"Speaking of Union Street ..."

Reminiscences of Newcastle Teachers' College
1949-1973
"SPEAKING OF UNION STREET ....."
FOREWORD

This random collection of reflections and anecdotes about the twenty-four years of the Newcastle Teachers' College at Union Street, Cooks Hill (before the metamorphosis into the C.A.E. and then into the Institute took place) has been contributed by some members of N.E.R.L.A. (The Retired Lecturers' Association) and by two of the pioneer students.

The collection has been made to mark the Australian Bicentennial Celebrations, 1988 and Forty Years of Teacher Education in the Hunter Region.

Many personalities emerge from these pages, those of the contributors themselves, and in their anecdotes, those of the Staff and Students of the early years of the College appearing through the eyes of good humour and affection.

An overriding impression to be gained from reading through these pages is the influence on the minds and hearts of all who knew him of the College's founding Principal, G. H. Duncan. This publication was originally intended to serve as a reminder to him and to ourselves of those vital early years. Sadly however, Griff. died before our plans were implemented and from this circumstance, the backward glance gains in significance.

My task has been to put together these reminiscences into their present format. In doing so I sought and was generously provided with assistance from the publishing and printing personnel, the word-processing staff and from the resources of the Institute.

Jess Dyce
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IN MEMORIAM


Principal of the College, 1949-1975

The Shadow of Griff. Duncan's death has fallen across our Celebrations with a consequent sense of dismay and loss amongst those who constitute the Retired Lecturers' Association; for not to have Griff. present at these celebrations would seem to be an unheard-of thing. That this is not a mere nominal sentiment is attested by the unique place he has held in the minds and hearts of those who worked with him, staff and students alike, during his 26 years as Principal. His exceptional qualities as an administrator, and as a human being communicated themselves to all.

Marked out from his schooldays for academic success, Griff.'s brilliant Sydney University career led him quickly from classroom teaching to lectureships, and ultimately to the position of Principal at the newly-established Newcastle Teachers' College at the early age of 34.

The opportunity to pioneer tertiary education in his home territory of the Hunter was a challenge which suited his consuming interest in Education, his drive, his energy and commitment, and his qualities of mind. He accepted an almost unlimited authority to develop a new establishment to have the widest range of Teacher-Education courses in Australia, and so to establish the importance of the region for further tertiary education development.
Though initially limited to two-year College courses, Griff. always held the view that teachers should have initial graduate status, and that our two-year trained teachers were "too good for their own good". Over his period as Principal he guided the College from Education Department sponsorship towards independence and corporate status, and the necessary development of courses other than Teacher Education. At first he envisaged involvement with the new University, but when this proved difficult, favoured the further development of the College as a separate degree-granting body, much like the English Polytechnics; its realisation in the C.A.E. and The Hunter Institute of Higher Education owes much to his vision and influence. The award of an O.B.E. in 1968 marked a nationwide recognition.

When one considers the qualities that are important amongst human beings, it is clear that Griff.Duncan was richly endowed with them. "Sympathy, tolerance, and good humour - these are the things that really matter...." is the summation of one great writer. They subsume of course perceptiveness, quality of mind, sensitivity, integrity, and a conviction that personal relations are of supreme importance in the scheme of things. As Principal, Griff.'s door was always open and he was always there; he liked people and loved nothing better than to talk with them. He had an ease of conversation at all levels, a wonderful memory for faces; but he liked nothing better than a deep discussion or even an argument about abstract ideas and principles. Then the quality of his mind would brush off on one. Impatient with slow thinkers, he would sometimes take over and shape their thoughts for them, but he was well aware of this foible, and with disarming humility readily apologised for it. In the same vein he was never dogmatic, characteristically saying, "I might be wrong, but .......".

All of us who worked with him feel diminished and sad that he is no longer with us to celebrate his achievements. Just to have known such a man is however, to have been aware of a sense of inherent but unassuming greatness, the brightness of which will not diminish with the passing of time.

B. L. Wood
President, Retired Lecturers' Association
Morning tea at Union Street was always looked forward to by members of staff, who crowded into the pleasant room at the Corlette Street end of the main block, with its clean white table cloths, vases of flowers, sweet biscuits, scones, and on treasured occasions, cream puffs made by Ada Renwick. Rostered staff members made the tea at strategic times in preparation for the 11 a.m. influx of staff members, and quite often, their visitors.

Conviviality ruled, light-hearted argument, discussion, and friendly banter were the order of the day, but the occasion was not quite complete until Griff. arrived from the other end of the building, with usually a word or two of general interest, to be handed a cup of tea. After the usual courtesies he then liked to home in on any group that had an animated discussion going.

When there were visitors Griff. liked to welcome them again informally at these gatherings, be they Inspectors of Schools, visitors from other Colleges, staff from the Junction School arranging Demonstrations, or V.I.P. from the community.

On one occasion the well-known Australian novelist, the late Kylie Tennant was there visiting old friends, Jess Dyce and myself, who had known her at the country town of Canowindra when she was writing her first novel Tiburon and gathering material the The Battlers. Many members of staff had talked to her, but all waited with some expectation the special welcome that Griff. would give her when he arrived.
He was unusually delayed however on this particular morning and there was a feeling of mild concern on the visitor's behalf at his non-appearance. Then he came in, took his cup of tea from Leila Whittle, waited until all attention was focussed on him, paused dramatically, and then announced in special tones:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have a thief in our midst".

There was a moment of consternation and embarrassed laughter which Griff. reacted to instantly, becoming aware of the College's honoured guest, and hastening to rectify the situation apologetically and skilfully. He had been delayed, he explained, by a tearful student who had cashed her scholarship cheque and had had the money all stolen from her locker during the previous lecture period.

It was the first time in the College's brief history that anything really unpleasant had occurred, and Griff. seemed to be registering not only the student's loss, but also some slight diminution of the esteem which we all felt for this, the newest of the State's Colleges.

With her intimate knowledge of the joys and sorrows of The Battlers, I think Kylie Tennant understood the situation perfectly, and with the rest of us murmured sympathetically.

Morning Tea at Union Street
I arrived at Newcastle Teachers' College a month after it opened. One Friday in March 1949, while teaching at North Sydney Boys' High, I received a message to report immediately after school to Head Office. I presented myself, with some trepidation, to Mr. Inspector Jack Back (a formidable figure), who asked me whether I would like to be seconded to Newcastle Teacher's College for two years as lecturer in History and History Method. It had just opened as a training college for primary teachers. "You've had plenty of experience teaching First Years, haven't you?" Back asked. I agreed that I had, and accepted his offer.

So the following Monday, a steamy day, I arrived in Newcastle and presented myself to the Principal, G.H. Duncan. The Newcastle College was temporarily located in the manual arts wing of buildings being constructed for Newcastle Technical High School, which in turn was temporarily accommodated in the Technical College buildings at Tighes Hill. I found Newcastle Teachers' College to be at Broadmeadow, opposite the racecourse and conveniently close to the Premier Hotel. The students, said Griff., were out in the schools, observing, until work on the wing we were to occupy was completed.

