



February 2012

Newsletter

Association of Retired Inspectors of Schools and Senior Educational Administrators

From the President



Welcome to a New Year and to the hopes we have that it will be a year of peace and happiness. I look forward to the fellowship we share to-gether through ARISSEA.

The December luncheon was a great success and being well attended, enabled us to catch up on the activities of many of our members. Some members live quite a distance from Sydney or were overseas at the time of the meeting so we bring you a special greeting. You are each an important part of our community of retired senior educators and I hope you will keep in touch with colleagues using the pages of the Newsletter to share your experiences.

Whilst some had very ambitious plans for travel and family commitments in January, we played the role of grandparents with time in Sydney and Dubbo. First at the cricket. I spent two days in great expectation that I would see centuries by Ponting and Tendulkar but only the former obliged. Instead I saw one of the truly great innings by Michael Clark who has demonstrated very quickly since his appointment as captain of the Australian team, excellent leadership skills as well as batting ability. The hype of the media promised a great season of competitive cricket but the Indian team have played rather poorly. In fact they are performing at the same level that I witnessed in England just over four months ago when they were thrashed by what seemed an invincible English team. I should then have read the signs of a failing team.

We spent a week in Dubbo for its first real week of summer this season and felt the blast of the afternoon heat and occasional fierce thunderstorm. Moving between vacation care, scootering and skateboarding as well as time in the cricket nets and visits to local parks, we did not have time to enjoy the new cultural experiences that Dubbo is offering to visitors. To all those who have played the grandparent role over the past month I dare say that you will also welcome the new school year.

The various commitments we undertake have their personal rewards as well as benefits to relationships and understandings within families. And in a practical way we were also seeking out new shoes, uniforms, books and school necessities. A new year brings hope for students that they will continue to enjoy their schooling and friends, and do well in their learning.

January has education off to a good start. Positions have been offered to study education at Universities and there is evidence that the teaching profession is the desire of many HSC

Graduates and mature age students as enrolments in programs in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education and Secondary Education, in both rural and city institutions, have attracted a full complement. This is vital for the future but our past efforts in schools and the school system have helped build the confidence and foundation that supports the education sector.

This year has affected retired groups by creating a context of financial uncertainty. We must all feel some discomfort in the situation. The financial strife in Europe is affecting our investments and there is concern about possible unemployment. We have general concerns about the willingness of China to maintain the level of its expenditure on exporting our minerals. But we are advised that the position of our super funds is not dire although it may mean that “not many of us are going to be taking our cornflakes with champagne.”

For the current year our commitment remains to support the services provided through Stewart House to needy students in NSW public schools. Our support through donations, volunteering and project assistance is complemented by the unique arrangements for funding whereby donations are provided by teachers, students, Parents & Citizens groups, educational organisations and from the Department itself. I commend George Green for his efforts to expand support through building links with Rotary and other service clubs.

A major issue for this year will be school funding with proposals soon to be released from the School Funding Review. On the 20 January Federal Schools Minister Garrett indicated that the awaited Gonski School Funding Review will be released by the government along with its initial response in the next eight weeks. The minister repeated his promise that no schools, public or private, would lose a dollar of funding per student under the reforms, giving his “rock-solid commitment.” He emphasized that the days of the old public versus private argument are over as far as his government is concerned, and that Labor has significantly increased federal spending on both public and private schools. The Review will focus attention on resources for education to meet the learning needs of students and will, no doubt, create debate throughout the education sectors.

A reminder that the next luncheon will occur on Friday 4 May and details will follow. The Committee will meet on Monday 19 March at 50 Disraeli Road, Winston Hills at 2 pm. It is our intention to progress the secondary panels project and to convey advice about it to the Committee and to contributors.

Brian Ford has returned home and is making progress in his recovery. He is grateful for the messages of goodwill he has received and expressed his appreciation for the support provided by organisations catering for people needing special assistance. I expect to see him on a motorised wheelchair in the Winston Hills Mall. Medical procedures and hospitalisation continue to cause great discomfort and raise concerns for some members and their families. For those confronting issues, we keep you in our thoughts and extend to you our best wishes.

It has been reported that Al Smith has died. Formerly Secondary Industrial Arts and a member of the Teachers’ Housing Authority, Al Smith died at Port Macquarie where he had lived in recent years.

Ron Ikin has also lost his battle with cancer and passed away on 21 January, 2012. He came to NSW after an extensive period as an Inspector in Victoria and had a senior leadership role within the NSW Department in the professional development of Principals and senior staff.

