Connections

Issue No 20 Summer 1997

Postcard from Vietnam

The grey-green patchwork of rice paddies and flooded plains of the Mekong Delta were a long way from the quiet little rural school and the cold, wet Ballarat spring that we had left behind. As we started our descent into Ho Chi Minh City you had to wonder what possessed two reasonably mature adults with secure teaching jobs in Ballarat to throw it all away and head off to start a new teaching career in Vietnam. Our first view of Than Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City did nothing to convince us that this was a good decision. This first impression of Ho Chi Minh City was not wonderful. The buildings are drab and badly in need of maintenance. Rusty, derelict outbuildings, the remnants of the Vietnam war dotted the outskirts of the airport. Enduring the queues in immigration and customs and losing your entry visa didn't exactly make for a pleasant introduction to Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam.

Our first impressions of the City were the traffic noise and the staggering numbers of motor scooters, bicycles, cyclos and pedestrians choking the roads. The twenty minute trip from the airport to the hotel was a real eye opener. The unusual feeling of being on the wrong side of the road only added to the confusion of vehicles and people.

On the way into the city we stopped at The International Grammar School, Ho Chi Minh City, our new workplace for the next two or three years. More reasons to wonder if we were insane. The building that we were supposed to occupy as a school in a little less than a week was still well and truly a building site with piles of bricks and tiles stacked amid the rubble and debris of what could have been

mistaken for a demolition zone. The Vietnamese Director proudly showed us around the site and we visited our classrooms and even braved the stairs and the tangle of electrical wiring to visit the library which was now a furniture factory and paint shop as everything from tables and chairs to cupboards and doors was constructed on site.

Four of us had made the trip from Australia together. We were to be the staff at the International Grammar School, Ho Chi Minh City, the first international school to open in Vietnam since 1974. A married couple from Ballarat and two single girls, one from Sydney, one from Melton. We were deposited at the Bong Sen Hotel in

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the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as the city is still called by most of the locals. After a restless night of being disturbed by the incessant traffic noise, a rattling air conditioner and an altercation with the hotel's cockroach population we were ready to face up to our first day in our new country.