I discovered that I owed my appointment to Don Aitken, a lecturer in Education at the College. The post had originally been offered to Gil Hugheson, who was at Armidale High School. He had decided not to take it up, being unsure whether he would be able to find accommodation for his family. When the unexpected vacancy occurred, Don Aitken mentioned my name to Griff. Duncan. I had no accommodation problems, being a bachelor and at age 27 the youngest on the staff. I travelled to Sydney each Friday night by the "Flyer", returning to Newcastle Sunday night.
Later I met Gil Hugheson, when I was in Canberra in 1959-61 working on my doctoral thesis. He was the head of Lyneham High School. He was also chairman of the local branch of the New Education Fellowship, and I became secretary.

Don Aitken was a bit of a character. I had been in the same History Honours class with him at Sydney University in 1945. Fortunately, I had not offended him – though that would not have been difficult to do. So he remembered me favourably and suggested me to Griff.Duncan as an alternative to Hugheson.

We became friends, though in a small staff – only 14 by 1950, I think – relations were pretty good all round. We were all learning, Don had a quick mind, an Australian scepticism, and an impressive ability to retain facts. He had an answer for everything. It might not be the right answer, but he would quickly voice it with confidence and authority. Don was interested in drinking and horse-racing. Soon a small number of staff and a larger number of students formed the Premier Club. On one occasion when Griff.Duncan, anxious to check on student drinking, entered the Premier public bar by one door, Don hastily took his exit through another. He, too, travelled to Sydney each weekend, and was thus anxious to leave College on time, if not a little before. The "Flyer" left at 5 p.m.. During one Friday afternoon staff meeting he placed an alarm clock inside the cupboard. When it went off late in the meeting it produced a welcome diversion.

Because of his memory and confidence Don Aitken rarely prepared lecture notes. On one occasion when he was in full flight a breeze came through a window and blew his papers off the lectern and onto the floor. A helpful male student came forward and picked them up. "Why, there's nothing on them", he said to Don. "Shush", Don replied, "don't let the others know!" On another occasion he was lecturing the infants section. "And why did you ladies decide to take up teaching?" he asked. One whispy-haired attractive girl responded: "Because I am fond of children." "Well, I can think of other things you could do if you're fond of children", Don remarked. The poor girl blushed.
Later on Don purchased half a local Newcastle horse — but on looking at its teeth sold out rather hurriedly.

As a lecturer in History I worked in close association with Ted Crago, lecturer in Geography Method. Ted, who had a Scouting background, helped organise provisions for the College Camps at Castlereagh and Broken Bay. I was his assistant. To save money we catered ourselves, hiring a cook, and purchasing provisions through a wholesale store. I can recall Ted working through the list of goods to be purchased, while I pretended to assist him. "I think we will need 40, well perhaps 35, tins of pie peaches". Ted has a slow, deliberate enunciation. As he spoke he made my mouth water. Ted drove his car to the Castlereagh camp. On one occasion after 'lights out' an amorous couple found the back seat comfortable. But Ted and another member of the late-night patrol disturbed them.

The young lecturers naturally found much in common. Harry Gillard (Physical Education) became a close friend. We sometimes exchanged views on College matters in the Premier after lectures ceased at 4.15p.m. — though we were both moderate drinkers. This was one place to get to know the more responsible male students. Another way was through sport. Like some other lecturers, I helped out by attending one of the various teams on sports afternoon. In 1950 I accompanied Harry and Margaret Melville, the women's Phys.Ed. lecturer, when a busload of students visited Armidale Teachers' College for inter-collegiate sports. The Coalfields boys constituted a solid contingent in the sports teams. It was a good occasion to get to know students, as well as lecturers, the Armidale lecturers.

The lecturing staff held their own social gatherings. Initially these were in homes, where the wives excelled in providing attractive suppers such as a young bachelor like myself was quite unused to. Later, staff socials were held at regular intervals — about once a term — either in the College Assembly Hall (once it was built) or in some bowling club which Harry Gillard knew. Dancing, conversation and supper were important items. Again, the youngsters tended to congregate together on these occasions. I recall Russell Doust, the College Librarian (and eventually Chief Librarian of the N.S.W. Public Library), Don McKay, and
a few others would form a little circle to make our regular, semi-private toast - "Confusion to the College!" Alas, in view of later events, our toast was perhaps too effective.

I found Jim Staines, Griff.'s Vice Principal, helpful to me as a new member of staff. In my first few weeks he spent some time explaining to my obtuse mind how weekly demonstration lessons were slotted into the weekly programme, as well as ways of handling practice teaching. He was interested in psychology, but also in sociology, politics and educational theory, and I benefited from our frequent talks. He was tall and still quite young - we all were - with big brown eyes which attracted the admiration of not a few female students.

Women made up two-thirds of the 140 members of the pioneer session, as the first intake was called. I found most of them good natured, sunny, and reasonably keen on work. However, I was a serious young man with a political philosophy and attempting to develop an educational philosophy. The students were mainly interested in a good time. For many of them these two years were to prove the best in their lives. Many permanent friendships - and some marriages - were incubated. I enjoyed the weekly College dances, which were attended by some members of staff. But I was not tempted. I had quite a different and separate Sydney life.

After a while I boarded with the President of the Students' Association, Mick Hannan. Mick was an older man, like myself an ex-serviceman. He had been a postman before the war, but the C.R.T.S. gave him a second chance, and he turned up at Newcastle College, with a scattering of other ex-servicemen. I consulted Griff.Duncan, and after some thought we agreed that it would not be improper if I were to board with Mick and his wife, Pauline. Mick had the fair, open face of a Celt and the shrewd, whimsical tongue of an Irishman.

I lectured in Cultural History in First Year for one hour a week, traversing the complete span of history from Paleolithic Man to 1949 in twenty-four lectures. I also lectured in History Method (Social Studies did not establish itself in the Primary School until 1953). In Second
Year I lectured two hours a week in Australian History. I found the combination of world history and Australian history most stimulating - whether the students benefited as much is another matter. Each lecture was repeated four times - there were five sections. I was adviser to Section 491. I was also Principal's representative on the Students' Council, probably because of my experience in student activities a few years before at Sydney University.

We called the roll at the beginning of each lecture. Hilda McIntosh, lecturer in Music, had some difficulties here. The Coalfields lads were often up to mischief. They invented a phantom student, Joe Fanatomy, whose name was answered regularly at roll calls for the best part of the year.

I recall an incident about the middle of 1950, when I was lecturing in Australian History to Section 495, now in Second Year. This was normally a pleasant, attentive section. I was surprised to find a student in one of the front seats - a quite attractive, fun-loving type, not very much interested in History - was very busy engaged in reading notes passed to her and writing replies. Discipline was not usually a problem, but I felt I could not ignore this, for she was sitting right under my nose. "I don't mind you not paying attention to the lecture", I said, "but please do not interfere with those who do want to attend. Why don't you sit up at the back and play noughts and crosses if you're not interested?" (After all, a written exam was set on each course, so I felt able to make this sort of offer). A little to my surprise Meg Wilkinson took up my suggestion and moved to a back seat.

