



Newsletter

April 2018

Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators Inc



[From the President](#)

Kerrie Ikin, President IRSEA 2017-18

With my year as President coming to an end, it seems timely for a little reflection. I recently spent a few hours looking back over past Newsletters—some dating back to 2003—which had been filed away by my late husband, Ron, I think in his first year of (yet again) ‘failed’ retirement.

What struck me was the recurrence of issues that I read about through these Newsletters. Various Presidents have reminded us of the great wealth of educational knowledge that exists within our Institute and how this could

be tapped into, reminding and urging us to contribute to Departmental consultation processes.

For example, Vincent Delany in the November 2004 Newsletter urged members to respond to Andrew Cappie-Wood's call for contributions to Excellence and Innovation. Helen Campbell in the November 2006 Newsletter pondered whether, 'we surmise what we may do', when educational issues are raised in media headlines and encouraged members to contribute to future newsletters with their views on topical educational issues.

The opportunity to contribute our knowledge and expertise is again with us. In my recent meeting with Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, I mentioned that one initiative that had been agreed was for the Department to tap into our members' expertise from time to time. Murat acknowledged that our members often have a great depth of knowledge and expertise that could be of great value but was often overlooked.

I have undertaken to compile a list of members with their areas of interest and expertise, who would be willing to be contacted by the Department to provide input and be consulted when opportunities arise. If you would be willing to be on such a list, could you send me or The Secretary your name, preferred contact details (phone, email) and your areas of expertise.

Another recurring theme that appeared in nearly every April issue was a reminder of the upcoming AGM—'we are always interested in volunteers for roles on the executive', 'please consider attending our AGM'—and so on.

My call this year will be no exception. The AGM is to be held on Friday 4 May and I encourage as many of you as possible to attend. To say that we are always interested in encouraging members to consider a role on the executive is somewhat of an understatement. IRSEA cannot exist without the support of its members and without some members undertaking the voluntary executive roles.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as President and look forward to continuing as the Immediate Past President in the coming 12 months. My

role, however, has been miniscule in comparison with the other executive members—those who have provided many, many years of service to IRSEA, those who have been instrumental in upgrading the administrative functions of IRSEA, and those who can always be relied upon to provide wise counsel. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with you all.

Finally, however, to conclude my reflections, the issues that I read about in these past Newsletters were not always about education or indeed ARISSEA now IRSEA. For example, in the April 2003 issue, Margaret Hopkins commented that a number of members had been unable to attend the previous luncheon because of bushfires. Her words:

‘the suffering of so many people reminds us of the harshness of our country and that we can only hope that those who suffered losses are recovering from their trauma’,
ring so true today. As I sit in front of the TV news, listening to the reports of the devastating bushfires in Victoria and on the South Coast of NSW, my thoughts go out to all those caught up in these latest bushfire catastrophes. Let us hope that none of our members are affected but, even more importantly, that no lives are lost.

Kerrie Ikin

Secretary's Report

Some things to think about as we move
towards the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

The Institute currently has a membership of 176. Based on the information recorded in the membership database 56% of our members retired prior to 1998, 38% retired between 1998 and 2008 and 6% retired between 2009 and 2018.

The responsibilities, composition and membership of the IRSEA committee are clearly set out in Part 3 of the IRSEA Constitution February 2016. The members of the 2017-2018 Executive

Committee met in May and September 2017 and February and March 2018.

The 2017-2018 Executive and Committee Members elected at the Annual General Meeting in May 2017 are Kerrie Ikin President, Barry Laing Vice President, Alan Laughlin Immediate Past President, Geoff Walton Secretary and Welfare Officer, Ray Gillies Treasurer, Peter Robinson Newsletter Editor, John Allsopp Luncheon Co-ordinator and Stewart House Contact, Allan Mills Membership Officer, George Green, Vincent Delany, John Edwards, Alan Rice and Brian Davies are Committee Members.

During the year the committee held business meetings in May and September 2017 and February and March 2018 to plan the delivery of the program of activities and services to Institute members that has included:

The publication and distribution of four editions of our Newsletter (in July and November 2017 and February and April 2018). Largely through Peter Robinson's continuing dedication and enthusiasm, 55 members receive their Newsletter by email and 125 receive a printed copy through Australia Post. In addition, we mail printed copies to the widows and widowers of 35 deceased members.