After four days of briefings, meetings with parents and the customary sightseeing trips we were eager to get ourselves organised for the first day of school. Not in the school building as we had hoped but in temporary accommodation as the school site seemed to be a long way away from being ready. School was to start in two villas. I had never envisaged the prospect that I would be teaching a composite class of fourteen students from eight different countries in the school director's bedroom, nor did my wife expect to be teaching her class of ten in the dining room downstairs. The rest of the school, six pre-school and kindergarten pupils and two Korean brothers who made up the high school occupied the principal's residence. We had started lessons with twenty-nine pupils from sixteen different countries, many of whom had little or no English.
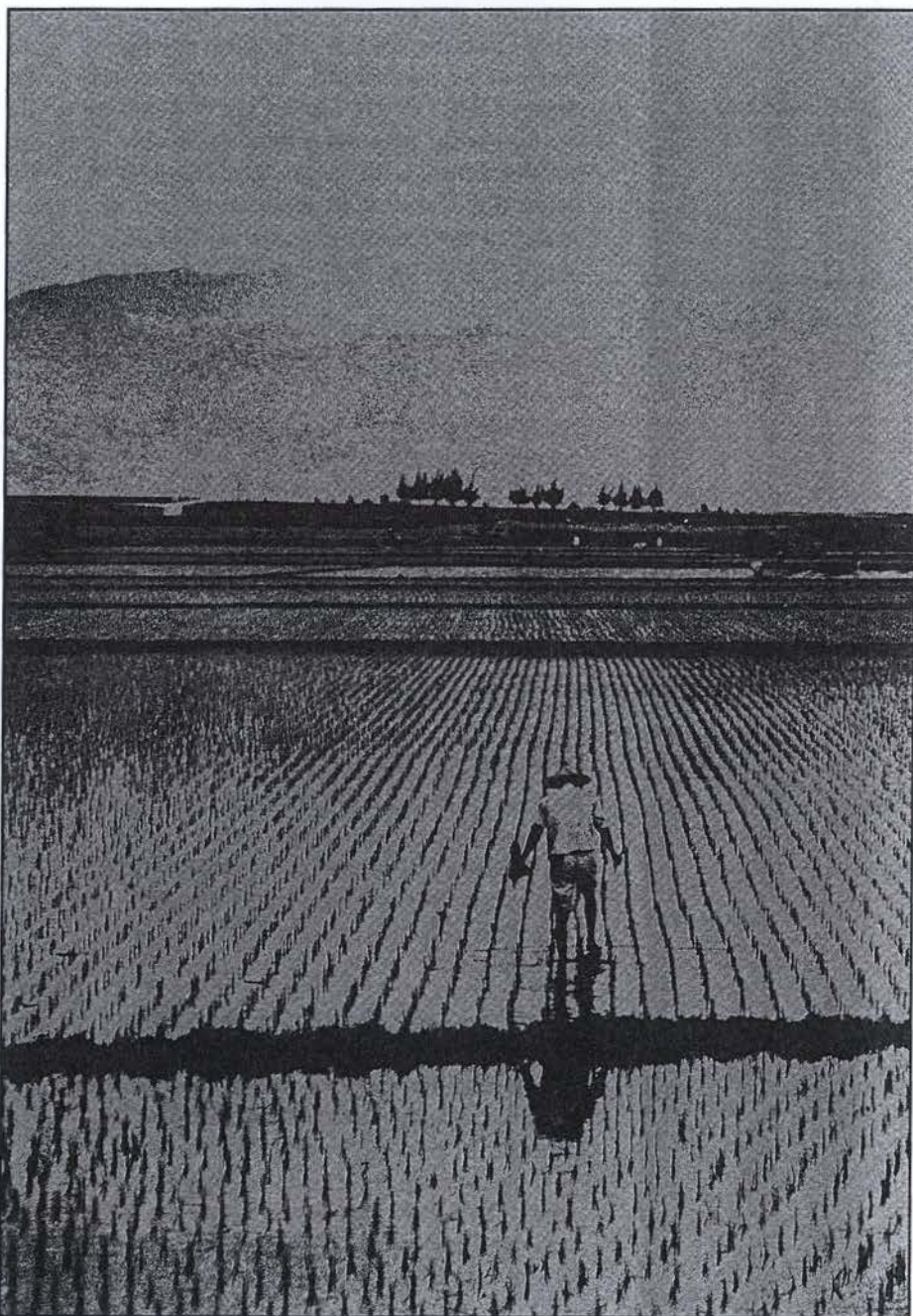
It was back to basics teaching. Most of the school equipment and resources were still being inspected by customs as were our own small collections of books and teaching aids we had sent over before we left Australia. All pupils were given aset of basic supplies including exercise books, pencils, scissors and a wonderful set of paintbrushes but no paint. There were only a few text books and even fewer library books. Teaching was very much "chalk and talk" as the white board we had been given became the focus for most of our lessons in that first two weeks.

By the time the Christmas break came around those first two weeks were only a memory. The school had grown to over 50 students. We were in a great new school with enthusiastic students, new equipment and resources and feeling very positive about the future. The school went from strength to strength. Enrolments were increasing rapidly as more and more families were moving into Ho Chi Minh City. At the end of the first school year the number of students from pre-school to year 9 had risen to 70. Teachers had to be flexible as roles were changing almost as rapidly as the enrolments. My own class for the second semester of that first year was a composite 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. It was an interesting exercise balancing the primary curriculum against the high school timetable. Mathematics and simultaneous equations in one corner of the room and grade 5 creative writing in another were poles apart.

Other areas of the school were also developing at the same rate. The library that we originally saw as a furniture factory was now operational and the number of books was increasing. The administration saw the growth and development of the library as vitally important to the structure of the school and a

considerable budget was allocated to the purchase of books and other teaching materials. Plans to computerise the library were well in hand by the start of the second school year.

