

The Arnold Rieck Story



Arnold's Story

My father was Percy William Rieck, (born 21 March 1907 at Woolloongabba) whose family came from Wittenberg in West Germany in the 1860's and settled around Kalbar. My mother was Olive Kersley. She was born in Reading, in the south of England (6 June, 1908). She came as a youngster to Australia. The Kersleys lived in various places in South East Queensland. Mum and Dad were married on 29th August 1931. I was born exactly 12 months later, on 29th August 1932 – not on Mum's wedding day (as I have been reported telling folk).



As a child I grew up in two houses. Our first house was at 78 Lewin St., Bardon where Mum and Dad built their first wooden house on stumps to match other houses nearby. Our house was on the western side of the street where it drops away on the west side. Over our back fence we had a view of the Rifle Range and Taylor Range. Below our house on the flat was Fletcher Park. In the distance was Ithaca Creek and further to the left, Coopers Camp Road.



Top picture: Arnold with parents.

Lower left: Arnold with grandmother (Nannie, Louise Rieck (nee Jenner)).

Middle: Arnold with grandfather August Rieck and father

Right: Arnold with grandparents. Grandfather was killed in a workplace accident when Arnold was one year old, but Nannie lived to be 89 years.

Our neighbours were the Todd family. Colin was my age, Audrey a couple years ahead and Beryl a little younger than I was. Next to us at number 80 was the Cox family, just husband and wife – no children. Next house along at 82 was a young family who had recently built their wooden house on stumps.

Dad was a licensed plumber with several plumbers working for him and several apprentices. Dad's workshop was under the house and it could be quite noisy during the day. Dad would take workmen off to various plumbing jobs.





As a youngster, I can remember watching Dad covering lead pipes for sewerage with molten solder and wiping the excess solder off with a thick layer of heavy bunting. One day he had a piece of hot lead finish up in his eye cavity, which was quite a concern for some time.

Down the back yard we had a fowl run with a high wire fence around a shed. Dad had rigged up a water trough for the chooks to drink from. It was an old toilet system which automatically replenished the water. He planted a choko vine near where the water overflowed. It produced dozens of fruit each season and we never had to water it. In the chook yard was a large fig tree. When the figs were ripe, we had our fill of figs. I used to enjoy climbing the large tree to select the ripe fruit.

Nearby Dad built a large covered area for soft leaved plants, like ferns. It was a pleasant spot on a hot afternoon. In front of this covered area was our outside toilet. One evening a week the night man came and took away the full can and replaced it with an empty one.

In 1937 I started school at Ashgrove State School. John was born in 1936. I had a night with the Cox family next door. Mum came home with her baby. Early in my school days, I came home with whooping cough. In those days there was no vaccination available. John was still tiny and became really ill with whooping cough. He eventually got over it.

At Ashgrove school there were actually two buildings on site. The original building was an old wooden structure. It was still in use, although really past its time. This was my first school room and my first teacher was Miss Taylor. She got married in that year, but we still called her Miss Taylor. With two years of prep before grade one, I found myself coping easily with classes. I can remember one year we had an inspector visit who had us do some writing for him on our slate. The slate was equipped with heavy grooves so that our letters had to keep within the grooves, which was rather difficult with a slate pencil. We used to sharpen our slate pencils on a piece of concrete. You needed a sharp pencil to write neatly. The inspector walked around the room placing a number on each slate. I remember I had a 7. What it was for, I had no idea. In hindsight, I had scored 7 out of 10 for my writing and in his black book he averaged out his score for the class.

In my Grade One year we went into the new school. It was a pleasant change. I can remember once, probably in Grade One when a younger prep boy was introduced to our group and he started to read out of a school reader – a far more mature reader than we were. Wow – would I be able to read like that one day!

Going to school was a pleasant walk along Lewin Street to a spare allotment, down a steepish hill to the west, across Fletcher Park, across Ithaca Creek, walking on the stones to keep our feet or shoes dry, up Northy Street to Ashgrove tramline and on the road past the terminus to school. The main road went downhill toward St. John's Wood, the next suburb and next suburb from that was the developing suburb called The Gap.

The old state school building was moved to a paddock at the top of the hill and became the kindergarten. When John started kindergarten, I used to walk him to kindergarten on my way to school. It was a good mile from home to the site of the school.

On our way home from school, the Todds and I would stop at Ithaca Creek and enjoyed making rock walls across Ithaca Creek to stop the flow of water. One day Audrey Todd came and told us that there was a dead cat in the creek. It was about 50 metres downstream from where we were playing. She told us to do this "dance" and we would be OK. And in the dance we had to say "1, 2,

3 don't poison me". In hindsight we did not realise that the cat was downstream from where we were playing.

I joined the fife band in Grade One. Our school band marched the classes into their rooms every morning. I learnt to read music quite quickly and gave up my "lessons". Playing the fife came naturally to me. One Saturday the fife band was involved in playing at a patriotic fete at St. John's Wood hall. We marched down the hill from Ashgrove tram terminus to the hall, playing "British Grenadiers" and "Sons of the Seas". World War II was on, but it didn't affect us at all. The country was fighting Hitler and Mussolini. To my way of thinking, Hitler went around hitting people and Mussolini had huge muscles. As children the war was a long way from us.

One day while I was in Grade Two, there was a huge storm about 3pm when we were ready to go home. About 70 m from our new school, lightning struck a large blue gum. There was an almighty bang. The lights went off. When we were allowed out, the storm had passed and we found there were bits of the tree trunk outside our room. I found Dad in the ute ready to take me home. He said that at the height of the storm all the telephone lines stretching between the poles glowed with a blueish light. At that time all the telephone lines stretched between poles – none underground.

The noise of that storm and the lightning strike, Mum heard at home. After that Mum would not allow us children near any window during a storm – even washing up was delayed until a storm was over.

All of our school work up to Grade Two was done on slates and we had a wet sponge in a little tin to clean the slate. Slate pencils were made of soft greyish stone.

Every Sunday we had lunch at our Grandmother's, Dad's mother at Annerley. We called her Nannie. When I was one year old, her husband was electrocuted one Sunday afternoon, while up a pole at Wacol repairing a fault from a storm. As an aside, many years later my wife Joyce, met a man who had been at the Sunday School Teachers Meeting that Grandpa had called away from to attend to the repair. They were still at the meeting, when they received a message that he had been killed.

From that time onwards, Nannie always wore black clothing. That first Sunday as a one year old I am told that I walked around the house looking for Grandpa – and a cuddle from him – and I could not find him.

After I turned five I would walk up to Sunday School at the Annerley Church of Christ after lunch. I particularly remember one day I persevered and gesticulated with the Superintendent as I knew the memory verse and it was "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". So, I won for myself a special memory card which they handed out to the person who could remember the memory verse from the previous Sunday.

After Sunday School we went to Haig Road, Torwood where Mum's parents, the Kersleys lived. Here we would have afternoon tea and then head for home.

Our Saturdays at home meant it was castor oil day. Each boy had a spoonful. We hated it. Mum decided to make it easier for us to swallow she would put it into an orange drink with a little bit of bicarb of soda. We drank it and it ended up fizzing up our nose. Many years later playing hockey at Milton School, we used to be given half an orange to chew at half time. Every time I chewed the piece of orange, all I could think of was the castor oil on Saturday mornings.

On some Saturday afternoons when we had a good easterly breeze, we would fly my kite from the spare allotment a few houses from us. Dad made me a small kite. Mum had a picture of a koala

put on the front. Off we went with a large ball of string. Our launching site overlooked Fletcher Park, so our kite soared high into the air. I was very proud of my kite with its long tail.

When I was school age Dad used to buy a tray of Iceland poppy seedlings from a traveller each autumn. He planted dozens of seedlings in the front garden. My task was to keep them alive by watering them each day. We had a garden full of dancing Iceland poppies. Mum used to pick them of a morning, burn the ends of the stem and place them on the dining room table. They were a pretty sight.

One birthday I was given a Hornby train set with a wind-up engine, carriages and a series of railway lines, so I could run it in a large circle. I enjoyed playing with it on the front verandah. It finished up at 96 John St., many, many years later and then went missing.

Camping near Scotts Point, Redcliffe. Dad would take our large tent to Scotts Point a few times, when John and I enjoyed brief holidays from home.

One day a platoon of Australian Army soldiers came and camped near us. Dad had gone home and Mum was shopping. The soldiers set up tables for lunch. When they left they gave me a loaf of bread they had not used for lunch.

At Scotts Point, we lads would go and dig up sand worms for fishing. We used to catch some whiting for our meals. One day Dad was slowly reeling in his line and said that he had a crab nibbling away at the bait. He asked me to grab a frying pan and walk behind the line as it came close to the bank. I did that and in the shallow water I was able to catch the crab and heave it up on the sand. It was a sand crab, common in Moreton Bay, and it was big enough to keep. So we had sand crab for lunch. Delicious!

134 Fernberg Road, Rosalie. Late in 1942 we moved from Lewin Street into a new brick home along Fernberg Road. It was several houses down from "Fernberg", the residence of the Queensland Governor. Our home was built on the site of a demolished wheelwright property with a large area of concrete slabs down the back yard. That had been the floor of the factory. Dad had a large shed erected where he could keep all his plumbing equipment and accommodate two vehicles. There were now three boys in the family. Paul was born in 1939. Our home was on a built up level area. At the back of the house we had a large levelled area, supported by a porphyry wall. In the centre was a Hills Hoist. At Lewin Street the clothes line had been two heavy wires drawn across from a wooden bar. There were two clothes "props" keeping the lines from sagging. I can remember a couple of probably ex-World War I men walking the streets and shouting "Clothes Props". They carried one on each shoulder for sale. Now those long lines needing clothes props had been replaced with a Hills Hoist.

