



Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre would like to thank everyone for sending in Photos, Paintings, Newspaper clippings, Fond memories and Information. There are too many wonderful people to name.

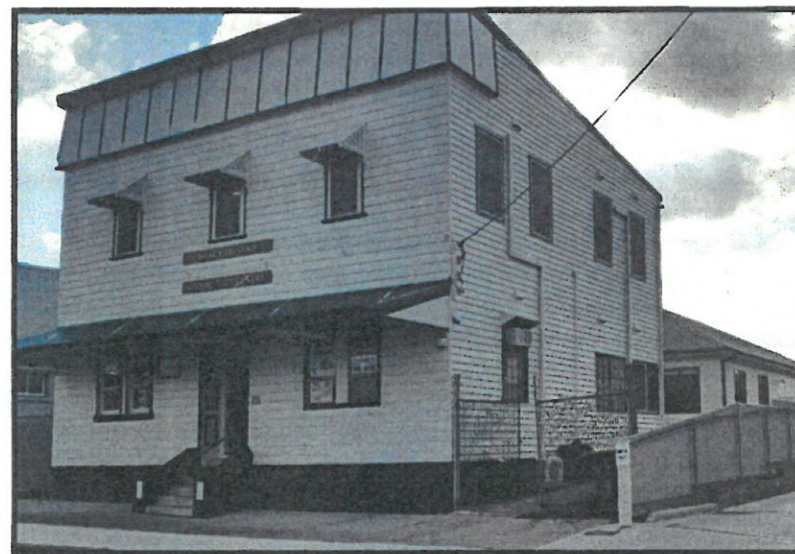
We would also like to thank Lake Macquarie City Council, Community Building Partnership Grants, NSW Government Department of Family & Community Services, for the wonderful repairs to our building.



West Wallsend School Of Arts



1901



2017

The West Wallsend School Of Arts

(Also known as the Community Hall and now known as Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre)

The township of West Wallsend commenced when the Coal Company's first subdivision plan was handed to the Registrar General on the 17th April, 1886. The first we hear of a proposed Library is in the early 1890's when dances and other fund raising events were held to raise money for the library. In 1882 and 1883 there was a feverish rush to increase the sum of seven thousand pounds. Most of this sum was spent on books, but history does not say where the books were housed.

It is known that the West Wallsend Coal Company donated two blocks of land. One of these blocks was lot 15, Section B in Carrington Street, where the Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre/Community Centre (School of Arts) now stands, but the location of the second lot is uncertain.

In 1885 the Coal Company's mine was sold to the Caledonian Collieries PTY LTD. The manager, Mr Duncan McGeachie, had plans for the proposed "School Of Arts" drawn up. The president of the Committee was Mr A Fairley and the Vice Presidents were Mr Walter Jarvie, Headmaster of the public School and Mr McGeachie; Mr R Lind was Secretary, and Mr N Gray was the treasurer.

In 1900 the Committee apparently accepted the contract price of nine hundred pounds to have the School of Arts Built. At that time the committee had four hundred and fifty pounds in hand, which was subject to a pound for pound Government Subsidy. It is said that Mr James Johnston was the builder.

The day set aside for the Laying of the Foundation Stones was a big occasion for the town. The New South Wales Minister for works Mr E.W Sullivan invited the town to lay one stone and the other stone was laid by Mr David Watkins, M.H.R., representative for West Wallsend in the first Government. The date on the foundation stones was April 20th 1901.

These men met by the Town Band, speeches were delivered, The foundations stones laid, one on each side of the front steps of the building and the usual jollifications followed afterwards. The School of Arts comprised of a hall, library and reading room on the ground floor, with a billiard room and offices on the upper story and a large balcony in front. Many speeches would be made from this balcony in the years ahead. The School of Arts was the centre of the town and well used, until hard times fell upon the town during the depression years of 1929 and the early 1930's.

(Newcastle Herald 21 April, 1901)
When the Workers Club was set up in 1948 they began in the School of Arts and continued using it until 1952 when they purchased the two-storey brick building which belonged the family of R H Jones (called the Drapery Palace). This building was demolished to make room to build the Workers Club building. The School of Arts was taken over by the Lake Macquarie Shire Council who named it the Community Hall.