Later he was the Executive Officer for the Institute of Senior Educational Administrators (ISEA) and played a key role in forging links between ISEA and ARISSEA to facilitate membership transition. Possessed of a quick wit, Ron was an innovative thinker and possessed an extraordinary ability in resolving problems, including those in the industrial field.

I encourage you, gentle readers, to submit articles for the Newsletter on what you are doing now or what you remember doing. Whilst some reflect upon the past and their or their family's engagement in education, often reporting memorable stories of past incidents or sayings, others like to write about life in retirement and those things that now give satisfaction. Peter Robinson values all contributions to the Newsletter as he plans for a balanced and interesting journal.

Hope to see you at the May gathering -

Alan Rice

Friends of Stewart House

Rotarians @ Stewart House

George Green

Our little project is gathering momentum! The idea of harnessing the power and reach of Rotary to support Stewart House has been enthusiastically supported by everyone I have spoken with.

While, as we have discovered, many ARISSEA members are active and influential in Rotary, so are many former DET principals, executives, teachers and other staff. Some key influentials have agreed to join the project to help widen our reach within the "ex DET community". These folk will be well known to many ARISSEA members.

Tom Croker was principal of Manilla Central and Metella Road Primary schools, president of the NSW Primary Principals Association and President of the Australian Primary Principals Association. Tom is currently the president of the Rotary Club of Breakfast Point.

Jim McAlpine was principal of Tumut and Moss Vale High Schools and president of the NSW Secondary Principals Council. Jim is the current president of the Rotary Club of Moss Vale.

Graeme Davies was principal of Griffith and Kincumber High schools. He is a past president of Kincumber Rotary and will be the District Governor for the new Rotary district 9685 taking in Northern Sydney, the Central Coast, Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains in 2013/14. Graeme will promote the project with incoming Rotary district governors across NSW.

An early initiative will be to develop a speakers' kit for guest speakers to use with Rotary and other clubs. We then need a network of speakers prepared to visit clubs to promote Stewart House and its work. You do not need to be a Rotarian. We would be very pleased to access Lions, VIEW, Probus or any other community group. If you are interested in joining us please contact me at: grjgreen@bigpond.net.au. Stewart House needs you!

Christmas Lunch



Barry Higgins & Helen McMaster (nee Campbell)

Members say

Morton Crawford

Alan Rice's comments in the November Newsletter, about Departmental pre-schools reminded me of my experience with what I believe was one of the first, if not the first, of such schools. In my student days I'd heard a great deal about early childhood Education from my aunt, Minnie Walsh, who was President of the Federation of Infants Mothers Clubs through the Depression and the early war years.

In 1946, aged 17, newly graduated from Sydney Teachers College, I was appointed to Waterloo Central School in inner Sydney, where I was to set up an Opportunity B Class. My immediate supervisor, in this situation, so I was told, was Dr Harold Wyndham, newly arrived from studies the USA and appointed Staff Inspector in Charge of Special Education. He was a real inspiration.

However, the Headmaster, who was going for a mark, decided that this young teacher should have a variety of additional roles. So, inter alia, I was given the liaison role between the school and the newly opened Minnie McKell Nursery School.

This was an old brick building in the school grounds, totally renovated and appropriately furnished. It had two very fine, caring young women teachers and about 40-50 children from the local community.

These children were all under five. At this time I can't remember the minimum age. The school was named after the wife of the then State Premier who was later to become Governor-General.

The two bright, airy and colourful classrooms were carpeted. There were pleasant light curtains at the windows.

There were suitable small desks and chairs for the children. There was ample space for the children to move around and be involved in classroom activities.

There were sufficient small metal framed stretcher beds for each child to have an afternoon rest/nap. They had an inside toilet block with separate male and female areas with porcelain fittings, such a contrast to the main school's unsightly metal fittings.

Lunch was provided for all the children. Waterloo, at that time, was a very low socio-economic area with most of the parents working in local industries on low paying jobs. As far as I can recall the parents either paid nothing or only a very small amount towards the cost of their child's education in this Nursery school.

The young teachers provided a very wide range of activities and games including some leading into reading and number. Each child was really cared for in every way.

Unfortunately, towards the end of the second term I had to seek a transfer out of Waterloo school as my father, in Newcastle, had become seriously ill. So I lost contact with, at that time, an exciting innovation in education.

