

Papua New Guinea Days : Richard Clark 7th E Course 1964

My memories of Papua New Guinea are many and varied. Indeed, I would consider the country a second home, having spent a little over ten (10) years there. My wife of almost forty years is from PNG.

The experiences and adventures began on 18th June 1964 with the departure from Sydney to Rabaul via Port Moresby and Lae. My association/friendship with others on the 7th "E" course began on this rather memorable flight. Memorable because it was the beginning of an adventure into the unknown. An unknown future, career and experiences and not to forget the tension associated with leaving the safe haven of home, family, friends and a career with the PMG Department.

The flight from Sydney was delayed for several hours and consequently, did not arrive in Port Moresby until around nine o'clock when the sun was well and truly up and many of us were in our suits! During the flight I had the pleasure of sitting with Albert (Bertie) George and Alan Baxter. My association with both endured right through the six (6) months of the course and became a close friend to Bertie for the duration.

The flight from Lae to Rabaul was equally memorable because we all travelled in a DC3 sitting "side saddle" with all our luggage in the middle of the aircraft and weren't those seats bloody hard! This part of the trip enabled many of us to meet and although names were not necessarily exchanged, we were all bonded together in the situation we found ourselves.

Bertie George and I spent a lot of time together travelling around the traps of Rabaul and were partners in several assignments on the course. One assignment involved a practical demonstration on telecommunications in the Territory and the other, a written one imposed on all of us by John Schofield, involved the merits of combining local and western cultures. Bert and I spent a lot of time talking with Malaguna villagers and the local Pastor in preparation for the cultural assignment. Needless to say we did well in both assignments and thought we had done ourselves proud!

Bert and I spent a lot of time practising the recorder together. The early part of the course can be well remembered for the noisy recorder sounds emanating from the dormitories at all times of the day (and night) until a moratorium was placed on practice times

Once, Bert and I found ourselves lost on a walk from Malaguna to Vunapope. We took the route over hill and at one stage found ourselves lost among many cacao trees. We finally reached the main road and a kind local police officer gave us a lift back to the college. We were tired and relieved to be back.

Dormitory Characters

I have thought long and hard about the names of those who shared the dormitory with me during the course. (And didn't the months of the course seem to go ever so slowly!) Alan Baxter is one. We would have our little chats from time to time, but essentially, we were in different worlds. John Lotti is another. John was with the Catholic group of trainees and was due to go back to Milne Bay after the course. He was, I believe, the youngest on the course. I'm sure he was about 18 yrs. I remember because all participants of the course had to be at least 21. I had turned 21 only weeks before departure from Sydney and considered myself to be the youngest.

John was a little on the immature side in his behaviour. He could be both boisterous and aloof. He attempted to act older than his age but he was a young dedicated Catholic and his heart was in the right place. He would "sponge" what he could from the dorm fridge, hence, I was continually buying "lollywater" John did not like to be criticised but would be critical of others. This was demonstrated when we decided to practise in front of each other. I got the works, so to speak, but he would not accept any criticism at all. He was the perfect deliverer!!!! Two other missionary types were Hans Hanni from the Swiss Evangelical group and John Carlson from the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Brian Smith had been a motor mechanic He and I got on well together. I remember him well because of the sarcastic, cynical comments Father Walker wrote in his "Lesson Observation" notes. He was subjected to the most vitriolic of comment and while he took the criticism in his stride and shared a laugh with us, underneath he was, I believe, upset.. { I was later to meet this same fellow in Port Moresby on his way finish. We shared a laugh and a beer and at that time I was preparing to marry and I remember the comment he made about being brave to take on the task of marrying a girl from Papua New Guinea. I wish I could meet up with him again. } But getting back to the course and the dorm mates, there is no doubt that anyone who had their notes checked by Father Walker suffered the same fate with his style of commentary.

