised position of Director-General has now been renamed, as SECRETARY of the Department of Education.

A cynic might well argue that, at least, a Director-General DIRECTS and LEADS. A Secretary MANAGES and ADMINISTERS. They are NOT the same!

**Graham Sims**



Eula Guthrie and Mary Furness

## **Members Say**

### **Richmond Stuart Manyweathers**

#### **A Personal Reflection**

The passing of my long time friend and colleague Richmond Stuart Manyweathers leaves a hole in the lives of many people and organisations. It is no surprise that he frequently stated that 'service is the rent we pay for living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time'. He was someone who made a difference! Service was in his DNA.

Richmond was born on November 9, 1936, the elder son of Richmond William and Beryl Manyweathers [nee Doust], prominent members of the Casino community where his father served on the Municipal Council as Alderman and Mayor and represented Casino as MLA and MLC in the NSW Parliament. In recognition of his outstanding service, he was awarded an MBE in 1976. To avoid confusion in family circles Richmond was referred to as Junior! His brother William [Bill] predeceased him in 2010. In recent years Richmond became aware that an older sibling, a sister, had died at birth.

Richmond was born into a family that epitomised service at a community and state level. His name reflected the river and valley that he and his parents loved. His ancestry took him back to one of the surgeons on the First Fleet. His love for the area brought him back to the green hills of Alstonville and the cottage at Lennox Head.

Our paths crossed when as youngsters we became acquainted on the beach at Lennox Head. His parents had a weekender in the hamlet that was Lennox in the 1940's, Seven Mile Beach as it was known in those years. After completing his Leaving Certificate at Casino High he matriculated to the University of New England. This was a fairly common path for students on the North Coast of NSW. Here he met his future wife Jeannette, a close friend of Dora, my wife to be, and our very special friendship was cemented. We were both appointed to the Commerce department of Mullumbimby High, and sat alongside each other in the staffroom for five years.

Richmond's teaching career included appointments to Narrandera, Griffith and Mullumbimby, and a Fullbright teacher exchange to Seattle in the USA in 1966. Following his return he was promoted to Commerce Master at Endeavour High School. His appointment as a Public Board Inspector in 1972 marked a transition into many roles at a senior leadership level that concluded with his retirement in 1994. As CEO Distance Education he had a wealth of stories as he visited far flung corners of the state and reflected on the brief given to him 'to work himself out of a job'. Success is evident in the decentralised model of delivery that emerged. It is also significant that after his retirement he was asked to come back to Head Office where change had meant corporate memory had been lost and the skills of someone who knew 'the system' were needed.

Richmond was a person of integrity and humility with a strong moral centre which enabled him to be a trusted mover and shaker as he set out to help others. He also had a great sense of humour and was known to enjoy the odd practical joke!

He was a talented communicator and a born organiser. Here his fine people skills gave him the edge. Wherever he went he participated enthusiastically in organisations such as Apex and Rotary, Historical Societies, the Fellowship of First Fleeters, Geography Teachers' Association and most recently the Association of Independent Retirees and Uniting Church. His contribution to ARISSEA has been enormous. The family could account for at least sixteen organisations benefitting from his involvement.

An avid student of military history, he held the commissioned rank of Captain in the CMF and was closely associated with the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion [Byron Scottish Regiment] with headquarters in Lismore. The Cadet unit which he commanded at Mullumbimby High was used as a vehicle to assist some of the less disciplined lads in the school. Success was evident in the huge respect they had for him then and was still evident when he attended recent school reunion days.

His concern for the wider world was seen in the prominent role played in Youth Exchange Programmes, Rotary initiatives to rid the world of poliomyelitis, service as a committee member of National Rotarians Against Malaria and since 1998, a pivotal part in the organisation and delivery of the National Rotary Bowelscan Project. Through the Ranfurly Project, Richmond and Jeannette were active in sorting books which were sent to schools in PNG, Manus Island and the Pacific Islands. His contribution to the public good was recognised with the award of an OAM in 2013. Rotary recognitions included Paul Harris Fellow, Australian Rotary Health-Gold Companion, Rotary International "Service Above Self" Award and Rotary Centennial Community Volunteer Award. At one point he personally raised \$1.4m for a project which paid for mosquito nets to be sent to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

Richmond's knowledge and enthusiasm for Geography and travel equipped him to act as coordinator on numerous trips arranged through Odyssey. Together with Jeannette he walked England West to East and explored the length and breadth of Australia and made it to the base camp at Mount Everest.