Christmas Lunch



Brent Corish

Anecdotes from the life of
Nicholas 'Nick' Corish
NSW Government School Teacher
Part 3 of 4

Springvale

The years at Collector were always looked back on with great fondness but officially came to an end on 15 December 1915 with a transfer and promotion to Springvale Public School a few miles from Bega on the NSW south coast. (Of course the fact that the Collector school had been totally lost to fire just three weeks before also rendered a move necessary).

The family's house at Springvale was four miles from the nearest shop. To get to Springvale the family travelled by steamer to Tathra, then by dray to Bega and then on to Springvale where the school and residence stood in the middle of open fields.

During this period Nick's oldest son 'Ril' (Richard Cyril) was living with his grandparents, the Pullens, at Hurstville in order to attend Sydney Boys High School where he had won a place. Hazel rode her bike to and from Bega daily to attend the secondary department of Bega School that taught courses similar to city high schools. The rest of the children, of course, went to Nick's primary school at Springvale.

While living at Springvale the family sometimes travelled by pony and sulky, the 12km to Bega. Motor cars were becoming popular and the pony didn't like them. Every time a car came along Nick had to stop the buggy and get out to hold the pony's head. Everyone else was expected to get out just in case the pony bolted.

On one visit to Bega the family stayed in a hotel and the children saw their first electric light. Ronald (Ron) used to tell the story that they were so fascinated that the children stayed awake most of the night pulling the light cord just to see the light go on and off.

The First World War began while Nick was at Collector but it was while teaching at his new school at Springvale that Nick had the teaching idea that his class should write to a soldier – and what better soldier than one named “Corish” – if one existed. Nick began his lesson preparation by writing to the military to find out if anyone named Corish was serving in the army and, if there was, how to contact him. Nick ran into a real bureaucracy!

Only one Corish served in the First World War and that was Harry Corish a far distant relative of Nick's who he had never met. At the exact time Nick wrote to the army seeking information about any Corish, Harry was retraining after being injured at Gallipoli, prior to being sent to the Western Front in Europe.

Army files show that the army's response to Nick on 28 February 1916 was a request for him to provide the name and serial number of the person he wished to contact and the Army would then tell him how to make contact. Since Nick didn't know if such a Corish even existed this task was impossible so contact was never made.

Walbundrie

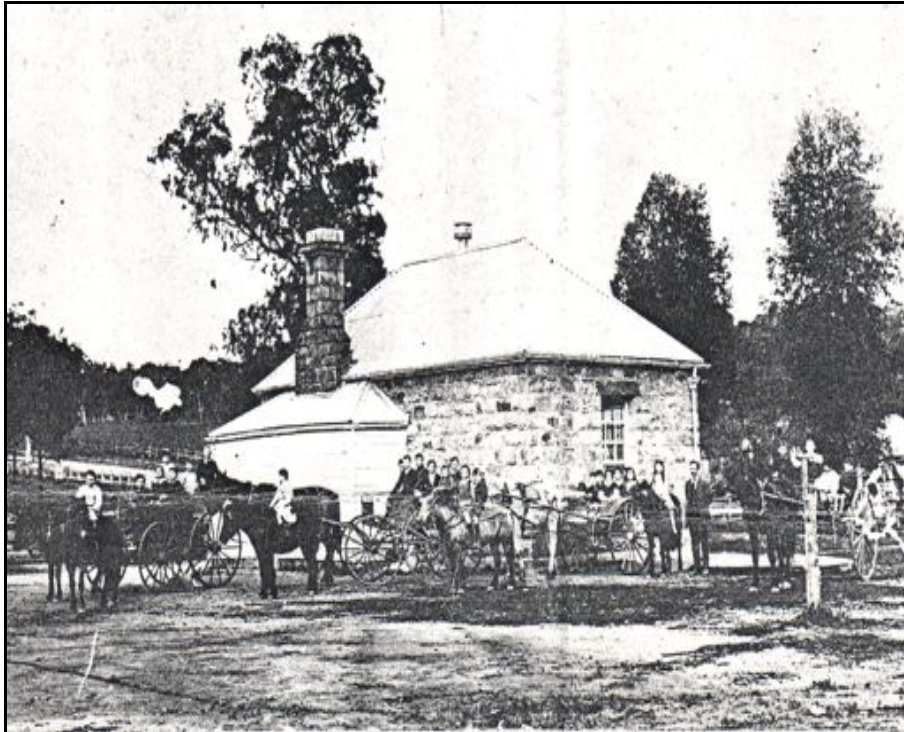
After four years at Springvale, Nick was transferred to Walbundrie Public School (418 miles from Sydney, near Albury) fairly late in 1919. The schoolroom had been extended three years earlier and was now a single room 30 feet by 15 feet designed to take 45 pupils but now greatly over-crowded with more than 60 pupils.