Sourced from the Early West Wallsend - It's People and Places By T.G Reynolds

YEARLY ART SHOWS

Memories by Lillian Price

During this same period, a well known and well supported event was the yearly Art Show in the hall. Artists from all around the Newcastle area, including the local artists used to participate. Mario Ermer was one as well as Jean Hocking were two of our local artists. Lake Macquarie City Council used to supply the prizes, (From memory, I think the top prize was \$200.) Viewing stands were set up around the hall and all the paintings were placed on show for folk to walk up and down and check them out. The prizes weren't just for painting exhibits but for any form of art, including pottery. One year I had made a pottery village taking historical buildings from all around Australia and placing them into a village setting. I set it up at the hall as a special interest exhibit for show but not to be included in the judging. Sandra told me later that the judges wanted it to be included in the judging and that it would have won the year's prize. The winning exhibits became the property of council and I would have lost the joy of looking at it. I'm not sure why the Art Shows were discontinued but feel that it could have been a combination of lack of helpers and the cost of running the show making it unviable. Those who usually exhibited their work were very disappointed when it all came to an end.



Left: A painting by Jean Hocking on the front steps of the School of Arts. The local priest reading the newspaper to the men on the dole or those who could not read.

Right: The card found in the back of the painting. Painting provided by Mr Hocking and daughter Robyn Hocking.

POTTERY CLASSES

Memories by Lillian Price

During the 1980s and 1990s, Sandra Hare used to run pottery classes. Sandra made beautiful pottery and had an extra large kiln up on her property at Seahampton. Every now and again, when we had large items to be fired, we would have a special firing for the class up there.

The pottery class itself was held in the old Supper Room which was an extension building on the side of the main hall. If there were items that needed to be kept out of harm's way until the next week, they were placed up in one of the tiny change rooms behind the stage.

The kiln itself was placed in what is now called the Computer Room. Someone would be delegated to keep checking on it during the firing stages to make sure everything was progressing well. I used to be uneasy about this being in the old building and hoped that it was safe as there were many hours when it was unattended between checks.

The class chose whether to use the pottery wheel, we had to take turns to practice on it. Others were happy to make hand made pottery using coils of clay and shaping it into whatever form they liked. We all chose what we wanted to make, making use of the many pottery books that were available and Sandra was able to guide us through the many stages. Sandra was a good teacher, always ready to help us and guide us.

(She was tragically killed in an accident some years ago at Westy.)

Glazing the pottery was an exciting time as the raw material never resembled in any way what the finished colour or effect would be. There is a real sense of satisfaction in seeing the finished articles come through the kiln. The first firing made things ready to cover with glaze and decorate to taste, but the final firing always was an exciting time.

Some of us became so interested in pottery that we bought our own pottery wheels, materials and sometimes our own tiny kilns to carry on in our spare time at home.

To most of us, we were very disappointed when the lovely old building with its little rooms hidden behind the stage and also the Supper Room – all with their memories were demolished to allow the functional hall to be built in its place.

At least Council allowed the historic front section of the hall to remain though it took many, many years to upgrade the upstairs section including the awning which makes for a better appearance of the hall but leaves much to be desired when compared with the lovely old wrought iron veranda which once graced the building.

The West Wallsend Coal Company donated two blocks of land. One of these blocks is where the School of Arts was built by a local carpenter James Johnston for the contracted price of 900 pounds. The date of the build was c1895-1900. On the 20th April 1901 the Foundation Stones were laid but are no longer on the building.

The School of Arts was the principle social centre of the West Wallsend community and the place where all important social and civic functions were held. The building was sadly neglected over the years but has recently been revamped by a partnership of the Lake Macquarie Council, Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre and funding from grants provided by the Community Builders Grants and the NSW Government Department of Family and Community Services. The centre is now known as the Community Centre and the Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre operates in the building. In previous years the School of Arts Centre was utilised for Balls, Weddings, Receptions, Court, Dole Handouts in the Depression, Music Lessons, Library, Workers Club, Friday night Dancing and much more.

In 1901 there were 2 Foundation Stones laid but by 1967, only one remained. Today there are no Stones remaining.

The Stones were laid on the 20th April 1901 at 2pm and the members of parliament Mr O'Sullivan and Mr Watkins were met by the Town Band. Speeches were delivered and the usual jollifications followed.



Above: Newspaper article from the Newcastle Herald in 1967. Mr. K. Booth, M.L.A., Mr T. Reynolds and Mr R. Simpson, Workers Club President, examine the remaining Foundation Stone (Memorial Tablet) laid at West Wallsend School Of Arts 66 years earlier.

Above: The New South Wales Minister for works Mr E.W Sullivan invited the town to lay one stone and the other stone was laid by Mr David Watkins, M.H.R., representative for West Wallsend in the first Government. The date on the foundation stones was April 20th 1901.