Around the edge of the raised area Mum planted lots of colourful roses. It was my job to care for them.

Then came the war with Japan in December 1941, following their attack on the U.S. at Pearl Harbour. The war was now on Australia's doorstep and coming closer week by week. The Japanese finally landed in Papua New Guinea and made their way along the Kokoda Track to capture Port Moresby. It was probably early 1942 when the Auxiliary Fire Service came and commandeered half of Dad's shed, including the two garages. The AFS lined one of the garages as a "bedroom" with bunk bed and a telephone line. The other garage housed a Ford utility and a large water pump on wheels. So we had a fire officer living on the premises twenty-four hours a day. From one of fire officers I first heard the words "bloody" and "damn". Those words were never used at home.

It was probably when the Kokoda Track battles were being fought that the station got a phone call stating that there was an unidentified aeroplane sighted over Brisbane. All Allied planes had an IFF identification, i.e. Friend or Foe. The fire officer rang Dad and told him to move his family into the "air raid shelter", which was under Dad's office. We did not get much sleep. Another telephone call – the plane is gone – all clear – back to bed. A couple days later a Japanese mini sub snuck into Sydney Harbour, tried to torpedo a U.S. cruiser but hit a small Australian Naval ship. Several sailors were killed.

It was around about the same time that the AFS occupied our shed, that an Army search light group set up in the southern end of the grounds of Government House. So on most nights we had the brilliantly bright light of a search light sweeping across the sky. Brisbane was a darkened city at night. Cars had to have their lights on low beam with a hood over their lights so they could not be seen from above. The windows of the house were blacked out with heavy black paper which was taped across to prevent shards of glass entering the home if bombing took place.

At Milton school in Gregory Park the authorities dug trenches to be used in case of an air raid on Brisbane. One wet season the trenches filled with water and they stayed filled with water, so the government had to build sandbag shelters above ground, zigzagging across the park near the school. In 1942 we went to school for only half a day – in the morning. Up to grade 4 in the morning and grades 5 – 7 in the afternoon. Half day for us lasted only a couple months. I can remember one of my school mates getting out at mid-day and heading off on his little bike to go home and he hit a Great Dane and over the handle bars he went. He had hit one of Danny Groundwater's dogs!

I was enrolled in Miss Jacobs class in grade three at Milton State School and graduated to using paper and pencil. It was a large school with about 1200 students at that time. A few years back it was down to 400, but has increased again. Miss Jacobs had had one of her relatives captured up in Arnhem Land by a Japanese submariner, taken on to the submarine and murdered. The relative had been working with Aborigine families. It was interesting that there were no young men on the staff at Milton school.

At this time, my handwriting was very poor and untidy. It was made to improve in grade four. Our teacher Miss Hughes was a disciplinarian. She had us doing neat writing all the time in our pads and she walked around the room with a 15 inch ruler and we copped it on our knuckles if she thought it was untidy. Because of her efforts my writing became very neat and remained that way until my stroke in 2011.

There were no Brooks text books available for any classes at this time, so Miss Hughes had us writing out British History, Australian History and Geography in special notebooks. I can remember being able to recite the major townships on all the railway lines along the Sunshine Route, the Western Lines from Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville to their inland termini, e.g. Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Dalby, Roma, Mitchell, Charleville and Cunnamulla (once a week).

Down from our home in Fernberg Road was McDougall's Bakery. They delivered by horse and cart. After they had been around, I would go and collect manure for the garden. There were few cars along Fernberg Road, so my mate and I used to have hill trolleys. We would start up near Government House and head down Fernberg Road to Ellena Street, Rosalie on our trolley. It would be about a mile. One day Gordon finished under a Tickle truck, but he was not hurt.

At lunchtime at school we played marbles and rounders (with a pick handle for a bat) and spun our tops. I still have one of my tops. The school had an alarm system to direct us to the trenches but it was never needed. We had trials occasionally. When the trial alarm went off, we stopped what we were doing in class, stood and moved quickly and quietly to the door, walked down the nearest set

of steps, made our way to our allotted area in the trenches, squatted down in the bottom of the trench. We each had a peg to put in our mouth in case there was an explosion. One day Miss Hughes lost her wig as she hurried out to one of these trials. It was very embarrassing for her, but caused great excitement among the class.

At the end of one lunch hour, I was given a note to take down to Mr. O'Neill, the head master. I got to his office and there was a line of boys shoving out their right hand to get the cane. I walked in, mentioned I had a note for him, but he said "Put out your right hand". Bang – down came the cane. I then gave him the note. There was no apology from him. His nick-name along us boys was "Tiger O'Neill".

On the home front, rationing became the norm. Petrol was severely rationed. Dad had to give up plumbing. He joined the Fire Brigade and was stationed at Ithaca Fire Station. He had one big fire to attend when a large timber yard at Toowong went up in flames.

Visiting Nannie at Annerley. When John and I were old enough we would travel by tram to Nannie's home. It cost us a penny each to go by tram to George Street and another penny each to travel from Queen St. to Annerley. At Nannie's house we had to pump our water from Nannie's air raid shelter near her back steps. The shelter was always half full with water and was unusable as a result. We always had some vegetables and eggs to take back home. Dad did not have enough petrol to use the car for these trips as we had before the emergency.

Dad helped me with my cricket skills. I drew three stumps on a piece of bakealite and Dad would bowl off spin and leg breaks to me – at first one arm, then underarm as his shoulders gave out. That practice helped me in years to come.

We had ration cards for sugar, tea, meat, butter and clothing. When we bought these items we had to cut off the required number of coupons.

On Saturdays I used to go to Haldandes, the local store at Barooka Road with a suitcase on my scooter and went home balancing the suitcase of goodies on the scooter. I can remember being given occasionally, by Mr Haldande, a small paper bag with pieces of broken biscuit. At that time Arnott's biscuits were sold loose from large tins, not the plastic packets we have today.

Mr Muller was our teacher in grade 5 and the pressure of Miss Hughes was off. He was very strong on geography and we had to be perfect with our mapping. I can remember that I argued with him about the location of the capital of Canada, Ottawa. I had it on the St. Lawrence River and he commented it is not on the St. Lawrence it is on the Ottawa River.

For the last three months of this year Mum was in bed with rheumatic fever. I went to live with Nannie. My school days were at Junction Park School where I excelled. I came first in my class at the end of year exams. The maths came easily to me – always had. I joined the school fife band. The breaking-up day was the highlight for me. The school went to Annerley picture theatre to see "The Wizard of Oz". I had wanted to see it when it was first released, but we never went to the pictures as a family.

In Grade 6, I had Mr Colin Spiers. He was known as Mr Collins on a commercial radio station program entitled "Information Please". It was a quiz show. At that time teachers were not supposed to have a second job. He was really good – there were very few questions that he could not answer. In this year the boys had half a days manual training and the girls had domestic science at the same time. I was good at tech drawing and only fair at woodwork. There was no metal work because there was no metal available during wartime. Instead we just had cardboard to work with and we cut out shapes and glued them together.

At this time, Dad decided that we would raise chooks to lay eggs for home consumption and to sell to the Egg Board. Dad built several cages for the chooks. It was my job to feed them each morning with wet laying mash and in the afternoons with wetted lucerne hay for their greens. I collected the manure and soaked it in drums of water for our vegetable garden. I think I used to put too much liquid manure on some of the vegetables. We had giant lettuce, huge cabbages and enormously large silver beet. We also had a pen of ducks. Nearby was our duck pond – a concrete tub sunk into the ground. Next to it was a mulberry tree. I went in there one day and one of the drakes went “burp”. I finished up with shoes and socks with reddish duck manure over them. I learnt my lesson, to be very careful when that mulberry tree was fruiting.

At home on a Sunday evening I would listen to “The Quiz Kids”, some bright youngsters on the radio and also the Lux Radio Theatre. On Wednesdays the ABC Orchestra would play the top ten hits. I also enjoyed “Greenbottle” which was a hilarious take on school.

During Grade Six I used to “buy” or “swap” comics called “The Champion” which had stories, mysteries, war yarns, etc. I would swap them for a penny at the local secondhand shop.

During our last week at school, Mr Spiers asked if there were any boys who hadn’t had the cane from him during the year to stand. A couple of boys stood. Mr. Spiers said that no boy leaves his class at the end of the year without saying that he got the cane. “Come out here you pair, lift up your hands – bang”. It was more of a love tap across their hands than a solid whack.

Grade Seven – Mr Purdie. It was during this year that the Japanese surrendered to the Allies following the dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. Dad and I went into town by tram to celebrate with the population, but did not even get to Roma Street as the trams were stopped because of the crowds. Off the tram and walk into the city, past the markets and into George St. It appeared that all the residents of Brisbane had the same idea - to go into the city.