Late in 1914 Mr G Loftus, Secretary of the local branch of the Labor Party, had written to the Department of Education asking for a vested residence to be built but no action had followed.

The only accommodation available was a house owned by the village publican and Nick rented this until December when the publican, Mrs Fagan sold the hotel and wanted to move back into her home.

Richard (Ril) was still in Sydney and travelling home to the family every school holiday. Mavis recalled that there were several reasons for leaving Walbundrie (apart from Mrs Fagan wanting her house back!).

Generally there was little for the kids to do in the village. More specifically Hazel needed to get a job and there was nothing available. Alan, Ron and Mavis herself needed to go to high school but, more significantly, Hazel, 16 years old and quite beautiful (according to her sister Mavis), was attracting the very unwanted attention of the village blacksmith Mr *****.



Nick watching the children depart at Walbundrie, about 1922

In later years Mavis recalled that Hazel caused quite a stir by going for a walk at night with Mr *****. Hazel got on well with most people in town including Billy #####, a member of a well-respected local Aboriginal family.

But it was Mr ***** who was the main worry! The solution to all these problems was for Lilian and the children to leave Walbundrie very early in 1920 and return to live initially in Macquarie Street, Hurstville, then with the Freestones (relatives of Lilian's) in Lily Street, Hurstville.

This arrangement continued until, after some discord (and the Freestones indicating that they wanted their house to themselves) the Corishes moved to West Kogarah. Mavis and the boys, Alan and Ron, went to Hurstville Public School.

Nick continued as the teacher-in-charge at Walbundrie and lived in the hotel that Mrs Fagan had just sold.

The history of Walbundrie Schoolⁱ describes Nicholas Corish as a “fine teacher” but also provides a neat summary of eighty pages of official record of an inquiry into a number of complaints from a parent that Nick was persecuting his eight-year-old son.

The summary lists some of the questions posed by the District Inspector together with the responses independently gained from 26 pupils. Some examples:

Q.1. Does xxxx obey Mr Corish?

No 24, Sometimes 2;

Q.6. Did he tie a handkerchief over his face and shape out at Mr Corish?

Yes 21, Didn't see 5

Q.16. Does he annoy girls in front when lying on the form by pushing them with his feet?

Yes 15, Do not know 11;

Q.21. Have you heard him make a noise by blowing into a bottle?

Yes 21, No 1;

Q.26. Did you see xxxx expose himself (explained)?

Yes 17; No 1;

Q.28. Were his trousers burst at the fork?

No 11, Do not know 15;

Q.29. Do you like xxxx?

No 16, Yes 4, Various answers 6.

A very strong letter went to the complaining parent stating that the boy was badly behaved and that the Department would always “*protect its teachers from vexatious and unwarranted charges*”.

In February 1920 – just a few weeks after Lilian and the children left – the Department decided to have plans drawn for a five-room residence and a new school on a new site in the village.



The residence was completed and ready to be occupied in August 1923 and the school in October. Now, after nearly four years, the family could be re-united in a brand new residence.

But it never happened because Nick received a transfer notice in the mail.



Nick was a good sportsman, enjoying golf and excelling as a marksman with the rifle. Records show that he gained permission to compete in several shooting competitions which entailed closing the Walbundrie school for the duration.

Golf at Cordeaux Dam

The single men's quarters are behind him.

The Two Dams – Cordeaux and Nepean

The “forced” separation of the family continued when, after four years as teacher in charge of Walbundrie Public School (and four requests to be transferred to a Sydney school) Nick was transferred on Christmas Eve 1923 to take over as teacher-in-charge of the school on the construction site of the Cordeaux Dam 60 miles south of Sydney.



Nick milking the cow
Location is in dispute – either Springvale or at Nepean Dam

The Cordeaux Dam Public School operated for the eight years it took to build the dam (1918 – 1926). Nick lived on-site in the single men's barracks for three of those years (1923 – 1926) until the dam was finished and the school closed.