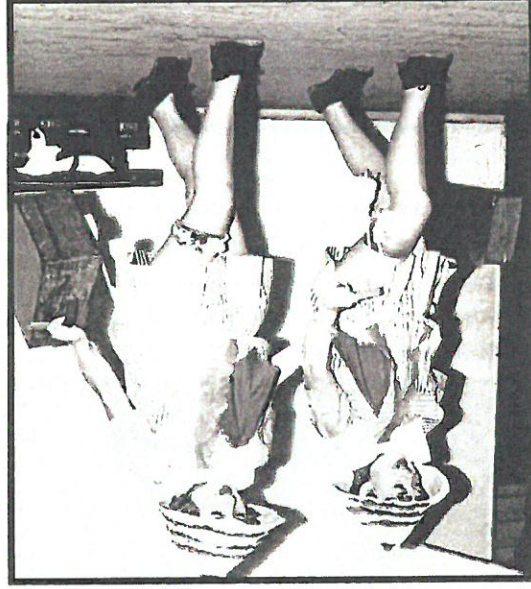
(If you have any early photos of the stone that was laid by Mr E. W. O'Sullivan the Minister for Works, Please contact 4953 1667)

By Bob Broadfoot OAM

From my early days at school until the day of my marriage sixty years ago I have fond memories of the West Wallsend School of Arts Hall. Prior to the West Wallsend Workers Club auditorium opening in 1959 the School of Arts Hall was the venue for many and varied entertainment functions such as school concerts, variety entertainment, dances, spring balls, public meetings and wedding receptions. I was told by my Father that a Variety Entertainment Show arranged by a Mr Ike Beck of Sydney stated that if you could take a show to West Wallsend and they liked it you could take it anywhere in the world. Apparently, he considered Westy people hard to please.

Concerts

School children would perform in the hall for their annual concert. Performing on the big stage before Mum, Dad and Grandparents was the highlight of their year. The stage with entrance through the wings, closing curtains and dressing rooms behind the stage made them feel like theatrical stars. West Wallsend Co-op Society employees had a very successful concert party that was led by Bill Scott. They performed many shows in the hall. I recall making a set of stage lights for the shows that I controlled from down in front of the stage along with the sound system.



Geoff Sidebottom-Sidey This one was at Brother John's 21st birthday Party in the supper room..



*L to R, Albert, George (Snr), Jack, John & George (Jnr)
(all Sidebottoms) singing a song called "The Bowery Grenadiers"*

Susie Parry Clarke Brass Band practice

Terri Cameron Hubby's brother was bandmaster Sue.

Susie Parry Clarke I know Terri... Jeff, he even picked me up on the

Main Rd on his way there.

Terry O'Hea First memory was getting vaccinated, going to the Library

on a Saturday morning. There were the dances, going to band practice also

there was drama club, also the dances and the roller skating.

Terri Cameron Johnny Brennan did the roller skating if I remember

correctly. ??

John Sidebottom Old Alf's favourite saying was "All I want to hear is

the click of the balls "

Julie Kelly They use to have dance lessons there

Wendy Hilditch Tommy Linton worked there for a lot of yrs.

Michael Brown Had trouble convincing Tommy Linton I was over 16. I

still look young.

Terri Cameron When I was in high school our drama class did a play on the original stage. It was about 1974 and the play was called "Passion, Poison and Petrification" and Bob Ireland was our drama teacher.

I also received my first (that I remember) immunisation shot in the hall. The kids walked on long tables so the medico's didn't have to bend down.

When I left school, along a few others we formed a drop in centre and some Friday nights we showed films on a reel to reel projector. One film that comes to mind was "Sunshine", so many girls walked out crying their eyes out.

There's probably other stories of dances and the sometimes brawls after the dance by a jealous boyfriend. I wasn't allowed to go as I was too young.



Geoff Sidebottom-Sidey Our family taken in the main hall, I think it was at a wedding about 1955!

L to R, Carol, John, Bette, George, Geoff & Clare (all Sidebottoms)..

Wilma Brandrick I believe this photo was taken at Albert Sidebottom & Fay Deeks wedding ,I have some taken that day.

Spring Ball

The highlight of the town was the Spring Ball. Spring Balls held in the hall were the Catholic Ball, the Church of England Ball, The Store Ball and the Masonic Ball. This was the opportunity for the ladies in their long frocks with partners in their suits and dancing pumps who thought they were Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, the film stars.

When you purchased your ticket it was stamped first or second sitting. This was your supper ticket. When called you went upstairs out onto the balcony where a long table was set with food.

This was later reset ready for the second sitting.

