



Newsletter

July 2018

Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators Inc

SPECIAL INVITATION

IRSEA AUGUST MEETING

**LUNCH AND TOUR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION'S NEW PREMISES**

Friday 24th August 2018

Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, has invited IRSEA members to inspect the Department's new facilities followed by a light lunch. The August meeting of IRSEA will also be held.

The new facilities are at 105 Philip Street, Parramatta, close to transport.

An information package will be forwarded to those who will be attending, including a map, information on transport options and details of where to meet. It is expected that we will start at around 11 am.

There will be no cost but a voluntary donation to Stewart House of \$5 would be appreciated.

This meeting will replace the scheduled 3rd August luncheon meeting.

Booking slip 24th August 2018 Meeting

Please complete and return by **10th August** to:

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

I will be attending the Visit and Tour of the new Department of Education Headquarters,
at 105 Philip Street, Parramatta on 24th August 2018.

A short IRSEA meeting will also be held on the day.

A light lunch will be provided: Special dietary requirements:-----

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone No. _____

Please print your surname here. _____

Please list any guests who may attend with you: _____

This function has no charge but a collection (\$5) will be taken on the day for Stewart House.



Newsletter

July 2018

Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators Inc
From the President



Alan Laughlin, President IRSEA 2018-19

I would like to express my appreciation to the members of IRSEA, for the honour you have shown to me in electing me as the President of IRSEA for the 2018-19 year. My election is probably a bit unusual as I was President in 2016-17. I would like to give members a bit of background.

Normally our Vice President would move through to the President's position. This year Barry Laing has conveyed his apologies and has not been able to do this for a number of personal reasons. In addition, our President, Kerry Ikin, has been highly committed to work and been prevented from attending the AGM. As IPP I chaired the AGM and with no other nominations, accepted the position of President for this year. Kerry believes her work commitments will not be as great in future years and, with this predicted capacity to devote more time, she would like to give the presidency another run in 2019/20. For that reason Kerry was elected as Vice President.

A number of other changes have occurred as long standing office holders are seeking a change. Most importantly Geoff Walton has stood down as secretary and we are fortunate to have Brian Davies come forward as our new secretary with ongoing support from Geoff. Geoff will also continue in the position of welfare officer.

Ray Gillies, having done a great job as treasurer in 2017/18 has been confirmed as our treasurer for the coming year. He will also fill the statutory position of Public Officer. Peter Robinson is also seeking to move on from Newsletter Editor. He has generously agreed to continue in the short term while we resolve this position and Geoff is also assisting. It is wonderful that Alan Mills will continue as Membership Officer and John Allsopp as Luncheon Co-Ordinator. We also have an experienced and energetic committee in Vincent Delany, Alan Rice and Chris Carroll. So, although this is a time of change for IRSEA, we have a first rate team and the continuity to provide confidence for the future.

It is always difficult to single out individuals, but I would like to mention a few people for special mention. Firstly our out-going secretary, Geoff Walton. Geoff has held this critical position for some six years. He has been the keeper of records and history, but more importantly he has monitored needs and responded rapidly, providing structure and materials for all meetings and has been the glue that has held the show together. Geoff, on behalf of all members of IRSEA, thank you very much and thank you for your willingness to now act as a guide and mentor to all of us.

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, arrange for it to be printed, folded, packaged and posted as well as produce the email version and arrange its distribution, is a most challenging task. Peter your work over the last fourteen years has been outstanding and we appreciate your willingness to continue for the short term. Thank you very much.

This coming year we will continue to pursue our major objective, which 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.

Our luncheons and our Newsletter will continue to be the major platforms to promote this collegiality and connection. Membership remains a continuing challenge and we must continue to work to gain new members through personal promotion and networking. Stewart house continues to benefit from our contributions. I would draw your attention to our Newsletter which in each edition has carried a summary of social activities for the Friends of Stewart House. Through your personal donations, our luncheons and other fund raising activities and contributions, IRSEA has recently been able to forward a cheque for \$2,700 to Stewart House.