The Sands Directory for 1924 (compiled very late in 1923) showed Nicholas Corish's address as Macquarie Street Hurstville (on the corner of Dora Street) but this was actually where the family lived with Nick coming "home" on some weekends.

Nick was then transferred to a similar position at the new Nepean Dam Public School when it was first opened on 20 May 1926. Once again it was the construction site school for the new dam and Nick lived in the single men's quarters. He remained there as the teacher-in-charge for six years until the end of 1932.

On 1 Jan 1927 Nick was placed in classification Class 1, Section B, of the teaching service. This was the second highest classification and entitled him to appointment as Principal of a Class 2 school (400 – 600 pupils).

Gaining this classification took considerable effort. In order to be classified the teacher had to successfully pass examinations in selected subjects (Nick chose Education, French, Physics, Physiology and Agriculture).

In addition he had to write two theses. The titles of Nick's theses were *Nature Study – and how to teach it* and *The Localisation of Faculties*.)

Greta and Abermain

On 5 December 1932 Nick took up a promotion as Principal of Greta Public School 130 miles north of Sydney in the NSW Hunter Valley. At that time he had been living almost separately from his family for thirteen years.

His wife and their youngest child, Mavis, now 21, accompanied him to Greta. Mavis had worked in a legal office after completing her secondary education at St George Girls High School.

At work she had met Alan (Mick) Barnes a solicitor and they had become steady companions. At the time of the move to Greta they were “having a break” from their relationship so Mavis went with her parents.

At that time Greta was in the grip of the second ‘Great Depression’. It was a town dependent on the local coal mines and, with the Depression, the demand for coal had fallen and the mine owners had illegally locked the workers out for fifteen months in 1929-30.

The nearby mine at Rothbury was used by the mine owners to bring in scab labour to force the miners to take a 12.5% pay cut.

The government expected trouble and brought in 400 police from outside. In December 1929 the Greta miners joined hundreds of others in a march to the Rothbury mine. In the riot that resulted police shot and killed one miner and wounded many others.

All local miners were refused the dole because they declined to work at the “scab mine”. Greta became a town where everyone was unemployed.

The year before Nick’s arrival, the school’s Mothers Club had established a soup kitchen for the children but it lasted less than a year. The school population dropped as families left town in search of work. There was great ill-feeling towards the government.

While living at Greta and Abermain, Mavis was surprised to discover that all the local men left their hats on at the local dance – not like the city boys who always danced with their hats off. Mavis was to cause gossip in town when, ever the fashion conscious woman, she was the first female to wear slacks in town!

She caused an even greater sensation when Mick sent her a pushbike as a present. It was a boys bike and the sight of Mavis on it was such a disturbance of country ways that it had to be quickly exchanged for a “ladies bike”.

Because of space limitations I have serialised Brent Corish's excellent article. This is Part 3 of 4. The final part will be included in the April Newsletter.

Editor

Christmas Lunch



Colin and Sarah Macdonald

Members say

Graham Sims

In December, 2008, I was in the middle of writing an article on the demise of the teaching of grammar, (which I'll have to resume anon), and I'd just returned home from a visit to my alma mater, Fort St. High School, with a group of my old school-mates, to celebrate the passing of 50 years since we sat for our Leaving Certificate.

At the school assembly, where some 40 of us were, somewhat embarrassingly, introduced as "esteemed Old Boys" of the school, Justice Michael Kirby, a fellow Old Fortian, gave an inspiring address on the importance of education and the joint partnership between parents, students and teachers.

Michael, on behalf of all of us, acknowledged that our success in life, however measured, was owed significantly to the support of our parents and the scholarship and dedication of our teachers.

As I looked around the school hall, where, as a student, I had sat 50 years ago, I was struck by two simultaneous impressions, which seemed contradictory, but which, on reflection, are part of the almost mystical, black art of our teaching profession.

On the one hand, "my" school is now so very different from the one I attended all those years ago. The differences are not only physical, (with new buildings and facilities) but organisational (now co-educational, whereas in my day, Fort St. Boy's High and Fort St. Girls' High were two quite separate schools, indeed in different suburbs.)

The student profile is spectacularly different. 50 years ago we were virtually all "European Aussies". I remember only 1 or 2 students of Asian background.

Today, the school is a direct reflection of our multi-cultural nation, with many ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented.

The School Captain and Prefects system has gone. The Student Representative Council President is of Indian background, and our “tour guide” was a delightful young Aussie whose father is from the Punjab and his mother from Indonesia. (Sadly, as I discovered, the lad speaks neither language ... but that’s another story.)