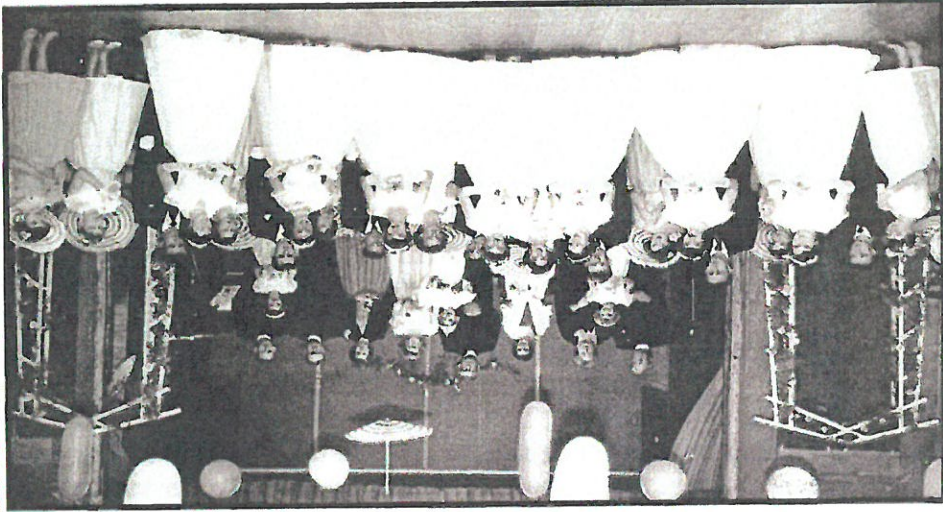
One such function was the Back to Front Ball where the Boys dressed as Girls and the Girls dressed as Boys. Sounded like fun.

The picture of this event (*courtesy of Marlene Allen*) shows the stage with the paintings on the wings.



Debut Spring Ball

The highlight of any young lady's life is to make their debut at a spring ball. Dressed in their pretty white gowns, holding a bouquet and accompanied by their deb partner. I remember it was a great honour to be selected to partner a young lady making her debut and I was honoured to be selected to partner a young lady at the Catholic Ball.



The stage was redecorated for the various functions and local musicians provided the music for the dancing. A Debutant Ball is pictured above.

West WallSEND Workers Club

The West WallSEND Workers Club had its beginnings through the re-establishment of the School of Arts Committee. On 5 December 1946 it was decided that the School of Arts Committee apply for a liquor licence as a Workers Club under the Liquor Act. At a special meeting held on 27 March 1947 the rules of the School of Arts were changed so that the Institution was known as the *West WallSEND School of Arts (incorporating the Returned Soldiers and Workers Club)*. The West WallSEND School of Arts Hall Annex was home for the West WallSEND Workers Club from 1947 until they moved to their own premises in 1954.

Allison Reilly I did as well Kim Moore

John Bowie Junior Deb Balls were held there, this one was in 1962



John Bowie and Lyn James
Jennifer Scott and Michael Fletcher

Jenni Svensson The library used to be in the School of Arts, I still remember the first book I ever borrowed there. I was so excited!
Jennifer Anne See Woods me and my twin sister had our 21 b/day there 1967.

Garry Hilditch I am a little Dutch boy I don't swear.... bugga bugga bitch bum I don't care.... remember singing this when we went from infants up to the library as the school didn't have a library at that time ... would have been 1966-70

John Robins The billiard room used to be upstairs in School of Arts, and was run by Alf Burton. Mucking around one night, Rooley Blanch gave Alf a bit of lip, then here's Alf chasing Rooley around table shouting, "you cheeky little bastard, if I catch you I'll kick you that far you'll starve on the way home". I'm sure Sideshow would remember.

Facebook Memories from Locals

Don Rankin Late 80's or early 90's my kids were part of the peer support group where Year 11's (big kids) helped the year 7's (my kids) settle in. We did a couple of courses upstairs to help us parents help both lots of kids. I wish I had taken more notice of my surroundings. It was (is) a great space.

Allison Reilly I loved going to the library, I can still remember the kids books up the back and Addie Hunter (Auntie Addie) was the librarian. She always had her dog with her, she was a lovely lady

Sandra Jones She was my great Aunty. Were you related or did everyone think of her as an Aunty. She was a sweetheart and called everyone love.

Allison Reilly No not related but I think she was related to Denise and maybe the Dents, I think she is responsible for my love of books, I can still remember what the library felt like to me (sounds weird) when I was little.

Terri Cameron When I used to go to the Library Mrs Lance was the librarian and Mrs Woody from the boarding house made the yummiest sandwich for her. She loved them.

Rosanne Leahey We did karate in the building in the early 70s.

Barbara Duncan I did Karate there too Rosanne - still remember being so proud of breaking a roof tile with my elbow, thought I was a legend lol.