On the broader picture, there is much happening in education. At the national level we have the implementation of Gonski 2 with the inevitable debate from special interest groups re proposed funding changes. NAPLAN has received broad criticism and it is likely changes will occur. The MYSchools website has also come in for its share of criticism. At the state level a review of the primary curriculum by Geoff Master has been announced. Locally the old Bridge Street headquarters has been closed and the Department has now moved to Parramatta. I have written a short article in this Newsletter about this move. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to have more in the Newsletter re some of these matters at a later date.

Unfortunately an organisation of our kind will experience sad loss. Recently we have heard of the sad loss of Frank Fisher (31 May) and earlier in the year, Graham Drayton (8 Feb). We offer our condolences to their families and acknowledge their contributions, through education, to making this a better world. We also have a number of members experiencing ill health, we wish them well. Thank you very much and all the best.

Alan Laughlin



Tony Re and Alan Laughlin

At the 65th Annual General Meeting at the York Function and Conference Centre the election of committee members and office bearers for 2018-2019 resulted in the following:

Committee Position	Elected for 2018-2019
President	Alan Laughlin
Immediate Past President	Kerrie Ikin
Vice President	Kerrie Ikin
Secretary	Brian Davies
Treasurer	Ray Gillies
Newsletter Editor	Referred to the Executive Committee*
Membership Officer	Allan Mills
Luncheon Coordinator	John Allsopp
Welfare Coordinator	Geoff Walton
Stewart House Contact	John Allsopp
Public Officer	Ray Gillies
Committee member	Alan Rice
Committee member	Chris Carroll
Committee member	Vincent Delany

*Peter Robinson has been the newsletter editor for 14 years and would like to assist a new editor to take over. Alan Laughlin thanked Peter for his marvellous contribution over so many years.

Secretary's Report

I would like to thank the members at the Annual General Meeting in May this year for electing me to the position of Secretary. I would also like to thank the outgoing Secretary, Geoff Walton, for helping me to move into the position. It is important to note that Geoff will continue in the role of Welfare Coordinator.

Alan Laughlin thanked Kerrie for all her work this year as President.

In Geoff Walton's absence his report was tabled. The report noted that the Executive Committee met four times during the year in May 2017, September 2017, February 2018 and March 2018. The work of the Committee included:

- Closure of the *Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools* account with the balance transferred into the *Institute of Retired Senior Educational Administrators* account
- Application for an Australian Business Number
- Survey of members for their opinions about the current program of institute activities and services
- Meeting with the Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance.

The report thanked John Allsopp, Cate and Ian Vacchini for their work on organising the luncheon meetings. John had successfully negotiated with the Function Manager of *99 on York* to maintain the cost of lunches at 2017 prices. Peter Robinson was thanked for all his work in the production and distribution of four editions of the newsletter each year – both electronic and mailed versions. Peter and his wife Wendy were thanked for hosting the packing and dispatching of the newsletters for posting.



Vincent Delany and Peter Robinson

In his report Geoff recognised the valued opportunity to work with Presidents Deanna Hoermann/Alan Rice, Sid Smith, Ray Gillies, Chris Carroll, Alan Laughlin and Kerrie Ikin and also acknowledged the support that he has received from John Allsopp, Ian Vacchini, Peter Robinson, Alan Mills, Ray Gillies, Vince Delany and the rest of the Executive Committee.

As Welfare Coordinator, Geoff reported that he continued to draw on and value the support of members who provide relevant information and prompt, timely action.

The membership data base and John Dugdale's *Register of Inspectors of Schools in the State of New South Wales 1854 to 1990* is also used. A brief letter is written on behalf of the Institute to the family of a member that makes reference to the comments and observations from colleagues.

Alan Laughlin thanked Geoff for his enormous contribution as Secretary since 2012.

Brian Davies

Membership Officer Report

In his report Allan Mills, the Membership Officer, drew attention to the importance of members providing information about changed contact details so that accurate records could be maintained. He is grateful for the information provided which allows continuation of contact with members.

Alan also thanked Geoff Walton for his efforts in distributing the information.

Alan reported that during the year subscriptions have been separated from the membership data and transferred to the Treasurer but the database still records the membership status of members.

Membership stands at 175 and comprises 41 ladies and 134 men.