I would have been startled - she even more so - if I had realised that 36 years later she would become my second wife and I her second husband.

(Dr. Barcan's memoir, "Writing about Education 1950-1988" was published in Quadrant, December 1987).
It could have been Ted Crago with his impish sense of humour who perpetrated the hoax, or it could have been Mr. Duncan.

In the 'good old days' when the non-academic staff numbered three - the Caretaker, the Registrar, and the Principal's Secretary - the staff had to compile their own Section rolls and keep their own records of attendance. In one Section, having listed all those present, I asked for the names of absentees. One name was offered - Joe something-or-other. How do you spell it? FANATOMY. So I entered him on the Section roll.

Week after week this character failed to appear, and, in the end, waxing wrath, I sent Mr. Fanatomy a scathing and threatening message. Then it all came out - someone had invented him.

How this student was translated to saint-hood I do not know; but for several years Saint Fanatomy, halo and all, was carried in high honour to all College Festivals - Sports Days, Intercollegiates, etc. Enter a lecture room, and it was more than odds on that on the black-board, windows, desks, or even floor, would be scrawled in chalk, "Joe Fanatomy was here". Assignments and even examination papers sometimes carried the sign.

Fanatomy was never allowed to graduate; however he was accorded a (vacant) seat-of-honour at the Annual Graduation Dinners and was duly toasted. Once, as a punishment, I suppose, for my gullibility, I was called upon to reply to the toast.

Somewhere in the College archives there is a "Ballad of Joe Fanatomy" and at this late stage I suppose I can admit that I helped him write the thing.

Joe had a satellite - Hogan's Ghost - and I always suspected Charles Grahame of creating him. The 'portrait' of Hogan's Ghost would appear on documents, notice-boards etc., but no one seems to have known where he came from; but someone must have had fun keeping us guessing. Both phantoms have long since left their haunts. Where are they now?

Huldah Turner.
When I completed my leaving certificate in 1948 I was a sixteen-year-old who desperately wanted to gain a Teachers' College Scholarship and become a Primary School teacher. I knew I would have to leave Newcastle to achieve this. Students from the Newcastle area went to Sydney, Wagga or Armidale for their training.

I had convinced myself that I would like Wagga or Armidale best because they were live-in colleges. The lectures and accommodation were all on campus. Also from reports from older high school acquaintances, student teachers there seemed to have a good social life even if the food was terrible and the bedrooms freezing in winter.

Sydney Colleges appeared to be a greater challenge again. The cost in Sydney would be much more both for accommodation and day to day travel. As well, to an unsophisticated Newcastle boy, Sydney was a big place and you could easily get lost both physically and socially.

There had been 'talk' about the establishment of a new teachers' college in Newcastle but this was only something in the distant future. No decision on a site had been made. Even as late as January 7th, 1949 the Newcastle Morning Herald was reporting that a Newcastle college might open sometime in 1950. However after the Leaving Certificate results were published in mid-January, the Minister for Education announced that a college in Newcastle would open in 1949 if temporary accommodation could be found.

I received a Teachers' College Scholarship offer, subject to a medical and suitability examination, but the college where I was to study was
not named. The examination of students took place at Sydney Teachers' College and the people who asked us to cough, sing a song, and to prove we were not colour-blind maintained that Newcastle College would not open in 1949 because there was no available building.

Within a week a dramatic change took place and through the early days of February almost daily reports were published in the Newcastle Morning Herald and the Newcastle Sun:

"Teachers' College at Technical College Building, Tighe's Hill"

"New Technical High School Broadmeadow (Under Construction) Site for Teachers' College"

"Principal Appointed"

"The Principal, G.H. Duncan, comes from the North"

"Old Kurri Kurri Boy to be Principal"

"R.F. Hodge, Principal Maitland Boys' High: 'Duncan was a lad with a personality that sticks in your mind"

"The Junction School to be Demonstration School"

"Junction Parents Anxious: 'We don't want our children to be taught by student teachers''

"Teachers' College Staff arrives to train 200 young men and women. Only first year classes will attend the College this year"

The Newcastle Morning Herald staff reporter wrote an excellent article (February 11th) about the arrival of the Principal and staff:

"...What they found was a long low building, resounding with noises of carpentry, encumbered with a sea of shavings, ladders and scaffoldings, and workmen wielding paint brushes and hammers.

......

......Although the raw stages of a college are no novelty to Mr. Duncan who was on the staff of Balmain and Wagga colleges when they were opened, this must be the most immature of his ventures.

......

......He (G.H. Duncan) stepped straight into the confusion by allocating his staff to tasks of unpacking books and equipment, buying more books, making enquiries about accommodation and playing fields, and innumerable other details of organisation."
Mr. Duncan is enthusiastic about his new school. 'The College hopes to send out teachers who love their work and are proud of it', he said.

Mr. Duncan also said 'My staff is taking a deep pride in literally shaping this new and important venture in Newcastle's educational history.'

This was exciting and exhilarating stuff and I certainly felt part of it. However there were times when I wondered if I would ever begin my training there.

Heavy rain during January and February had made the task of the builders very difficult. The new lecture building was incomplete and it was surrounded by a sea of mud because workmen could not lay cement paths. The building certainly would not be ready for lectures by March 1st, the day we were expected to enrol.

A decision was made by the Principal and the District Inspectors to send new student teachers to local schools 'to observe the work of practising teachers and cultivate a new attitude to school'. We were expected to only observe teachers in action, but all gave some lessons and we then realised that we had a lot to learn about teaching. This type of pupil-teacher training had not been used for twenty years in this State but it gave the builders another two weeks to prepare the stand-in College for lectures.

By the actual enrolment day, the College Staff had not received a list of students from the Education Department. It was expected that the new enrolments would all come from Newcastle and its surrounding areas, but they arrived from all parts of the State. Accommodation had to be found for many homeless students and Newcastle families took up the challenge. They wanted a teachers' college and they intended to keep it.

So the College began in semi-chaos. Buildings continued to go up around us during two years of study. Rooms were vacated while fixtures were finished or painting completed. Yet buildings do not make a college. The staff and the students are its heart and soul and we spent two wonderful years learning about children and ourselves. Besides the physical discomfort we also faced a psychological barrage from local
principals and teachers who had trained at Sydney and Armidale. They consistently emphasised how sorry they were for us. Their old colleges had history, high teaching reputations, and charisma, something they believed it would take years for Newcastle to achieve. However, although we had no tradition to follow, no student organisational network to guide us, we built up, in two years, a wonderful college spirit and this spirit has stood the test of time.

In our first Pioneer Session reunion in 1970, twenty years after the first graduations, ninety nine out of one hundred and seventy two attended.