John Allsopp has coordinated the luncheon meetings held in August and December 2017 and planned for May 4, 2018. This will be our 2018 Annual General Meeting. On average, 30 members and guests have attended each of the meetings, held at 99 on York Function Centre.

Based on responses from members we intend to continue the practice of having an invited guest speaker at the August 2018 luncheon. (Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education was guest speaker at our August 2017 luncheon meeting. A report of his address was published in the November 2017 Newsletter.)

Treasurer, Ray Gillies has consolidated our Commonwealth Bank Accounts into a single account in the name of the Institute. Ray

and Allan Mills, Membership Officer, continue to collaborated to ensure that the information entered in our Membership Database is kept up-to-date. Ray has indicated that he will be mailing Membership Renewal Notices to members before the end of March.

As Welfare Officer, over the last 12 months I have continued to use broadcast emails (to all members who have advised us of their active email address) as a mechanism for sharing information about the death of Institute members and non-member colleagues. I appreciate the timely prompts I have received from colleagues and family members.

Elections for the 2018-2019 Executive Committee

Ray Gillies has taken on the task of receiving Nominations for positions on the 2018-2019 Executive Committee.

The current Vice-President is not available to become the President for 2018-19. Our Constitution provides in Clause 15.8 that, in this event, the next President is to be elected at the annual general meeting of the Institute. In this case, the current President may stand for re-election at the AGM for one additional term.

Our current President Kerrie Ikin is committed to a number of overseas work engagements and is unable to stand for election as President for 2018-19. As a consequence, nominations are sought for both President and Vice President.

I am unable to devote the time necessary for the Secretary role in 2018-19. I will be seeking to remain on the Committee and continue the role of Welfare Officer and, of course, provide assistance to the incoming Secretary. Consequently, nominations are sought for Secretary.

Our long serving Newsletter Editor, Peter Robinson, has advised the Committee that he will undertake the Editor role for 2018-19 only on the condition that an Assistant Editor is appointed at the May election to work with Peter and gradually take over the Editor's

role and become Newsletter Editor in 2019-20. It is critical that this new interim post be filled in May.

Geoff Walton
Ph 02 9639 6847
Mob. 0418 241 406



Ray Gillies with Ian and Cate Vacchini

Friends of Stewart House (FOSH).

Background:

As many would know, the Friends of Stewart House (FOSH), was set up as a support organisation to provide both material and financial help to Stewart House.

IRSEA has a very strong link with FOSH and there are many members in both organisations. Each year a number of social activities are organised to provide both an enjoyable opportunity to get together with old friends and also raise a little money. A summary of these for the next few months is

attached for your consideration and all IRSEA members and friends are welcome.

Membership of FOSH is \$15 (the bulk of which goes to SH) and information and an application can be found on the Stewart House Web Site.

Activities for 2018, April to July.

April 18, (Thursday). Visit to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walk.

The Memorial Walk is at Rhodes Park, off Killoola St Concord West, start time: 10 am.

Cost is a \$10 donation to Stewart House, paid on the day. Lunch is available at the Kokoda Cafe following the guided tour.

Please contact Ray Gentles at rjgentles@gmail.com or mobile 0407 710 795 by April 6.

(Ray's dad, a Kokoda veteran, will be one of the guides).

April 19, (Thursday). Training Day for School Visitors.

Members of FOSH, ARPP (Association of Retired Primary Principals) and IRSEA are invited to be involved in a school visit program similar to that provided by Stewart House School Liaison Officers.

An initial training program for visitors will be held at Stewart House on Thursday 19 April. The session will be held from 10.00am until 2.30pm.

Please advise Tom Croker mtcroker@bigpond.net.au or phone on 0409 926 826 by the 12 April 2018 of your interest in attending the session.

May 4, Friday, Joint ARPP/ FOSH Golf Day.