Another dorm occupant was a fellow by the name of Rod. He occupied the cubicle next to me. A nice, affable sort of bloke who had interrupted university studies to do the course. Rod was well remembered by everyone in our dorm because of those confounded boots he wore. He would walk through the dorm at all hours of the day and night and take no care to walk softly. It was enough to wear down the most patient of us until we finally tackled him about the issue. To his credit, he laughed with us but after that he must have bought himself a pair of scuffs because he was as quiet as a mouse thereafter.

Rod and I got on well. He bought a small motorcycle and I was a regular pillion passenger. Most Sundays before lunch, we would ride somewhere quiet, while he would read/write letters and I would just read or sit and meditate under the palms. Rod assisted me a lot during the course. We would talk at length about the various aspects of the course and these talks gave me some confidence in tackling some of the arduous assignments. He was appointed to Lae Tech at the completion of the course and that was the last I heard of him.

Kevin Diflo was another occupant of our Dorm. Kevin and I were only casual acquaintances during the course. A quiet, unassuming sort of person who later on in his career in PNG became an excellent organiser. Kevin and I were Headteachers at nearby schools some years later and he commanded a lot of respect from staff, pupils and community. Kevin went on to greener pastures helping to organise the Teachers' Union and it was during this time that he was involved in a tragic plane crash. I believe he was the sole survivor. Kevin and I shared many a drink over the time I knew him and he introduced me to coffee and tiamaria, accompanied with a small glass of port!

Another dorm mate was Ron Halpin. He may have been born in Papua New Guinea. He hailed from Madang and had worked for Ansett. He failed the written examinations and I remember talking to him on Xmas Day. He did not attend the luncheon and indeed, did not mix with us after the results were posted. He expressed bitter disappointment with the whole outcome. In the Natural Science Examination, he wrote as a motivating step : Pick up the nearest kid and throw him in a frog hollow! Such was his disappointment.

I must make mention of the coffee club we had in our dorm. I'm not sure whether everyone had an electric jug or not, but I did and it was used regularly at night. Almost all of the dorm would converge in my cubicle after someone would call out, "Put the jug on, Dick! I would come to miss these little gatherings and fondly remembered them whilst having a coffee, on my own, at that first isolated posting.

Other associates on the course I remember well. One was from South Africa. His name was Phil Nel. We were together on the last practice teaching session at Nodup Primary. Phil was posted to Bougainville. He wouldn't work under a local Headteacher and I understand he jumped on the first boat and left.

I remember the two priests on the course. Their names escape me but one was from Wales and the other from France. The Frenchman and I were partners on the second teaching session at Vunairoto. I had problems understanding him at times and in the end it was the language factor that contributed to failure in the written exams. He was a genuine, dedicated person and I felt deeply for him in his disappointment.

The Welsh priest I had little to do with other than sit next to him during lectures. I remember him complaining about Father Walker's comments on his handwriting, particularly his beautiful gaelic 'r'. (Remember the approved cursive style we all had to conform to, especially in our lesson observation notes ?I guess it was hard for him (and others) to adapt. Some were in the older age group and when they succeeded in the course, it must have given them a great sense of achievement.

One such success must be mentioned. A Swiss evangelical missionary by the name of Hans (?). He found the way difficult because of the language barrier and to some extent, his age. But he had a lot of support from within the group and his missionary friends. When he graduated, there was a loud applause when he stepped up to receive his certificate.

There were others on the course that I can remember. Bob Taylor, Bruce Howe Gordon Shirley and Lowrey Cortez. Roger (?), nicked named Jerry (Lewis) ? Ian Barclay? Bob Young? Ian McKenzie ? And some that didn't last the distance. Who were they?

Who could not forget Lowrey Cortez? He was liked by everyone, had a huge sense of humour and although he had to sit a subsequent examination later on, proved to be very capable in his career. Lowry was Headteacher of a school further down the Papuan coast from me and I had some association with him in organising district athletic events. I also met him again with his wife, together with John Schofield and wife at Kevin Diflo's place some years later. Was it just a rumour that Lowrey and Ebbeck got on well together despite that blasted recorder?

