



Friends of the

Old Teachers' College, Armidale Inc.

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

FOTC President's Annual Report – November 2022

Once again, 2022 has proved to be another remarkable year. I wish to thank all members of the FOTC Committee and volunteers for coping with lockdowns and constant administrative changes throughout the year. The situation meant cancelled meetings and closure of the college building to visitors. The history room and museum room have been closed throughout lockdowns and earlier this year tradesmen came from Sydney, Newcastle and Tamworth to undertake renovations to the college building. This work for the Department of Regional Development has now been completed and the Department now occupies the north-eastern and eastern sides on the lower ground floor of the building.

Our History Room and The Museum Room (Gwenda Shannon Room).

FOTC has been guaranteed our history room and museum by the Education Department. We have moved the Gwenda Shannon Room from the first floor to two large rooms on the ground floor. Painting of one of the rooms has now been completed and display of the educational items will be set up in December.

The Lift

Negotiations continue to determine when installation of the lift will commence and the local member Adam Marshall has announced his full support for the installation. We have \$137,000 in trust to provide support for the project.

New England Conservatorium of Music

Letters of support were provided to NECOM for renovation work to music and performance rooms through the Infrastructure and Stronger Communities Funds. NECOM has now received that grant and renovation work has commenced. As a heritage advisor, I will provide advice to the project. NECOM has continued to flourish in the building with music lessons and public performances.

The Museum of Education.

A tender for restoration work to the three Museum of Education timber rooms has been signed by the Crown Land Managers (Trustees) of the Museum. Initial conservation work to the timber has been completed but the Trustees are still waiting for paint work to commence. Three of the trustees met with the former Vice Chancellor of the University of New England to arrange for the return of the museum material held in storage in the Heritage Centre. At this meeting the trustees were informed that the contents of the Museum of Education belonged to the University and would only be returned when certain conditions were met. This interpretation of ownership has now been resolved and it is expected that a positive relationship now will be developed. Don't forget that if you have early educational material, we will give it a good home in the Museum!

Reunions

Two highly successful large re-unions in Armidale were held in the year from former students representing a 60th anniversary from the 1960s and the early 1980s's (Armidale C.A.E.) period.

Graham Wilson
FOTC President – 28 November 2022

Our History Room

We are always happy to receive artefacts from ex-students or families of ex-students to display in our History Rooms. Our three rooms have many and varied items to remind us of our enjoyable years at college.

We have many volunteers who ensure our rooms at the college are open to visitors on weekdays between 2pm and 4pm. We struggle at times to have enough volunteers, for a myriad of reasons, so if you know of anyone with some spare hours, once a month, to join our dedicated group of volunteers please let us know.

We hosted two reunion groups in the latter part of the year, their reports are included in this newsletter. It is always wonderful to see them meet with friends from their days in Armidale and hear of their special times at college.

Bev Korsch and Peter Pickett

From our Powerpoint Presentation in the History Room



Membership

Our sincere thanks to our members for continuing to be a "Friend" of the college. Your support allows us to continue preserving the history of the college.

Bev Korsch

Planned Reunion 2024

A reunion for Armidale Teachers College 1972-1974 Session will be held 18th – 20th October 2024. Brian Mooney and Wilf Flint are the committee member contacts and their details are as follows:

Brian Mooney mob ... 0428281067
email: bmooney@westnet.com.au

Wilf Flint mob ... 0419663663
email: flintwilf@gmail.com

There is also a facebook page

fb <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2885424681601332> &
entitled "Armidale Teachers College - 1972-1974."

1982 Graduate Group Reunion

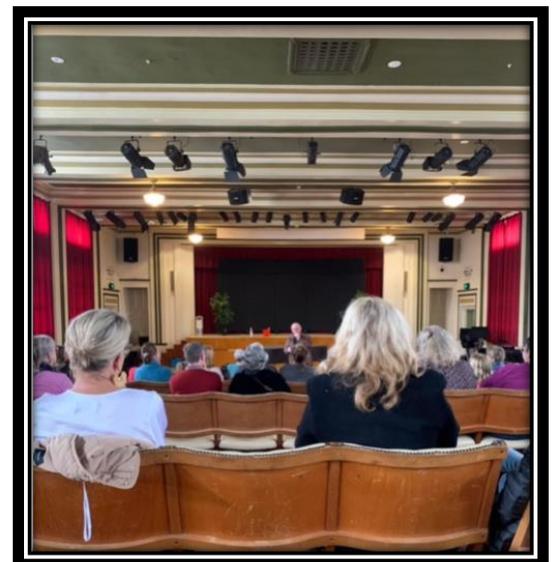
On the October long weekend, the 1982 ACAE Graduate Group gathered to celebrate 40 years since receiving their Diploma in Teaching. Forty six teachers and friends descended upon Armidale on Friday 30th September at the Tattersalls Garden Bar for a meet & reminisce over pub-fare & refreshments. Old friendships were rekindled & many entertaining anecdotes kept everyone smiling and looking forward to a few days of fun.

Mr Graeme Wilson, together with members of The Friends of the Old Armidale Teachers College guided us through an afternoon of fond memories and historical accounts of college life past and present. Everyone was pleased to see the building is being utilised in a positive educational way. The tour culminated in a delicious afternoon tea on the portico. It is evident from the photos how much everyone enjoyed this event.