This was our scholarship year. Mr Purdie was determined that our class of 40 students would all pass the exam. 39 of us did. A scholarship pass enabled students to go to a state secondary school without paying any fees. At the end of the first month we had our first mini test. These tests were held every Friday morning from then on - English, Maths, Geography. As all our students were doing manual training or domestic science, our class did not have any history students. There were a couple history students in Mr Garske’s class. Our English paper included a compo, i.e. essay, analysis, parsing, correction of sentences, spelling and a question on our novel, “We of the Never Never”. Mr Purdie would mark our papers over the weekend, and return them on Monday. We had to write to our parents and tell them what we scored in each test, giving the top marks in the class. Our Maths was straight from the syllabus – lots of calculations in percentages, profit and loss, and mensuration (squares, rectangles, circles and solids. i.e. volumes). It was my best subject. For Geography we studied the whole world with particular interest on the British Empire, i.e. the red countries on the map. Mr Garske’s class did similar but not the same tests as we did.

Besides our scholarship work, we had a home exercise each weekend which we had to write with a dip pen. Several of us made a pictorial heading for the subject, usually with Old English printing. I usually received a “very good” stamp for my effort. Occasionally I was thrilled with an “excellent” stamp.

Friday afternoons was our sports time. In wintertime I played hockey as a right winger. I made the Brisbane Primary Schools Hockey team. I remember one match in Toowoomba. We were the first team on that day – from primary teams to adult teams. It was bitterly cold. We ran onto the field and the frost crackled under our feet. But we had to play. In summer I played cricket. I was not good enough for the school team, but I used to go along as scorer. I can remember one match

against my old school Ashgrove. Milton won the toss and batted. Our openers, Peter Gall and Brian Binney declared after scoring 200. Then our bowlers cleaned up Ashgrove and we finished winning by an innings!

Came scholarship. I scored the second highest of the Miltonites and was one mark short of getting myself the medal for the best scholarship mark for the school. My brother John, when he did scholarship, topped his year and won the school's gold medal.

During my scholarship year the Ashes were again being played for. Australia had the honour of being the host nation. The first test was at the Gabba and Dad took me there to see the opening day of the match. We were there just before 7am – the game started four hours later. The Aussies batted first and I was privileged to see the famous Don Bradman score a century.

From that day Dad would take me to see a day of Sheffield Shield cricket on a Saturday. I would take with me a sugar bag and after the tea session, I would go around and collect the Tristram bottles and return them to receive tuppence for each bottle. Drinks cost a shilling to buy. We would be sitting in a relatively new stand that Dad had supervised the plumbing for the roof and down pipes a couple years earlier. My collections of soft drink bottles were a bonus for my pocket money.

So, I had a scholarship and enrolled at Brisbane State High School. I used to catch a tram from Rosalie to Adelaide Street (cost 1d.), then a second tram from Queen Street to the school in South Brisbane (cost 1d.). Brisbane State High School was one of the top state high schools in Queensland at the time. The other high schools in Brisbane city were Commercial High, Industrial High and Domestic High.

I had four years at this high school. SJ 4 (boys), J2 (mixed boys and girls), SS3 (boys) and S1 (mixed boys and girls). Our Junior year (J2) was the first and only time that State High had a mixed junior class up to that time. It was a mixed group because it combined the top French language and top German language students. One of my classmates in J2 was Patrick Thomas, who later became the conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

I can remember one of our teachers coming in while we were in grade 8 and said, "My name is Mr Lockie, I'll be your history teacher." He asked all those who got 85% or over in scholarship history to stand and then decreased by 5% each time to reach 50%. I was the only one sitting down. "What is your name", he said to me. "Rieck, Sir," I replied. "What did you get?" he asked. I said, "I didn't do history, Sir. I did manual training." "You ought to be at Industrial High" he said. Then he asked me "What did you get?" "85%" I replied. Which was a higher mark than any of the history students had got. Soon after we started our history. "Rieck, what happened in 1485?" he asked. I said "Black Death?" "No, that was 200 years earlier". It was the beginning of the reign of the Tudors.

Later, Mr Lockie remembered my manual training days. He and another teacher from State High, Mr Honour were calling ball by ball the last session of a Sheffield Shield game on 4KQ. I was asked to be their scorer there. At times when I was scoring for them, I would be asked questions, such as "How many overs has Jones bowled in this session?" At the end of the cricket, they would drive me to Albert St where I caught the tram home.

We are all boys in our class in sub-junior and I used to sit with Ron Adie and I did so for the full four years. Ron passed away a few years ago.

We all had the same nine subjects. They were: English, German or French, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, History, Geography, Chemistry and Physics. We were a class that did extremely well in

Junior. Our class averaged six A's per student. That was an exceptionally good result for a class of 30 plus students.

In our Junior year our classes were re-arranged. All those continuing studying French or German were put together in the one class. So, we had a mixed gender group.

It is so long ago since I did German, but I can still remember a little bit. I sometimes use "Danke" for thank you. The English version of "Silent Night" is slightly different from the original German. The German word for "silent" is "stille", which actually means expectant. Our "silent" does not have the connotation of expectancy.

In our sub-senior year we had a mixed class. We had some really bright students within our group. One student in particular, he was fantastic – his memory was exceptional. I had decided that I wanted to become a teacher. I was given a Junior Teacher's Scholarship, which was worth 30 shillings a week. At last I had some spending money. One of the things I did this year was to go to the youth concerts by the QSO at the City Hall. I can remember one concert in particular when Moira Limpany played a Concerto on the piano. It is the only piece of music that the 18th century composer Litoff wrote, that is still played today. It was the Scherzo from his Concerto Symphonic. When the Concerto was finished we all applauded so loudly that the conductor said "Would you like to hear that again?" and the soloist and orchestra obliged. Occasionally I hear it on the ABC Classics program, and I have to stop what I am doing to listen to it again.

When I was interviewed for my teacher's scholarship, the interviewer said that I had done very well in Junior. He informed me that I had scored 100% in arithmetic and geometry and 96% in algebra for Junior, and I know where I lost my four marks. My Senior results were not as good as my Junior marks. Teachers' Training College: The Education Dept was very short of teachers at the time and our incoming group of students was told that we would have just one year of training and then off teaching. We had been allocated a school for training, which we attended one day per week and two continuous weeks later in the year. My school was Ithaca Creek State School. It so happens that the head teacher at that time was the father of our former Governor, Paul deJersey who was in grade four at the school.

From our house in Fernberg Road I was able to walk across to Ithaca Creek School, which saved me 2d in fares – 1d to the city and 1d out on the Ashgrove tram line.

Teaching Career: The first school I was appointed to was Rainworth State School, where I had a Grade Two. I travelled to school by tram. The school was at the Rainworth tram terminus. I enjoyed my time there with the youngsters. I continued studying a maths subject externally from U of Q. During the August school holidays I was transferred to Sandgate State School. I had a Grade Four. Parents of children in this class told me that I was the fifth teacher they had had that year. I had a lot of work to bring them up to standard.

Late in the year the Inspector came and I passed with good results. One of the things I had been warned about was to make sure that I had a jacket on the premises. And he asked me about my jacket and I said that it was in the teacher's cupboard. I had to produce it for him. One school day, a Queensland cricketer, Ron Archer, came to the school to be with the boys at training. I got a ride home to Brisbane with him.

Breaking-up day, the class gave me lots of individual gifts – razor blades, soap, handkerchiefs and a couple chocolates.



One Teacher Schools - Pioneers Rest State School
1953: We had been warned at college to expect a transfer to a one teacher school, after 12 months. My transfer came in the Christmas holidays to a school called Pioneers Rest. The school was on a rise looking down on the Mary River. I caught the Bundaberg Mail train to the station called Antigua, on the Mary River. The station mistress loaned me a bike for me to get to the place where I was to board. I can remember the first Saturday I went on the train as there happened to be a dance at the Antigua hall that evening. So the Bandholz family who I was to board with took me to the dance, where I met the parents of my pupils. From the Bandholz home I walked about 1 ½ miles to school, collecting three different families along the way. The pupils warned me about snakes. My first day at the school, I wondered why there were empty tins around the outside fence line. Each had a stone inside it. If the children saw a snake in the school ground they had to rattle a tin to give a warning. Outside the school ground were several guava trees. The local called guavas, "pluggers". I can remember one lunch hour when the guavas were ripe and a group of students were up the tree having their fill. And there was a shout "Snake". It was in the guava tree. I rushed onto the verandah to see the pupils leaving the tree in a hurry.



At the school I had to do everything, even sweeping the school (not every day). A lady came and took the girls for sewing on a Friday afternoon and I gave the boys some raffia work to do.

I was able to go home every three to four weeks from Pioneers Rest. I would get someone to take me to Mungar Junction which was about ½ hours journey towards Maryborough. Then I would catch the Rockhampton Mail to Brisbane – an overnight trip. I would arrive at Roma Street around 6am and could be home at Paddington in about ½ hour. When I did come home for a weekend, I had to go into Adelaide Street and book a seat on the Bundaberg Mail which left late Sunday evening. I would receive a hand-written ticket to Antigua. When the train arrived at Gympie the conductor would walk the train to check who would want to leave the train before Maryborough. He arranged for me to get off at Antigua. Once we crossed the Mary River at Antigua, I would be dropped off at the siding. There was nothing about - always dark. I would collect the bike and make my way to the Bandholz home. I was the only passenger to alight the train at Antigua.