There were a few wags on the course. Remember the fake telex message about postings after the course? A broken wall in the shower cubicle was the result of someone taking the bait! And who was the bloke who woke up in his bed that had been carefully moved to the pathway outside.

Course Lecturers

One could go on about the whole course surrounding the association with other members. Many would be personal ones, others as a group. But everyone would be dominated, so to speak, by the lecturers. Who could forget them? The Principal, Jim Kernan was a man who had the gift of the gab! All of his supposed lectures on Remedial English were nothing but an arm-chair chat, according to Dave Pitt. But his lectures were informative. They gave me the inspiration to continue and persevere with the studies. He fired the imagination with his description of Papua New Guinea school disciplines.

I remember him addressing the group about the opposition to the amount of assignments we were bombarded with. He virtually said to stop bloody whinging and get on with it. When you want to get something done, go and ask a busy person, he will always find the time to get it done! In a way, Jim was a sort of father figure. He warned us at the beginning of the course that the midnight candle had to be burned. Little did we know how true that was.

Jim was in his element after the examinations. I remember him wandering around the campus and approaching someone who had failed a subject or two. He also made a point of walking in on a group, making conversation, and out of the blue give someone the bad news. I remember him coming into our dorm one evening but all he wanted to talk about was the weather and how were we bearing up after the six months! A number of us escaped to Pila Pila beach for hours on end just to escape him.

Jim and his wife, together with Kevin Diflo, visited me at Daumagini Primary school some years later. I will always remember Jim standing on the verandah of the house overlooking the school and shaking his head at the scene. It was a picture at that time as a lot of work had been put into preparations for the District Sports Carnival. The whole scene was a picture! Jim was sick at the time and I found out later that his problem was due to some anaemic condition.

Father Walker was a different kettle of fish. I was intimidated by him and I really don't know to this day, why? I remember him at the beginning of each lecture asking for the main points of the previous lecture, and nominating someone for the answer. He asked me once and all I could give was four out of the five main points asked for. He seemed to be disgusted with my performance, but with the pressure at the time, I could not think clearly. I have already written about Father Walker and his comments on students' assignments. I often wondered whether he was not under the influence of the amber fluid when he was marking! He must have gone through dozens of red biro's during the course. But give Father Walker his due! On the last Practice Teaching course at Nodup, Father sat in one of my lessons and made some glowing comments on how much I had improved since the first session at PilaPila.

Father Walker and Fred Ebbeck came to dinner with us in Port Moresby in January 1965, shortly before we left for our first posting. (With Lowrey Cortez and Kevin Diflo and someone else by the name of John (?) who was of Austrian or German descent) It was a pleasant evening but the presence of Father Walker still placed me ill at ease. Father Walker gave all the participants of the course a big wrap at the church parade we attended in Rabaul. He honoured us on our dedication and commitment.

Mal Mcrae was a down to earth, talented bloke who took everything in his stride. Nothing seemed to unnerve him. He guided us through the course with his great talent and I remember meeting him several times in later years, socially and one time professionally, when he adjudicated at the District Arts and Crafts festival. I remember babysitting for Mal and his wife several times. I recall having a beer or two at the Planter's Club with Mal prior to sitting with the kids.

John Schofield and his Education Principles! When I read or hear anything about Pavlov, Solomon or Montessori, I think of John. He gave us a briefing on all the well known educationists and their theories. I must admit the basics John gave me came to fruition during my years as a teacher. (and Instructor with Telecom Australia). I met John again in Port Moresby at his home and at Port Moresby Teacher's College. He really hadn't changed and I did wonder at the time how the Papua New Guinea students would have accepted him during his lectures. (I wonder where he is now?) At one stage I was not popular with John because I mis-informed him on the operation of Bert George's tape recorder. John spent hours recording the singing of various classes in different schools, only to find out the recordings were of poor quality. (A switch was in the incorrect position and caused a humming noise in the recording) So John had to repeat the whole thing again didn't he?