John Sidebottom Had some great times at the pool room upstairs at the old School of Arts in my teens. Alf Burton, Billy Robinson, Tom Linton, Mel Eastly had their work cut out keeping us in check, but overall we weren't too bad. There were some good snooker & pool players that did their apprenticeship there.

John Norris I lost a lot of money there but the apprenticeship served me well for later in life when losing became a rare thing.

Geoffrey Keith Brown band practice with old Jack Cameron he once told me to stick to soccer and cricket because that's where my mind always is.

Terri Cameron I lost a tooth up there by Teddy Bailey buggerising around with a pool cue.

Larry Ann May I used to go to the dance on the weekend way back in my teens

Barbara Duncan Westy High production of 'The Great Gatsby' - can't remember whether it was 1975 now or 1976 but it was a wonderful venue.

Mick Bundschuh Heaps of kids turned up for roller skating once, probably mid 70's. Leather work mid 80's, a few mates & I made drink holders & belts. Snooker tables & pinball machines was a memorable teenage thing to do.

Kim Moore Learning tap and ballet in the hall



Wedding Receptions

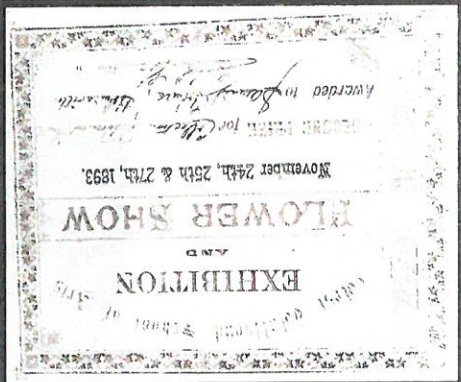


Left: Bob and Betty
Broadfoot 1956

Above: The majority of young people held their wedding reception in the School of Arts Hall or Annexe. Tables were set up in the hall and on most occasions caterers were brought in to provide the food. Tables were then cleared and dancing would commence.

I definitely recall this special occasion on Saturday 3 November 1956.

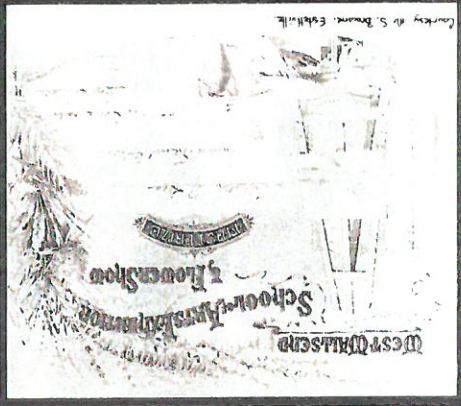
Above: Second Prize Certificate for the Flower Show Held on November 24th, 25th & 26th 1983. *Photo Courtesy West WallSEND Museum which was provided by Mr S. Browne.*



ANNUAL ART EXHIBITION
The Official Opening of the Sugar Valley Seventh
On Friday, 21st September, at 7.30 pm
Being held at the Community Centre
Carrington Street, West WallSEND
Exhibition Times: Sat 10am – 5pm
Sun 10am – 4pm
- Complimentary Ticket -

Flower Show

Above: School of Arts Exhibition & Flower Show First Prize. Awarded to Samuel Holmes in 1893. *Photo Courtesy West WallSEND Museum which was provided by Mr S. Browne.*