Come August, on the Saturday night closest to my 21st birthday, people started arriving at the Bandholz. I was told to change my clothes. The house was full of people and that was how I celebrated my 21st birthday. I think I had one drink too many! The Bandholz son was the first student that I put through scholarship. Sadly, he was killed over the school holidays – thrown from the back of a ute.

The nearest hall for us for dancing was the hall in Tiaro. We had the normal dances of waltz, quick step, etc. During the year square dancing became popular and I had some 78rpm records which we used. I was the one who had the knowledge of the various steps used and I finished up doing some calling of the square dances.

Jundah (1954-56): I had applied for any class 6 primary school in Queensland, at the end of my year at Pioneers Rest. A class 6 school meant an average attendance of between 21 and 40. Out of the blue I received a transfer to Jundah. Where is Jundah? Out came the maps of Queensland. Dad finally found it. The town was 140 miles south west of Longreach on the Thomson River. When the time came, I had to pack my clothes in one suitcase and school material in another. It was a long trip by train – Brisbane to Rockhampton, then Rockhampton to Longreach. Got to Longreach station but my clothes suitcase was missing. It had been left in Rockhampton. Soon after Rockhampton had heavy rain, resulting in a flood. All trains west of Rockhampton were cancelled. All I had with me was my old school port and the clothes I wore. For three weeks I washed my nylon shirt every afternoon before I had my shower. It was dry by the time I had finished my shower. I wore grey cotton shorts and sandals and had to apologise to my students that I was wearing stuff that I had to wash the afternoon before.

My letter of transfer said that Jundah is reached by mail coach operated by J.B. Godkin of Longreach. So Saturday afternoon I walked around to Godkin's office and met a fellow loading a six ton truck. I asked him what time did the mail coach leave for Jundah and he told me, "There is no b... mail coach to Jundah. You will be my gate-opener sitting on the back of this truck until we get to Jundah".

We left at 6 am. At 8 am we reached Tocal, where we had breakfast at the "hotel". We had cereal, which involved the hostess walking around with a packets of Weet Bix under her arm. She asked everyone in turn, "What would you like, Weet Bix or Cornflakes?" I said "Weet Bix" so she left two on my plate. The person next to me said, "Cornflakes" and she just crunched up two of the Weet Bix and left them in his plate.

For the next eight hours I had to duck off the back of the truck and open the gates for the mailman to go through. There were very few grids in the west at that time. At 4pm we finally made Jundah, outside the Armstrong Store. Opposite in the main street was the hotel, one room of which was to be my "home" for the next three years. It had galvanised roof and walls. There was no ceiling. I seldom visited the bar. The meals were patchy. Occasionally we had young goat and that was extremely tasty, but mostly we had mutton. This was sheep country! There was no fresh cow's milk in town. Every house had a couple goats and they roamed the streets and the town common where they foraged.

At that time Jundah's population was 200 plus and I had close on 40 students, and all the students lived in town walked to school.



Jundah State School October 1954



Anzac Day 1956: Ex-servicemen and school children on parade outside Jundah Hall.

There was no mains electrical power. The only places which provided their own electricity by means of generators was the pub, the two stores and the Barcoo Shire Council office chambers.

Local Economy: In the 1950's Jundah was booming. The wool industry was doing exceptionally well. At that time wool was worth a pound money per pound weight. As soon as school boys turned 14 they had work at any sheep station and could earn five pounds per day and keep on a sheep property.

In my three years at Jundah only one lad, Steven Naish sat for scholarship and would go to the Agricultural College at Longreach. One chap was apprenticed to the Jundah Post Office at seven pounds per week. He lasted a few weeks and got a job on a sheep station.

Lesson Preparation: I would go up to school of an evening twice a week. I took my handi (hurricane) lamp. There were fly screens on each school window but I was overwhelmed with very tiny insects. They were small enough to pass through the fly screens. To rid the room of these insects, I had to place my hurricane lamp on a block of wood in a basin of soapy water – result – I caught hundreds of those tiny green insects. When the hot summer weather cooled off in autumn, the insects disappeared. I would spend 1 ½ - 2 hours on marking students work – copybooks, home exercise books, and preparing for the next days work.

Religious Instruction: The Catholic priest and the Church of England minister used to come to Jundah on different Mondays. Both ministers would come to school for their half hour Religious Instruction. I used to take the protestant children under the school while the catholic priest had the school room. When the Church of England man came, I used to take the Catholics under the school. Very occasionally the minister from the Australian Inland Mission (Presbyterian) would just turn up at school. He would take all the students. He had a flannelgraph and all the children wanted to see the bible stories he illustrated. I remember one family who had three students enrolled at school, each with a different religious denomination, depending on which minister was in town and baptised them.

Record Player: The Dept supplied all schools with a large grey wooden box with a record player on the top and a speaker in the middle. It played 78rpm records. There was no electric power in town. The headquarters of the Barcoo Shire Council was in Jundah. They were responsible for grading the roads, etc. They were happy to loan me a large 12 volt wet battery from one of their graders. When the voltage died they would replace it for me. I used the old 78 records for folk dancing, square dancing and in my program music where I played such music as Peter and the Wolf, William Tell Overture and other light musical programs. They were my music appreciation lessons. Square dancing was all the rage at that time, and it became a hit at the school. I used some Jim Vickers/Willis 78rpm records for many dances Four couples formed a square, and I had enough students to make several squares. The boy was on the left and he had to follow the calls and order his partner around. "John Brown's Body" was their favourite. In my second year, the inspector asked for some folk dancing, and the students asked "Could we have "John Brown's Body?", which they did and did famously. But the inspector said "I want some FOLK dancing". So, we played one of the departmental records and the students danced to that. It was called "Luby Lu".

Library: In the school library were several books about Australian wild animals. One was called "Shy, the Platypus". They were written as conversations between animals. I would read a small section of one of the books occasionally. The students were enthralled. Those books became the most popular ones in the library.

Poetry: had made the decision that our poetry would be all from Australian bush poets. Banjo Paterson was high on the list. The same inspector queried why just all Paterson? I replied that Banjo visited Winton, about 200 miles from Jundah. One of their favourites poems was "A Bush Christening". It's first line read "On the outer Barcoo where churches are few". The Barcoo River was only an hour's drive from Jundah! We crossed it on the road to Yaraka.

Swimming: In the summer months I took all the students swimming in the Thomson River, which was about a mile to the west of the town. I used the buddy system. "Blow the whistle. Find your buddy". If we had an odd number, I was somebody's buddy.

Lunch Time: The school had a bush shelter, a large open area with seating sufficient for all. When the Thomson River flooded, the students would come to school with an old treacle tin. Inside was burning cow dung. The burning cow dung was used to chase the sand flies away. We had them only when the river flooded. On such days, after lunch was finished, you would find the tennis players placing the tins on the corners of the court.

Sport: When I arrived at the school there was a note in the top drawer of the desk saying "Dear Schoolie, You will be the new secretary of the Jundah Sports Club", signed by the previous teacher.

Cricket: Cricket was played on a Sunday in autumn, winter and early spring. It was too hot in summer. We played teams at Stonehenge, 40 miles N.E., Windorah 60 miles S.W., Yaraka 100 miles E., and Bimerah Station 100 miles N.E.. Jundah had a good team. I finished up as an opening batsman. At no time did I ever score a ton, but there were two occasions when I was not out in our first innings and we had a second innings and I scored sufficient runs to make the ton over the two innings.

Tennis: Tennis was popular. We had a court near the school. We had singles and doubles matches. The doubles were interesting. Two good players would start at minus 40 points. One of our top players was Ken Armstrong who had gone to a private school in Rockhampton. His playing partner had been the Rockhampton Rocket, Rod Laver.

Film Evenings: In our local hall, Matie Richards had a portable 35mm film projector. He would have an MGM feature film on once a month. We saw nearly all the films that Esther Williams in her swimming costume, ever made for MGM.

Fishing: The best time was fishing for yellow belly i.e. golden perch was of an evening. The PMG linesman and I would go down to the Thomson River and dig some worms. Some evenings we were very successful. I remember sitting on the river bank fishing and listening to the Australian cricketers playing in England. After a big flood when the river was almost stationary, we would go to the lower crossing of the main channel of the Thomson and were surprised to see yellow belly



One hot Friday afternoon, November 1955



Jundah State School:
Children's Sports Day - Treacle Bun

swimming across the concrete crossing, making their way upstream. With a hand net we would have a feed in no time at all.

Other Highlights: The Morris Oxford: In the Christmas school holidays at the beginning of the third year I was at Jundah, I purchased my first car – a second hand Morris Oxford. At last I had a vehicle to get around in! Late January 1956 I headed off, reached the Condamine River. It was flooded and the Warrego Highway was impassable. I had to divert to Bell to get around the flood. The road to the west was open. North of Charleville the Warrego Highway was closed and we were held up for a few hours before I could cross. I reached Blackall to find the road to Barcardine was definitely closed. I headed south west from Blackall toward Yaraka to cross the Barcoo River at Retreat Station. The Barcoo was in flood and I had to get to school! I left the car with a young couple, the Westons and made it to Jundah in another vehicle. I finally collected the car in Windorah in the May school holidays. The Westons brought the car down from Retreat Station. They had kept it in running order.



