

The Teachers' Edition

As usual, my end-of-year newsletter is rushed – I fly to New Zealand today, back on January 5.

Why the teachers' edition?

I received an email from Bev Carron telling me that she was putting together something about Mr March for a history of the Churchill Trust. It got me thinking along many lines. Time spent at school has always been a big influence on people. True, not always good but luckily for most of us we have fond memories of events and friends and teachers. This website is proof of that. A lot of good people have caught up with each other and shared reminiscences. I'm also aware that many of us went into some form of teaching – primary, secondary, tertiary, even dog school. So that is the theme.

Since writing this introduction it has been pointed out to me that not everyone shares my point of view of "the good old school days". If that is your point of view please skip the next few sections – there is other 'stuff' that I want you to read.

I started by emailing all the teachers that I have contact with in an effort to fill in some of the gaps here. Naturally, it is harder to track the teachers than the students. I have received some photos and stories and hard-working Barry Ballard has uploaded them to the [Staff 1963 – 1968](#) page. I encourage you teachers to continue to do this and Barry can upload as the info comes in.

Please click on the names to see what we have added:

[Judy Inveen](#)

[Ailsa Grant](#) (plus a photo)

[Enid Falk](#) (contributed by Cathy plus a photo)

[Mick March](#)

Still lots of gaps though so any news of where people are, contact details, photos – please contact me.

Then I wrote about my favourite TPHS teacher, Mr Burnett (see below) and invited some students to do the same (also below). These will also get to the website and I invite all of you to contribute to this project.

Cliff Burnett

Mr Burnett taught me Economics in 1967 and ever since I have been correcting people on the TV when they pronounce the science (?) as ECKONOMICS instead of the correct EEKONOMICS. It was something he insisted on. But that isn't what I most remember and most liked about him. I really liked the man, his demeanour and his standards, and his way of presenting the subject in a way that I understood and enjoyed. I went on to do a Bachelor of Economics at the ANU in 1969 – 1971. True, I did later deliver newspapers before dawn for a living which isn't the usual career path for such graduates. I remember visiting Mr Burnett when he was principal at Yass High School each year because I believed he was interested in what happened to me after Telopea. I did see him at Royal Canberra Golf Club (and William Ifor Price, and Don Gamble who was Club Captain and seconded my nomination for membership in 1983 but that's a different story) but sadly in his later years he suffered from Parkinson's Disease and other serious health problems. Even though he enjoyed getting out he stopped playing because he didn't want to hold up other players on the course. That's the sort of person he was – considerate of others. My final memory of Mr Burnett was visiting him at his home in Dickson, just behind the ABC studios. Even though his beloved and charming wife had died a few years earlier he kept referring to her as if she was still alive and then correcting himself, saying "no, she has gone". Cliff (I never called him that) knew I was coming and that I was bringing my daughter with me so he had organised his son to have special cakes and biscuits on hand. I remember being nervous because he insisted on making the tea despite his Parkinson's instability. He wouldn't let me do it. He had a lovely house full of memorabilia – I just wish I had recorded some of his stories. He was special.

From Bev Carron Payne

Milton (Mick) March MBE

I currently work at the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, which is based in Churchill House, on the

ANU campus. The Trust offers Fellowships which allow people from all walks of life to travel overseas and bring ideas back to the Australian community. Mick March was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1969. One of my projects this year has been to work with an author and a publisher to produce a history of the Trust. The book, *Inspiring Australians: fifty years of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust* (2015, Australian Scholarly Press), has just been launched. It features 400 of the more than 4000 Fellows who've been awarded Fellowship over fifty years. Mick is one of them. I see him quite often because he's an active member of the alumni group, the ACT Churchill Fellows' Association. I'm sure I was in awe of him when I was at school, as I was of all the teachers. I don't think we would ever have called a teacher by their first name. The revolution in the ACT Education system led so ably by Mick March no doubt changed that for many students. Whenever I see him he says "call me Mick" but I tell him it's not possible. I'm still in awe of him, perhaps for different reasons, so to me he is still "Mr March".

Lola De Mar PSM

Like Mick March, Lola De Mar is a former Telopea teacher who was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship (1985). At the time she was working as an art teacher at the Woden Special School and she travelled to Egypt, the UK, Canada and the USA to study the teaching of fibre craftsmanship to young intellectually handicapped people. When she returned Lola was the instigator and overseer of a wonderful Bicentennial project in which students from special schools and special classes throughout the country designed and constructed a series of five large wall hangings, each depicting an event in the story of the period leading up to the establishment of the colony at Sydney Cove. The tapestries were hung in the new Parliament House:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/hanneorla/8469252864>

From **Bill Andrews**

Len Childs

My story is not about a Telopea teacher, but Len Childs, an enthusiastic teacher many of us had the fortune to be taught by in about 1960-1 at Forrest Primary School. Many of his classes progressed to Telopea.

Len continues to live in Canberra in Kingston although he has spent several years in the interim living in Sydney, Victoria and overseas.