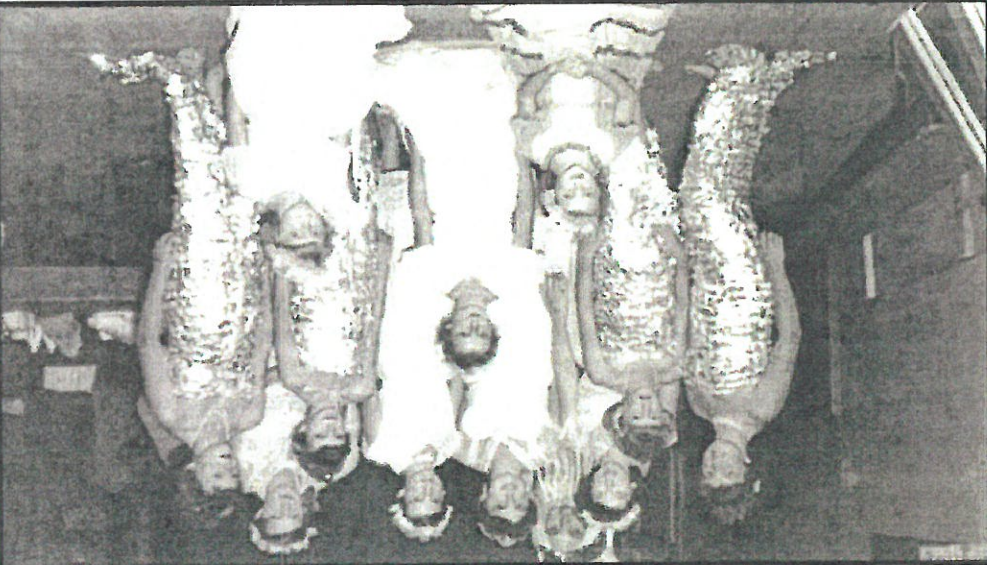


Above: Certificate of Award for the Flower Show September 14th, 15th & 17th 1894. *Photo Courtesy West WallSEND Museum which was provided by Mr S. Browne.*

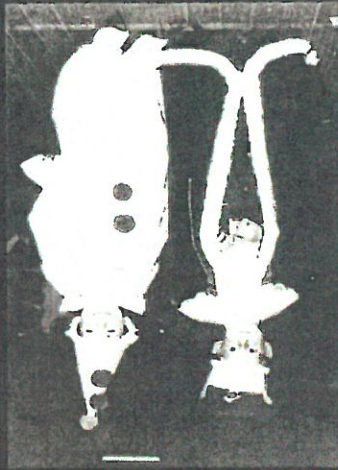


Back Row: Alwyn Lee (*King Neptune*) **2nd Back Row:** ??, Marlene Wakeman, Rosemary Burton (*Queen*) Barbara Macdonald, Marilyn Burton. **Middle Row:** Dorothy Puntun, Kay Burton, Irene Hunter & Betty Newstead (*All in mermaid Costumes*) **Front Row:** Maree Preston? Margaret Morris & Bev Burton

Westy Queen Competition



Above: Phillip & Trevor Allen



Above: Douglas Nelson & Marlene Wakeman



Above: Marlene Wakeman



Marlene Allen's reminiscing about the "West Wallsend School of Arts"

(Also known as the Community Hall and now known as Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre)

My earliest memory is when I was about 4 or 5 years old. I was involved with a Ball. I was one of the miniature debutants or flower girls, whichever you wish to call them. My partner was Ronald Murray at the time and my sister was a Herald who was dressed in a blue satin outfit and had a cow horn, which she put to her mouth and pretended to blow. (Someone was in the wings behind her and blew a proper instrument, I do not know who). Aunty Annie Murray was the Matron of Honour. The next ball I was also a mini deb. Doug Nelson was my partner; I was about 5 or 6 years old. Aunty Annie Murray was once again the Matron of Honour.

The hall was used for all sorts of entertainment and gatherings such as balls, concerts and frolics (Fancy Dress Evenings). The Masons used to hold all their Christmas Parties and Installations Suppers. Behind the stage were dressing rooms which were accessed via a steep staircase at the back. A lot of wedding receptions were also held and I also held my wedding reception in the hall. At this time, my cousin Bernice Wakeman was my Bridesmaid and she was a Ballet Dancer and danced at my wedding.

The West Wallsend Central School (from Kindergarten to Intermediate Certificate) held their school concerts at the end of the year. The year I sat for the Intermediate Certificate in 1955 was the first and possibly the only year that 3rd Year performed an item, as most had left school and had jobs.

The Anglican Church held a back-to-front ball, where the boys wore the dresses and the girls wore the suits. Alwyn Lee was the Matron of Honour. Two young girls, Catherine Emerson and Margaret Morris wore their sports uniforms and they sang, "I don't want to play in your yard".