Tennis Court: The Sports Club decided to place a layer of ant bed on the court to improve the surface. I was given the job of making the court a perfect rectangle. I had worked out using the Pythagoras theorem the length of the diagonal. There was a call from someone with the car valves measuring the length of the diagonal, “Schoolie, you are out!” “Can’t be”, I replied. It was out of one inch. In went the car valve, marking the corner. In my third year during a tennis match after the school holidays in May I collided with the tennis court roller and badly grazed my right arm. That arm would not heal for weeks. To Brisbane for August holidays and Mum’s cooking with fresh vegetables and fruit, it healed up in no time. I had been suffering from what the westerners call, Barcoo Rot. For the rest of the year I purchased a half a case of fresh fruit each week from Longreach.

Floods in the Thomson River: In 1954 we had a big flood in March. Jundah was cut off for a few weeks. Mail trucks from Longreach and Yaraka could not get in. The two shops were getting low in food. The Barcoo Shire Council arranged a “food drop”. A Douglas DC3 was hired from Brisbane and brought a load of food into us – bags of flour, bags of potatoes, cardboard boxes of varieties of tinned food and fresh fruit. After the plan unloaded it taxied to the end of the runway, revved its engine. What an enormous cloud of dust rose from the plane! Although we were in flood the earth was very dry. Typical of the west!

In 1956 a cyclone formed in the Coral Sea and headed west to Cape York. It crossed the Cape into the Gulf of Carpentaria and changed course. The cyclone made its way south, crossed the coast and then became stationary over the Selwyn Range, lost most of its moisture, causing heavy flooding in the Gulf rivers and the Thomson and Diamantina Rivers which flow into Lake Eyre. Longreach police warned Jundah to expect a BIG flood. The water in the Thomson at Jundah was low, 6’8” in May. The river rose to 26’8” by Wednesday 1 June and the river filled all the channels and was six to eight miles wide. There had been no rain in Jundah. Jundah was completely cut off. The only means of communication left was the aerodrome. The Council graders built a levee bank around the northern edge of the drome where it dropped away. The menfolk of the town were rostered to patrol the levee bank. Our group of young bloods was on the midnight to 3am shift. We could still drive out to the drome. Jundah was like an island. Our group stopped the flood breaking the levee bank. Older men on the next group from 3am to 6am did the same.

And we had a day at school. All the students lived in town. When the children arrived, I said “We will go for a walk around the edge of the flood.” Hats on, shoes on and off we went. It took all

morning. When we got back, we had a list of what we had seen – so many kangaroos, a couple of snakes and large goannas and so many insects climbing up the stalks of grass. I should have kept a copy of those lists.

Water, water everywhere, especially around Jundah. Our Jundah hospital had approximately six feet of water cutting it off from the town. The black and white film that I had taken was sent to the Courier Mail. They sent me a couple enlargements. One of the best was taken from the water tower, with water in the main street and in the distance the whole cricket ground completely covered with water.

Our Big Dust Storm: Late in October that year, we had a huge dust storm that enveloped the town. Two hours earlier it had closed up Windorah and headed north east to Jundah along the

Thomson, reaching us about 3pm. Late that afternoon the storm reached Longreach. The Longreach Show Society grandstand collapsed under the force of the wind.

Flying Doctor's Special Trip: That same month, the Flying Doctor aircraft landed unexpectedly late one afternoon. We heard that an aboriginal baby was seriously ill and had come to Jundah to be hospitalised. The plane had collected the infant and mother

from Warbreccan Station about 100 miles west of Stonehenge. The baby needed a supply of oxygen. Matie Richards was prepared to have one of his commercial bottles taken up to the hospital.

That same evening my school pupils had organised a dance in the local hall as there had not been a dance for some time. They organised the band and its transport by plane from Longreach. The dance was under way. The pilot of the Flying Doctor plane came into the hall, interrupted the proceedings and asked for the car drivers to line both sides of the runway for the plane to take off. Matie Richards' oxygen was not of hospital standard. Out to the aerodrome we went, lined the cars up at an angle, headlights outward, tail lights on the edge of the strip. At the end of the strip was the police 4WD. The plane took off. Twenty-four hours later with the baby in Charleville hospital, the "bush telegraph" informed us that she was on the mend.

I sent a story to the Courier Mail on how car lights helped save a baby's life. It made the front page of the Courier Mail the next day. That is not the end of the story. The pilot told me that he had received a 'please explain' from the Dept of Civil Aviation, asking why he had taken off from an airfield that was not equipped for night flying. He told me that he just wrote on the bottom of the letter, "We saved a baby's life", and posted it back. There was no reply from the DCA.

A Memorial Church in Jundah: Diagonally opposite the school was a small galvanised iron building which was a memorial to the Reverend Hilton Sams, a former Church of England minister in Jundah, who joined the army and was killed in World War I. The church had originally been built on the southern side of Jundah and it had been empty and derelict for many years. During that time kangaroo hunters had used the floor to stretch out their roo skins to dry. There were lots of



nail holes in the floor. The building was moved to its new location and became again a church for the Church of England folk. A retired man and I spent many days working inside the building. We lined and ceiled the building with sheets of 3 ply. Early in my first year when the parents knew that I was a church-going Christian, I was asked if I would look after a Sunday School. That I did on Sundays when we weren't playing cricket. In my last year there, with the help of some young folk, we gave the church a coat of orange paint and a green roof. On our last day of finishing painting, a whirly wind blew across from the cricket ground and onto the church where we had just finished painting the last of the roof. So many tiny pieces of sand finished up landing in the wet paint. The sand was still there when we were in Jundah in 2000 for the school centenary.

Shearers' Strike 1956: Late one afternoon, when I went down to the hotel to have a cuppa, there were a group of men sitting at one table.

One fellow rose and demanded to see my union ticket. He was quite aggressive. I showed him my receipt from the Teachers' Union. He had thought that I was a renegade shearer, but renegade shearers don't wear shorts and long socks! He was satisfied that I was a teacher, but there was no apology. I had my cuppa. This was my only experience about the shearers' strike.

The strike was serious in the pastoral industry. Here is one story that did not make the papers or a news item on the radio. At Blackall a train loaded with wool bales was ready to go to Brisbane. Renegade shearers ripped open all the bales of wool and scattered them around the siding. Queensland Rail lost the contract to cart wool bales to Brisbane. That was the beginning of semi-trailers loaded with wool bales heading to the sales in Brisbane. These trucks were dangerous on our dirt roads. The roads between the western townships were all dirt. When we saw a large cloud of dust rising from the road ahead, we slowed down, kept to the left and let the semi-trailers have use of the whole road. Between Longreach and Jundah the bitumen stopped at Gin Creek, a short distance out of Longreach, there was a little bit through Stonehenge and then at the "slow down" sign at Jundah.

Phoning home: Every Sunday evening I went to the Post Office to ring the family in Brisbane. The lass who was on the exchange had to identify a free line from Jundah to Longreach to Rockhampton to Brisbane, or from Jundah to Charleville to Brisbane. Calls were timed for three minutes, which you could extend for an additional charge. If there were no other calls waiting, the telephonist would give me an extra three minutes at no extra charge. I can't remember the cost of the calls, but they were not cheap.

1956 August Holidays: I had an invitation to Chas (Charles) Walker's wedding on the first Saturday of the August holidays. To get to Brisbane I had to miss the flooding to Longreach – road closed. So I took off and headed S.W. to Windorah, then S.E. to Quilpie and Charleville. Reached Quilpie and road bridge was under a foot of water. Only way out was by the railway bridge with the flood waters almost level with the sleepers. Scary – very. Made my way across bouncing off the sleepers. Off to Charleville late in the day. Camped overnight in the showgrounds – very wet! Next morning early (day of wedding) at Mitchell I sent Chas a telegram – will miss his wedding. Headed east along the soggy muddy roads. Reached bitumen at Roma. Safe at last. Made Brisbane without incident – with a very mud-covered car. For the trip back to Jundah the road had dried out and I was able to travel from Charleville to Barcaldine to Longreach and on to Jundah on a dry, not muddy road surface.

Other district schools: Stonehenge: At a tennis tournament at Stonehenge after the May holidays, the father of a Stonehenge pupil asked me how often I had maths lessons at Jundah. I said that we had maths every day for one to one and a half hours. He told me that his lad had come home from school and said that he had maths for the first time that year that day. I was horrified. The

teacher spent most of his time having the children collect rocks from the school grounds, painting them white and lining the two pathways that led to the boys' and girls' toilets!

I don't know what the inspector had told him when he visited the school, but he was transferred at the end of the year to Boulia State School. He promptly resigned.

Windorah State School: In my third year the inspector told me this story: The teacher at the provisional school in Windorah was a day behind in marking the roll. The teacher explained what had happened. He had an opportunity to go to Birdsville. That took three school days. He had worked two Saturdays and had one Saturday to go. That is why he was missing one day for marking the roll.

School Christmas Parties: Windorah 1956: I took some folk from Jundah to the Windorah Christmas Party for the school students. The highlight was Santa arriving in his sleigh drawn by two "reindeers". These animals were two goats with antlers attached. I overheard two students nearby, the younger one said "They are not reindeers, they are only goats". The older brother replied "Yes, they are goats, hey, they are our goats!"

Jundah 1956: Every year for several years a middle-aged father, Mr. Rod McCullough had been the school Santa. I decided we would have a change. I asked the new 20 year old lady in town – the new secretary to the Shire Clerk if she would be our Santa. She didn't have to say anything – just hand out the presents. She was happy to do that.