The teacher profile, too, has changed. In my day, all our teachers were men, formal in dress, bearing and manner, and mostly middle-aged (or older). We respected them, even feared some.

They were scholarly, some even remote, but they were not our friends, as such. A certain barrier of age and status stood between us. We knew our place (and there was always “the cane”).

Today’s teachers are often very young, informal in dress, manner and, by my standards, speech. They “get much closer” to their students than our teachers ever did. (My own teaching style and demeanour changed a lot over my long career.)

Nevertheless, the essence of the teaching-learning relationship has, I believe, remained fundamentally the same.

Despite popularity contests and appeal, students eventually remember and appreciate those teachers who were knowledgeable, encouraging, fair and consistent, who believed in them as people, and who had an impact on their lives and aspirations. The unique nature of this almost mystical relationship has never really changed.

Quintillian put it best when he wrote: “The job of the teacher is to enable students to have victories.”

As I wandered around my old school, enjoying the company of not only my former school-mates, but of our young guides and their parents, I was reminded once again of the importance of a very old-fashioned concept, of: tradition.

Now, since my old school, Fort St., is the oldest public school in Australia, founded in 1849, one might reasonably argue that keeping its traditions alive should be relatively easy. Regrettably, in the modern world, when “tradition” begins “now”, a true appreciation of tradition happens neither easily nor automatically.

The young students and their almost equally young parents whom Michael Kirby so eloquently addressed, have little or no direct link with the Fort St. Boys High School which we remembered, yet they are part, a dynamic part, of its tradition, and it’s important that they realise this, and, as Michael so effectively did, be reminded of it. Despite our differences, in age, outlook, background and milieu, part of our heritage is shared.

Now, as it happened, I had already visited my old school, while I was recently Principal of the Italian Bilingual School in nearby Leichhardt. I had received a request from a Year 11

student of Fort St., just returned from student exchange in Italy, who asked if she could do some volunteer work as a teacher's aide.

To her surprise, I readily approved, adding that the fact that she was a fellow Fortian did her cause no harm whatever. She appeared genuinely amazed at the coincidence and its symbolic significance. (What probably amazed her was that someone as old as me could possibly have ever gone to her school!)

I visited Fort St. soon afterwards, to sign some paperwork, and the Principal, knowing I was an Old Fortian, asked two Year 9 students to show me around the school.

It soon became obvious that the old part of the school, my school, was now largely disused and partly locked up, as a museum. Having obtained the keys from the Principal, I showed the students around my old school. They were, to put it mildly, gobsmacked.

I must have waxed on a bit lyrically, as, when we'd finished our tour, and before I could thank the students, they thanked me, and I'll always remember the words of one of them, as she asked me, "Mr Sims, will we ever feel about your school the way you do? You know so much about it, and you've made it sound so real."

Touched, I replied, "It's not just my school; it's your school, too. You are part of our school tradition that goes way back to 1849. You are entitled to feel just as proud of this as I do!! They went off, beaming.

It is this uncompromised continuity of the pursuit of excellence, of taking advantage of every opportunity, of belief in oneself and in the equal worth of every human being, to which Michael Kirby referred in his address to the school.

Michael has always been a staunch supporter of the public school system, as, throughout my own career in education, have I.

However, as an Inspector and Director of Education, I visited, inspected, evaluated and reported upon many schools, both government (public) and non-government (private). "Excellence" is not unique to either system (nor sadly, is mediocrity). A good school is, demonstrably, a good school.

Michael is, nonetheless, correct in his statement that public schools are, and must remain, the cornerstone of our education system. They alone are, essentially, free, open to all, irrespective of race, creed, intellectual capacity, personal beliefs and values etc.

As he said, "Once we walked through the gates of Fort St., we were all equals."

In his address, Justice Kirby referred to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, promulgated 60 years ago, and given to him, on a card, as a primary school student, before he attended Fort St. Boys' High.

He has kept his card ever since, and challenged the 2009 President of the S.R.C. to find this Declaration and have copies made for each and every student.

In an increasingly crass world of materialism, self-centredness and instant gratification, Michael's challenge is, I believe, an appeal to human values, high ideals and a reminder of our shared humanity, all of which, more than ever, need to be fostered in our schools, in our society and among our leaders.