It was not possible to go down to the nearest book store and put in an order as we were used to doing in Australia. For a start there were not many book stores available in Ho Chi Minh City and there were no suitable books in English. All library books had to be imported from Australia. This appeared to be a straight forward exercise but never turned out that way. All books imported into Vietnam had to be approved by the Ministry of Culture. This was a complicated process as details of the order had to be translated into Vietnamese, including titles, authors and publishers. Some of the translations proved to be very difficult. The Vietnamese translations for books like "Far Out Brussel Sprout" caused more than a little confusion with the authorities. Once the books arrived in Vietnam they were indefinitely held in customs for inspection before being finally delivered to the school where they were locked away until officials from the Ministry of Culture had inspected and approved every book. It was not uncommon for books to be taken and later returned with pages containing culturally inappropriate information neatly removed.

Despite these difficulties the library continued to grow. At the end of the 1995-96 school year it contained over 8000 books, was fully computerised on two sites and was well established as a substantial resource for all curriculum areas and all members of the school community. Enrolments at this time had reached 450 students and the staff had increased from the 4 of us who endured those first difficult times to 30 foreign and 20 Vietnamese staff. Six months on the school has moved into a campus that will cater for 800 students. The fourth move in just over three years. Numbers are still increasing.

Three years of teaching in Vietnam will always be a career highlight. The opportunity to be involved in the growth and development of a school from such small beginnings to its present size and achievements is an experience that I count as significant in my teaching career.

Written by: Ray Sullivan

Ray and Nancye Sullivan taught for most of their teaching careers in and around Ballarat before taking a Voluntary Departure Package and heading off to Vietnam. Ray has worked as a computer consultant and was principal of a small school on the outskirts of Ballarat. Nancye was a long serving member of staff at Golden Point Primary School where she spent six years as teacher librarian.

Ray was Deputy Principal of the International Grammar School, Ho Chi Minh City and Nancye was Junior School Coordinator. They are enjoying a break from teaching at the present but are in the process of arranging another overseas teaching post.

ASLA Conference Update

Celia Otley from CASU Teacher Resource Centre reminds us that it's less than six months to the most exciting event on the 1997 education calendar...

The *Language, Learning & Culture: Unsettling Certainties* conference will be held in Darwin, July 8 to 11 this year. With *early bird* registrations closing on March 31 colleagues are reminded to submit their forms as soon as possible and all ASLA members have the opportunity to win a *registration refund* through the School Library Association of the NT (SLANT). The lucky winner will be drawn after *early bird registrations* close.... so be in it to win it!!!

The program will offer something for everybody. **David Crystal** from the UK and author of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* will deliver the **SCIS Oration** which is generously sponsored by Curriculum Corporation. The Corporation will also have a large booth in the Trade Exhibition displaying their publications and staff will be available for consultation on SCIS products.

For information on other speakers and the exciting author program check the conference web site at :

http://www.ozemail.com.au/~dar win97. We are regularly updating the information on this site so do visit for the latest news.

The dry season is a great time to visit Darwin and the conference social events will take advantage of the balmy tropical evenings and the multicultural nature of the city. Book your accommodation soon and we look forward to welcoming you to the Top End of Australia in July.

More information and registration details are available through Rita Henry: phone 08 8922 0725, fax 08 8922 0789 and e-mail: *darwin97@ ozemail.com.au*.

NEWS

New, amended, replaced subject headings 1997

Below is a list of new and amended subject headings created at recent meetings of the national SCIS cataloguing agencies. Existing headings which have been altered as a result of decisions made by the agencies are identified by **. The nature of the change is indicated in brackets ie: (Replacement) or (Deletion) or (Addition).