When the usual Santa turned up in civvies, nobody had a clue! The swap went very well. She had gloves on covering her lady's watch. Nobody picked up the evidence of who she was! She remained silent. There were no "Ho, Ho, Ho" from her!

In my last six months at Jundah, I left my room at the hotel and made a 'bedroom' on the back verandah at the school. The hotel was under a new management and they didn't want any boarders. I arranged for a wire bed from a local sheep property, and arranged meals with a local couple.

During my last few weeks timber arrived at the school for a residence to be constructed early in 1957 for the next school head teacher.

So my three interesting years in Jundah came to a close.

Numinbah Upper State School (1957 to Easter 1959): I left Jundah in December 1956. I had my Morris to see me back to Brisbane, via Longreach, then east to Rockhampton then south to Brisbane. On travelling east along the Capricorn Highway – only a gravel road and across the Bogantungan Range, I looked back. There was my dust trail from the west. Near Emerald – bitumen at last! All the way back to Brisbane!

As I had not received any notification about a transfer, I called the Education Dept in the Treasury Building and met the officer who was in charge of transfers. He greeted me and told me he would arrange a transfer to a class 6 school in south east Queensland as I had served for three years in a western school. In January my transfer came through. I was appointed to the Numinbah Upper School inland from Southport and near where the Nerang River rises close to the border ranges. From one of the driest parts of Queensland, I was going to one of the wettest.

Rainforest country! So different from Jundah!

When I got in touch with the school P & C secretary, he told me they had arranged board for me in Henry and Mary Winchester's home about 1.5 miles down from the site of the school. The Winchesters lived in a small timber house on a sloping site.



From there I was able to come home to Paddington on weekends and travel back by the faithful Morris Oxford through the southern suburbs then along the Pacific Highway to Southport – then along the road through Nerang, a farming area, go past Advancetown along the Nerang River through wooded country to Numinbah Valley (which had been settled long ago), along the Nerang River to the Winchesters in the Upper Valley. At that time the Pacific Highway was two lanes with a double lane section at Slacks Creek. So different from the 2022 road!

Southport Congregational Church. – After being a nominal Anglican, I could enjoy being a part of the Congregational Church once again. Southport had a CYF (Congregational Youth Fellowship) group in which I became involved. It met on the fourth Sunday of each month for an evening meal. While I was at Jundah, I had kept in touch with Queensland CYF by sending articles to their news sheet, called "Contact" most months about how life was lived in a western Queensland school. I called them "Go West Young Man". I happened to be one of the oldest members – in my late 20's.

Come Easter I was able to go to Easter Camps once again after missing them for three years. It was at the Easter Camp in 1958 at the showgrounds in Rosewood that I met my future wife, Joyce Armstrong.

Conditions at the showgrounds were quite primitive. The men were housed in the manse at the Rosewood church with the ladies down in the old show hall at the showgrounds.

I can remember at the Saturday evening in the church that all the girls were 'bought' by the Rosewood men at an auction. Joyce was 'bought' by Jim Harding. On the Friday evening Joyce held my torch for me while I had to replace a flat tyre on the Morris!

What's in a Name? There were three schools each with "Numinbah" in its address. One in N.S.W., over the border, "Numinbah" Public School, and two in Queensland. "Numinbah Valley" 6 miles downstream from my school, and "Numinbah Upper" – my school. Our mail was often delivered to the wrong school. In November of my first year at Numinbah Upper I had the secretary of our P & C contact the Education Dept and request to have our school's name changed to Natural Bridge. Just 200 yards (metres) from the school was the Natural Bridge telephone exchange. During the holidays word came through to the P & C secretary that the name change had been accepted.



School Project Club: I had the school project club resurrected and used the gardens at the front of the school as a vegetable garden where we grew lots of vegetables for our school families.



Once a year we would have a departmental project organiser come to the schools with project clubs. It was a big day for club members as the parents of the students were present to hear the club's report. It was a typical meeting procedure with a chairman and secretary. There would be a mover and seconder for every motion and the chairman would call for those in favour to show hands. The project club organiser told me that my school had the best conducted meeting procedure he had witnessed in his travelling throughout the state. Future members of the P & Cs could learn a lot from their children!

Numinbah Valley was one hour from Southport. To the east of the school was Springbrook, and to the west Binna Burra. In wintertime the sun warmed us at school after 9am, but it was gone before 3pm. That's how high the ranges to the east and to the west rose.

Dave's Gully was not far away from the Winchesters. It was lined with large rain forest trees. One Saturday a huge cedar log was removed from this scrub. It had taken a week to reach it in the gully, fell it and remove it. At its base it was well over two metres across. At the club's cricket oval, a few kilometres down the road, there in the creek – or river, was a ginormous red cedar cut down years before, it fell partly into the river but it did not go far. The log was supposed to reach the mouth of the Nerang River and be floated out to a waiting ship.



Numinbah folk were very friendly. Even in the 2020's I still swap Christmas cards with folk from the Valley. In my first year at Numinbah I would take the school down to where Cave Creek (from Natural Bridge) crossed the road near the junction with the Nerang River. One Friday we walked down to find broken glass everywhere, beside and in the pool. No more swimming!

My school project club supplied the school families with lots of vegetables – lettuce, cabbage, beans and peas. In my second year in February some cabbages had been left over the Christmas holidays. There was not one green leaf on the plants left as the cabbage moths had eaten all the leaves and left the stalk. Come scholarship and I had one lad to sit for it. He was fair in English and average in Maths. He scraped through scholarship to my delight. The last time I heard about him he owned a trucking business in Southport.

The Valley Spring Carnival – October 1958: There were 50 plus one teacher and two teacher schools in the area around Southport. There were four schools in the Nerang Valley – Gilston, Advancetown, Numinbah Valley and Natural Bridge. I put it to the school P & C about organising a big sports day for all of the one and two teacher schools in and around Southport. Our P & C felt we did not have the personnel for such a large undertaking, so we invited the Numinbah Valley QCWA to assist us on the day. Fifty schools were invited. It became the Numinbah Spring Carnival, held initially at the Yaun's rifle range. Our estimate is that at our first spring carnival, we had 700 adults and children present. Admission charges were: adults two shillings and children free.

The Spring Carnival continued for another 25 years and became a very successful community gathering for the Valley. They are mentioned in the Numinbah Valley Centenary book. Those small schools have now grown to be huge schools, or have closed. Joyce and I were invited back for the final Spring Carnival in 1983, being the silver jubilee of the Carnival!

The enrolment at Natural Bridge School fell and so the classification of the school fell and at Easter 1959 I was transferred to Mt. Walker School, where my paternal grandmother (Lizzie Jenner) had attended school in the 1880s.

Mt. Walker School Easter 1959 – December 1963:

The school was about 25 minutes south of Rosewood, along the Bremer River towards Rosevale. Rosevale school at that time had two teachers.

Years ago, the school had a teacher's residence on the property adjacent to the school. The residence had been removed. There were several one teacher schools in the Rosewood district at that time. Nearly all have closed. Today Ashwell, Walloon and Mt. Marrow survived long enough to grow into larger schools.

At this time, the Grade 7's went every Wednesday to Rosewood State School for manual arts and home economics.

Rosewood became my "home". For several months I boarded with the Congregational Minister, Graham Hall and his wife, Margaret. Next, I moved out to the home of Bob and Madge Stokes at Stokes Crossing Road, close to my school. The Morris Oxford kept me mobile. I stayed with the Stokes family until August 1960 when Joyce and I were married. We moved into a rented house in south Rosewood just before the Western Creek. The house belonged to Olive and Edna Armstrong. Soon after we got "tin-kettled". When that home was sold (to Joyce's uncle, Gordon Elliott) we moved to 13 Waight St., where we lived until I was transferred to Rosewood Secondary Dept and we purchased the home at 98 Albert St. at the end of 1963.

One lunchtime playing cricket with the children, I was hit on the side of the head with the ball. I drove to the Rosewood Ambulance Station after school and promptly fainted when asked to look up. Eventually I was diagnosed as having a fractured skull (from the fall, not from the hit). I had a fortnight off school.

While I was on sick leave, my replacement introduced "morning talks" to my school. I followed suit when I got back teaching.

Mt. Walker school was polling place each election. I remember one election in particular, when Percy Kerle was my assistant. Most electors voted in the morning as they had to milk in the afternoons. At 3pm Percy said, "How many votes have we taken?" I said "52". Percy said there will 48 for the Country Party and 4 for the Labor Party. When 6pm came and we counted the votes, he was absolutely correct.

Summertime was cricket time and I felt happier with my cricket ability after my stint at Numinbah Valley. In the Valley I made the Southport rep. team for a couple matches as an opening bat. One match against Brisbane I had to face the fastest bowler I had ever faced. He was really fast. I was 20 in the first innings when he beat me with a yorker but I got 40 odd in the second innings.

In Rosewood I became a member of the Rosewood United Cricket Club, playing Church Union in the Ipswich competition. At an annual meeting I became treasurer. The previous treasurer handed me a bottle of loose change. There were no treasurer's books. He had worked out that if we had eleven players per game, a new ball cost us 22 shillings, and if we each put in two bob per game the club would survive. He said that he had no time for treasurer's books.