Richmond had a great commitment to his family and wife Jeannette. He encouraged Jeannette to pursue her studies in family history and with a PhD in children's literature she fitted naturally as a consultant to school librarians.

It was open house at the Manyweathers especially at Lennox Head where fish and chips, games, walks to the headland and conversation were enjoyed. Richmond had an extensive network of friends and contacts nationally and internationally.

His final days were not easy. With the irreversible nature of his pancreatic cancer he faced his short future with great courage and chose to have palliative care at home. His concern was for Jeannette and her care. In the period before the disease intensified he spent much time ensuring that 'his house was in order' and here he was wonderfully supported by his daughters Margaret and Jennifer, their husbands Paul and Tom and all the grandchildren. This was a time for tears and laughter in an atmosphere saturated with love.

Jeannette is presently a resident in Jarman a division of Uniting Care Caroon Village at Goonellabah in Lismore.

A private funeral service conducted by Richmond's son in law, Rev Paul Sheely, was held in Lismore on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June and a cremation followed. A Thanksgiving Service celebrating his life took place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June at the Alstonville Uniting Church. An overflow congregation was accommodated in the church hall. Our condolences go to Jeannette, Margaret, Jennifer and their families.

**Howard Brockington**



Robyn Furness and Graham Mosely

### **Members Say**

#### **Vale Richmond Manyweathers**

Richmond retired in August 1994 after a 36 year career as a teacher, Inspector of Schools and Senior Educational Administrator in the NSW Department of Education. In 1997 Richmond was elected Vice President of the Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators (ARISSEA).

He became President in 1998 and then Treasurer in 1999. He was re-elected to this position each year for the next 18 years. He took on the Treasurer's role at a time when the implementation of *Schools Renewal* and subsequent administrative changes in the Department were impacting on the careers and lives of senior educational administrators. Attending Association meetings, regular newsletters and being able to actively contribute to the related projects continued to be significant contributions to the welfare of members.

On an annual basis Richmond managed membership renewals. He told me that in his first year in the job he and Monica Miland sat down and handwrote the renewal notices that were mailed to members. In later years Secretary, Brian Ford transposed the information from Richmond's hand written records into a spreadsheet and renewal notices were computer generated.

From 1985 onwards Richmond and Jeannette made very significant personal contributions to keeping our organisation alive and to the delivery of services to members. Ours was not the only organisation that Richmond supported and during the Thanksgiving Service, earlier this month, Richmond's daughters indicated that at "last count" he was actively involved in supporting 16 community organisations".

In an email I received at the end of April Richmond reflecting on his 23 years in ARISSEA and the IRSEA wrote: "It is always easy working with friends and I have enjoyed the experience and the constant contact with great people."

**Geoff Walton**

### **Members Say**

The following is an edited version of the presentation given by Bill Cameron at Fenton Sharpe's Service. **Ed.**

#### **Dr Fenton George Sharpe AM**

Throughout his long and distinguished career in education, Fenton Sharpe has been a steadfast supporter of Public Education and has, in the many positions he has held, always endeavoured to promote its values and goals. Fenton believed that ideally Public Education is the means by which children of differing backgrounds and abilities could be given the opportunity for a quality education which would meet their needs and aspirations. He further believed that when children from diverse backgrounds learn and play together, they grow in tolerance of, and respect for, each other's differences; develop a strong moral sense; and the ethical standards necessary to participate in, and contribute to, our multicultural society.

Fenton's own education began in the Public System. His primary education began in 1939 at Croydon Park and subsequently at Drummoyne Public. His secondary education was at Fort Street Boys school from which he graduated in 1951, having been awarded a scholarship to Sydney Teachers College. In 1953 he received his

first teaching appointment to Rozelle Junior Tech. A lifelong student, Fenton continued over his teaching career to further his academic qualifications. In 1959 he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of New England and in 1962, while studying for a Bachelor of Letters, he took up a Fulbright teacher exchange scholarship to the United States and gained experience of the American school system, teaching in Nebraska at the Alma Public School. Fenton continued with his studies, completing a Master of Educational Administration in 1973 at UNE and culminating in 1976 with a PhD in Educational Administration from the University of Oregon.