AMUSEMENTS (Addition)
See also FACE PAINTING

BODY-MARKING (Addition)
See also FACE PAINTING
XX FACE PAINTING

BUILDING (Deletion)
[Delete See also TREE DWELLINGS]

CHILDREN (Addition/Deletion)
[Delete XX ADOLESCENTS; INFANTS]
See also ADOLESCENTS

CUBBYHOUSES (Addition)
Use for works on children's playhouses, including those in trees.
x Tree houses

ELECTRONIC MUSIC (Addition)
See also KEYBOARD MUSIC
XX KEYBOARD MUSIC

FACE PAINTING
See also BODY-MARKING; MAKE-UP, THEATRICAL
x Facepainting
XX AMUSEMENTS; BODY-MARKING; MAKE-UP, THEATRICAL

Keyboard instrument music
See **KEYBOARD MUSIC**

KEYBOARD MUSIC
See also ELECTRONIC MUSIC
x Keyboard instrument music
XX ELECTRONIC MUSIC; MUSIC

MAKE-UP, THEATRICAL (Addition)
See also FACE PAINTING
XX FACE PAINTING

MUSIC (Addition)
See also KEYBOARD MUSIC; PERCUSSION MUSIC

Percussion instrument music
See **PERCUSSION MUSIC**

PERCUSSION MUSIC
x Percussion instrument music
XX MUSIC

TREE DWELLINGS (Addition/Deletion)
[Delete XX BUILDINGS]
Use for works on human habitations built in trees.
For works on children's playhouses in trees, see CUBBYHOUSES.
x Treehouses

Tree houses** (Addition)
See **CUBBYHOUSES**

Treehouses**(Addition)
See **TREE DWELLINGS**

What's new?

The school office environment is changing like never before and it requires support staff to become skilled often without the benefits of professional training.

Open Office have compiled a series of easy to understand self-training modules which can be used to introduce the needed skills, retraining and for continuing professional education for all ancillary staff. It enables the staff to learn at a time and pace which suits them best, gives a wide choice of topics to select from and does not rely on access to another institution. Currently there are ten modules available each one introduced by questioning the reason behind using the guides and presenting the study options for that topic. The partcipant is then asked to identify what they intend to achieve from the module. Each chapter presents them with information and at the end asks the participant to respond to a series of situations relevant to their own workplace. The module titles are: **The Woman manager; Customer service excellence; Stress control; Planning your work; Being the best you can be; Personal life skills; Your office team; Communicating clearlt; Assertiveness and Time management.** All can be purchased individually at $19 or the full set for $150. With T/Ls reliant on a small and competent support team, these modules can often enhance skills necessary within the school library.

Open Office Self-Training Modules for School Office Staff.
The Wyncroft Centre
13 Gomms Road
SOMERVILLE. Vic 3912

Fax: 059 77 6530

Heather Kelsall
Editor

New Zealand school librarians are set to enhance 1997 curriculum delivery under the new technology document.

We are now three weeks into the first term and have almost recovered from the initial flurry of activity - updating computer files, introducing new students to the library - and are beginning to settle into another year.

What challenges are we to face this year as school librarian? For many of us in New Zealand it is the introduction of new curriculum in a number of subject areas and in particular the cross curriculum technology document. Within each of these new curriculum documents there is an information problem solving/gathering component.

These changes together with the move to pupil centred education has impacted not only on teachers but school libraries as well. The expectation placed on school librarians are broadening to encompass an understanding of teaching and learning. This means that the school librarian in consultation with the teacher is having increasing input into the information gathering/problem solving process component of assignments.

Therefore a major challenge for the year is to raise our profile so that our skills are seen as essential in the delivery of the curriculum. We likewise need to develop our skills in the areas of teaching and learning so that we are able to work in close liason with the teaching staff. This can only enhance our position in the school community and impact positively on our professional lives.

A busy year is to be had - especially if we are also to keep up with our traditional duties!

Jenny Carroll
Queens High School
Dunedin. N.Z.

1997 ASCISRECON/RAPID Retrospective Processing Dates

(The dates listed below are the Thursdays which orders must be received at Ferntree Computer Corporation by 5.00pm. The processing of orders begins on the following Monday.)