General Business

John Allsopp raised the issue of holding luncheons at the *99 York Function and Conference Centre*. The Centre had communicated that IRSEA had to guarantee the number of meals (between 30 and 40) or we would have to pay a new base cost of \$200. The meal itself has increased from \$39 in the past to \$45 per head and we expect to pay the \$200 additional cost for today's meeting. There is some indication of a fall in attendance.

Options include increasing the luncheon payments or use accumulated funds. The Deputy Secretary School Operations and Performance had offered to host a luncheon at the Department's new Parramatta premises. Options to be investigated with the matter for consideration at the next Executive Committee meeting.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

21 May 2018

The Executive Committee Meeting discussed luncheon meetings for August and December 2018 and for 2019.

In relation to the August 2018 luncheon meeting, the option of taking up the offer from Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance to host a luncheon at the Department's new premises in Parramatta was discussed, with the possibility of a tour instead of a guest speaker.

Concerns were expressed that August was usually our least attended meeting and that parking could be an issue.

The venue for future luncheons was discussed. The *99 York Function and Conference Centre* now requires a minimum number of 40 or a standard room charge of around \$220 will be charged. The importance of the accessibility of this venue to our members was raised.

Other possible venues for investigation were raised. It was decided to hold the December 2018 meetings at the *99 York Function and Conference Centre* and consider increasing the amount charged from \$45 per head to \$50. There is to be further discussions with the Centre.

The transition to a new editor of the newsletter was considered.



Colin and Sarah MacDonald

Treasurer's Report

The IRSEA is in a reasonable financial position for an association of our size. At the end of our 2017/18 financial year, we had \$3,802.25 in our operating account and a \$15,000 term deposit maturing 19 February 2020.

In 2017/18, our receipts (\$7,879.92) were members' subscriptions (19.8%), donations to Stewart House (26.7%), luncheon meetings (48.5%) and bank interest (5%).

Expenditure (\$9,443.14) was on the newsletters (15.3%), donations to Stewart House (43.7%), luncheon meetings (36.5%) and running costs (4.5%) – meeting venue, Fair Trading fees, printing and postage.

The higher total expenditure is due to the Stewart House donation including funds received in 2016/17.

Annual subscription renewal notices were mailed to members in April 2018. So far in 2018/19, we have received \$1,740 in subscriptions, \$2,555 in donations to Stewart House and \$945 for the May AGM luncheon.

We have sent a donation of \$3,000 to Stewart House and paid a total of \$1,618.05 for the AGM luncheon, a newsletter and running costs.

I would appreciate receiving annual subscriptions from members who are yet to pay in 2018/19.

Ray Gillies

Friends of Stewart House

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.

Coming Activities for 2018, August to October.

August 25, (Saturday). Rosehill Gardens Race Day.

Stewart House will be part of the Thompson Reuter's Charity Race Day to be held at Rosehill Race Course. This will be in the Grand Pavilion Ballroom and includes a three course meal, drinks, live band, race guide and commentary. Cost \$210 per head.

Contact people: Tom Croker, mtcroker@bigpond.net.au or mobile 0409 926 826 or Kerryanne Knox, kknox@bigpond.com or mobile or Stewart House.

September 1, (Saturday) Wine Tasting and Movie Night, Stewart House

A very special wine tasting evening at Stewart House looking out to sea from those magnificent balconies. This will be a celebration of 80 years of FOSH. The event will include: Tour of Stewart House for those interested, Free Wine tasting from a Mudgee Winery, Dinner and Movie. The theatre has a capacity of 45 people. Cost: TBA. Contact Cecilia Wilson: windswept2@bigpond.com

October 2, (Tuesday). High Tea.

High Tea will be on Tuesday, October 2 at 10.30am (sharp) – 12.30pm This will be at the Beehive Cafe, Shop 4/ 1A Wongala Crescent, Beecroft. The cost is \$35 and includes high tea with unlimited tea / coffee, a \$10 donation to Friends of Stewart House and a lucky door ticket. RSVP: 18th September

Marketa Bird 0417275393 dgmbird@bigpond.com or Judy Brown 0438731550 or d_jbrown@bigpond.net.au (note underscore)

October 14 (Sunday) Race Day at Tamworth.

This will be a fundraiser for FOSH on Sunday 14 October 2018 at Tamworth Racecourse. This will be a similar event to the very successful Newcastle Race Day held in 2017.