The FOSH/ARPP Golf Day for 2018 will be held on Friday 4th May at Massey Park Golf Course, Tom Croker is the FOSH contact mtcroker@bigpond.net.au or by phone on 0409 926 826

May 11, (Friday). Stewart House Annual Presentation Ceremony and Open Day.

This will be held at Stewart House. The ceremony will acknowledge the support and assistance from many organisations. The Chairman will present his report on the work of Stewart House across 2018. Contact Person,

Murray O'Donnell (Chief Operating Officer) Stewart House Marketing Manager, Phone No 9938 3100.

May 24 (Thursday) and June 22 (Friday)- The French Connection and Charles Dickens and Australia.

These activities will be in a seminar/ presentation format by Brian Powyer. The first will be on our "almost" French heritage in a review of early explorers. The second seminar will be on the nine characters from Dickens Novels who have been connected to Australia (usually transported).

Venue: Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club. Limit of 20. Cost: \$15 to Stewart House.

Contact: Contact: Brian Powyer bpowyer@optusnet.com.au Mb: 04041181170

July 26, (Thursday). Lunch at Doyle's Restaurant on the beach at Watson's Bay.

This popular event has been organised this year for Thursday July 26 commencing at 12.30pm. This will be a special birthday celebration for FOSH (80 years young). Contact for bookings - Judy Brown at

d_jbrown@bigpond.net.au (note underscore) or mobile 0438 731 550 OR Marketa Bird at dgmbird@bigpond.com or mobile 0417 275 393.

(More events will be published in our next newsletter.)

Alan Laughlin (Hon Sec, FOSH).

I found the following article in my 'FOR USE ?' folder, but with no ID showing who had sent it to me, or why. So I left it in the folder, for later consideration.

It seemed to probably be American in origin because of some of the spelling and grammar, that I have corrected. (In spite of my computer continually trying to change it back again).

After a number of recent news announcements which may affect our finances and banking arrangements, that have caused me to reconsider my position with bank accounts, Super accounts and pension payments, etc, I stumbled across this article and immediately realised that I needed to share it with you, my readers.

Shown below, is a letter that was sent to a bank by an 86 year old woman. The bank manager thought it amusing enough to have it published in the New York Times.

Peter Robinson, Editor.

Dear Sir:

I am writing to thank you for bouncing my cheque with which I endeavoured to pay my plumber last month.

By my calculations, three nanoseconds must have elapsed between his presenting the cheque and the arrival in my account of the funds needed to honour it.

I refer, of course, to the automatic monthly deposit of my entire pension, an arrangement which, I admit, has been in place for only eight years. You are to be commended for seizing that brief window of opportunity, and also for debiting my account \$30 by way of penalty for the inconvenience caused to your bank.

My thankfulness springs from the manner in which this incident has caused me to rethink my errant financial ways. I noticed that whereas I personally answer your telephone calls and letters, when I try to contact you, I am confronted by the impersonal, overcharging, pre-recorded, faceless entity which your bank has become.

From now on, I, like you, choose only to deal with a flesh-and-blood person.

My mortgage and loan repayments will therefore and hereafter no longer be automatic, but will arrive at your bank, by cheque,

addressed personally and confidentially to an employee at your bank whom you must nominate. Be aware that it is an OFFENCE under the Postal Act for any other person to open such an envelope.

Please find attached an: Application Contact which I require your chosen employee to complete.

I am sorry it runs to eight pages, but in order that I know as much about him or her as your bank knows about me, there is no alternative.

Please note that all copies of his or her medical history must be countersigned by a Notary Public, and the mandatory details of his/her financial situation (income, debts, assets and liabilities) must be accompanied by documented proof.

In due course, at MY convenience, I will issue your employee with a PIN number which he/she must quote in dealings with me. I regret that it cannot be shorter than 28 digits but, again, I have modelled it on the number of button presses required of me to access my account balance on your phone bank service.

As they say, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Let me level the playing field even further.

When you call me, please press buttons as follows:

IMMEDIATELY AFTER DIALLING,
PRESS THE STAR (*) BUTTON FOR ENGLISH

- #1. To make an appointment to see me
- #2. To query a missing payment.
- #3. To transfer the call to my living room in case I am there.
- #4 To transfer the call to my bedroom in case I am sleeping.
- #5. To transfer the call to my toilet in case I am attending to nature.
- #6. To transfer the call to my mobile phone if I am not at home.
- #7. To leave a message on my computer, a password to access my computer is required.

