



Friends of the

Old Teachers' College, Armidale Inc.

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Patrons: T.G. (Gus) Plater and R.F. (Rod) Davis OAM

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It's Newsletter time again and there is much to read in this particular issue.

To start with, the University has decided that it will not be responsible anymore for the "College on the Hill", nor for the beautifully kept grounds when the current gardening contract comes to an end. We understand the present Administration of the City of Armidale is negotiating the future of the building with the actual owner of the College building and grounds- the NSW Department of Lands. In the meantime the present occupants- the Friends, the New England Conservatorium of Music and UNE Partnerships carry on and await developments. We do know that the Conservatorium has a new three-year arrangement to continue in the building. That looks hopeful. We will keep you posted on developments.

And now on a more positive note, the development of the Green Room on the first floor has been completed. It is a magnificent tribute to the Teachers' College and all that was achieved there. The members of your Committee particularly responsible for this super achievement - Ros Townsend, Sue Melville and Karen Marshall - are to be congratulated. The new history room will be officially opened on the 28th June. Thank you again for the memorabilia you continue to send us. No wonder we need two rooms in the College building to display everything to the best advantage.

Over the years, the Friends have achieved much on your behalf and with your financial support. All of which I couldn't help thinking as I recently sat in the fire-proof Auditorium (one of those achievements) a week or so ago at a well-attended and much enjoyed concert performed by the Armidale Symphony Orchestra.

Last, but definitely not least, I once again attended the Anzac Day Ceremony on the University Campus and laid a wreath on your behalf in memory of all 68 staff and ex-students who died in World War 2. Last year, of course, marked the particular naming of the last few of those 68. This year, the naming began again and the names and details of the following were read out:

JOHN NICHOLSON BARNIER, HDA
EDWARD DAWSON CHALMER
RAYMOND DARKEN
ALAN DOUGLAS EDWARDS, B.A., B.Ec.
RONALD JAMES FINCH
DONALD MURRAY GIBSON

LEST WE FORGET

**With very best wishes,
Gwenda E. Shannon, OAM President**

MEMBERSHIP

What our membership lacks in numbers is more than compensated by your words of encouragement, your generosity and those treasured pieces of memorabilia that you send us for safe keeping. That being said, we would still warmly welcome lapsed and/or new members. So... if you are attending a reunion this year and always wanted to be a recruitment officer when you grew up, now is your chance. Just contact us and we'll send newsletters and membership forms for distribution.

It is with deep sadness that we report the death of John Rochester on March 28th. He was an ATC maths lecturer, a long term FOTC member and a great friend to many.

Lorraine McNamara

HISTORY ROOM REPORT

The History Room continues to be open to visitors each weekday from 2 to 4pm. Our newest volunteer is Bev Pitt. Thank you Bev for giving us your time. We also thank Kate Prosser who previously volunteered while on long-service leave and now volunteers as a retiree. If any local member knows of an Armidalian who might like to help us out whether they were a former staff member or student of the College or not, please tell them to contact us at the History Room. It would be ideal if all our volunteers had just one day a month. As it is, some volunteers are on duty more than once.



One of our long-time members has requested a photo of our History Room. This is just one corner showing the Principal's desk. Behind the desk can be seen beautiful oak cupboards displaying precious memorabilia.

The "Green Room" with its ever-increasing donations of memorabilia is now ready for visitors. It will be formally renamed and opened at the end of this month. A record of the event will be available in our December newsletter.

Request

Ian Stephenson who is the Curator at the Heritage Centre is looking for a copy of 'Attica' for the year 1945; it is the only one missing from their collection. If anyone has a copy and would be happy to donate it to the University of New England regional Archives and Heritage Centre would they please contact Ros Townsend by email - townsendr@optusnet.com.au

WEDDINGS AND REUNIONS

In February, we had two couples choose the college grounds for their wedding ceremony and photos. While the weather was very warm during this period, the wedding parties were able to find shade under the canopy of one of the beautiful large trees in the front garden. Disappointingly, we haven't another wedding booking this year. We've heard a whisper that a session from the sixties might be planning a reunion for later in the year. We hope so because as yet, we haven't been notified of any others at the College. The 1956-57 Session held their reunion in Port Macquarie, commencing April 4th, to celebrate 60 years since their graduation from Armidale Teachers' College. From all reports, the occasion was enjoyed by the group, renewing old friendships and recalling happy memories. A huge "Thank you" to this session as they paid for the enlargement and framing of their session photo which now hangs in the ground floor northern corridor of the College.