Dave Pitt was someone I didn't have much time for. He seemed to be a person who would easily take the "mickey" out of someone given half the chance. I remember being warned about him in regard to being fed misleading information prior to the written exams. Does anyone else remember that? I recall Dave standing outside the lecture room eyeing and laughing at anyone having problems with bandages during first aid courses. But despite my disquiet about him, he was a good lecturer and gave us all the good oil on school sporting activities. Dave Pitt was the only lecturer I did not meet again.

First Posting

My first posting was Hood Lagoon Primary located about 150 Km South- East of Port Moresby. The only access to the area was by sea or a walk about 5 Km on part of the coast at low tide. There was a regular boat service provided by Steamships Trading Co. The vessels used were about 600 tonnes ("K" boats) and carried cargo to the various plantations along the coast and back loaded copra to Port Moresby. The service was weekly and provided contact with the outside world by the way of mail and essential goods such as fresh bread, meat (frozen) etc, etc. How we looked forward to those weekly services!

The initial trip to Hood Lagoon was on one of the coastal vessels. The "MV Kobo". We left Port Moresby early on the Tuesday morning with it's cargo of essentials including a load of teachers destined for various schools along the coast. After spending the first night at Hula, we continued to Hood Lagoon the next morning. As you can imagine, there was some excitement at our arrival. It was because this was the beginning of a whole new experience and for the children, the arrival of two (2) new Australian teachers. Which classes would they teach ? And indeed, which class would I teach?

I was to teach Standard Four in my first year. Hood Lagoon was a small school in those days, about 170 in number ranging from Prep to Standard Six. A staff of six (6) included a teacher from the Duke of York Islands, three from the Central District and of course, two from overseas. The planning of term, weekly and daily lessons was relatively easy right from the start. I would spend a great deal of time in preparation, quite often Saturday and Sunday mornings in the classroom, which was only several cricket pitches away from my house. I revelled in the experience but found it difficult when it came to teaching aids. Consequently, a lot of time was spent on blackboard work on which I was regularly commended. My blackboard map of PNG during that year was highly commended by my class as well as the Headteacher and Inspector.

The Standard Four class was a large one, 42 pupils from the three (3) nearby villages. The previous teacher commented that they were an unruly lot and had a difficult time with them . The main problem I found with the class as a whole, was their inability to put a simple story together, even two or three sentences was a hurdle for them. They also had a lacking in basic arithmetical skills. As a consequence, I spent a lot of time on bringing them up to speed in the first term. By the end of that year (1965) I had achieved what twelve months before was but a dream. The Headteacher was to teach that same

class the following year and was quite satisfied with their level of performance. I remember several pupils from that class expressing their delight in being able to write a simple story in English.

The syllabus requirement for Standard Four, from memory, was the ability to write a short story of about four sentences. A good percentage of the class were able to write up to ten sentences by the end of the year. The class became very smart in their basic arithmetic skills. I taught the same group again in 1967 as Standard Six and could see the effect of not only my teaching but of the other Australian as well. During October 2001, I visited Hood Lagoon for a family function. One of the students from that first year of teaching came to see me, gave me a large watermelon and spoke about the good old days. Mention was made of how he was able to perform at the top of the class when he transferred to a Port Moresby school for his Standard Five/Six years. Several students from the years of 1965 and 1967 went on to do well. Several became teachers themselves, one is now on the staff of the Post Courier and another represented PNG in athletics at the Montreal Olympics.

Les Johnson, the Director of Education, visited Hood Lagoon during 1965. He spoke to all the school and visited only several classes, one was my Standard Four. He spent a little time sitting in on me, spoke to the class and asked them to sing a local song. He also asked them to either sing it in English or translate the words. The class could not do either but he asked for a letter with the translation of the song to be included. This was duly done and with a little help from village elders, a translation of the song was included.

During that first year, I attempted to introduce some local cultural activity in the year's programme. The boys spent some time, with the help of a villager, to construct a small canoe (Lakotoi). The girls with the help of a local teacher's wife, spent time learning the art of small basket weaving as well as basic sewing skills. Cultural activities were beginning to become an important part of a school's programme at that stage and I was able to implement my ideas when I returned to Hood Lagoon as Headteacher in 1970.