Everything in that first year was a first:
the first election of President: Michael Hannan and of Vice-President: Barbara Williamson
the first demonstrations and practice teaching sessions
the first college dance and the first drama presentations
the first sporting and social club formation
the first visit from another college (Balmain)
the first visit to the snowfields
the first intercollegiate - (a visit to Sydney)
the first college ball
the first college camp.

The College Staff contributed a great deal to the success of these ventures and particular credit must go to Harold Gillard, Kitty Barnes, and the Principal, Griff.Duncan for their personal contributions. In 1988 students are older and do not seek involvement of staff in their social activities. Forty years ago students needed and appreciated the efforts of Staff to make their two years as enjoyable as possible. Subsequent years built on the framework established by the pioneering sessions.

These memories are very fresh in my mind, and they get a good 'airing' fairly regularly. The Pioneer Session has had three highly successful reunions, after 20 years, after thirty years, after 35 years, and a strong local group meet regularly throughout the year.

My fellow students and I look back with great joy on the fun, the good fellowship and the professional training we received at Newcastle Teachers' College in 1949-50.
At the end of 1950 I completed the Leaving Certificate and gained a very unremarkable pass. In those days however it was enough to gain me - and lots of others like me - a Teachers' College Scholarship. This award entitled me to train for two years, be paid a small allowance during that time, and then be bonded for three years afterwards or repay three hundred pounds (six hundred dollars) to some omnipotent authority connected with the government. After our first session of practice teaching, many of us agreed that we would 'serve out the bond' by teaching to the end of 1955, and then resign. It just hasn't worked out that way.

In 1951 Newcastle Teachers' College lacked a permanent home. We were accommodated at what is now Merewether High School. There were then, of course, far fewer buildings than now and we occupied only the bottom floor of the main block. I think the whole college had about two hundred students.

Vivid recollections of 1951 have very little to do with the General Primary Course we had all undertaken. I remember instead the College blazer-green with white trimming and a golden torch on the pocket above the motto "Ad Meliorem Mundum". At the first assembly we were addressed as 'Mr', 'Miss', or 'Mrs' and were subtly encouraged to hasten towards maturity and responsibility. I began to take myself rather seriously. For those of us who came from single-sex schools there was the heady business of being in class with girls. College dances, held every Tuesday night in the assembly hall, were attended by students and...
lecturers and the music was supplied by piano-playing students. 'Second Years' were much more important than 'First Years' and we tried very hard to bridge that gap by playing sport. Each five weeks we were paid our allowance and for a few days some of us revelled in 'Men Only' pubs which closed at 6p.m.. Driving caused no problem as there were only two cars in the College. At the very first College reunion ever held, we glimpsed the members of the Pioneer Session, great men and women who had established, in all respects of their student life, standards to which we could aspire, although they had been teaching for only one term.

In 1952 we were moved to Union Street just opposite National Park. Griffith Duncan spoke to all of us Second year students, who fitted into one large classroom. We began to specialise: I went into the Small Schools section to learn how to cope with the country one-teacher school; many of the girls went into Infants sections and the remainder concentrated on General Primary.

Again, though, I recall only the extra-curricular activities: dances at the Y.M.C.A. Hall in King Street; exhausting Rugby within the College and in the Newcastle competition; and the football team being coaxed from training in National Park to form the dragoons' chorus in "Patience".

Perhaps the vast difference between that tertiary institution of 1951-52 and the College in its later years was the fact that all of us - lecturing staff and students - knew one another very well. Strong friendships were made and many of those have endured.

At the end of 1952, aged eighteen, I clutched my Teachers' Certificate, began to suspect how little I knew, and peeped into the terrifying abyss of my future. Many of us began by completing military service, which we had been able to defer until we finished our course. I became Trooper Rooney at 13th Battalion, Ingleburn, and in April, 1953 started teaching at Liverpool Junior High School.

(Trooper Rooney's gaze into the future did not allow him to foresee that he would become an outstanding teacher of English in High Schools and a leading professional actor in the Australian theatre. - J.D.)
1949 Pioneer Primary School Student Teachers discussing their craftwork with their lecturer, W.E. Wilcox.

THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS SCENE

When the College was established in 1949, it was accommodated at the Industrial Arts block of what was to be the Newcastle Technical High School near the racecourse at Broadmeadow. When the remainder of the school was completed the Teachers' College moved to Cooks Hill in portable rooms imported from England.

In 1955 a Secondary Industrial Arts Teacher Training Course was commenced with practical courses being conducted at the Newcastle Technical College. When Teachers' Colleges became C.A.E.s, the Industrial Arts practical Courses were conducted in the new Industrial Arts building at Waratah.

I was in charge of the Industrial Arts Campus from 1970 to 1973, during the period when the remainder of the C.A.E. was being built. A special Artisan Teacher Education programme was commenced for qualified journeymen and technicians. At this stage the Craft and Industrial Arts
staff had increased to twenty-two lecturers with an attendant staff of six. The year 1976 saw the introduction of a three-year Industrial Arts degree course. The first graduates of this programme were admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Education (Industrial Arts) at the 1979 Graduation.

**BLUE MOOD**

("Blue Mood" is a story about a Teachers' College student and his clay model of a female form made during a Craft session).

At the end of the practical session students brought their clay models on modelling boards to the demonstration bench. As the student who had created "Blue Mood" carried his model to the front of the room, he tripped and it fell to the floor, resulting in much loss of shape. As the lecturer in charge had seen the model being made, he awarded it a mark, and commented that it was still an interesting arrangement of masses. This comment was the beginning of a 'work of art' called "Blue Mood".

At this time students were preparing murals for the College ball. Imagine my predicament at the ball when my wife saw a large mural of a male lecturer looking at a curvaceous female student with the caption: 'An interesting arrangement of masses!' Thinking quickly, I said to my wife, 'I wonder who that lecturer could be'.

After a drying period of several weeks, that shapely piece of clay was baked and glazed a beautiful shade of blue, and the next episode began.

The Newcastle Art Gallery was arranging an art exhibition from another country and somehow this glazed torso was placed in a central position, with a card entitling it "Blue Mood". When the exhibition came to an end "Blue Mood" was moved to another prominent place in the Art Gallery. The story of this work of art was published later in the Students' Journal.

Perhaps I should have given "Blue Mood" a higher mark.

W.E. Wilcox
In 1949 N.T.C. opened at Broadmeadow. The first Inter-Collegiate at Bathurst consisted of Athletics and Major Games. We travelled from Newcastle in two buses, one of which broke down at Eastern Creek near St. Mary's on the return journey. The lecturers accompanying the students were Kitty Barnes, John Moore, Margaret Melville and myself. The party was housed in the Church of England Hostel. There was a heavy fall of snow. Students on the second bus did not arrive in Newcastle until the next morning. They 'buried' the bus on their arrival at College.

An Inter-Collegiate Board was formed on the basis of Newcastle going to Armidale, and also to Balmain and Mackie Colleges. Newcastle visited Wagga, accompanied by Mr. Duncan, who was then able to renew his association with Wagga's Principal, Mr. Blakemore.