January	16 (one processing only)
February	6 and 20
March	6 and 20
April	3 and 17
May	1 and 15
June	5 and 19
July	3 and 17
August	7 and 21
September	4 and 18
October	2 and 16
November	6 and 20
December	4 (one processing only)

1997 Full & Abbreviated Microfiche Dates
(Due in schools by...)

January Main Cumulation	31/1/97
Subject Authority No.1 (JAN.)	31/1/97
February Update	28/2/97
March Update	31/3/97
April Update	28/4/97
Subject Authority No.2 (APR.)	2/5/97
May Update	30/5/97
June Update	27/6/97
July Update	25/7/97
Subject Authority No.3 (JULY)	8/8/97
August Update	29/8/97
September Update	26/9/97
October Update	24/10/97
Subject Authority No.4 (OCT.)	7/11/97
November Update	28/11/97

1997 RR ISBN Index Updates
(Due in schools by...)

January Update	7/2/97
April Update	9/5/97
July Update	8/8/97
October Update	7/11/97

1997 CD-ROM Dates
(Due in schools by...)

February (Edition No.1)	7/2/97
May (Edition No.2)	9/5/97
August (Edition No.3)	8/8/97
November (Edition No.4)	7/11/97

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1997 SCIS Subscriptions

Has your school library subscribed to the Schools Cataloguing Information Service (SCIS) for 1997 yet? If the answer is 'no' and you would like a copy of the 1997 SCIS Subscription Form or further information on any of the SCIS products/services, please contact Curriculum Corporation's SCIS Customer Service staff on:

Tel: (03) 9207 9600
      1800 337 405 (free call)
Fax: (03) 9639 1616
Email: *scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au*

SCIS Customer Assistance

A brief reminder to schools who phone Curriculum Corporation regarding SCIS enquires/assistance. The contact numbers provided to schools, ring directly through to Curriculum Corporation's Reception staff and not immediately to a Customer Service Officer. In order to provide a more efficient service, schools are asked to provide a *brief description* (only) of the nature of their call to the Reception staff who will then put them through to the appropriate person. For example: SCIS-Account, SCIS subscription, Voyager, SCISLINK, ASCISRECON, etc. Your co-operation in this matter will enable the SCIS staff to maintain their high standard of customer service.

Connections Journal Photocopy Request

As a result of reduced staffing levels, the "Connections journal photocopy request" service will be temporarily unavailable. Curriculum Corporation apologises for this inconvenience and hopes to resume the service as soon as possible.

Changes to Voyager Display

At the request of SCIS Online customers, Curriculum Corporation have altered the screens in Voyager so that customers will view the full catalogue record instead of the brief screen that previously displayed first.

DDC21

The review of DDC21 by the state based SCIS cataloguing agencies is underway.

This is an involved process requiring agencies to examine and compare sections of DDC 21 with the current SCIS standards on applying options and number building and making recommendations for amendments where required.

SCIS aims to begin cataloguing new records with DDC21 numbers in early May, 1997.

HAVE YOU READ THIS?

The *Seminar Series* from IARTV has printed Gary Stager's presentation to Melbourne schools on 'Computing and the Internet in schools: an international perspective on developments and directions.' As the Adjunct Professor of Education at Pepperdine University, LA, Gary has been extensively involved with the innovative use of computers in USA schools and as a consultant to several Australian schools. In this presentation he offers a provocative, entertaining view of computing and the new technologies suggesting there needs to be a re-evaluation of the relationship between technology and education. He also discusses the role of the Internet, multimedia, and laptop computing in the context of students constructing their own learning: innovative!
IARTV Seminar Series.
November 1996, No.59.

Insite Vol.18 Issue 2, February 1997 features informative reports from State and Federal parliamentary libraries and is worth reading from cover to cover!
Nick Bannenburg, Queensland

Parliamentary Librarian maintains that with the ever-increasing involvement of government in all aspects of our society our elected members need access to an efficient and effective information source to assist them in their legislative and constituency roles. He also mentions that parliamentary library staff often have to digest, interpret and analyse data so that it can be more readily used by their clients. T/Ls can relate to that!
"Efficient and effective information source." p. 10.