The first year of teaching was a tremendous experience. I revelled in the whole adventure and challenge of teaching. I spent a lot of time in preparation but like most of us, we were frustrated at times with the lack of materials. But somehow we were able to overcome the problems we encountered. I did not have a formal Inspection until the following year, 1966. The Standard Six class were a lot older than the little Standard Fours of a year earlier. Some in the class were at least 13 - 14 yrs old. But a smart group in the main. I had to prepare well that year. I had to keep one step ahead of them all the time and I believe that the class helped me a lot in my teaching career. I seemed to leap ahead in all aspects of teaching. The class helped me to gain enormous confidence and the Inspection Report of that year gained me 10/10 result. The Primary Final results of 1966 were outstanding and many gained entry to a High School. A number continued through to University to have rewarding careers in the private and public sectors.

During the early days at Hood Lagoon, I found difficulty in adjusting to the new environment. I had built up a good association with the other Australian teacher and the

local teaching staff but it took some time for me to start mixing with the local population. I was very conscious of personal behaviour and made sure that the image portrayed to the locals was one of circumspect. One day I took the “bull by the horns” so to speak and started to regularly walk through the three villages and make contact with the various families of children in my class. I had been told by some villagers that some of the previous teachers at the school had often wandered through the villages eyeing the girls. So I had this in mind at all times. Quite often I would be invited into homes for meals or just a cup of tea. The local male population were (and are) natural sportsmen. Their favourite sport is cricket. The local men invited the teachers to play on a regular basis and it was the foundation for a good working relationship all round.

During the first year at Hood Lagoon I had to come to terms with the isolation in terms of regular food supplies, mail and the like. Thanks to Steamships Trading Company, we were able to receive weekly freezer supplies of meat, bread and vegetables. The coastal vessels had a huge “esky” packed with blocks of ice. The meat was frozen in Port Moresby, packed and sewn up in hessian bags. Even if the vessel was a day late, the meat was still frozen. I had organised a permanent weekly order of various meats and vegetables and left it up to the Manager at Steamships to make suitable variations depending on supplies. Beer was included in the weekly order. At first it was one carton a week but it soon went to two cartons. When I returned to Hood Lagoon in 1970 and spent the next four years there, the weekly order always included two cartons of SP.

The kerosene refrigerator constantly broke down in the early part but one learns from experience. At times I managed to keep the unit working with just a condensed milk tin suitably cut to size. This was to replace the glass unit which was part of the “flu” at the base of the refrigerator. It had to be reasonably sealed, so it was an art to cut and shape the tin can. The refrigerator once broke down whilst I was away for the weekend visiting the teachers at Hula, another school further up the coast. I came home to find the whole fridge defrosted and food spoiled! What a waste! I lived on bully beef and sao biscuits for a few days.

I have mentioned the value of the weekly boat service delivering the essentials. The most longed for each week was the mail! The weekly mail bag was the communication with the outside world (apart from the radio). The Mail Bag was also contained mail for the villages. The Headteacher at Hood Lagoon, in effect, was the Postmaster and responsible for all the incoming and outgoing mail.

But something was missing. Where was the two-way radio ? During 1965, we had success in lobbying the District Inspector to provide two-way radio communications. When this was installed, we were able to directly contact Port Moresby. A daily schedule was required and both Australian teachers became responsible for the daily duties required. The radio was used several times for medical emergencies, in all cases, saving lives. One such case involved Port Moresby Hospital despatching a helicopter to pick up the patient. The whole population witnessed the arrival of the “chopper”. One elderly villager who had never seen a helicopter before just sat stunned by the sight of the landing. I wish a camera was on hand to capture the sight on his face.