The remainder of the weekend was spent wining, dining and enjoying the spectacular scenery and sites of Armidale and its surrounds, including a delightful dinner on Saturday night at Manny's on Marsh. A great time was had by all and we look forward to the next reunion in 2027!



1982 Group Reunion



The 60th Reunion of the Armidale Teachers' College Class of 1961-1962

A group of 65 of us — ex-Armidale Teachers' College students from 1961-1962 — braved the weather and returned to our *alma mater* on Wednesday, 19th October, 2022, for a 60th reunion held over three days.

We now know that the heritage-listed Armidale Teachers' College was once the site of a former prison, before it was demolished and rebuilt in its current form, from 1928-1930. As we began our studies in 1961, we students knew little about the history and construction of this amazing building. But now, as we enter our eighties, it has become a passion for many of us, including this ex-student, to learn more.

I don't remember ever using the classical front steps or the *terrazo* staircase of the Teachers' College to enter its hallowed walls. From memory, we students used to enter via a side door on the eastern side: the tradesmen's entrance. It doesn't matter, because the walks up and down the hill from Smith House and Newland, not to mention the sporting events, must have kept us fit: just look at the photo of us — smiles and all — sixty years on!

This October, in 2022, a decade after the first successful reunion in 2012, the two amazing organisers, ex-students Brian Moore and Jean Black, had planned slightly fewer active events for us this time, given the march of time. Yes, without Jean and Brian, we would never have had these two wonderful reunions to look back on. Can you imagine the painstaking journey they took in order to gather our names, two hundred and fifty of us, and to find email addresses? I am led to believe that Moorie and Jean surfed through the 1962 photo of the whole group, in order to begin their search. A Facebook page was then set up by David Hawke for us to message one another.

The last reunion in 2012 was a landmark event for us. It would be 50 years since we left Armidale Teachers' College and ventured into the wide world of teaching. Sporting events were on offer, bowls and golf, which were well-attended. Also, a wonderful session viewing the Hinton art collection was greatly appreciated, as well as tours around the area. We even had a dance, just like in the gym at the College. The floor was crowded with couples dancing to the College Saints' tunes, and it finished with a Greek-style conga line around the dance floor.

In November of 2012, the spring carnival was in full bloom, and roses, roses, roses were on display! Fast forward to October, 2022: Was it global warming that had sent us wet and rainy weather, with Dumaresq Creek flooding all over the road and wet hairdos for some of us? Still we were so glad that we had come.

Like last time, Jean had hired a room at the Armidale Services club for "Meet & Greet", on Wednesday, 19th October, 2022, commencing at 5 pm. She'd organised hot and cold finger food, and drinks were available at the bar. What a buzz it was to recognise all the faces, of men and women, whom we hadn't seen for a decade or more. Sure there were changes, and a few had not come back — some had passed on — but most were still here with us! Smiles and a certain radiating "energy" filled the room with warmth and love.

On Thursday evening, 20th October, we had the Formal Dinner at Armidale City Bowling Club in the large TOPS Function Room.

The evening started off with historic student photos, lots of them, organised by ex-student Peter Pine, and shown on a continuous video presentation as we arrived. Prayers, grace, and memories of students who had passed on, led by Kay Hogan, was greatly appreciated by the rest of us. A sit-down two-course meal, with alternate dishes, was served at large tables amid conversation: lots of conversation!

Sounds of *Gaudeamus Igitur* and hits from the sixties, played during the dinner, were mostly drowned out by conversations between old friends trying to catch up on lost time.

A standout feature of the evening was the *Remember When* stories, prompted by returning student, Anne Skyvington, and embraced enthusiastically by many others, who entertained us with laughs and nostalgia from memorable events and hijinks narrated from the two years spent at College. Messages from abroad were also relayed to the audience.

The crowning glory of the evening was the cutting of the enormous celebration cake. Married couples who had met at the College — Roger and Angela Britton, Robyn and Peter, D'Arcy, Roslyn and Bob Barwick, Narelle and Des Hoy, and Bill and Sybil Orr, were called on to officiate.

Another absolute blast was the 10 am Tour of the College, followed by morning tea, on Friday 21st October. It was so special to be filled in on the current uses and status of the Armidale Teachers' College by the President of "the Friends", Graham Wilson. At a meeting in April 1997, it had been agreed to create a Committee to save and protect the building. This group became the Friends of the Old Teachers' College (F.O.T.C.).

As we sat in the refurbished hall, still packed with so many memories for us, Graham talked about how the College had been saved from mothballing by the Friends of the College, and about the improvements that will happen, now that the Education Dept. has taken control back from the University. We learnt that this hall is where the New England Conservatorium of Music (NECOM) now rehearses and performs recitals for the public.

Our heartfelt thanks must go to Graham and to FOTC for the wonderful work they have done, and are still doing, to save the ATC for future generations, and for the benefit of reunions like ours.

So many wonderful memories have been stirred by this 60th Reunion: the bus tour around the region, lunches and dinners with old friends, walks around the town, and many, many more... What are the standout memories of the three day Reunion for us? There are too many to choose for recounting here. But the absolute delight of old friends meeting up once again, and wanting to chat well into the night, was so heart-warming for this enthusiastic returnee and writer, that it will have to feature!

This amazing building will live forever in our hearts, the 1961-1962 *alumni* of *The College On The Hill*.



Anne Skyvington

<https://anneskyvington.com.au>