Cricket involving all Colleges was played. Vince Martin of Newcastle College was captain of a representative team which played the N.S.W. Association Representative team and defeated them on the Sydney Cricket Ground.

In time, the Inter-Collegiates did not retain the support of College Principals - clubs arranged their own visits, e.g. when Newcastle went to Armidale to contest athletics and cricket.

N.T.C. had a sports afternoon, where four houses competed. A sports report was given at weekly assemblies.

Ken Scott (now a lecturer) won the 220 yards at Bathurst, holding the record. Ken was also a member of the N.T.C. Hockey team.

N.T.C. always had a strong Rugby Union team, defeating Sydney at the first Inter-Collegiate in Sydney. Outstanding players were John Doherty and Colin De Lore who represented Country Firsts. Others to represent were Ted Wicks, Brian Schumacher, Bob Dark and Ross Turton.
Camp Songs of the Early Years
 Contributed by Leila Barclay (Whittle)

Staff Song performed at a concert held on the Point Wollstonecraft Camp

I'd love to climb an apple-tree and sit on Harold Gillard's knee;
and have Bev. Thomas croon to me -
It's camping but it's fun!
I'd love to go down for a swim, and have Lindsay Hill push me in -
into the arms of Paul Newling -
It's camping but it's fun!

I'd love to act with Mr. Doyle, upon a movie screen,
and have him gaze into my eyes -
It's camping but it's fun!
With Hunter Graham to beat the band, and Alan Eggerton on the stand,
and Crago dear to hold my hand,
It's camping but it's fun!

I'd love to go out for a sail, and have Don's ardour send me pale
and land on shore with a wet, wet tail -
It's camping but it's fun!
I'd love to go for a barbecue, oh, Johnny Hook, we'll go with you
and stroll back home at half past two;
It's camping but it's fun!

We love to stroll round out of bounds, to see that things are right,
to send those ardent couples home;
It's camping but it's fun!
We see romances right and left, and wonder if they'll stand the test
and end up in a true-love nest.
IT'S CAMPING BUT IT'S FUN!
THE SONG OF THE TORCH BRIGADE

Composed by Anon

Performed at the Yarramundi Camp by the Staff, in solo and chorus parts, and by Students

MR. STAINES:  
O who will go rounds with me,  
And make a walkabout?  
O who will join the Torch Brigade  
To see the lights are out?

ALL:  
0 we will go the rounds with you,  
Go prowling by your side;  
And two by two will take the beat  
And, Students, woe betide!

We screw our courage to the point  
With tea of Staines's brew;  
We grab a torch; we ring a bell;  
We ring a bell - or two.

We flash them here, we flash them there,  
We work with plot and plan;  
We peer in every shadowy patch,  
The river bank we scan.

We hope the men have gone to bed,  
And all the women too:  
But if they haven't, oh dear me,  
What won't the lecturers do?

MR. WOOD:  
What's this we see come looming up,  
So very, very late?  
Is that a Stude? And are there two?  
Are you that woman's mate?

ALL:  
The torches' lights work overtime,  
Effective barricades ......  
"Why aren't you all asleep in bed,  
You little renegades?"
STUDENTS: We couldn't find the way back home!
The night was quite obscure;
We couldn't find the river bank,
And made a wide detour.

MR. STAINES: Go, get to bed and stay there too,
And no more coil and moil,
Oh, sure as eggs, you'll find your claim
Is jumped by Mr. Doyle!

ALL: Here comes another wandering one,
Caught by the searching beam ......

STUDENT: I think you only think I'm here,
Things are not what they seem!

MRS. WHITTLE: This is the hut where Beauty lies ...
They're surely all in bed!
But no, this species strange we find
In wardrobes roosts instead.

MISS MELVILLE: An even stranger species here
Soft beds and pillows scorns;
Beneath the beds they crouch in sleep
From the lights-out till the dawns.

ALL: At last we think they're bedded down -
The Hut, the Vikings - all;
For final silence settles down
On river bank and hall ....

The Torch Brigade its work has done,
And so to bed - not we!
We quench our torches and our thirst
In cups of morning tea.
I have a collection of howlers from students' exam papers over the years, which you may wish to use as memorabilia:

**QUESTION:** Name a factor contributing to the decline of the birth-rate, 1880-1920.

**ANSWER:** "The introduction of conception".

**QUESTION:** Who was the author of a famous work on the use of power, entitled The Prince?

**ANSWER:**
(1) "Matravelly"
(2) "Machievelli - unsure of spelling but I can pronounce it O.K."

**QUESTION:** Comment on the difficulties of the first European settlement (in Australia).

**ANSWER:** "Agriculture was slow to get off the ground".

**QUESTION:** What is the supreme legislative body in the Australian political system?

**ANSWER:** "Caucus".
I joined the staff of Newcastle Teachers' College in 1966 and retired from the C.A.E. in 1986. As a historian my interest is in change: no change, no history. There were certainly plenty of changes of structure and attitude in my time there.

There was general support for the changeover from College under the control of the N.S.W. Department of Education to a corporate College with its own Council. We were going to be free from the heavy hand of centralised authority. As the heady days of the early 1970s with an oversupply of students and almost an oversupply of money turned into the years since then of an undersupply of both, staff began to long for the good old days. Instead of one State Government boss, the College found itself answering to the additional authority of the Federal Government, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, and the State Higher Education Board. Instead of new staff being appointed as needed, with a teaching load of fourteen hours, plus or minus two, per week, and a career expectation of becoming a senior lecturer, staff found themselves with higher workloads, fewer staff and a reduced career expectation. Old timers on the staff recalled the wisdom of the then President of the Lecturers' Association and later President of the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation, Eric Pearson, who always doubted the benefits of becoming corporate colleges and insisted that he was perfectly satisfied to remain a member of the staff of Sydney Teachers' College.
There was considerable change inside the College during my time. It was Griff. Duncan's College. He was never short of ideas of what courses should consist of and it was my impression that Heads of Departments and staff accepted without question Griff.'s authority and judgment. Bert Wood, Head of the English Department was the exception to this compliance. He often became the lion in Griff.'s path at staff meetings, and the maulings given and received by Bert and Griff., who was no pussycat, made staff meetings more interesting and longer than they would otherwise have been. From 1966 on there was an increasing intake of staff, many of whom were senior staff from high schools, used to having a say in the running of their schools. From being a College where Griff. was the acknowledged decision-maker to one where top policy decisions were made by a representative College Academic Board came about after Griff. was subjected to fierce and unjustified personal attacks in student publications by students attending the University on teacher-trainee scholarships. With the establishment of the Academic Board, decisions on student progression could no longer be said to be subject to the whims of the Principal. Since that time, Committees and Boards have proliferated; if two heads are better than one, ten or twenty must be better than two. I fear we have tended to become talking heads. As Clement Atlee said, "Democracy means government by discussion, but is only effective if you can stop people talking".