The motto of my old school is "Faber est quisque suae Fortunae". Now, as a linguist and "humanities" man, I have never been at ease with its literal translation of "Every man is the maker of his own fortune".

The true "fortune" of our school motto is not, I've always felt, the "fortune" of economic rationalism and materialistic greed, but rather, our destiny, the things we decide to do with our lives.

In meeting up with my old school-mates, and in hearing and reading what they've done with their lives, I have been reassured to realise they are a blend of academic/professional/corporate success and a commitment to social responsibility, service and personal integrity.

At our reunion dinner, and with a refreshing absence of embarrassment and self-consciousness, we expressed a common acknowledgement that our school played a significant role in helping us to be the best kinds of people we could strive to be.

As an educator, I've long been concerned that, for today's young people, the traditional guiding influences of family and school have largely been supplanted by those of the media and of peer group pressure. (Research indicates that this pressure can begin as early as in Kindergarten!)

We need our schools to have the resources, the courage and the conviction to stand for, and insist on, high standards, on the pursuit of excellence, on personal and societal integrity.

We need parents to support them and we need governments to stand for no compromise in the unique importance of education.

As a guest at the recent school assembly at my old school, (an assembly far more "modern" and "democratic" than those I remember), I found myself recalling "The School Creed" which we used to recite at each assembly.

When I muttered it to myself, my initial reaction was, "it sounds so old-fashioned!" On reflection, we could do a lot worse than embody its essence, couldn't we?

"I honour my God; I serve my Queen;
I salute my Flag.
I will, at all times and in all places,
maintain the honour of my school.
For what I am, the school will be"

Christmas Lunch



Alan Laughlan and John Edwards

Members say

Laurie Dicker

I am still here!

There have been wild rumours lately that I am on my last legs and about to meet my Maker. I am sorry to disappoint you all but I am alive and kicking, fit and healthy and have faith in the prediction of my cardiologist that I will live to one hundred.

Judy has been somewhat slowed lately by having her second knee replacement, which means that she had to withdraw from the London Olympic team because of the drugs in her system.

However being house bound has given me time to complete writing, editing, printing and self publishing my latest book: 'Dust, Dags, Drongos and Flies', a collection of short stories set in a fictional outback town in the period 1930s to 1950s.

It is an outstanding literary piece that will have you laughing and crying to the last page, skilfully crafted by an old country lad. The stories will be of particular interest to the majority of Institute members who have lived and worked in country areas.

You are however warned not to take any notice of any tellers of tall tales from beyond Speewah as we are all prodigious liars.

You would be better advised to consult esteemed Institute members such as Pat Morgan, Jean Koshimakin, Laurie Craddock, Brian Ford, Bill Muir and Jan Dale, who I believe have obtained pirated copies of this masterpiece and whose opinion could be trusted.

You could try a sample by going to the website www.dicker-books.com and clicking on O.D.Cologne or Truthful to read half of two stories as teasers. The book is not available in major bookstores because I refuse to pay Mr Murdock 65% to act as courier.

It is available by sending \$25 to PO Box 1304, Buderim, Qld 4556. There will be no Postage and Handling charges for Institute members.

Should any of you Mexicans from south of the border ever venture north to the land where the curtains don't fade in summer and the chooks keep laying, please drop in for coffee. I regularly purchase a brown paper bag full of broken biscuits from the local Co-op store to top up the tin for just such occasions.

We could sit on the verandah and discuss the courting rituals of the cane toads while feeding crumbs to the green tree snakes or we could analyse why Queensland can't be beaten at State of Origin. We are also willing to ponder whether all this is related to the Big Bang theory or recent advances in quantum physics.

When you arrive please hitch your horse and dog to the verandah post and leave your gun and spurs at the front door. Judy does not like them scratching the furniture. Please drop in, you will be most welcome.

Members say

Al Ramsay OAM, MBE

This photo is of me 21 years and Mal Ramsay at 22 years, in Sydney, in December 1945, after returning from the war. Mal was in Liberator bombers out of India and I was in England in Lancasters

Neither of us would have had any idea that years later we would serve together as Inspectors of Schools.

Malcolm Ramsay MA Dip Ed

The funeral of Malcolm Ramsay at Killara last year was very well attended. I was surprised at the large number of teachers attending with one even coming from interstate for the occasion.

There were many interesting stories by teachers of Malcolm's time as an inspector.

In one, a teacher at a small school back of Lightning Ridge was sweating in over 40 degree heat in a small class room and expecting that dreaded inspector to arrive. A car pulled up in the



shade of a tree and the inspector arrived at the door.