In summary, the first posting was indeed an adventure of experiences that only a short twelve months before was just unimaginable. The “E” course provided the basic tools in order to carry out the task required but it was the practical ongoing experiences that developed and moulded me into a teacher of some merit. But after the first two years, I felt that the course had not really been long enough and would have given anything to do another. But the only avenue, as it turned out, was to carry out personal studies and reading. Later on in my career the successful completion of the Second Division Examinations and associated assignments is proof that I wanted more out of teaching.

I spent two (2) years at Hood Lagoon under the Australian Headteacher, Jeff Chapman. At the end of the second year, the District Inspector wanted to appoint me to Hohola Demonstration School in Port Moresby. However, with my impending marriage, I asked to remain at Hood Lagoon. This was approved and subsequently served under a local Headteacher, Ila Sam from Hula (as 2TIC) for the third year. Towards the end of 1967, my daughter was born. Like most fathers, this was a great experience and instilled an even greater motivation within me.

Move to Daumagini

My next posting was Daumagini Primary, located inland and about an hours drive from Port Moresby. This posting was not so isolated, the school being located near the main road and the Sub-District office was just down the road. The Headteacher was Alan Jones, an AOSPA graduate and a crow-eater to boot! Alan was (and still is) a dedicated soul to his work. He would spend countless hours at his work. He was a strict disciplinarian and had the school working like clockwork. He would never take no for an answer and instilled a great pride within the school. I learned a lot from Alan and implemented some of his ideas in later years as both a teacher and Headteacher.

The people in this area were very different from those at Hood Lagoon. The children indeed were different and I really had to work hard in all aspects of teaching in order to gain the results required by Alan. My Standard Six class was a difficult one and I was most pleased at the end of the year with the result. Alan made favourable comments on their progress because the previous teacher had been a little lax in discipline. As a result of my efforts that year, (1968) the Inspector’s report was excellent and I was subsequently appointed Headteacher for the following year. (Alan Jones moved to Hula Primary)

1969 was my first year as Headteacher. I found the staff reasonably co-operative but most of them had served under Alan for a number of years and were used to his style. I had other ideas and some staff were not entirely in favour of them. However, we managed to survive the year and we successfully conducted several Sub-District events. The first was a combined schools’ sports carnival. It was necessary to construct a suitable running track as Daumagini was built on a slope. The local Council came to our assistance and constructed a suitable running track utilising their road grader. The result was superb! The actual event was a huge success with the PNG Police Pipe Band leading the march-in at the beginning of activities.

The second event was the annual Art's Festival which included an impressive presentation by the Police (brass) Band. All schools exhibited a fine array of art and craft, together with the different styles of traditional dancing. Mal Macrae was the adjudicator. The whole year was a busy one as I was the secretary of the Sub-District Headteachers' group. At the same time I was studying for the Second Division exams and was rewarded with a pass in all but one. Fred Ebbeck came to visit me and gave me the results personally. He gave me back the paper I had failed in. I can't remember what the subject was but it didn't matter. In short, my stay at Daumagini had its difficulties but there were many rewards. The completion of a new office building as well as the concreting of several recently built classrooms together with all the other activities already referred to, made the whole tenure a satisfying one.

Return to Hood Lagoon

I returned to Hood Lagoon as Headteacher in 1970. The place was a complete wreck. There was no resemblance to the school I had left in 1967. All the buildings were in urgent need of repair. The staff seemed to be disinterested in their work as several had received very poor reports on their teaching the previous year. The whole school tone was poor!! The P & C had not really been active as well.

At the very beginning, I alerted the staff as to what I expected of them and their performance and the desirous outcome by the end of the year. In hindsight and even after all these years, I believe we achieved the targets. All of the staff received favourable reports and the whole school tone was raised beyond expectations. The resultant response from the parents was also positive but I still had to work on them with various goals.

The first meeting with the Parents and Citizens was in the village one Sunday afternoon soon after the school year had resumed. I had the assistance of a retired United Church Pastor who translated. I made it quite clear the whole situation with their performance was less than desirable and wanted their complete and utter support for what I wanted for the school and the education of their children. I promised to obtain a great deal of support from the Education Department as well as the Public Works' Department.