Recently we were approached by Glenys Williams, the Social organiser of the local PROBUS group, to visit our beautiful and historic building. On May 1, forty four members of PROBUS were treated to a tour of the College by Judy Grieve and Graham Wilson after a warm welcome from President Gwenda. The group was particularly interested in seeing the two stained glass windows. We have to thank UNE Partnerships and the NECOM Office for being so accommodating. The group enjoyed the tour and found the commentary of Judy and Graham very informative. The tour was followed by a delicious afternoon tea on the portico with its glorious Autumn vista.



Left: Eileen Mitchell
and Joyce Gow

Left: to right:
Janice Johnson, Gloria Cook
and Jenny Sayer



Afternoon tea and assistance on the day was provided by committee members, Gwenda, Judy, Graham, Ros, Peter, Sue and volunteers, Ruth Blanch, Robyn Bradford, Terrie Crick, Margaret Martin, and Jim White. Afternoon tea was followed by a performance from the Senior Schools NECOM choir which Glenys had arranged with the NECOM Director at the time. The group was very appreciative of the whole experience and their donation of \$220.00 was gratefully received by the Friends.

Karen Marshall and Sue Melville

THE LIFT AT THE C.B. NEWLING BUILDING

To say the least, this has been a saga spanning a number of years. A huge thank you goes to the many who have contributed to our Lift Appeal and at present, we have \$115,000 in trust. It would appear that the final estimated cost of the lift's installation would be between \$300,000 & \$400,000.

Outlined below is a summary of our efforts to install the lift:

- The Friends has always maintained that an external lift should be installed in the south western corner of the building to ensure that the heritage significance of the State Heritage listed building is not compromised. This position was supported by Professor Sharon Sullivan of Sullivan, Blazejowski and Associates on 13 November 2008.
- The University of New England maintained that the lift should be installed internally which would mean construction of a large ramp on the western side of the building. The University was not prepared to negotiate on any other location.
- On 27 July 2016, Gwenda Shannon and I met with a University representative on site to discuss location of the lift. We were taken to the south western corner and informed that 'this was the best position'.
- On 30 August 2016, our President Gwenda Shannon wrote a letter to the Vice Chancellor of the University to discuss installation of the lift. This letter was not replied to.
- Recently an announcement was made that the University was to relinquish its role as Trustee of the C.B. Newling Building which is owned by the NSW State Government. Despite the Memorandum of Understanding with the University, we have received no correspondence from the University concerning our position, apart from a message on our answering machine.
- We are to contact our local member for the Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills concerning our position.

We will keep you informed.
Graham Wilson OAM, Vice-President of FOTC.

The Teachers' College Girls and W.A.S.P.S.

The Friends continues to receive historical material from past students of the Teacher's College. Recently three World War 2 photographs of student teachers were received and one photograph was noted: 'Isabel Bloomfield and Lila Sneddon (G Session 43-45) harvesting hybrid corn on Don Shand's property near Armidale in 1945. We earned 6/- for a day's back breaking work and scratched legs from thistles. It was considered "work for the war effort" and was compulsory'.

W.A.S.P.S was the Women's Agricultural Security Production Services and was formed to increase food production during World War Two. The movement was created by Don Shand, an Armidale grazier, who was the founder of East West Airlines. Bill Oates, University of New England Archivist, has undertaken much research on the W.A.S.P.S. and in my research; I have found reference to the organization at Ebor, a farming community east of Armidale.