Mt. Walker 1961

Back Row: Peter Smith, Graham Christensen, John Smith,
Graham Christensen, Greta Christensen,
Glenn Hartwig, Kelvin McManis, Cedric Zahnow
Rodney Felskhan, Norman Korte, Wayne Baile

Middle Row: Karen Fildnahy, Cheryl Christensen, Dorel
Harrichsen, Carol Hartwig, Gabrielle Gannon
Kaye Smith, Leona Neumann, Elaine
Smith

Front Row: Donald Baile, Annie Baile, Kenneth Zahnow,
Lyle Hartwig

Absent: Lynette Zahnow, Rosevalene Smith



I was fairly successful as an opener for Rosewood. I had long gone from wearing my school cap to wearing a Greg Chappell wide brim hat to protect me from the sun. When the Rosewood school wicket was not available, we had a couple matches at the Rosewood Showgrounds. One match I knew that I was getting close to 100 and when the boys started cheering I knew that I had made it. It was my one and only century as an opener! and I had become a slow leg-spin bowler. One match the batsman asked the umpire "What's he bowl?" The reply was "Right arm erratic!" That deflated me. I proved that umpire wrong a few weeks later. In one match I took six wickets for 27 runs. That was my best bowling performance ever.

I had always been a member of the Milton Congregational Church which closed in 1970. Sunday School Anniversary celebrations were a big show. I can remember one special play when the boy who had the role of the lad bringing his loaves and fishes to Jesus, took sick the week before the event, and I was given his words to learn.



Milton Congregational Church,
corner Baroona and Haig Roads

While I was at Mt. Walker School, I became involved with the Rosewood Congregational Church. I started a Junior CYF group once a week after school. We had a great group with some fine young people. Jim Harding supervised the older

group – a very large group associated with our church. I also became involved with the CYF at state level, eventually becoming state president. In 1960 we organised the National CYF Conference at a boarding school in Toowoomba. I had attended National CYF Conferences at Morilta, S.A., Ballarat Victoria and Mittagong N.S.W. Now it was Queensland's turn.

In the 1950s and 1960s young people's church activities were very strong and Congregationalism was strong in the Ipswich district. We had annual sports days, organised by Dr. Chester Wilson at Ipswich Grammar School ovals. Our Rosewood CYF groups, both junior and senior always did well. Joyce and I also taught Sunday School, Joyce with kindergarten, and I with the High School young people at Junior Church.

Soon after I came to Mt. Walker, Joyce and I went to the Ekka and we were astonished at the size and parent/pupil interest in the schoolwork section of the show. Coming back to Rosewood, I suggested to the Rosewood Show Society that they ought to have a schoolwork section at the show. There was a vacant building near the show secretary's office that could be used as it had several sections that could mount a display. "Good", they said, "You can be the steward in charge". And so began many years when I encouraged the local primary schools to enter for display the best of their home exercise books, copy books and maps of Australia. That section went on for many years until I retired. At the 2021 Rosewood show display, there was a photo of me placed in a display of award cards I had signed as steward many years ago. Several folk had kept their prize winning cards from when they were primary school students.

Scouts in Rosewood: Growing up I had joined Cubs at the Bardon Group when we lived in Lewin Street. Then I transferred to the Milton Group after our move to Fernberg Road. I was a patrol leader in Scouts, then a Senior Scout (later known as Venturer).

When David was seven he joined Cubs in Rosewood. The Cub Leader (Akela) was Kev Kanofski. I became an Assistant Cub Leader. Kev soon dropped out, and I became the Cub Leader. Twelve

months later, I was Group Leader of Rosewood, looking after Cubs, Scouts and Parents' Group, a position I held for the next 17 years. Ron Purvis took over as Cub leader.

David moved from Cubs to Scouts. Russell from Cubs to Scouts. There was no Venturer Group in Rosewood at that stage as the minimum number for a group was 12. Russell wanted to be a Venturer so he joined an Ipswich group, while he recruited local lads to form a Group at Rosewood. Russell earned his Queens Scout badge, as did Stewart. Wendy and Carol had joined Rosewood Guides. In Year 10 they became the first girls in the Rosewood Venturer Group. They also earned their Queens Scout Badge.



Rosewood Secondary Department: This was a new experience for me. My home room was No. 6 on the first floor of the new building. I was in charge of English, Maths, History, Geography and Science as well as playground duty and bus duty at 3pm two days a week. English was like the old Year 8 course without grammar and parsing, Maths – old Grade 8 course, Science – Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Physics. History and Geography was to be local history and geography. Biology consisted of ecology, cycles in ecosystems, marine world, littoral zones, life in fresh water, life on land, plants, plants in biology (Year 9) and human body (Year 10). Geology consisted of rocks and rock structure, age of earth, water and soils, recognising rocks and minerals and plate tectonics. Geography (local geography) covered a brief history of age of earth from Jurassic and Triassic eras to vulcanism – Tweed Valley Volcano (Mt. Warning) and Main Range. Local history included aboriginal tribes who used the scrub for food (goannas, wallabies, fruit, seeds, leaves), English settlers along the Bremer and tributaries, German settlers who cleared the Rosewood scrub.

Research into these new 'subjects' took a lot of time. Assignments were helped by a 50 book 'science' library I had purchased and encouraged my students to read up suitable articles.

Students from the lower grades at Mt. Walker school became part of my high school classes in those early years. One of the important learning aspects was my insistence that my maths students know their tables (times tables in particular).



Rosewood State School Secondary Department c1975

Back row: Doug Thomas, Geoff Ashdown, Mr Berryman, Mr Collins, Bob Watson, Arnold Rieck, Bruce Stitz, Col Horne.

Middle row: Jeanette Johansen, Mandy Frazer, Wendy Sellars, Nancy Boughen, Isabelle Kearlsey, Marie Allen, Christine Mollenhausen, Shirley Moore.

Front row: Margaret Bourke, Jenny Stubbs, Meryl Armstrong, Mark Robertson (Principal), Rosemary Doerr, __? ____, Judy Meehan.

I recently found a list of the "families" we had learnt in the biology course. These were the protozoans (the simple celled life), porifera (the sponges), coelenterates (corals and jelly fish), platyhelminthes (flat worms), echinoderms (star fish), annelids (garden worms), arthropods (joint footed insects), and molluscs (snails).

In 1974 the Russians sent the Sputnik in orbit around the earth. The Commonwealth Government deemed that all high schools ought to have its own library. At a meeting of Federal election candidates in Rosewood, I asked why weren't secondary departments offered a library as well. Our secondary department was one of the largest in Queensland with around 200 students. We were in the electorate of MacPherson at that time. Eighteen months later we had our library at the Rosewood Secondary Dept.



Extended Rieck Family c 1975

Back Row: Scott, Lorna, Paul, Margaret with Elaina, Brian, Joyce, Mother, Father, Kathy, Arnold, John

Middle Row: Louise, Russell, David, Stewart, Peter

Front Row: Bruce, Wendy, Martin, Carol, Stephen

Rosewood High School: On 1st April 1979 the P & C of Rosewood School received a letter signed by our local member, Bill Gunn, stating that a new high school was to be built at Rosewood and opened in 1980. Many of us thought it was an April Fool's Day hoax. But it wasn't! Work started soon after at the site on the southern side of Lanefield Road, and the school opened for the new school year in 1980, offering Year 11 and then Year 12 in 1981. I was transferred to the new high school and was one of the senior (by age) teachers.

In my last year at the Secondary Dept I applied for and received a term of long service leave. But I learnt that I would not be returning to the Secondary Dept.

Mr Barrell, in charge of transfers, informed me that he wanted me to go to Bremer High and be involved with Year 11 Maths classes, before I was transferred to the new high school being built. I was transferred to Bremer after Easter and took over the classes of a year 11 teacher. My year 11 groups were enthusiastic. Not so a Grade 9 Science class of commercial girls. They were inattentive and taunted me so often. One lesson I stopped teaching, walked up to the girls who was talking among themselves and asked them to be quiet and to listen to me. One of the girls said to me that if I touched her she would have me up on an assault charge. The height of impertinence by a teenage student!

At the end of 1983 the high school was informed that it had a low retention rate for Year 10 students returning to school for Year 11 and 12. Miss Pledger, the Principal told me that she had advised the Education Dept that I could organise a course and start a board registered school subject called Horticulture. I went to a high school in Brisbane where they had established horticulture courses. I used their ideas and some of my own. I organised a two-year horticulture course for Year 11 and Year 12 classes. With money allocated for that purpose, I was able to build a propagation tunnel and purchase basic potting and cutting materials. My course included practical aspects – such as teaching students propagation techniques by seeds, cuttings and graftings. Later on, we planted an area near the tennis courts with a variety of citrus trees. It was only a board registered school subject, but it had much local information. With money allocated for

board registered school subjects, I was able to arrange the building of a propagation tunnel and purchase basic potting and growing mixtures. At last I could have a location where plants from the original scrub could be propagated. And I was able to teach my hobby. I enjoyed those Year 11 and 12 classes.

Go forward to 1988. For the bicentenary of Australia my Year 12 students were able to propagate and sell lots of our local rosewood trees to Rosewood folk. We even gave the premier who came to visit the school a couple to take home. It was amazing to think that so many Rosewood folk now had a rosewood tree to plant in their backyards. The tree was quite unknown in the local area.