Password will be communicated to you at a later date to that
Authorized Contact mentioned earlier.

#8. To return to the main menu and to listen to options #1 through #10

#9. To make a general complaint or inquiry.

The contact will then be put on hold, pending the attention of my automated answering service.

#10. This is a second reminder to press* for English.

While this may, on occasion, involve a lengthy wait, uplifting music will play for the duration of the call.

Regrettably, but again following your example, I must also levy an establishment fee to cover the setting up of this new arrangement.

May I wish you a happy, if ever so slightly less prosperous, New Year?

Your Humble Client



Allan Mills and Ritchie Stevenson



John Edwards, Alan Laughlin and Jack Baseley

NO FEAR

Graham Sims

Over my 70 years of education, as pupil, student, teacher and bureaucrat, I don't think I actually FEARED any of my teachers, colleagues or bosses. A precious few I stood in awe of; most I liked or respected; some I didn't, nor they me. I guess most of them worked out which category I'd deemed them to be in.

Wait a tick. I've told a fib. There were three people I came very close to fearing. Unsurprisingly, two were women...and only one a man. My encounters with them varied significantly in time, manner and circumstance, but they each merit their place in these geriatric reminiscences.

In my Dip.Ed. year, 1962, my French and German 'method' groups observed 'demonstration lessons' at certain high schools, where, by some sort of divine inspiration, we were supposed to observe how to give a good / excellent / perfect...or, occasionally, bloody awful lesson.

One memorable day, we were to observe two German lessons at Fort St Girls' High School, then on its beautiful site at Observatory Hill, and the sister school of my alma mater, Fort St Boys High, at Petersham.

Our lecturer had given us a clear instruction and warning...that the Headmistress, (oh, yes!) was a holy terror, who had a 'thing' about people being 'late', and that, if we WERE late...ie if the lesson had already begun, we were to WAIT outside the classroom and seamlessly slip into the room for the second lesson.

Things were destined not to work so seamlessly for young Sims. In those far-off days, I drove a tiny, Messerschmitt 3 wheeler, which, perversely, decided to break down, on the highway, just before the turn-off to the school on Observatory Hill. After fellow motorists had stopped laughing, they pushed the little 'Schmitt' into the school grounds, and I rolled ignominiously into a parking area.

By then, I KNEW I was going to be late for lesson 1, so I decided to find a chair in the vestibule, quietly and anonymously wait for lesson 2, and then do my 'seamless slipping in' as instructed. Such was not to be.

The door of an office suddenly opened and a diminutive, white-haired lady emerged and coldly demanded, 'Who are YOU, young man, and what are you doing here?'

'It's quite all right', I naively replied. 'I'm here for the demonstration lessons. I'm late for lesson 1, and apparently the Principal has a fit if you're late, so I'm waiting for lesson 2.'

'Oh, indeed? Well, I'M the Headmistress. This is MY school! You'll do no such thing. Come this way at once.' And she shot off down the corridor at a rate of knots, with me galloping along behind her, spluttering, 'but...but...but', to no avail.

When we reached a certain classroom, she flung open the door, hurled me into the room like a rag-doll, and announced, to a bewildered teacher, class, my lecturer and group. 'THIS young man...is LATE!' She then left the room, shutting the door vigorously. My 'slipping in' had been far from 'seamless', and I don't think I'd ever been so embarrassed in my life.

I later apologised profusely to the teacher and my lecturer, who both, somehow, seemed to understand, and I began saying prayers to any

listening deity NOT to appoint me to Fort St Girls' High the next year, sister school or not.

Although this terrifying little woman came into my life for only a few minutes, and I can't even remember her name, such was her impact on me. (Somebody up there must have liked me, as in 1963 I was appointed to Sydney Boys' High, where I was to spend several wonderful years.)

There was, however, soon to be a name that was to fill me with terror, long before I met the fearsome figure behind it. The name was Harold Jones, one of the Panel of Languages Inspectors, at least one or two of whom I was destined to encounter as I was inspected, initially to receive my Teachers Certificate, then for List 1, List 2, List 3, and, if the gods really smiled on me, List 4.