Len was a particularly enthusiastic educator of the "new school" in the '60's and was recognised later by Gough Whitlam PM as the leader in education policy. He was appointed to the Australian Schools Commission and contributed significantly to the development of policy for the new age of education. He was also a keen athlete and competed in pole vault in every Masters Games until recently. He is looking at competing again next year as he found that he could beat the world record for shot put for 95 age group and so he is in training. Len served in WW2 and plans to return to UK next year for a 70th re-union of his RAF mates.

Len is now 95.....in good health although he recognizes his limitations. He is well supported by his daughters, two of whom have PhDs and have prominent careers.

I had lunch with Len on Monday (30th November). Although our years with him are now 55 years in the past he remembers many of his class with great fondness - particularly Valda Krastins, Muriel Story, Ian Hill, Richard Swan, Ruth Ingram amongst many others. Interestingly he says that the reason his memory of our classes is so strong is that they stood out as having the highest average IQ over his whole career - but perhaps he was just saying that to get me to pay for lunch.

Postscript. Ruth Ingram remembers Mr Childs with affection and tells me that he used to board with her grandparents.

Now, who became teachers?

From what I've learnt all of these people spent some time teaching. I might be wrong, I might have missed some, but I'm happy to be corrected.

John Aitchison

[Dana Breese](#) (Colorado USA and Australia)

[Roger Brown](#) (Chair of Law. University of Tasmania and lecturer in Oslo and Bonn)

[Judy Bullock](#) (school librarian)

[Michael Burns](#)

[Dinah Clark](#)

Kate Cottingham

[Hugh Craig](#) (University of Newcastle)

John Craig

[Ian Dodsworth](#)

[John Engledow](#)

[Cathy Falk](#) (Professor, [Melbourne Conservatorium of Music](#))

[Michael Guppy](#) (Lecturer, University of WA)

[Christine Harris](#) (teacher of English to medical students in Verona, Italy)

[Peter Harris](#)

Jennifer Hendy (High school maths in Windsor, NSW, Balcatta WA, Albany WA, Pinjarra WA and lastly Telopea Park High School in 1977)

[Steven Hills](#)

[Liz Hipsley](#)

[Ian Kerr](#)

[Barbara McGann](#)

[Barbara Meech](#)

[Jan Nelson \(teaching English overseas\)](#)

[Richard Norris](#) (sadly passed on)

[Susanna Price](#) (ANU)

[John Pumpurs](#) (specialty – frogs)

[Virginia Jane Rose](#) (University of Wollongong)

[Leonie Skinner](#)

[Chris Slater](#)

[Penny Watson](#) (school lab technician)

[Helen White](#)

Brett Yeats (High school maths in Albany WA, Pinjarra WA and lastly Canberra High School in 1977).

And I mentioned a dog school – that's [Kaye Hargreaves](#) and her cleverly-named [Wagging School](#).

Forgive me if you've sent me something and it's gone astray. Please re-send and **please**, more contributions. And corrections.

[Here is something](#) that Dinah Clark shared on Facebook about one amazing teacher.

Finally on teachers (for now) here is a list of [69 Inspiring teacher/student movies](#). At our next reunion I am hoping that we might screen #1 from that list, one of my all-time favourite films, [Goodbye, Mr Chips](#), as one of our events.

Did I say next reunion?

Three mini-reunions are currently being planned.

Canberra.

On **Friday 15 January** at my place – Unit 9, 127 Hopetoun Circuit, Yarralumla. There could be a bike ride in the morning. There will be coffee and cakes for morning tea. There will be a barbecue and salads for lunch. If there are still people around in the evening it might be Turkish pides. There might be some wine and beer consumed. Ian Barnes and Christine Harris will be attending and I'm expecting many more. Please let me know if you are coming and we might try to co-ordinate a bring-a-plate/ cake/ roster. Or we might leave it to fate and see what happens. But do come.

Sydney.

On Wednesday **January 6** at Ian and Jill Hill's home in Turrumurra. I'm hoping that Christine can also attend this one, plus most of the people who attended lunch at Simon Downie's place when we did that. I will try to get there if a Canberra person is prepared to come with me and navigate (I don't get to Sydney very often). If you are a possibility email Ian at ianhill1@bigpond.net.au or phone him on 0457 328 160 for the address, time and other details.

Melbourne.

Valda has offered to co-ordinate a lunch-time get-together in Melbourne on Sunday 14 February to coincide with a visit that Jenny and I have planned.

It will be somewhere central with public transport links. Valda's email address is vlavoipierre@optusnet.com.au and her mobile is 0403 197 035. Please liaise with Valda and let her know if there are any special dietary requirements.

And then maybe Brisbane?

Steve Maitland is tempted to do something if anyone is interested.

Who might get there from northern NSW, the Gold Coast and other areas north of Brisbane?

Please email Steve on stephen@delphin.com.au or ring him on 0419 797 187.

At these mini-reunions we might start to plan the next big reunion because we are approaching five years since the "Now we've turned 60" one held in Canberra in October 2011.

We can talk when (season?) and where and what we might do. Some have said that the last one worked fine so why change it but let's see if there are any great ideas.

I've suggested (above) a dedicated screening at the ANU film group.