Sport at Secondary Dept and High School: I introduced hockey as a winter sport. I had played at primary school at Milton, and for the YMCA after I left school. Both the secondary dept and high school had hockey teams. Other staff members supervised rugby league in winter. There was a time at the secondary dept that there was not a male teacher on the primary staff. I can remember glancing out my window and seeing a lady referring a league match, and it was Mrs Isabelle Kearsley.

In summer I looked after the cricket team at both secondary dept and high school. I would coach the boys in trying to improve their batting and bowling skills. Years later a chap in his twenties pulled me up in Rosewood and stated that I was the best cricket coach he had a school.

I can remember one match in particular. We played Laidley High School one Saturday morning. We won the toss and batted – poorly. All out for 55. My team were really concerned that we were going to lose. Our top fast bowler was big Sid Faulkner. I told him “Don’t bowl short, or they will hit you for four every time. Bowl to hit the base of the stumps.” Sid did just that. Laidley made 40 – all out. We won! Big Sid died in his thirties.

At this time, I was also coaching the Rosewood United Junior Cricket team in the Church Union competition. One day I fitted the whole team in our Valiant station sedan to go to a game at Kalbar, was hauled over the coals by the father of the 12th man who we couldn’t fit in.

My Retirement: Over the years teaching had changed. I found it hard to cope with the lack of respect that students had for teachers and so I decided to retire from fulltime teaching at the end of 1989. I did quite a bit of supply teaching mainly in primary schools up until the end of the year 2000. My most rewarding teaching experience in this time was an adult Maths class at Bremer TAFE, where the students wanted to learn.



Keiran Nicoll, Salu, Arnold, Peter Gibson at Year 12 Formal Rosewood High School, 1986



Arnold, Kathy, Father, Mother, Paul, John.



Our family at my father's funeral, in 1997.
 Back row: Stewart and Narelle Rieck, Joyce and Arnold Rieck, Wendy Johnston, Gavin Adsett
 Front row: David with Patrick, Lachlan, Nicholas and Theresa Rieck, Carol Adsett with Stephanie Rieck.



The whole family at Joyce and Arnold's 50th Wedding Anniversary, 2010

Rosewood: The town of Rosewood (pop. 1700) is in the south east corner of Queensland is credited with being named after a tree – the rosewood tree which is indigenous to the scrub country to the north of the town. Locally this tree has two common names – scrub ironbark by the farmers who prized its timber for fence posts, Jack Downing, a long-time resident of a farm in the scrub country region reckons that the scrub ironbark fence posts on his property are as good today as when they were first placed in over one hundred years ago. There's a local comment about the hardness of this timber; scrub ironbark is so hard that termites blunt their teeth on the timber.

The Rosewood Scrub stretches from Rosewood, north to Lowood and from Haigslea west to Plainland. Most of the scrub has been cleared for framing, and only about 2% of the scrub remains

today. The scrub is located on fertile volcanic soil and produced extensive crops of maize, pumpkin and beet when cleared by the German settlers from the 1870s.

The Rosewood tree belongs to the Acacia family and grows associated with its 'cousins', the brigalow tree. Both are long lived trees, so different from the short-lived acacias that replace the brigalow and rosewood in cleared areas. It will reach 6m high as a tall erect tree with a dense canopy and drooping branchlets. The trunk has a grey fissured bark like the ironbark eucalyptus. The dark green leaves are lanceolate (lance-shaped) or sometimes slightly curved and up to 18cm long. Along the centre of the leaf is a pale green mid-vein with no visible lateral veins. There is a gland on the upper edge of the leaf close to the base of the leaf. The leaves are actually flattened stems, a characteristic of most Australian wattles. The rosewood tree flowers in late summer (early March). On young trees there can be a profusion of pale creamy-yellow flowers. The flowers have a sweet perfume. Seed pods are similar to leaf colour when developing and turn a brown colour when mature.

Native Plants: Back in 1974 Geoff Brown saw me and mentioned about a Native Plants Group starting in Ipswich, i.e. The Society for Growing Australian Plants, Ipswich Branch. He had seen an advert in the Q.T. He took me along and we joined up the next month. Present at that first meeting was Andy Nisbet, originally from the Shetland Islands. Andy and I are both still members in 2022, although there has recently been a name change to Native Plants Queensland, Ipswich Branch.

I met Lloyd Bird, a coal miner and a native plants whiz. Lloyd passed on years ago. Lloyd has left a legacy of several new varieties of previously unknown species, e.g. *Notelea lloydii*, which have been named after him.

I was fascinated by the number and variety of plants found in the Rosewood Scrub. The scrub was located from Rosewood to Lowood (south to north) and from Haigslea to Hatton Vale (east to west). This original scrub grew on the top ridges of the ranges, on the rich volcanic soils. This soil was too rich for the myrtacea family, i.e. eucalypts, callistemons, melaleucas and leptospermums.

In my research on local history, the local aborigines used the scrub to hunt wallabies, etc and collected the fruit for eating from the trees and plants for medicinal purposes.

Lloyd Bird suggested to me that I establish an "Arboretum" of Rosewood Scrub plants on behalf of the Society for Growing Australian Plants, Ipswich branch. The location of the arboretum was at the end of Matthew St on Council owned land, known as Peace Park, named to commemorate Jack Peace, the previous owner of that land. It was part of Masons Gully which came from Perrys Knob, under the railway line and meandered down towards the roundabout in John Street. The Peace Park Arboretum was eucalypt country – not the best soils for scrub plants. Over two hundred different varieties of trees, shrubs, vines, herbs and grasses from the Rosewood Scrub have been identified on various patches of scrub on private property and roadside verges.

For six years we were funded by the National Heritage Trust 1994 – 2000. There were eight surviving scrub species in the gully at the park. They include the two acacias found in the scrub, the local green brigalow and the rosewood tree (famously named by Ludwig Leichhardt in the 1840's). Ten special feature gardens were established and labelled. They included plants worthy of garden culture, rare, threatened and endangered species, pioneer timber trees, bush medicines, bush tucker plants, other plants used by the aborigines, plants with potential medicinal properties, species not common in the scrub, butterfly host plants and finally prickly and spiny stemmed plants.



Three booklets on the arboretum are available from me.

1. Rosewood Scrub Arboretum – 160 plants described
2. Species proposed for future gardens
3. Bush medicine plants of the Rosewood Scrub.

When I reached 84, I could not continue my work at the Arboretum and fortunately my local helper, Colin Thompson took over my role.

Masons Gully Regeneration Project: Plantings in Masons Gully, Rosewood began in August 2000 when I applied, on behalf of West Moreton Landcare, for an Olympic Landcare Grant of \$1500. Rosewood had two participants in the Sydney Olympics. They were Juanita Feldhahn, road cyclist and Anthony Martin a boxer. The Olympians could not be present on the initial planting day but their parents were. At that time Masons Gully was only a grassed area to the north east location of the round-about in John St.



In July 2001 I arranged for the upper primary classes and the high school horticulture classes to a big planting day. That day went well and dozens of plants, all labelled were planted. Over the years the evidence of our plantings is obvious. We held monthly working bees, with a small band of volunteers continuing the planting and the maintenance of the area. Plantings are continuing upstream from Walloon Road and I hope to have special signs painted on the groups of plantings.



In 2017 the local Councillor at that time, David Pahlke announced the establishment of the proposed Arnold Rieck Walk from Walloon Road to the Rosewood Scrub Arboretum. In 2019, the first section from Walloon Road to Matthew Street was built and opened.

In August 2020 we held a 20th Anniversary Celebration, planting patches of Baileys cypress and Rosewood wattles. At this time, I handed over the convenorship to Chris Rinehart. I still maintain an active interest in this project.



Rosewood District Protection Organisation:

Rosewood has been a coal mining district since early in the 20th century. At one time there were 40 coal mines in the district employing up to 400 men. These mines were all underground. Mostly owned by family businesses. I can remember in the 1960s seeing miners on their bikes coming home from work, black and filthy. Only one student left school while I was there to go and work in an underground mine. Gradually all the underground mines closed. In Central Queensland the newly opened mines were after workers. Quite a few Rosewood families left Rosewood to work in Central Queensland mines.

New Hope Coal Co. purchased the Oakleigh underground mine and started open-cut mining west of Tallegalla Road. They cleared all the trees off the property and removed the topsoil covering the coal seams. So, began open-cut mining around Rosewood.

In 2001 Paul Kennedy with a group of like-minded people established the Rosewood District Protection Organisation, as a result of community concerns about the effects of open cut mining at Ebenezer, Jeebropilly and Oakleigh. Paul used a photo that I had taken of a 100-year-old brigalow with a huge blood vine curling around it. That tree had been destroyed by New Hope Coal. Paul devised the RDPO badge featuring the brigalow and vine.



The RDPO focussed on raising the awareness of local people to the scenic value of our district. Paul organised monthly nature walks to local areas of interest – often on private property. There was a bird expert and several plant experts, of which I was one. We kept meticulous records of birds and plant life observed, and passed them on to the Ipswich City Council. Sadly, Paul died in 2016.

The New Hope property was rehabilitated, planted with grass and used as a cattle fattening area. Not a tree grows on the slopes below the old Marburg rail line.

I enjoyed my teaching career and I still get a thrill when I meet a middle-aged person in the street, who says “Good Morning, Mr. Rieck”. Early in 2021 I had a visit from a brother and sister whom I had taught at Jundah in the mid-1950s. How great that they bothered to look me up!