Enquiries can be made to: Kerry Knox: kknox@bigpond.com

Alan Laughlin (Hon Sec, FOSH)

Closure of Bridge Street Building.

Alan Laughlin.

Many members of IRSEA would have worked in the Bridge Street building of the Department of Education. The Department has now moved on to new premises at Parramatta and Bridge Street closed its doors on 25 May 2018. It has been leased (103 years) to Singaporean developer *Pontiac* for \$35m and will be turned into a Five Star Hotel.

This heritage listed Edwardian Style building was designed by colonial Architect George McRae and built in two stages, the first completed in 1912 and the second stage in 1938. It features Sydney Sandstone, metal framed windows and copper clad skylights. It forms a natural link with a number of other imposing sandstone buildings in the area, in particular the adjacent (ex) Lands Department building.

All of the Directors General over the past century were based there and these included Peter Board and Sir Harold Wyndham.



These Directors General oversaw the establishment, then transformation, of Public Education in NSW.

The building has a permanent conservation order on it and is listed on the Register of the National Estate. The building was temporarily vacated in 1995 and refurbished over the following years to provide a more modern office space.

The Building contained the William Wilkins Gallery on Level 7 which was a venue for exhibitions of works in painting, drawing, photo-media etc. In more recent time this has provided exhibition space for HSC major works. Chosen pieces will be on display in the new premises, as will the Honour Boards.

The decision to close the building and move to Parramatta was announced by the Government in November 2016. Part of the thinking was to make this valuable space more available to the public (public roof top bar and retail area) and to have a

modern Department Headquarters in a more appropriate setting. Many IRSEA members would probably have mixed feelings about this decision given their long standing connections and history.

**Why are we ignoring the most likely cause
for the NAPLAN test results not improving?**

Peg Craddock

Despite great expectations, NAPLAN results have “flatlined, according to the experts and standards have not improved significantly since NAPLAN testing was introduced 10 years ago.

Some authorities have even argued that the NAPLAN testing standards have been dumbed down and the underlying problem is worse than generally appreciated. When considered in conjunction with the comparatively poor performance of our children internationally, in the “Progress in International Reading Literacy Study”(PIRLS) and the “trends in International Mathematics and Science Study”, the NAPLAN results raise serious concerns about the level of educational standards and possibly intellectual capital of current and future generations of Australians.

Will Australian society and our economy struggle to compete in the burgeoning Asia Pacific region in the years to come. So what is the underlying cause of the problem uncovered by the NAPLAN testing? Every year we hear the same old opinions and commentaries trotted out as the reasons for the lack of improvement with little or no evidence to support them.

First in the firing line , according to the Co-chair of the National Curriculum Review, are the teachers; accused of being poorly trained and poorly mentored and incapable of producing the results we want to see.

Second, the curriculum is said to be not academically based or rigorous enough.

Third, school facilities are substandard with class sizes being too large and classrooms being too small and too noisy. Finally in addition to several other theories, parents are also asked to take the blame for the poor performance of their offspring, but not being told how to improve their children’s performance.

So it goes on year after year without much change, leaving some of us who are not involved in school education to ask is there some other yet unidentified cause?

Are we overlooking a more fundamental, underlying problem potentially affecting most or all of our children? Could it be that environmental factors interacting

adversely with early biological brain development processes are preventing the brains of our children fully expressing their genetic potential?

One possible cause that stands out for which we have sound, experimental scientific evidence, is dietary iodine deficiency impairing maternal and foetal thyroid function. Yes, something as simple as that.

The World Health Organisation says that environmental iodine deficiency is the commonest cause of impaired brain development resulting in the loss of IQ. There is abundant scientific evidence from studies taken in developing countries that even mild iodine deficiency occurring during pregnancy can cause impaired brain function in the children of these mothers.

While these intellectual deficits cannot be reversed, they can be made worse by iodine deficiency persisting during childhood when the childhood brain continues to develop and mature. Population studies of women and children in Australia have shown mild iodine deficiency has been widespread for several decades creating the conditions for adverse effects on the developing brains of children born in this country.

In recently supported studies from the Menzies Institute in Hobart, their researchers found the NAPLAN results of nine year-old children born to mildly iodine deficient mothers were around 10% poorer in spelling and grammar and general English literacy performance, compared with children born to mothers who were not iodine deficient during pregnancy.