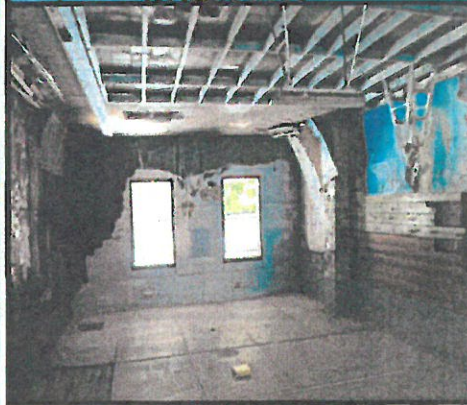
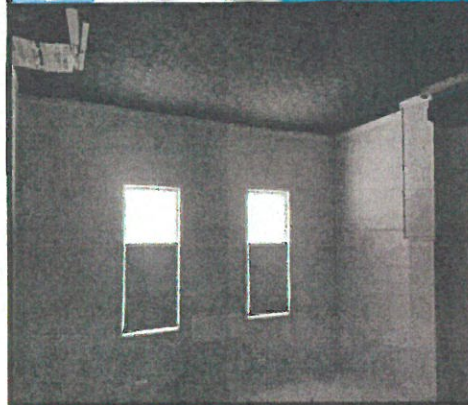
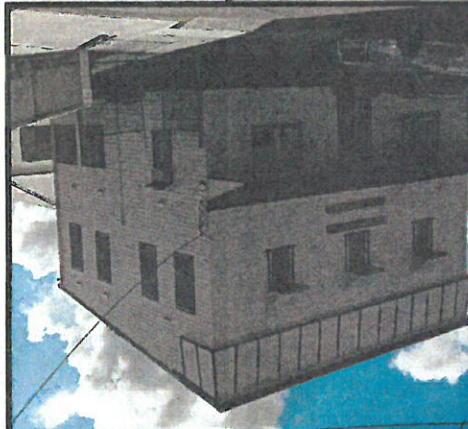
Dances were held regularly in the hall and between these and the dances held in the Masonic Hall most of us girls and boys learnt to dance. Our parents used to take us along and teach us and when we were good enough we were told to get a boy up and teach them. Shock horror!

Sometimes, while I was still attending school, an entrepreneur would stand at the school gates at home time and hand out flyers for a show that afternoon at the School of Arts which would commence at 4pm. We would have to race home and ask permission from our parents and ask for money so we could attend. There were all sorts of shows including concerts and magicians.

By Marlene Wakeman (Nee Allen)

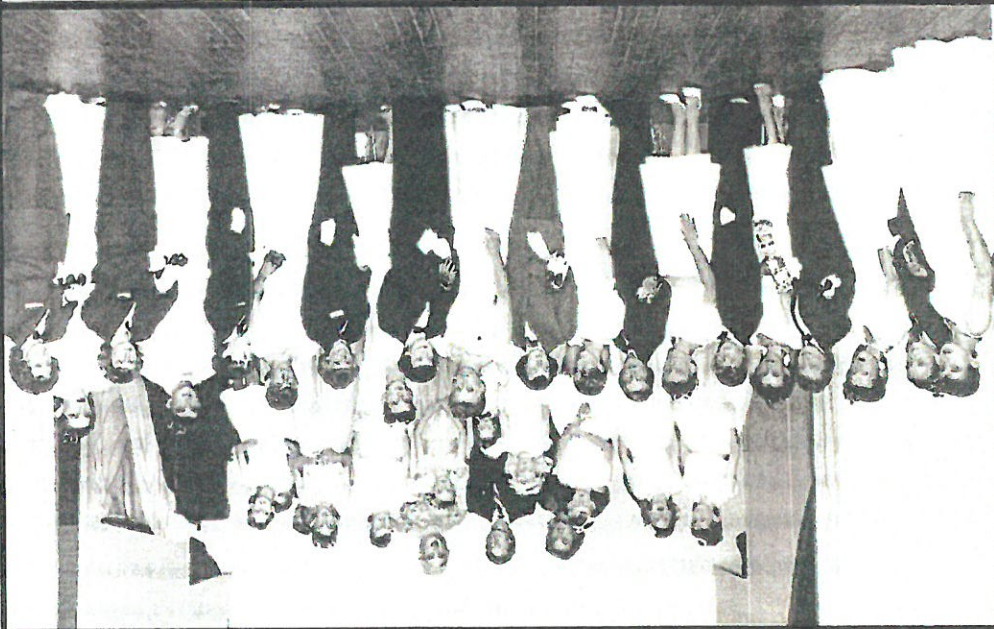
Before and After renovations



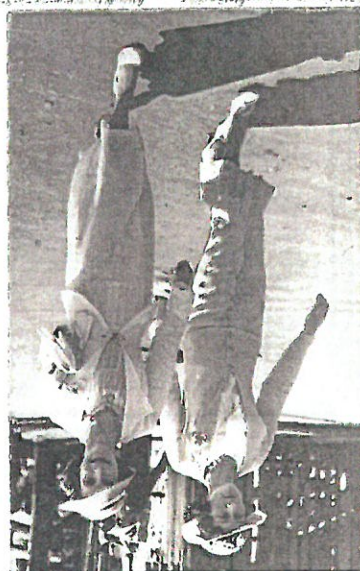


Left: Back Row: Rodney Lee, Susan Ninness, Greg Wakeman and Dianne Robinson.
Front Of picture: Marj Pilcher and ??? Padgett