One noticeable change over the years was in dress. By 1966 men students no longer wore blazers to College, but most wore ties and the women wore frocks. The big debate in my early years was about whether women students should be allowed to wear slacks to lectures. The recommendation was left to the women members of the staff who finally agreed that women students could wear slacks provided they were tailored. There were changes of dress among staff. Newcomers to College rather relished the idea of wearing academic gowns, formerly given an outing only on school Speech Days and Play Days. Yost soon ceased to wear them to lectures, leaving them on nails behind office doors, to be worn at Assemblies or on dashes to the carpark on wet days. Staff tended
to join the move to more informal dress, perhaps part of the process of identifying with students rather than being different from them. I remember one male staff member surprising me by saying that he was going to ask Griff. if it was all right to wear shorts to College.

The late John Koos was a sartorial trendsetter. By example he taught wearers of white shorts about colour-coordinated gear. He was once asked if it took him long to decide in the morning what he would wear to work. In slow measured tones he replied, "That is much too important a decision to be left until morning."

Mr Wood and Debating Team, 1955
Looking at the Home Economics department of the Hunter Institute of Higher Education in 1988 with its very modern facilities and its sterile laminates and stainless steel, those of us who were involved with the old Union Street Teachers' College with its "slum" surroundings, must surely be incredulous of the conditions which we lived through there. There were leaking roofs with washing up basins and pots and pans catching the drips, sagging ceilings, windows that were difficult to open and still harder to shut, stoves that could have come from the city dump, kitchen equipment that must surely have come from a demolished school at Woop Woop, paper thin walls, invasions of vermin and creepy crawlies in plague proportions, and electrical installations that defy description. And in these surroundings we practised Haute Cuisine!

But there was a good feeling in that decrepit old place. We held inter-collegiate visits, our own sports and swimming carnivals, and staff get-togethers. We even posed for staff and student photographs, but more importantly we seemed to get to know each other and perhaps those old wooden planked verandahs and walkways which connected our many portables played a unifying role, for they were busy places for both staff and students: for a lively, good-natured debate with the Principal, discussions on work between staff and students, the beginning of friendships, even love affairs, and for the plotting of moves in student politics.

Although there are many differences, what remains the same is the experience of meeting the group of wonderful students which fronts up each year, with their enthusiasm, dedication and willingness to succeed. The Staff of the Institute are fortunate to share in the dreams and aspirations of these future teachers of Australia - and indeed the world.
Newcastle Teachers' College opened in 1949 with an initial intake of 182 students, all for Primary School Training. In the following year there began the succession of "Gilbert and Sullivan" productions, which were always well received.

Music productions were held in what later became the Newcastle Technical High School assembly hall and were directed in these early years by Hilda McIntosh and Marjorie Sneddon. Each year there were two evening performances, playing to full houses and enjoyed by audiences who appreciated not only the freshness and spontaneity of student presentations, but also the hard work and thought that went into them.

The first programme consisted of "Trial by Jury" and "H.M.S. Pinafore". The soprano leads were taken by Pat Welsh and Noeline Byrnes; Noel Rutherford (formerly of the Newcastle University Department of History) was a convincing Dead-Eye Dick; and the roles of the Judge ("Trial by Jury") and Captain Corcoran ("Pinafore") were taken by Kevin Clifton and Kevin Williams. The role of Sir Joseph Porter was taken by Noel Pryde (now a Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences at the Institute). Accompaniments were provided by student pianists. Lecturers Colin Doyle and Gordon Elliott attended to the make-up and Alwyn Rutherford showed considerable talent in writing parodies incorporating reference to current College events.

The stage scenery for this production was painted by a student Greta Hard who spent many hours of her vacation on the work. Once painted the flies were tied to the beams in the ceiling and nailed to the floor. This task of positioning of sets was complicated by the fact that beams were not always available where they were needed.
Costumes for the performances were hired; and though these, in the main, met requirements, there was always need to shorten trouser legs for men, or provide adequate padding for women's garments. In these crises Leila Whittle, Lecturer in Needlework, proved herself indispensable.

Apart from those working on stage in the productions, back-up teams of students numbering about half the student population at the time, were involved: in selling tickets, designing programmes, looking after properties, lighting, prompting, etc.

Special mention must be made of Kitty Barnes of the English Department who had a close relationship with the students to the extent that she always knew 'just the one' for a special job; of Bert Wood, who was always ready to help with set construction; of Phil Marquet, who attended to movement and grouping on the stage, as well as to the diction of performers, and last but not least of Griff. Duncan, whose love of "G and S", gained from his experiences in other performances, brought valued criticism and much enlightenment of the text to developing productions.

In any musical production where, for the first time, music and movement are brought together, there is much opportunity for hilarity, and for frustration on the part of the producer. Students who had 'two left feet' and who could not count were apt to turn Marjorie Snedden into a 'fire-eater' on these occasions.

In later years with the growth of the College, the curriculum was extended to include Music and Art Courses. New talent was brought to the production line. This gave David Gee opportunities to develop his later talent as a conductor of "G and S" in Newcastle and Dale Blunden (Farrell) to take on leading roles with the Newcastle "G and S" Society.

The old days spent in these endeavours brought good results: students gained in confidence and poise, cultivated a taste for the stage and for music, and, perhaps most importantly, learned to organise their time. Strong bonds were formed between students and staff, and between the College and the community. In any reunion of ex-students "G and S" will usually feature in conversations which begin with "Do you remember ....."
THE STORY OF DRAMA (1951-61) AT N.T.C.
Huldah M. Turner (for H.M. Turner and P.A. Marquet)

From its beginning in 1949 Newcastle Teachers' College developed and maintained a tradition of active and outstanding drama achievement.

Mr. Duncan, the first Principal, believed in freedom and creativity; and it was his philosophy which gave the College drama its direction in the formative years by including Drama in the curriculum and by giving it personal and unstinted support.

Ultimately there were three outlets for drama activity: Drama Options in both years, a strong Drama Club, and after the first Graduates emerged from the fledging Newcastle University College, the Drama courses for our Diploma in Education students.

Under the guidance of the first lecturer in Speech and Drama, Clive Hoffman, dramatic performances through Options and the Club had already been launched. So when I arrived in 1951, I carried on from there.

As 1951 was the sesquicentenary of the Declaration of the Commonwealth of Australia, the first item on the Drama programme (as it was also in the local schools) was a reenactment of the ceremony that marked that event. Much research into text and costume, as well as intense rehearsal, followed. A shoe-string budget meant that the Justices' robes and wigs had to be home-made - cotton wool and Woolworth's discloths and scarlet gowns were designed and made by Leila Whittle. We borrowed from anyone who was willing to lend: for example, the Bishop's mitre and cope came from St. Peter's Anglican Church at Hamilton by courtesy of Canon Single. Philip Marquet, at that time on the staff of Newcastle Boys' High, provided the guns and ammunition for the Royal Salute. In a special
programme at No.2 Oval, where hundreds of school children participated in song and dance, the reenactment was staged, and Philip Marquet delivered the 21-gun salute on cue.