Fenton's abilities as a teacher and potential administrator were also being recognised within the Department of Education and he received a number of career promotions. In 1964 he was promoted to Young High School as English/History Master and in 1970 was promoted to Inspector of Schools for Secondary English/History. Several promotions followed within the Head Office of the Department. In 1979 he became a Staff Inspector of the Policy Support Unit and in 1981 was promoted to Director of Studies. 1984 saw Fenton promoted to Assistant Director General (Development) and in 1985 he was made Deputy Director General.

In 1988 the then Minister of Education and Youth Affairs, Dr Terry Metherell appointed Fenton as Director-General of Education. Shortly after Dr Metherell established two reviews of the Department of Education. One on School Curriculum led by Sir John Carrick and the other a Management Review of all aspects of Departmental administration under the direction of Dr Brian Scott. The findings of these Reviews and their recommendations were presented to the Minister in March 1990.

Most people are unaware of the scope of changes recommended. I was a member of Dr Scott's Review team and his report contained 370 recommendations. In broad terms they were intended to change the Department from a highly centralised bureaucratic structure to a more devolved system where schools had more direct control over staffing, finances and resources. The new approach also gave parents a more direct participation in their local school.

These structural changes had a major impact on staff, particularly at the Head Office level where the number of positions was greatly reduced. For example the position of Inspector of Schools was discontinued and quality control became a more localised function. Fenton now had responsibility for the greatest structural and functional change to the education system since the Public Instruction Act of 1880. A mammoth task not only of establishing new structures and roles, but of dealing with the concerns of individuals and groups who felt unfairly disadvantaged by, or disagreed with, the changes.

Over the next two years Fenton guided the Department of School Education in establishing the new structures and new ways of doing things and when he retired in November, 1991 the bulk of the recommendations were being implemented across the

education system. Fenton's retirement didn't last long as in 1992 he was invited to be a Visiting Professor at the UNSW. This role, as well as teaching and supervision in the university's educational administration program, also involved him in educational consultancies at government level in Australia and several overseas countries.

In 1997, Fenton retired from full time work at UNSW and in 1998 was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours being made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to education, particularly to administration in secondary and tertiary education.

I have known Fenton as a colleague and friend for some forty years. I have always found him to be a man of integrity – scrupulously honest in his dealings with others; principled in his decisions and actions; helpful and supportive of his colleagues; and hardworking, enthusiastic and committed in all the positions he has held.

I know his passing is mourned by his wide circle of former colleagues in education and on their behalf extend our sympathy and condolences to Fenton's wife, Helen, and all his family.

**Dr William G. Cameron**



Bill Cameron and Chris Carroll

**Address changes  
(Changes shown in Bold)**

HADDON, Donald  
**5/117 Rutherford Ave**  
**KELLYVILLE N.S.W. 2155**  
haddondon@hotmail.com

**Deaths**

1.5.2017 **FROST A (Arthur)**  
P.O. Box 242, CASTLE HILL, N.S.W. 2154

2.6.2017 **MANYWEATHERS R (Richmond)**  
15 Panorama Drive, ALSTONVILLE, N.S.W. 2477

17.6.2017 **SHARPE F (Fenton)**  
14 Valda Street, WEST PENNANT HILLS N.S.W. 2125

18.6.2017 **SINCLAIR A (Alan)**  
Room 110 Paling Court Carrington, 90 Werombi Road,  
GRASSMERE, N.S.W. 2570

**I need new material for the October Newsletter.  
What interests you? What have you done?  
Chances are that it will be of interest  
to other members.  
Accompanying photos are most welcome.  
Preferably as uncompressed jpg email attachments.(straight from your camera)**

**Copy deadline: 15th October 2017**

**Peter Robinson,  
Newsletter Editor,  
3 Corunna Ave,  
North Rocks NSW 2151  
peterrobinson7@gmail.com**