In his article **'Are research libraries dying?'**, **David Moursund** provides T/Ls with a thought provoking and a personal experience perspective involving traditional research libraries and the ever expanding cyberspace resource. He comments that technology is making information available more rapidly and at far less cost than the traditional paper format, and the effects this will have on library budgets and acquisition policies.
Learning and leading technology.
Vol.24 No.3 p:4

Mal Lee challenges school administrators to assess what constitutes quality education in the *information age* and beyond, and how they need to prepare themselves to lead their school community through change and into the new age. He outlines the challenge then provides strategies to make it all happen highlighting the need for the principal to **lead** in IT development and not leave it to the IT Coordinator or the T/L.
'Into the information age'. *The Practising Administrator.* Vol.18 No.4 p:40.

T/Ls are always conscious of students with more IT knowledge than they have and **Stephen James** in his article **'Hacker attack'** looks at the *why* and *how*. As an experienced hacker himself he then proposes a number of assertions regarding hacker profiles, ethics and motivations. Stephen also makes the comment that the first principal of a good hack is to do no harm: perhaps we T/Ls can take heart from this!
Internet Australasia. Vol.1 Issue 2 p:47

Heather Kelsall Editor

INTERNETTING CORNER

The theme for Australian Library Week (5th to 11th May) is *Libraries - a web of information for living and leisure*. For many Australians the Internet is still a mystery and sadly this is also true for some library staff. T/Ls as the information specialist must be the key promoter within the school, educating the community on how the Internet can assist them as life-long learners. Happy surfing in '97!!

http://www.aco.com.au/
The Australian Chamber Orchestra home page lists the Australian performance schedules for 1997, personal profiles and recent reviews.

http://www.vicnet,net.au/~ozlit/
This site contains 700 pages of Australian literary material, including a book exchange for students to buy, sell or swap texts. Could be useful to Librarians!

http://www.abc.net.au
A wealth of information covering the whole ABC Network inluding SSO and Triple J. With 'explore the Net' links it moves surfers through most genres of Web sites.

http://www.opaque.aone.net.au/petite.morte
A compilation of writing and visual arts created by Australian fringe artists.

http://www.ion.com.au/ourplanet
Our Planet explores existence, science and the Universe as one interactive, holistic energy.

http://i-net.com.au//
Keep abreast of happenings within Australia's Internet industry: reviews of nine search engines, Telstra's Big Pond, ABG McNair NetWatch, OzEmail's Web Wide Media and so on.

http://www.aian.com.au/
Great for music students this is an Australian music home online: covers all genres including jazz, funk, fusion, rock, reggae, ambient and techno.

http://www.io.org/amnesty
Amnesty International has used its site to provide extensive information about worldwide human rights issues.

http://hansard.aph.gov.au
The Federal Parliament's Hansard Internet service now includes House of Representatives Committee transcripts

http://www.democrats.org.au
The new site of the Australian Democrats which provides information useful to political studies students.

http://www.state.wi.us/agencies/dpi/www/search.html
Bob Bocher and Kay Ihlenfeldt presented a paper in October 1996 on the "Effective use of web search engines" which T/Ls may find of practical interest.

http://www.copyright.com.au
For Library Managers, this site contains information on the New Media licences and CAL operations generally.

http://www.webmonkey.com
Web Monkey is a valuable site to gain the latest information on html tricks, and contains easy to follow steps and detailed example code.

http://www.sausage.com.au
Sausage Software offers the latest version of this popular web authoring tool and features style sheets, a Javascript tool, animation tools and client-side image maps.

http://www.ash.org.au
Aussie School House is the virtual meeting place for teachers, students, and parents to chat and interact on educational matters all aimed to enhance learning.

http://www.rpl.com.au
Australian ag students and farmers can receive a regular stream of agricultural information and services from Rural Press.

http://www.childsafe.net.au
This Child Safety Network is dedicated to preventing child abuse and promoting safety of children.

http://www.mudcycles.co.nz
Mountain bike and cycle touring enthusiasts will enjoy Mud Cycles with all its information, pictures and links to similar sites.

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