Of course, to a young, rookie teacher at a selective high school, ANY inspection filled me with dread, as, at least initially, I doubted my skills and capacity to teach French or German to my classes of up to 48 students, all with IQ's of 130+.

The thought of facing Harold Jones raised my apprehension to another level, as he'd been known to reduce teachers far more experienced and competent than me, to gibbering incoherence, such were his scholarship and standards. Worse still, he was a German perfectionist, and, despite my German background, I always doubted my fluency in this language, compared to French.

My old friend, Murphy and his Law determined that the Inspector designated to inspect me for my Certificate, towards the end of my first year of teaching was...you guessed it...Harold Jones. I almost decided to chuck it in and join the army. However, at the last minute, Mr Jones was required elsewhere and I was inspected, (successfully and 'couthly') by Wally Wilson.

A year or so later, my Languages Master, Alan Hodge, encouraged me to 'go for List 1', as a necessary stepping stone towards List 2 and a Subject Master's position somewhere.

Soon, the happy (?) news came through that my allocated Inspector was to be...Mr Harold Jones! This time, joining the French Foreign Legion seemed preferable, but Alan Hodge reassured me (?) by saying, 'Ah, Simsie, he's not THAT bad, and your German is now passable.'

It beggars belief, I know, but two or three days before my inspection, news came through that, once again, Mr Jones was suddenly unavailable. (The brief and crazy thought did occur to me that, perhaps, HE was afraid of ME...but that seemed hardly likely.)

I was, instead, inspected by the avuncular Arch McGeorge, a Latin specialist, who knew little French and no German ,so we had a lovely time...and I received List 1, with the terrifying H.Jones and I still to clap eyes on each other. (We were not to do so until MANY years later, under very different circumstances.)

It looked much brighter still in 1968, when, to my amazement, I was seconded to the RAAF School in Penang, Malaysia, where I taught French, Indonesian, Malay and English...and had a ball! RAAF School was a Central School, staffed by ex-pats from NSW and Victoria, and a few of my Primary colleagues decided to 'go for' List2,(Primary) while on secondment. In for a penny, in for a pound, I decided to be inspected for List 2, (Secondary).

There were howls of protest that this couldn't be done at RAAF School, but, somehow, I prevailed and the delightful Vic Armstrong came to Penang, had a wonderful time and inspected me for List 2, confirming his recommendation after returning to NSW and having discussions with the Languages Panel. (The complications and ructions initially caused are the topic of another story.)

With List 2 under my belt, and my tour of duty in Malaysia coming to an end, I applied for a position as Languages Master in a high school in Sydney, and waited, and waited, and waited.

I had expressed interest in a co-ed or girls high in northern or inner-western Sydney, but the only school offered ,by telegram from Australia, was on the western side of the Blue Mountains.

Eventually, and only just in time, I discovered I'd supposedly been offered Strathfield Girls High School, but the RAAF had never delivered the telegram.

I accepted with alacrity, and looked forward to this exciting new phase of my career. Had I known what was in store, I might have thought again. Although it's now 45 years since I walked into Strathfield Girls' High for the first time and politely introduced myself to the Principal (Headmistress!), Miss Marion Anderson, her words of 'welcome' still ring in my ears. 'Ah, Mr Sims! You're going to find a great deal of staff and student antagonism towards you in this school. You have forced your predecessor, Mr Hayes, to have to leave this fine school, in which he was very popular! Good morning!'

Having been given this effusive but incomprehensible 'welcome', I slunk out with my tail between my legs and rang first the District Inspector and then Head Office Staffing, to find out what the !@#\$ she'd been talking about. The school's position of Modern Languages & Classics Master had been listed as vacant. I'd applied for it and was duly appointed. Who the !@#\$ was 'Mr Hayes' and how had I displaced him?

Eventually, I learnt that a John Hayes ,(whom I'd never met), had been ACTING in the Master's position, but was ineligible for it on a substantive basis. My appointment had meant that he'd moved on to another school. (I didn't meet this John Hayes till years later. He'd understood the situation perfectly well, bore me no malice ...and was probably relieved to get out of the school.)