He took one look at the teacher drenched in sweat, went to the car boot and from an esky produced a large container of ice cold water which he gave to the teacher. When he finished that and had returned to a more stable condition, inspector Ramsay said let us have a look at those scally wags you have in the room.

All tensions were now gone and a pleasant and interesting day followed.

Christmas Lunch



George & Dorothy Green

Members say

Brian Boyle.

When looking through my old copies of the Newsletter, prior to some very necessary autumn-cleaning, I noticed references to Norman Baker. Norm and I shared a possibly unique experience in that we may have been the only Inspectors-to-be who went through the WW2 Infantry Officer's Training School (OCTU). I say 'possibly' - there may have been others who did not see my wide-spread requests or didn't want to be involved when I was writing the history of the School.

Norm had been a corporal with the 2/104 Aust. Gen. Tpt Coy in the Middle East when he was nominated for OCTU. The new cadets received a vigorous introduction to OCTU as soon as they arrived and even before the Course began - a five mile route march proved a severe test for everyone.

The weather in April was starting to develop into a typical Woodside winter - corrugated, galvanised-iron huts hot in summer and close to freezing in winter. Cadets would spend the day in the 'bullring', running through the Assault Course or doing bayonet drill before

attending night lectures. Norm described some of his experiences in his usual eloquent style.

“One night Major Court, while lecturing on Military Law in the tiered lecture hall, was interrupted by boisterous, abusive language from an unkempt soldier at the back of the hall. There was a scuffle as the soldier was taken into custody.

Most of us were conned. With this role-play of a breach of discipline, Major Court proceeded with a mock charge, a summary hearing and a sentence for conduct contrary to military discipline. Norm soon had experience of a summary hearing. The nights were getting bitterly cold. The huts were like refrigerators. It was hard to crawl out from the half-dozen blankets on my bed.

The duty Warrant Officer found me in bed at 6.35 (reveille was 6.30). I was charged with conduct contrary to good order and military discipline, paraded before the O.C. who sentenced me to five sessions of pack drill. Such minor matters were part of the training”.

Norm found some parts of the Course relatively easy, such as the emphasis on Map Reading in ‘B’Wing - he had already qualified with distinction at the Eastern Command School of Map Reading and Field Sketching before going overseas. However, the Course eventually finished and it was time for the Passing-Out Parade for the successful cadets.

“The Wing carried out a ceremonial parade with the cadets acting as officers. It was a glorious day for the occasion with warm sunshine and a blue sky flecked with patches of snow white cloud. The parade ground was a grassy slope and looking up the slope past the saluting base there was the flag pole bearing the blue Australian flag waving proudly.

Beyond, widely spaced in the green paddocks, the gums with whitened trunks wisely in their old age beheld it all. The band provided moving marching music and the lads marched as they had never marched before.

First there was the General Salute, then the Colonel inspected the Wing, next we marched past in column of platoon, then came the advance in review order and finally the General Salute. I will never forget it.”

Norm went on to his ASC School - after being commissioned, he did tours of New Guinea before discharge on 9 November, 1945.

It seems likely that Graham Sims and I are the only ex-staff members of the RAAF School at Penang, Malaysia, to become members of ARISSEA. Although we were not there at the same time, Graham inherited and cared for my dog, Lassie, until she died of old age.

Lassie was passed on to me by an English family leaving Penang - we were told she was a wonderful watchdog. We had an Indian cook, a Chinese amah and a Malaysian gardener.

Lassie was great pals with all of them - in the house she spent much time trying to climb on to my wife’s lap. However, with any other Asians, she was a terrifying, snarling attack dog. We had her for our three years - reluctantly, we passed her over to the school secretary who promised to find “a kind and gentle young teacher” to take her - that was Graham!

Deaths

11/12/2011 Warne Ron F
15 Mawson Terrace Moss Vale 2577
(02) 9639 6847

5/1/2012 Smith Al K
33 Jupiter Crescent Port Macquarie 2444

20/1/2012 Ikin Ron Dr
3/74 Wrights Road Drummoyne 2047
(02) 9181 5879

24/1/2012 Faulkenmire Geoff W
73 Wanganella Street Balgowlah 2093
(02) 9949 2597

**Members are reminded that material is
urgently needed for the April Newsletter.
accompanying photos are most welcome,
preferably as JPG email attachments.**

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