I had the good fortune to be well acquainted with the Regional Public Works' officer, a fellow by the name of Bob Hogan. I saw him in Port Moresby at the beginning of the year before departing for Hood Lagoon. He asked me to simply put in writing a list of what repairs were required on all Government buildings at the school. I diligently did a whole survey of classrooms and houses and forwarded the report to Bob. One month later, several tradesmen and a huge supply of materials arrived. Work began and within a period of 6-8 weeks, the whole school was transformed. This was the catalyst for the superb response I received from the parents as well as staff and pupils.

During the next couple of years it was not unusual for unexpected items to arrive for the school sent with regards from Bob Hogan, Regional Works' Officer. For example, one time a load of paint arrived unannounced. There must have been about 40 x 4 litre tins, together with smaller tins of various tint colours. The school buildings certainly brightened up within a few months.

Anyone who has spent time in remote locations within PNG have stories about the problems with supplies from the main centres. However, during my term in the remote Hood Lagoon area, I must have been lucky. The regular supplies from Port Moresby arrived on the weekly coastal vessels and it was only a small number of times that boats were cancelled for some urgent reason. The requests for supplies from the District Inspector's office were nearly always met. I would assume that those schools, staff, etc who were performing to expectations were rewarded in this way.

Relations with the local missions, church groups, etc were always cordial. The head of the mission in the region at the time, Rev Maurice Nixon, was our wedding celebrant on 2nd January, 1967. The wedding coincided with the opening of a new church building. The church was packed to capacity. My wife walked down the aisle on the arm of her father whilst the congregation sang a very popular local hymn. My best man was a "kiap" by the name of Peter Whollers. After the ceremony, a huge "sing-sing" took place; a suitable celebration I thought.

One experience has come to mind that I should mention. At the completion of marking of the 1967 Primary Final Examinations, the results from several schools were found to be in question. There apparently was evidence that tampering had been carried out. (by ???.) The panel requested that subsequent examinations be held at these schools. For some reason the panel listed Hood Lagoon. As you can imagine, I was most insulted and made representations to the local District Inspector, to no avail. My class had to travel across the water to another location where the District Examination's Officer (Jim Tarr) conducted the subsequent tests. The results were marked immediately after and to the marker's surprise, the results in almost all of the subjects were the same or higher than the original.

I gloated at the result! I subsequently received an apology from Don Christie, the District Inspector. He admitted that, in hindsight, he should have known better. I further found out that some members of the marking panel (from various schools in Port Moresby) could not understand how a remote school could achieve a result better than an urban Moresby school. Jealousy can be demonstrated in many ways!!!!

I have been digressing. I should now continue to outline what I further achieved at Hood Lagoon during my term as Headteacher. During 1970, I regularly outlined my plans for the P&C which included the acquisition of a 16mm projector, the construction of an outdoor theatre, the hiring of suitable movies from the Admin library as well as the local movie distributor. The plan included an extra \$2.00 per family levy to raise sufficient funds to place a deposit on the projector. The Association put this plan on hold at this time and said it would be considered the following year. Obviously the plan included the profits from the project be ploughed back into the school.

The plan was finally approved and implemented the following year, 1971. It was a huge success. The projector was paid for within twelve (12) months and with the help of subsidies from the Education Department, a generator was acquired as well. During the time leading up to the Association buying their own generator, my own generators were used.

A number of men from the Association were instructed on the use of the projector as well as the motor generator. After a little time I could leave the operation of the movie nights in their safe hands. I would often sit on the verandah of the house relaxing whilst keeping an eye on proceedings. The theatre was conveniently built within the school grounds and adjacent to our house.

(I had bought several small Honda generators in 1970 and 1971. I wired up the house for several internal and external lights as well as several power points. My wife had the use of a washing machine and a steam/dry iron. We also had a small deep freezer that we operated when needed. I often wonder whether I spoiled my wife too much in those days. My wife certainly appreciated the facilities.)