This is not an isolated finding, as similar studies recently performed in the UK have documented lower IQ levels in children of mothers who were mildly iodine deficient during pregnancy. These adverse outcomes highlight the crucial role of an adequate iodine intake in mothers and babies to ensure adequate thyroid function for optimal brain development.

In 2009, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments responded to the health threats posed through the re-emergence of iodine deficiency in Australia by mandating that all salt used in the baking of bread be iodised, The National Health and Medical Research Council acknowledged that this initiative, whilst a positive step, would not be enough to correct iodine deficiency in pregnant women in Australia so it went on to recommend iodine supplementation for pregnant women.

Unfortunately, iodine supplementation rates are only around 50% for pregnant women in this country, so we can calculate that theoretically 150,000 pregnancies are at risk annually in not getting enough iodine, putting the brains of these babies at risk of development disorders. We have recent data, from studies on young

Aboriginal women in the Northern Territory that the problem is most marked in those living in remote regions. Nothing was done about it.

Until we correct this public health problem it is unlikely that we will see progress in educational performance in Australian children and we will continue to speculate on why NAPLAN test results are not improving and why we are falling behind our Asian neighbours. Most importantly, we are denying these children their basic human rights to develop their brains to their full genetic potential.

It is a national disgrace that needs urgent corrective action.

Peg has attached the following paper by Prof. Eastman.

Professor C J Eastman AM MD
Clinical Professor of Medicine,
Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney,
Principal Medical Advisor,
The Australian Thyroid Foundation

A relatively little-recognised problem (by the general public, and, regrettably, by some general practitioners,) is that of I.D.D. Iodine Deficiency Disorders. A trace element, iodine serves as a building block for the thyroid hormones, which are essential for every organ in the body. Mild to moderate deficiency can result in children having learning difficulties, and can affect hearing and motor skills. The health of the thyroid gland is of paramount importance to this and future generations. Many areas in the world have iodine deficient soils, resulting in insufficient iodine uptake in the human body.

The scourge of iodine deficiency in the life cycle of humans is a major cause of severe physical, neurological and intellectual problems. These include miscarriage, stillbirth, perinatal morbidity, cretinism, decreased intelligence and physical problems such as deafness, muscle and bone weakness, and eye damage. As the affected child grows development is slow and families are often faced with almost insurmountable problems.

Not all health problems in newborns are caused by iodine deficiency, but for the millions of babies born with any of the problems above due to the mother having insufficient iodine uptake, a simple preventative measure is to have an adequate amount of this trace element in her diet, before, and during pregnancy, and during lactation.

The right to fulfil the genetic potential inherited from parents, to have the physical and intellectual capacity to develop normally, ensuring the ability to benefit from education and to live life as the individual decides, contributing to the community, is

not just a health and welfare issue, but an issue of human rights and justice. It is also a socio-economic issue of fundamental importance to the world community.

This is the belief of Professor Creswell Eastman and has underpinned his efforts in Australia, China and Tibet, and in countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, to ensure that I.D.D is eradicated, enabling children to reach their full potential, able to take advantage of opportunities available to them and to contribute to the welfare of their communities.

Through Professor Eastman's diplomacy and ability to articulate the nature of the problems and their solutions to governments and health authorities in Tibet, China, Thailand, Vanuatu and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region he has brought about very significant change.



Peggy Craddock

He has been able to get permission for his team and himself to work with local doctors in these countries to effectively tackle the scourge. The team's work has been supported by The World Health Organisation and the U.N. His programs are well documented and have brought major improvements in health and wellbeing to the children and their families and communities. The professional and humanitarian efforts of the Professor and his team have greatly enhanced Australia's standing in China, Tibet and other countries in the Asia – Pacific Region.

Professor Eastman is often referred to as “the man who saved a million brains” and his medical colleagues in Tibet and China have told him that since the Iodine Replacement Program has become well established, no new cases of cretinism have been found in Tibet.

He and his colleagues are alarmed that research in Australia has shown that the IDD problem has emerged in Australia, since the use of iodine in the cleaning of milking machines, cows' udders, and milk churns, and the consumption of iodised salt has greatly declined. Whilst continuing the program outlined above, he is working to have such a program established here.