Obviously, the Teachers' College Girls were much involved in the movement as were students from the University of New England. Smith House, the female boarding institution, records are held at the Heritage Centre, University of New England Archives. The women at Smith House were involved in making camouflage nets, painting model aircraft, making hand grenades, home nursing, street fund collecting and various activities associated with the Red Cross. More will be revealed later.

Graham Wilson Vice President.

A Walk down ATC Memory Lane

In posting my membership renewal and a modest donation to the lift fund, I wanted to thank the FOTC committee and volunteers for their efforts in maintaining the fabric and fostering the history of the Armidale Teachers' College.

My memories of the ATC now go back seventy-five years and some of them are as fresh as yesterday's. Being desperately homesick for the first few months; learning to dance at the Saturday night Dance in the Gym which stood me in good stead during RAAF service and after (a year later I was a drummer with pianist Ethel Wilson as we tried to keep the Dance in the Gym going); experiencing my first adolescent crush on a girl who worked in Pennys variety store and plucking up all my sixteen year old courage to ask her if I could walk her home after Friday late night shopping; the voluptuous Norman Lindsay nudes in the Hinton Collection; experiencing my first snowfall; hearing the news of the attack on Pearl Harbour on the radiogram in the music room; digging an air raid trench in our landlady's backyard; making models of Allied and Japanese aircraft for recognition training; inviting the first US GIs whom we encountered passing through in a Jeep, to the dance; watching all but two of the men in my session leave to join one of the services and having to wait until I turned eighteen in August 1942 to do so myself; the lecturers who to my eyes were all characters - led by Principal Pop Newling, Nat Gould, Micky Clayton, Freddy Roberts, Wowie Oxford, Tom Macdonald, Cam Howard and not forgetting Emma Brown, Dot Lindsay and Doc Clements; the luxury of an ice cream sundae with friends at Nicks Milk Bar in Beardy Street which at one shilling and sixpence was just affordable after I paid my landlady the rent out of my eight pounds every five weeks scholarship – or was it the other way around? The fact that I can recall these names and those of my fellow boarders with Mrs Doring in Taylor Street – Max Hartcher, Don Hunter, Bernie Ellem and Jack Stahl – is testament to the impression that my brief twenty months at ATC left on me.

I began my teaching career after discharge from the RAAF with a brief stint in the far west followed by five years at Sydney schools when I completed an Arts degree in three years as an evening student and numbered eight year old John Winston Howard in 3rd grade among my charges.

With a degree, the RAAF appealed and I spent twenty-two years in RAAF education and training and was an external student at UNE in the pioneering Diploma of Educational Administration course, retiring as a Wing Commander. My final eleven years in education were at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology as an educational counsellor for which I received the RMIT Centenary Medal.

So many experiences after a sheltered sixteen years on a north coast dairy farm. At a now venerable ninety-two years, am I the last of my session? Armidale Teachers' College, you gave me a great start in life.

Les Sullivan (February 1941-September 1942)

Armidale Teachers' College All Sessions Reunion held at the Central Coast Leagues Club, Gosford

On Wednesday, 15 March 2017, fifty dedicated souls, in order to attend, braved all that fierce, stationary East-Coast Low could pour upon them. This speaks volumes for the tenacity of ATC people and their regard for the institution.

Importantly the general consensus seems to be that it was all well worth it. We will need to encourage attendance from the 'younger' sessions if we are to maintain momentum.

There were apologies, two from afar were from Cec Martin and Pat O'Farrell from Perth and Dale Toohey from Longbeach, California. Frank Atcheson from the 39/40 Session suggested it was only a busy social programme which prevented attendance and thought he might make it next year.

The quality of the singing has been maintained and we continue to appreciate the sensitive piano contribution of Ian Savins. We must acknowledge the contribution of the session contact people such as Don Firth, Tom Cassin and Brian Sawyer.

The event would not go ahead without the consistent contribution from Rex Gardiner and Margaret (Scott) Plater. The efforts of the staff of the Central Coast Leagues Club, especially Faye Twomey are appreciated. Next year's reunion is planned for Wednesday, 14 March 2018.

Gus Plater