In 1973, the Association invested in a motor mower to help keep the school grassed area in good shape. A number of boys from Standard Five and Six were selected to operate the lawn mower after having a series of lessons on the safe use of the machine as well as basic operation and maintenance procedures. The same applied to the motor generators as well. I could safely leave the machinery in the hands of the boys who became quite proficient. The boys also were taught the basics of electric wiring and necessary safety precautions.

When I finally left Hood Lagoon at the end of 1973, the school was in good shape financially. The whole school was a picture with neatly cut grass, brightly painted classrooms and the prospect of a bright future. However, during the latter half of 1973, I lost several teachers for various reasons. I undertook teaching of two classes, my own Standard Six as well as Standard Two for several hours in the morning. During this time I felt a deep regret in not having taught any of the lower grades during my career nine (9) years. (I still do!) All of my teaching was with the upper grades where the pressure was in relation to preparation for Secondary school.

During my time at Hood Lagoon from 1970-73, I spent a great deal of time (and money) in preparing stencilled worksheets in the main subjects such as Arithmetic and English. The original stencils were filed according to date and subject. Over the four year period I had amassed quite a library. This was used appropriately by other staff members as well. The prepared worksheets enabled more time for individual assistance as well as other duties associated with Headteacher activity.

I returned to Hood Lagoon in 1996 to visit my wife's family and while making a little tour of the school, noticed that my library of binder files were still intact on the shelf. Sources informed me that reference had been made to them years after my departure. During my time as an Instructor with Telecom Australia, I spent a great deal of time preparing work much the same as I did in at Hood Lagoon. The prepared assignments handed out to apprentices and mature age classes, helped break up the monotonous talk and chalk procedure. Other Instructors appreciated the assignments as well.

Post and Telegraph College

So it was that towards the end of 1973, the writing was on the wall when it came to making a decision for the future. My time as a classroom teacher was coming to an end with a feeling of sadness but loaded with memories and stacked with a great deal of experience. I had spent a total of nine years in the classroom. I looked back at that short six months course held almost ten year's earlier and conceded to myself that while I had some doubts as to what my future would hold, I had been a success in many ways. Self confidence had well and truly been established and I believe this was the main attribute.

So, now it was time to move on! It was obvious that towards the end of 1973, a decision had to be made in relation to the future. Localisation was in place throughout the Administration and while the Department of Education indicated my position was safe for several years, I had to consider the education of my two children, particularly the daughter who was already of school age. I made the bold decision to change when I read of several Technical Instructor positions available with the Post and Telegraphs Department located at the College in Port Moresby. I duly applied for and was successful in my application and was finally and reluctantly released from the Education Department.

I spent a full twelve (12) months at the P&T college and enjoyed the experience immensely. But other forces were working against staying in the position and indeed, PNG. My son was aged 4 years and we came to realise that his hearing was impaired and on medical advice had to make the decision to leave PNG in somewhat urgent circumstances. My application of resignation was accepted and we left the country in November 1974.

I met my wife, Numa in 1966. She is from Keapara village located on the south-east coast of Papua and situated at the mouth of Hood Lagoon. I knew my future wife's family as her sister was in my 1966 Standard Six. We met at a school party although I well remember her turning her back on me when I asked for a dance. Mutual attraction I guess was the motivating factor thereafter and we were married on the 2nd January, 1967.

We had two (2) children, both born in PNG. Our daughter was born late 1967 and son born in 1970. His birth is worth noting because my mother was present at his birth. The birth came a little earlier than expected and during the stay of my parents. My mother, in the absence of an experienced local midwife, delivered Graham in the early hours of the morning. I walked into the bedroom with the midwife to find my mother holding the baby up by the feet! He was fine and my mother was still in a state of shock over the experience. After a cup of tea, she calmed down and began to gloat over the whole event.

The move to Australia was the right one. I recommenced my career with Telecom Australia working in various positions, including one of Technical Instructor before retrenchment in 1992.