However, for my dastardly crimes of a) 'displacing him, and b) being a man, anyway, I don't think the redoubtable Miss A. ever forgave me. On the other hand, I NEVER encountered even a soupçon of the supposed 'staff and student antagonism' towards me.

I soon discovered that if Miss A. had ever read anything about 'democracy', she must have rejected it as a passing fad. Strathfield Girls High was HER school. She ran it HER way, and woe betide anyone, least of all a MAN, who dared to interfere.

I guess that, in those days, there weren't many men in ANY girls' school. No man had been appointed Principal of an all-girls high school, and the few men

on the staff at Strathfield Girls had either decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and kept out of Maid Marion's way, or had taken the opportunity...ANY opportunity, to leave.

Given that it was my first promotions position and that I loved my job, I didn't want to leave, but, along with the few other men, I discovered that 'armed ,(or disarmed) neutrality' was about the best I could hope for, in terms of any relationship with this prickly, intolerant woman who ran the show.

One (of many) examples comes to mind. Although there were no individually marked or allocated parking spaces within the school grounds ,there was a general parking area beside one of the buildings, where we all, including Miss A, parked our cars.

Through some sort of 'divine right', ONE of these spaces was 'Reserved for the Headmistress'. The only problem was that no-one, except her, knew which space this was...and, worse still, its precise location varied from day to day...according to the weather, the season, the phase of the moon, the angle of the sun, the tides on the Limpopo...God alone knew.

Poor old Hector Smart, the General Assistant, who (also) lived in fear of the Iron Maiden, would come into the staffroom of a morning, wailing, 'Someone's parked in Miss Anderson's spot again, and she's on the warpath.'

Things came to a memorable head one morning, when, one by one, we each discovered that the Oxford St gate to the school was locked, effectively preventing ANY of us from parking within the school grounds...except for Miss A's Morris, which stood inside, in splendid isolation.

Despite our pleas, whinges and complaints, Hector was adamant that the Headmistress had instructed him to lock us all out, as 'someone had parked in her spot again'. Grumbling in our collective cowardice, we all parked out in the street, conceding to Miss A. another (pointless) victory...or so we thought.

Into the story there then entered a character who, apart from his other claims, should go down in history as the (only) man to triumph over the Iron

Maiden. It needs to be said that it was 'HSC' time, and Furniture Branch was delivering desks, chairs and so on, for the forthcoming examinations in the school hall.

Working for Furniture Branch, and driving their large truck, was a man named Ron Hanson. Now, folks, Ron was built like a professional wrestler...precisely because he WAS one, a regular at both Leichhardt and Sydney Stadiums, which I used to frequent. He was built like the proverbial brick outhouse, and stood no nonsense from anyone, in or outside the ring.

Having gone to drive his considerable load of furniture into the school, he was justifiably upset to find the gates locked, so, knowing the General Assistant, he went over and asked him to open them. 'Oh ,no! I can't do that,' said poor old Hector. 'Miss Anderson ordered me to lock everyone out.' 'Who the !@#\$ is Miss Anderson, and what !@#\$ game does she think she's playing? Where's her office?' demanded Ron.

Now doubly terrified, Hector directed him to her office, in which Miss A. sat, as usual, deep in paperwork. Suddenly, her doorway was darkened by the stocky figure of Ron Hanson, hands on hips and glowering at her.

'Who are YOU? Get out of my office!' proclaimed Miss A., a technique that invariably worked...but not this time, as Ron's burly figure stormed across the floor, loomed over her desk, and he uttered the immortal words. 'Now listen, don't go getting menopausal with me, ducky. GIVE me the keys to the gates, NOW!'...and, amazingly, she did. A tiny chink had appeared in Boadicea's hitherto immaculate armour.

Unfortunately, we on the staff lacked the temerity to capitalise on this, and continued to be cowed by her, although, one day, I THINK I had a mini-victory, of sorts. I had, as usual, just lost another argument with her, and ,as I was leaving her office, muttering in my ineptitude, she uttered her parting thrust, 'The trouble with you, Mr Sims, is that you're a MAN!'