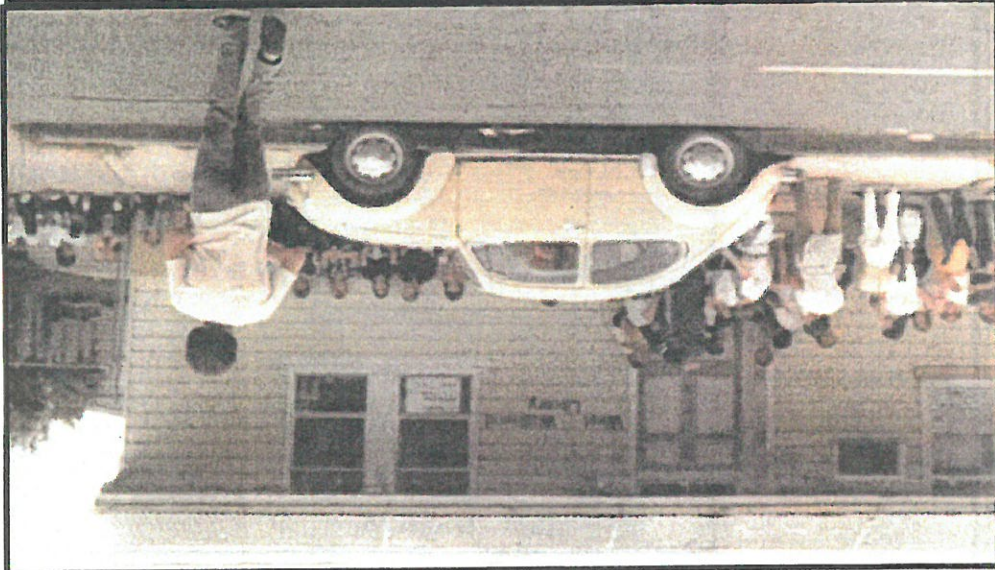
The Church of England-Back to Front Ball 1953-54: Men are dressed as women and the women are dressed as men. **Very back row:** Jack and Joyce Henderson, Alwyn Lee (Matron of Honor) **Middle row:** Greg Wakeman & Rodney Lee (Flower Girls) Billy Pickles, (next 2 Unknown) ???Preston? Gary Davies, Greg Russel, Last one Unknown **Front row:** David Vowles, Unknown, Jeffery Redman, Leah Murray, Tony McDonald, Unknown, Noel Pickavance, Kay Sneddon, Jeffery MacDonald, Maree Preston, Gary Henderson, Narelle Nelson, Robert Callinan, Kay Burton, Robert Young, Catherine Emerson, John Callinan, Margaret Morris, Charlie Connors and Dianne Erickson.



Right: Label of a Library Book.



Above: The building in 1978 with the signage of West Walsend Library on the front. The youths at the front of the building are there for the Youth Group that was run by volunteers. Photo provided by Lyn Brunner



No. 6-7	East Wall Street	School of Arts	Per Month
Membership:	Cash	Ladies	9d

Open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., daily.
Monday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Lending library
Open for the issue of books.
Returned books allowed for the period of a book.
It must be renewed or returned, otherwise a fine of half-penny per day, or Three-pence per week will be charged for loss of time of destination (Rule 5)
Books destroyed or lost will be charged for account.
TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:
(One Shilling per Month (in advance).
MAY 25 1895.—Take care of your own property. Examine each book when you own it, and at once report any defects to the Society.

Find taps into past

Time capsule of early 1900s needs home

By DAMON CROMBIE
for Macquarie Reporter

MORE than 300 artefacts found in a historic well at West Wyaland will be placed in a museum.

The well was discovered during the construction of a car park in Carrieton Street on Macquarie City Council-owned land in July 2002.

Artefacts, which were built between 1850 and 1880, included a special canteen used for balls, racquets, court and library.

The council engaged archaeologists to excavate the well, which was found in the mid-1800s.

Council staff recommended donating the artefacts to Newcastle Regional Museum, but Councillor Barry Johnson said they could be displayed at a West Wyaland High School museum that was planned to be open soon.

It would be better if they were kept in Lake Macquarie," Councillor said.

On the previous week to defer a decision on the artefacts until next investigation the high school museum option.

West Wyaland, some of the 200 artefacts found in a historic well at West Wyaland, which was sealed in the 1880s as a colliery town.



Above: The Plaque that is on the outside of the centre near the front steps. Presented on the 4th September 1995 by West Wallsend Progress Association.

Above and Below: Plaque that covers the well in the carpark. **Below:** Newcastle Her-aid: About 200 plus items found when the well was discovered in July 2002.

[illegible]

WELL
CIRCA 1888
POSSIBLE TOWN CENTER /
WELL, OJOW SURFACE
WEST WALLSAND
(Datum Point RL 50.45m)