The threat posed by undiagnosed iodine deficiency on the health and welfare of future generations, as well as on the economic and social structures of the community, is one that needs to be addressed.

I believe that Professor Eastman is a worthy candidate for the awarding of the Sydney Peace Prize for his outstanding work which has shown how a simple remedy such as providing adequate iodine intake has allowed millions of people to lead healthy productive lives.

The work has been challenging and arduous, and sometimes dangerous to the health of both him and his team. On one occasion he sent his team to safety and stayed to complete the work scheduled for that visit, which almost cost him his life, but he has persevered and continues to do so. I recommend him as a very worthy Australian for consideration by the committee.

Peggy Craddock
CPACS librarian and Council member

The Naming of Schools

Cliff Cowdroy

Many schools take their name from the local suburb or area, others from the name of the street in which they are located. A few from the names of famous people and some from more obscure origins.

NSW schools are mostly designated by the town within which they were founded, whereas in Victoria the naming of government schools was merely by an impersonal number e.g. State School 2104.

In NSW multiple Schools in a regional town or city were designated more by street than the locational name. There were exceptions with some intriguing names such as Alma perpetuating a Crimean War battle and St Ethels (now closed) at Maitland, possibly a carry-over from the transition from the denominational schools in the 1880's.

We have Plunkett Street school named after the Irish born NSW Attorney General, Bert Oldfield Public School - Australian wicket keeper, Robert Townson Schools - colonial agricultural scientist, Henry Kendall High - poet, James Meehan High - explorer and planner and some named after other prominent citizens. These include educationalists - Peter Board High (demolished) and Wyndham College but what of those named after women?

In 2014, the Marie Bashir School was opened at Strathfield as a tribute to our illustrious Governor of NSW. I am thinking also of Sarah Redfern High at Minto, the first and only other woman to have a school named after her. The name sprang out at me from reading a Stewart House Newsletter recently.

Who was she? Why was she so commemorated?

I hope to answer these questions, but first we need to refresh our memories as to the process of naming of NSW Government Schools.

Under Section 27 (2) of the Education Act 1990, Ministerial approval is required after the Secretary has consulted with the Geographic Names Board and being acceptable to the local school and civic communities. The political dimension of Government gazetting the name, hopefully after full consultation with the parent and civic bodies, may have been a process in operation much earlier than the 1990 Act.

However, in the case of Sarah Redfern it seems that the community wished to honour a feisty woman, possibly as a role model for students at Minto as well as being an historical personage.

Minto formed part of an estate owned by her husband, convict, Dr William Redfern, a naval surgeon, implicated in the mutiny of the *Nore*.

There would perhaps have been an expectation that the school should have been named after him. He had the common and healing touch and was greatly sought after by all, including the governor and Mrs Macquarie.

So who was Sarah and why is her name perpetuated, rather than that of her husband?

Sarah was born on 23rd April 1796. Her mother, also Sarah, had married Edward Spencer Wills, late of Broadcourt Manor, Long Acre in Middlesex. His father was reputed to be the illegitimate son of a noble duke.

Wills, a young (17 years old) compositor/ printer by trade, was arrested for highway robbery under arms. It appeared to be a lark except that coach passengers were threatened by weapons.

With his accomplice he was sentenced to death but this was commuted to transportation for life to NSW after petitions 'from higher up' were considered by the Judge. After a time in the deplorable prison hulk *Stanisklaus*, he was bound for Botany Bay.

Not only did Wills sail on the transport *Hillsborough* in 1798 but in an unusual occurrence, his wife and daughter Sarah, aged 2, were paying cabin passengers, along with five other women.

The *Hillsborough* was known as the death ship losing one third of the convicts. Apart from the 'loathsome accommodation', the convicts suffered from inadequate, poor quality food, lack of hygiene and stormy conditions.

Upon arrival at Port Jackson, a full inquiry was launched which eventually changed the way ship owners and their ship masters were remunerated.

Edward Wills was indentured as an assistant to the government printer almost upon arrival in 1799. He was released on a 'Ticket-of Leave' then pardoned. He purchased property in North George Street, just near Cadman's Cottage.