Before I could stop myself, I retorted, with a risky smile, 'Why, Miss Anderson, I didn't think you'd ever noticed!' I'd love to have seen her reaction, but I was already halfway down the corridor.

Despite, or perhaps because of our misery at her hands, the Deputy, Geoff Bartlett, and I decided to apply for inspection for List 4 and 3 respectively. Geoff was determined to be the youngest high school Principal in the state, and I'd been encouraged by one of my mentors, Jim Docking, to seek a Deputy's position.

Jim, by the way, lived nearby, and he and I edited the Department's Languages Bulletin. Like many other mere males, Jim, despite his status as an Inspector of Schools, was so intimidated by Miss A. that he used to stand outside my office, just outside the school, and throw pebbles at my window, to attract my attention.

When I asked him why he didn't simply come into the school, he replied, 'Oh, God, no, Simsie. Depending on what mood she's in, if she sees me, I'll either get the rounds of the kitchen, or she'll tell me all her latest tales of woe, and I'll never get away from her.'

Having applied for our inspections, both Geoff and I knew that the Principal's written report on each of us would play a critical part in determining whether we'd be Geoff, a gentle soul, was unfailingly loyal to Miss A. and, despite his own misgivings, in my view, he had nothing to worry about.

On the score of my Principal's support, I, on the other hand, was deep in the mire. Apart from my usual 'dust-ups' with Miss A, I had just had a rip-snorter, which made all the others pale into insignificance.

Having lost yet another argument with her, and sensing how futile my seeking promotion, in such circumstances, seemed to be, I backed out of her office with these words...(after 40 years, they remain burned into my brain and soul)... 'I'm sorry, Miss Anderson, for six years, I have tried to form a meaningful relationship with you, but you are, without doubt, the most abrasive and unapproachable personality I have ever met.'

For some dopey reason, I then waited for her reply...which I can also quote verbatim: 'Well, Mr Sims, that may very well be, but I am your Principal. Now get out!' And I did.

As it happened, on the first day of our joint inspections by Brian Phillips, (Languages Inspector), who was to become a dear friend in later years, and Fred Cronk (Industrial Arts Inspector), Miss Anderson was unexpectedly absent, ill, meaning that Geoff was suddenly Acting Principal ,and Simsie Acting Deputy...and, to cap things off, a girl 'fell' from a school bus, just as the day began.

It was a funny old way to start an inspection. Geoff and I called the two Inspectors into 'his' (ie Miss A's) office and said, 'Look, we're going to be flat out (a euphemism) today. If you like, you can just follow us around as we go, but you'll have to take pot-luck. We've just got to keep the school running.'

To their great credit, Brian and Fred took us at our word...and actually seemed to enjoy themselves, galloping around after us.

I don't actually remember much about the inspection itself, apart from Fred Cronk, armed with a school exercise book which he'd apparently had for years, asking me,' Now, tell me ,Graham, how intimately familiar are you with the new course in Technics?'

Taken aback by the question, I replied,' Well, given that I've been in an all-girls school for the last six years, I'm NOT familiar with it at all. BUT, if I HAD to be familiar with it, I'd read up about it.' There was quite a long pause, during which I thought, 'Well, that's another nail in my coffin,' and then Fred said,' That's a fine answer,' and he wrote it...or something, in his exercise book.

The inspection as such apparently over, there remained the dreaded matter of Miss Anderson's reports on each of us. Geoff was worried, as he so much wanted to be 'the youngest Principal'. I was resigned to spending the rest of my career as the world's oldest Languages Master ...and we were BOTH wrong! We were both successful!

Geoff's report was supportive of his work as Deputy, and he went on to be Principal of Dover Heights High, a political hot potato, where he had a miserable time for a while. Miss A's report on ME was so supportive that my

first reactions were that it was a joke...but she didn't do jokes, or that she'd written it for someone else...but there WASN'T anyone else.

It said, inter alia, that, as Principal, she valued all my contributions within the school, over and above my supervision and expansion of Languages, and that she would be 'proud to have Mr Sims as her Deputy.'