In that year the Drama Option group produced "Emperor Jones" by Eugene O'Neill. This was an Australian premiere and the main part was taken by none other than one Douglas Huxley, now Principal of the Institute. Philip Marquet again came to our aid with the necessary firearms - rifles and blanks. We left an abiding legacy of this production in Newcastle Technical High School: one of the blanks was fired in the wrong direction and blasted a large and irreparable hole in the brand-new, specially designed stage curtains. In this production old newspapers were cut into strips to make 'palm' hats, a chore undertaken by Sheila Moriarty.

In 1952 Philip Marquet joined the College staff as Lecturer in Speech and Drama, and from then on, for a decade, he and I worked as Advisers on the Drama programme. In that same year the College moved from its 'cuckoo' occupation at Broadmeadow to its long-term 'temporary' accommodation in Union Street. From then on, College play-production was exclusively a Club activity.

The transfer lost us the use of a fine hall and stage, and for years we had to rehearse in lecture-rooms and private homes, and 'borrow' school halls in the area for final productions. Newcastle Boys' High School, Newcastle Girls' High School, and Newcastle Technical High School were generous in making their halls available to us over and over again, and when the Dip.Ed. students arrived later on, we used the Union Hall at Tighe's Hill Technical college.

In retrospect we wonder how so much was achieved under such adverse conditions. The main problem, of course was imagining, in the restricted areas for rehearsal and preparation of sets and costumes, the scope of a real stage. Another problem was transporting loads to the school halls after school hours and to remove all signs of occupation before the next school day began. Tired cast and crew had to be up betimes to meet these conditions, and many an anxious hour we had when trucks failed to arrive on time.
We operated for a long period in this fashion producing each year at least four One-Act plays (sometimes nine or ten) and one Three-Act Play. All this activity was extra-curricular. The conditions engendered a fellowship to be envied. We battled along together, working for weeks on end till late into the night. Incidentally, we made sure that everyone participating arrived home safely.

The main purpose of the One-Act programme was that students who wanted the experience of acting should have it, and those who wanted to try their hands at production should try it. Believe it or not, there were in College in those years students who had never seen a play, much less acted in one. The students chose their own plays and attempted to put into their productions the principles they explored in the Options - regarding stage settings, styles and techniques, decor, make-up, lighting etc. The Three-Act play, on the other hand, was selectively cast, with the aim of producing an art-form. It was regarded as a special privilege to be involved in this production, and in the main, participation was reserved for students in their Final Year, who had already previously proved their interest and ability. Students were also strongly encouraged to write their own plays and two of these were produced by their writers - 'Rehearsal No.1' by John Avery (now a School Principal) and 'The Captain Laughs at Dusk' by Athol Hutchinson (now a Special Master at Cessnock High School).

Finally came the College's long-planned, long-awaited new hall with its glorious space, large storage areas, rooms to work in and in which to leave unfinished business, lighting installations, and rehearsals on our own stage in our own hall. We even had a kitchen! It was here that Agnes Smith made some of the huge curtains for the stage.

With the Club's hard work went much fun. Every year we took One-Act plays to the Singleton Drama Festival, and, though we brought home no trophies (often because our cast were 'too youthful') there were high commendations for our work. Especially memorable were 'Words on a Window-Pane' and 'Happiness, my Goal'. There were too the Drama Camps, sometimes at Coal Point Y.M.C.A. House and sometimes at Shoal Bay. Camps
were designed to put the final polish on productions before they went public. In between intensive rehearsals there were the usual Camp relaxations. The meals prepared by Leila Whittle and her Home Scientists were especially bright spots.

Then from 1957 on, all Dip.Ed. students, whatever their faculties, were required to participate in Drama production - this was part of their curriculum and was examinable. They operated as an independent unit and were completely responsible for their own production.

Some of the Three-Act plays presented in these years were "Emperor Jones" (produced twice by two separate producers), "Fountains Beyond", "Blithe Spirit", "Wind of Heaven", "Dear Brutus", "Deirdre of the Sorrows", "Black Chiffon", "Quiet Weekend", "Playboy of the Western World", "Medea", and a recital with tableaux of Douglas Stewart's "Glencoe". Among the countless One-Act plays were "Thread o' Scarlet", "Shall We Join the Ladies?", "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion" and "The Green Veil Passes".

In these years College Drama was very much a Staff-Student community affair: Bert Wood's 'cedar' staircase, a focal point in "Wind of Heaven", will be long remembered; Gordon Elliott's creation of a Harley-Street accent out of an ocker Australian one for the psychiatrist in "Black Chiffon" won much acclaim; the assistance given by Colin Doyle and Gordon Elliott in making-up a long succession of 'characters', and by Helen Moller, who unobtrusively brought her taste and expertise to bear on decor and movement was greatly appreciated. Harold Gillard was quietly helpful in many ways. There was acute Staff interest in the choice of the Three-Act play every year. As Drama Advisers, Philip and I supervised all rehearsals, and the Principal was always supportive, particularly in the final stages of a production.

Out of these performances rise a host of memories. Some insist on being recorded. Michael Taper (well-known to Newcastle play-going audiences) was a 'natural' as Lob in "Dear Brutus". (The period chairs for this production we borrowed from an antique shop, and they are now part of my
own lounge room furniture). And Michael Taper again is remembered as an authentic Leonardo da Vinci. Karl Levett distinguished himself as the aborigine in "Fountains Beyond". (Karl is now a critic of plays in London and New York). The elegant and distinguished Jan Bain, president of the Club in her time and the blithe spirit of "Blithe Spirit", now lives in London with her husband, Drama-Producer Royston Morley. The irrepressible Kevan Gosper of Olympic fame is now a Managing Director of the Shell Oil company. Colin Anderson, who produced clever and stylish University Revues, and who put on at College another production of "Emperor Jones" when decor by Tony Tripp, is now Lecturer in Drama at Riverina C.A.E. Jil Foster's beautiful voice reciting the "Glencoe" ballad sequence - "Sigh, wind in the pines" - still haunts the memory, as do her four different voices for the characters Swift, Vanessa, Stella and a Child in "Words on a Window-Pane". John Cohen who played in "The Rose and the Crown" is now a lecturer at Canberra C.A.E.. Neat, trim little Wendy Brett had a flair for programme design and a quick bright wit. Charles Grahan, now Manager of an A.B.C. Station, was skilful and polished and an infuriating ad-libber. Vic Rooney who flitted across the scene, with other fish to fry, now stars in professional theatre and films - and the College is very proud to claim him. Ken Longworth of the Dip.Ed. group and co-producer of "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder is now a well-known critic for "The Newcastle Morning Herald" - he must see more plays than anyone in Newcastle. David Gee and Jacqueline Magennis of the lovely singing voice both gave their talents to the Drama and Music Clubs. Who can forget Kay Planagan, producer of "Medea", with her dark, flashing eyes, and an accurate aim with a piece of chalk, and a fluent stream of flagellating language ("Mrs. T, would you mind leaving the room so that I can tell the cast what I think of them!"); or Robert 'Yo-Yo' Harbin of "Blithe Spirit", now a School Principal, combining yo-yo skills with serious acting; or Beryl Blundell surreptitiously hypnotising the cast between cues; or, of course, George Hutchinson, president, and one of the most hard-working members of the Club, whose tragic death stunned the College. (The George Hutchinson Memorial Prize, awarded annually for Drama is a tribute to his outstanding contribution to College Drama and has become part of the College tradition).
For many reasons we must remember "Wind of Heaven", produced by Kevin McDonald, now a well known College lecturer and conservationist; and in the same play, the beautiful gilded harp, a gift to Elsie ap Thomas from the King of Belgium, and lent by her to the College for the performances. Elsie Thomas had been crowned Bard of a Welsh Eisteddfod a year or two before. For the four nights of dress rehearsal and performance she and her husband travelled down from Kurri Kurri with the harp in a utility truck. We had much difficulty in making curtain-rise, as Mrs. Thomas would sit centre stage, playing without stop beautiful Welsh melodies, while cast and crew crept out and sat on the cedar-staircase, mesmerised. When we finally brought all our tact to bear and managed curtain-up, she would retire to the wings where she stood throughout the play, her eyes riveted on the harp. Then she took it back to Kurri Kurri every night.