The Wills family became successful entrepreneurial merchants. Sarah and her younger sister Eliza, a 'currency lass', (my great, great grandmother) were noted for their beauty and deportment attracting the interest of Dr William Redfern, ex Norfolk Island and officers of the 73rd regiment.

Redfern and the Major of Brigade, Henry Antill, an American, became brothers-in-law, the one a successful property owner and medical practitioner, the other the continuing Aide-de-Camp to his great compatriot, General Lachlan Macquarie, with whom he had served in India.

They, with the Governor, battled the "Exclusivists" who would not fraternise with convicts or emancipists in terms of social contact or trade. The two sisters lived relatively close by in the 1820's, Eliza at Antill's property 'Jarvisfield' near the village, he founded as Picton and Sarah at Campbell Field, Minto.

Her brother, Tom Wills, occupied and purchased Varro-Ville the holding of the late Dr. Robert Townson at Lower Minto. Hence three schools in the area have links to Sarah Redfern.

In spite of Macquarie's glowing reference for Redfern to become chief colonial surgeon of the colony, it was vetoed by London. Redfern, in hostility, sailed for Scotland to pursue further medical studies in Edinburgh, follow his business

interests and supervise the education of their son, leaving Sarah to manage his properties.

Under Sarah's management, the Minto farms were successful and she was highly esteemed in the area. Both Eliza & Sarah were respectful of the convicts and Major Antill, as magistrate was always sparing the lash to good effect and used benevolent styles of punishment as a backlash against the flogging parson, Samuel Marsden and the continued harsh treatment of felons.(1)

Dr Redfern while in his home city Edinburgh, monitored their son's education at a grammar school and Sarah set out to join him. She arrived just a few days too late, as he had an apoplectic fit in a street and died (1832).

My Great, Great Grandfather, Major Antill, was the executor of the estate and much land, with goods and chattels, was sold off including a farm at Cleveland St. Sydney. (now Redfern).

Back in NSW again, Sarah remarried to a Mr James Alexander, a wealthy shipping merchant of Sydney & the UK. Sarah returned with him to England and settled at Roke Manor in Hampshire, latterly the home of the Plessey Group.

Alexander & Gilchrist became known as Gilchrist, Watt & Sanderson, shipping agents of the main ports on the Australian coast. My father worked for the firm for 50 years, closing the doors after 150 years of operation as aeroplane travel took over from long distance sea passages.

Sarah had a daughter who married the MP for Bridgewater, a Dr Vanderbyl. Her daughter Mary was painted by Winterhalter and her portrait hung in the Royal Academy. Still within the family are medical books of Redfern and his portrait, the only known one in existence of which the State library was granted a photocopy.

So, in summary, what admirable traits could be admired in Sarah Redfern? Basically she was a survivor, brought up with the taint of convictism, married a convict, overcame the permeating prejudice of being the daughter of a lag. She had an abiding empathy with convicts and poor farming folk in the Minto and the Cow Pasture area subjected to primitive conditions.

She became the chatelaine of an English Country Estate, a far cry from the horror of a convict transport and the degradations of a primitive, untamed outpost of Britain.

A role model for students? Yes, in terms of survival, adaptability, compassion and empathy for the under-dog. She was also a leading emancipist(2), being in the circle of the Governor and Mrs Macquarie, much to the annoyance and indeed the

fury of the free society exclusivists. By the school, she has been recognised as the leading lady of the area.

Sarah died at Roke Manor in 1875, a far cry from the privations of her early upbringing. Her brother and nephew had a caring connection to indigenous people; however, the one was massacred with 18 of his party, west of Rockhampton. His son sent to Rugby, later introduced Aussie Rules to both aboriginal and colonials of Victoria. He also formed, coached and developed the first Aboriginal cricket team which ultimately played in Britain.(3)

(1) For Antill's moderation in punishment see "The Fatal Shore" a work by Robert Hughes.

(2) A play "The Emancipists" was written about the two Wills sisters and Redfern.

(3) see "Tom Wills His Spectacular Rise & Tragic Fall" by Dr Greg de Moore & Cliff Cowdroy 2018

PS: In recent discussion with Eula Guthrie, she revealed that she was instrumental in the selection of Sarah Redfern's name, as part of her policy as Director Met. South West Region, along with the nominations of other prominent early colonial citizens, for the naming of schools in the Region.