So discombobulated was I that I bumbled into her office, spluttering my disbelief and appreciation, given our tempestuous relationship over the years. Her response, with the tiniest ghost of a smile, was, 'Mr Sims, I thought you of all people would have known I can separate personal feelings from professional ones.' I was, uniquely, speechless.

As fate would have it, I did not stay much longer at Strathfield Girls High, as I was 'headhunted' to be the inaugural Languages Consultant at Head Office, in the Directorate of Studies. I never returned to the classroom.

Despite my official appointment being from the beginning of the 1976 school year, the Iron Maiden stood on her dignity and refused to release me until I was 'replaced by someone with parallel experience and qualifications.'

Given my experience and qualifications in French, German, English, Indonesian and Malay, this was a bit of a challenge for Staffing, and I was not released until May 1977. As usual, Miss A. had the final say.

In what was to prove the last conversation I ever had with her, she called me 'Graham' for the first and only time, wished me well, assured me 'there was nothing personal', and that she had her school's best interests at heart...and she discreetly gave me a glazed coffee-mug, which is still my favourite, these many years later.

To round off these reminiscences, I have to bring the feared figure of Harold Jones back into the picture. Many years after my teaching days, in one of my several roles at the Board of Studies, I was nominally responsible for two retired educators who, between them, proofed and vetted all the School Certificate and HSC examination papers. One was the redoubtable Nevis Henniker, the other was the equally redoubtable HAROLD JONES.

Over a liquid lunch at The Old Commodore pub at McMahon's Point one day, I ventured to admit to Harold, who, by then, was a much mellowed, Rumpolian figure, how terrified I'd been of him all those years ago.

So surprised was he by my admission that, his glass of Guinness poised in mid-air, he exclaimed, 'But, Graham, my dear boy, how could ANYONE have been terrified of ME? I was but a gentle pussy-cat.' I did detect a slight glint in his eye as he said this, but it may have been the Guinness talking.

We enjoyed a brief, but delightful friendship, until Harold went off to dazzle the heavenly hosts with his Teutonic erudition. I wonder whether they were terrified of him ,too.

And Marion Anderson? Well, she retired not all that long after I'd left her school, although I have no idea of any causal link between the two events. I think I visited the school only once, afterwards, for a reunion, and she was not present.

I knew that she lived at Gladesville, where she cared for her aged mother, but, as the years went by, I assumed that their lives had run their respective courses.

Imagine my surprise when, only a few years ago, my ex-wife, Helen Anderson, who'd also been an Inspector of Schools and Cluster Director, told me that she'd encountered the venerable Miss Anderson, (they are distantly related), at a Burwood Girls High reunion, where, in days of yore, Miss A. had been the Science Mistress.

With a giggle, Helen ,(now transmogrified into the Rev. Helenna Anderson), told me that when she mentioned my name, Miss A's eyes blazed and she said, 'Graham Sims? Yes, I remember him. He had an affair with Judy Stanton from Social Science, and EVERYONE in the school knew, except me!'

Helen(na) was able to respond, 'Well, Marion, I don't really think it was an affair. Graham & Judy have been married for 40 years. As she walked away, she could hear her muttering, 'Yes, but EVERYONE knew, except me!!'

**Have you contributed any material for our Newsletter
in the last 2 or 3 years?
If not don't you think that this would be a
very good time to do so, NOW Copy deadline 15th June**

Lunch Booking slip 4th May 2018 Meeting

Please complete and return with your cheque by **20th April** 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 May 2018.

Please provide _____ vegetarian meal(s).

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone No. _____

Please print your surname here. _____

Make your cheque payable to the ***Institute of Retired Senior Education Administrators*** and cross it
'Not negotiable'.

Money cannot be refunded for cancellations made after **20th April**

IRSEA 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

We, the undersigned, being financial members of the Institute, nominate:

Nominee

As an ordinary committee member AND/OR for the position of (please specify):

Position

Nominator:

Seconder

Nominee:

I acknowledge and accept this nomination

PLEASE RETURN TO **RAY GILLIES** prior to the
election to be conducted at the AGM on 4 May 2018 (rcgillies@yahoo.com.au or 79 Albyn Road, Strathfield 2135)