An army of other names and scenes marches across the years; for the Drama Club always had a very strong membership, with every member involved, acting, producing, supervising and devising sets, scenes, props, costumes; serving as stage crews, house managers, cooks or whatever; not forgetting programme designing and printing on the old much-used Gestetner.

Perhaps we can be forgiven for naming some, only some of these hard-working troops: Barbara Caldwell, Ruth Small, Bill Driscoll, Theo van der Veen, Noel McFayden, Fay Bartlett, Tom McBride, Una Barr, Don Filmer, Pat Biggs, Maureen Simpson, Judy McDonald, Judy McCaffrey, Merv Sneddon, Lorraine Talbot, Anne Renwick, Wendy Searle, Joan Ryan, Helen Clark, Joan Clark, Sandalene Clark, Tony Davis, Margaret Henri, Elin O'Connell, Bruce Deitz, Tessa Wicks, Robyn Wood, John Gill, Shirley Morris, Dick Retallick, David Codon - the list is endless.

To all we pay tribute for work very well done. We are gratified that, as we passed across this 'drama-scape', our destinies met even for a year or two. As students, these people enriched our lives and the life of the College-Corporate. We know that they now enrich the communities in which they live and serve, sharing with others their vision and expertise.
College Drama performances such as those presented by the Drama Club during my time at Union Street were often to be seen as triumphs of enthusiasm over unfavourable circumstances: of insufficient time available for preparation, for, as an extra-curricular activity, Club work was in competition for students' energies with College and outside commitments; of the difficulty of finding suitable plays with more female than male acting parts, for at that time the population of the College was predominantly female - certainly it was a luxury to know that there were understudies for parts taken by men; and of the different levels of drama experience among students, some casts having to include newcomers to the art (although this was cheerfully accepted in the interests of student involvement and social development).

It was always worthwhile looking for a good play, one that had some novelty and some nourishment in it, and one that would 'play itself' to an audience without having to rely too much on sheer acting expertise - but of course, we often had heart-warming surprises 'on the night'.

When (just before the move to Shortland) the Club chose the 'black' comedy "Billy Liar" by Keith Waterhouse, we felt that we could not go far wrong. The play had a contemporary theme - on the problems of a boy with some intellectual promise out of step with the Welfare State in England, at loggerheads with his funeral-parlour employer and his mother, in sympathy with his neglected grandmother, and in strife with his three girlfriends, to two of whom he had become engaged. The smallish cast with many good parts for women fitted in well with our resources. The play called for one set only, but one which could be varied by the use of
flexible lighting. The structure of the scenes and the dialogue were first class. But there were two problems to overcome, the sustaining of the North Country accent which gave so much 'flavour' to the play, and the lack of an understudy for Billy.

The student, let us call him Tim, who took the part of Billy was very well cast, almost type-cast. He possessed a striking presence, a good voice, acting skills including a very sensitive command of 'body language' and facial expression, and he had an excellent understanding of Billy's predicaments. All he needed was to memorize the lines he had to speak. (Thanks to someone's Yorkshire grandmother, the cast's accent was by then taking shape). But the end of the term was approaching and Tim's lecturers were demanding his now overdue assignments. In addition to his College activities he was committed to singing in a pop group (which was no doubt a means of keeping himself afloat financially). When the final rehearsal was to take place, Tim knew all his lines, he said but - he had entirely lost his voice. We had been smitten in the Achilles tendon, for there was no way to replace him. The only course we could take was to postpone performances and wait until Tim recovered.

During the 'Sixties, Drama Options and Club activities were part of my responsibilities but the latter were shared with other members of the English Staff. The two most memorable Club productions that I 'advised', because they required stylistic decor, large-scale stage grouping and movements, singing and dancing, and demanding main roles were Jean Anouilh's "Les Mouches" ("Les Flies") and Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage". (Here are some of the names that remain with me from those stimulating times: Jill Scott, Ros.Stewart, Sue Cummings, Bill Storer, Gary McDonald, Deane Done, Bob Sidlow, Kerry Davis, Lorraine Pearce, Prue Viggers, Margaret Cummings - but I am aware that many talented people have been omitted from this list).

Geoff Atkinson, a lecturer who was soon to leave this College for the English Staff of New England University, made a significant contribution to the Club in the early 'Sixties, which included 'advising' a production of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town". Des Davis, now at Wollongong University's Department of Drama, is remembered for his involvement with Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and with Arthur Miller's "The Crucible".
Jackie Thorpe, now free-lancing in Radio in New Zealand, was responsible for a very beautiful production of "Patience" for the Music Club when she was at Union Street. John Robson's productions of "White with Wire Wheels" by Jack Hibberd and of "Rooted" by Alex Buzo directed local attention to the new wave of Australian plays that was emerging in the early 'Seventies. During the period under discussion a wide variety of plays was presented to the audiences that supported Club activities.

To mark the move to the Shortland Campus, the S.R.C. at Union Street donated $3,000 in prize money for an Australian play-writing competition (for plays not previously performed in the professional theatre). Up to that time, this was the richest competition of its kind in Australia and it brought in 200 entries. Among the prize winners were John Romeril for "The Floating World", Jennifer Compton for "No Man's Land" and John O'Donoghue, at that time on the staff of the College, for "A Happy and Holy Occasion". John Robson and College students were the organisers of the competition and on the panel of judges were Ken Horler (of the Nimrod Theatre), George Whaley, and Phillip Parsons of Sydney and Denis Biggins, Philip Short, Jennifer Mathieson, John Robson and myself of Newcastle. In this way Newcastle Teachers' College made a contribution to the development of play-writing in Australia.