Deaths

21.10.2017 Rankin W.C. (Clyde)
60 Mooramba Street, GOSFORD NSW 2250

28.01.2018 Gallagher P.A. (Paul)
2 Peach Grove, LAURIETON NSW 2443

16.02,2018 McLean J.W. (Jack)
Room 210 Brian King Gardens, Hilliard Drive, CASTLE HILL NSW 2154

01.06.2018 Fisher F.G. (Frank)
3/90 Beleura Hill Road, MORNINGTON Vic 3931

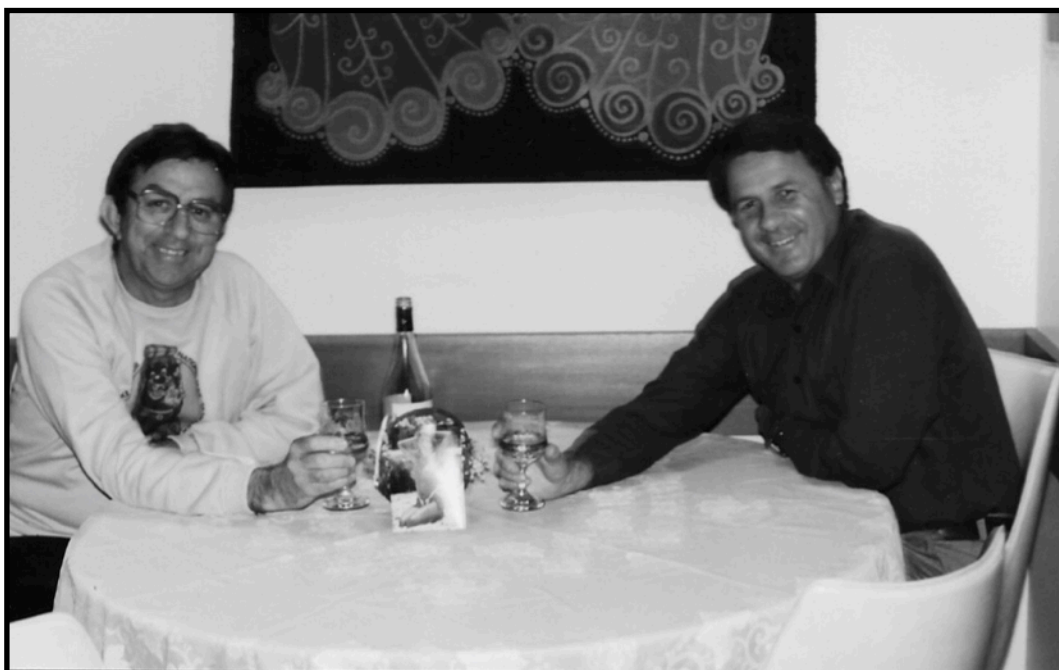
TRIBUTE FOR FRANK FISHER

David Maher

Frank and I were not only professionally at one, we were the closest of personal friends. Our working relationship was a perfect one and, at a personal level, we enjoyed each other's company in the office, on the road and in our respective homes. In retirement, and despite our geographical separation, courtesy of regular e-mails, we maintained uninterrupted contact.

Little wonder because we shared the same moral and social values; identical educational ideologies; an indelible respect for family and home life; the worth of travel as a mechanism for enjoyment and knowledge; a belief in humanity and a love of all things ornithological, botanical and cultural. Truly, it was an unblemished and valued relationship ever since he reported for duty as my Assistant Regional Director on the 21st January, 1983. Together, and supported by a great team of staff members, we believed, unashamedly, that we built a most effective educational Region that produced teacher satisfaction and meritorious results at all levels of participation.

Frank was an integral leader in the delivery of the outcomes.



David Maher and Frank Fisher

In summary, Frank Grantham Fisher was a splendid human being, one whose personal and professional integrity pervaded all that he said and did and one who exuded educational perspicacity, judgement and worth.

He was indeed a treasured friend.

Have you contributed any material for our Newsletter in the last 2 or 3 years?

If not, don't you think that NOW would be a very good time to do so?

COPY DEADLINE 15th October, 2018

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