Causeway Hall? Simon Downie and I cycled past it recently and we thought "wouldn't this be a great venue for a get-together?"

Look at [this great video](#) and [this article](#) and [this article](#). Great history, different times. Being a late-comer to Telopea I don't remember any students who lived at the Causeway – who can enlighten me?

News of or from students.

Raymond Solway.

Sadly, we've lost another of the 1963-68 Telopeans – Raymond "Solly" Solway.

[Here](#) is how the Canberra Times reported his tragic death.

[Here](#) is the notice from the Canberra Times.

John (Jack) Ewing wrote this to me about Ray:

Dear Brett,

I was very sad to hear about the passing of Ray Solway. I remember him at Forrest Primary then Telopea Park. He was a quiet lad that was never in any trouble. I cannot remember him doing or saying anything bad to anyone the whole time that I knew him and that was unusual in those days. I sat next to him in grade 6, age 12, our teacher was Mr Gunning. I remember that one day he told me a joke. He said, "Do you like TV?" Of course, I said that I loved TV. Then he said "so you love Tania Verstak!" (TV) She was Miss Australia in 1961. It seemed funny at the time.

Then we all moved to Telopea. There were so many tough boys that would punch you in the arm if you walked too close to them, my arms were constantly sore at that time but Ray never did that.

My wife Janice knew Ray through the Smith boys, who were neighbours. In fact Grant Smith was in our year at Telopea. He would have known Ray really well. I don't think I saw Ray after leaving school.

Steve Bisset.

Look at what you can find on YouTube.

Not one but two entertaining interviews.

A [75 minute one](#) (Canberra gets an unflattering mention, Richard Swan fares better) and a [31 minute one](#). Both recorded in 2014 but Steve is looking impossibly fit.

Jude Smith.

[Look](#) at what Jude is up to.

From [Robert Rubbi](#).

Hi Barry, HiBrett,

I just wanted to thank you for taking care of my story and to congratulate you for assembling this incredible website. I am truly grateful to you both, as this has given me the opportunity to look back to my days of youth bringing back lots of memories. It was fabulous to see so many of my school mates and how they look today. It was also very sad to learn that some of them are not with us anymore. When I last saw them, we were only 14 years old, literally just kids. On another note, I actually wonder if anybody still remembers me (or can recognize me). Once again, thanks for this and I hope we can continue to stay in touch.

If you remember Robert and/ or can recognise him send him an email at

roberto.rubbi51@gmail.com

Richard Emery

Jenny and I called in on Richard at [The Bean Barn](#) in Ballarat recently. We discovered a man serious about his coffee, serious about roasting but a lot of fun to be with. After ten years of running a coffee shop **and** being the only roaster in his area he has decided to sell the lease on the building to concentrate on his passion – roasting the best coffee beans he can get, from his home outside town. The good news is that you can buy his coffee beans, with a full story of the origin and his roasting history and his methods and his equipment. Check out his excellent website with photos and stories. Special deal for Telopeans – freight is free. Email Richard at

1951emery@gmail.com. You might be able to call in on him at home if you are in the area.

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Alan Tate.

[This](#) is not new but I came across this article where Alan is described as “*Australia's pinball king, Alan Tate - who owns a couple of thousand games after making his fortune in timber, and has plans to open the nation's first pinball museum on the Gold Coast*”. More [here](#). I've failed to contact Alan – is anyone in touch with him?

From **Helen White** (responding to news of the age of Patrick Britten's first child).

Patrick has beaten me as far as his eldest child goes. My daughter Kylie is 42 and living in sunny Brisbane. I also have a son Matthew 27 at the Gold Coast. Matthew is in first year Medicine after completing a Biomedical Science Degree and then First Class Honours. I am so proud of my kids and what they are achieving. I didn't get the chance to go to Uni so I am chuffed at what Matthew has achieved to date. It doesn't matter what my circumstances were, I had to live with it, but I have given my kids the opportunity to follow their dreams. It is going to be so nice to have a doctor on call in my golden years. Cheers.

From **Kerrie Blain**, current Principal at Telopea.

Kerrie.Blain@ed.act.edu.au

Subject: Telopea Park School Foundation

Dear Brett,

Further to that meeting we had earlier this year, I am soon going to progress the formation of a Foundation for the school.

You indicated that you would be interested. I am going to hold an initial meeting at the school on Thursday 28th January at 5pm.

Would you like to attend?

Happy to talk – 61423350 (direct) or 0401141812

I will be there. Would anyone else like to come?

Fundraising.

The Canberra Southern Cross Club has a Community Rewards Program for Not-for-profit groups. We are a NFP group and are registered with them. If you (or a friend or a neighbour or any contact) sign up to our group [here](#) then each time you spend money at any of their clubs (and swipe your card) 10% will be rebated to us. This can go to causes decided by us at a later time. To be debated at the mini-reunions.

Finally, you've reached the end and all that is left is to wish you and yours for a happy Christmas and a wonderful 2016.

I hope to see you or hear from you sometime soon,

Brett

Brett Yeats 9/127 Hopetoun Circ. Yarralumla ACT 2600 02 6281 7684

