

# *A Private Education*



## *Launceston Church Grammar School*

*1940-1965*

*Shrine of Enlightenment, Cradle of Character*



*Paul AC Richards, Rafe Champion and Peter Mercer*

## **A Private School Education**

*The advantages and disadvantages of a private school education continue to be debated on the premise of the individual cost of attending a private school and funding by the Commonwealth Government. However, it goes far deeper than that. The essence of a private church school education, such as the Launceston Church Grammar School provides, is the underlying principles of a Christian upbringing and guidance and development both spiritually and academically.*

*The school was founded to give boys a good education based on Christian values, practices and principles. These are constantly enunciated in every aspect of school life. The school today as a coeducational independent institute expects that both girls and boys will appreciate and live up to these concepts. It is the aim of those concerned with the administration of the school that all students should leave it with a clear understanding of the obligations expected of a Christian lady or gentleman, preparing them for life in accordance with Christian teaching.*

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Twenty-eight past students recalling memories 1940–1965

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## **A Private Education: Launceston Church Grammar School**

While on the subject of examinations, I would stress the point that any examination is an unfair test of a boy's ability. Examinations were invented by scholastic institutions as mechanical aids to internal administration, and standards of attainment for professional careers. Nowadays they are rapidly assuming the role of a hallmark of equipment for any kind of work. If we consider for a moment, the qualities most desired in a boy who enters a career other than professional, we shall see how utterly false such a hallmark may be. I do not fear contradiction when I say that the most important qualities are such things as honesty, integrity, and moral courage, which are conveniently summed up by the word 'character'. Next, I think we look for willingness to work and a sense of responsibility comparable with the task of the nature in hand, and the ability to learn. Finally, we look for a reasonable standard of attainment in our own language and accuracy of computation and thought. Of these qualities only the last two can be assessed by examinations of the type we use.<sup>1</sup>

*Norman Roff, 1940*

It was the school's object to cater as widely as possible for the religious, moral, physical, aesthetic and intellectual development of all boys entering the school. Religion remained the heart of the school's work and permeated all activities, and the ideals sought could not be achieved unless there was full co-operation between the school, church and home.<sup>2</sup>

*Harold Vernon Jones, 1950*

There is too great a tendency to judge schools by the number of competitions they win instead of by the number of gentlemen they produce.<sup>3</sup>

*Basil H Travers, 1953*

You don't do it because you are told to do it. You do it because it is the right thing to do!<sup>4</sup>

*Donald Selth, 1960*

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<sup>1</sup> *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954), Friday 11 December 1936, p. 13

<sup>2</sup> *Advocate*, 13 December 1950, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> *Examiner*, 17 December 1953, p. 10

<sup>4</sup> Quote from a School Assembly, 1960

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Typeset in 12, 11 and 10pt New Times Roman

Printed Tablo

Book designed by Paul A.C. Richards

Sub-editing and proofreading by Lisa Jones

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National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Entry

Educational, History

ISBN

Educational / History

1-Paul A.C. Richards AM, 2-Rafe Champion, 3-Peter Mercer OAM

Principal Editors: Barbara Valentine OAM, Bruce Crawford, John Scott and Peter Rae AO

Cover: The school oval, chapel and classroom block taken on a winter's day.



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## Classroom Block and Boarding House 2021



*Source: Paul AC Richards collection*



## Comments from former headmasters

In 1887, at the Annual Speech Night the Rev AH Champion remarked:<sup>5</sup>

*I do not wish to speak at any length about the aims of such a school as ours; but few words must be said, because there seems to me to be a misunderstanding in some quarters. For instance, I am sometimes asked whether it is absolutely necessary for a boy to learn Latin or any other subject. My only answer to such question is that the Grammar School was not founded to teach Latin only, or any other subject only; but that it is, to use a good old phrase, a place of sound learning and religious education, that it aims at educating a boy for work he may have to do in the world; and that for this purpose it uses many instruments, mathematics and natural science and Indian clubs and cricket all having their proper part and share.*

In 1933, FR Adams said in a message to those students leaving the school at the annual speech night:

*Almost the only sad time of a schoolmaster's life is when he must bid farewell to boys who are leaving for the larger world outside the school. Even then there is compensation in the sure knowledge that the boys will carry with them the ideals of honour, truthfulness, loyalty, unselfishness and service which they have been taught, and which they have learnt in school and on the playing fields. When their Latin and French, their mathematics and science, are in part at least forgotten, these and other noble virtues for which their school exists will not pass away, but prove of lasting value.*

In 1950, H Vernon Jones said:<sup>6</sup>

*That religious teaching was at the heart of the school and it was the school's object to cater as widely as possible for the religious, moral, physical, aesthetic and intellectual development of all boys entering the school. Religion remained the heart of the school's work and permeated all activities, and the ideals sought could not be achieved unless there was full co-operation between the school, the Church and the home.*

*The only things in education that are fixed and unchanging are the sense of moral values and, in a smaller degree, the basic skills such as English and arithmetic. He went on to say that it was the adventure of education to produce great men and women, to cherish and cultivate the best of which mankind was capable and the primary concern of the school was the building up of our age and the creation of a saner and happier world.*

He reported at that time that an average enrolment at the main school was 325, of which 175 had been boarders and 130 at the preparatory school.

And in 1952, on the eve of his retirement he was reported to have said:

*NEVER WAS the responsibility of the teaching profession greater than it is today.*

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<sup>5</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 15 December 1887, p. 2

<sup>6</sup> *Examiner*, 13 December 1950, p. 8

The report went on...

*The time has come when the possession of knowledge and the power to impart knowledge are no longer adequate. Priority must be given to the possession of standards of value and the power to induce others to accept and use these standards. The question of state aid to public schools had been very much to the fore during the past few months and he must express his sorrow at the "appalling ignorance" shown in the views of some members of Parliament, said Mr Jones. "I wonder if the member who stated that the public schools were 'a breeding ground for snobs and encouraged class distinction' has ever visited a public school,"*

In 1954, Basil H 'Jika' Travers said:

*...There had recently been considerable discussion on the mainland and in Tasmania about matriculation and the standard of students entering the University. The extension would mean that boys would leave the school a year later and enter the University more mature. In both ways this is a desirable step. But it is even more desirable when one considers the present matriculation syllabus, which is far too large for the year's academic work. By increasing secondary education to six years, it was hoped there would be more time for, but no increase in, the present syllabus. The effect, of course, would be a higher standard.*

Mr Travers stated that for the successful education of children it was becoming more essential that the community realise that teaching was an important profession:

*...Life for a boy now was far more complicated and hectic than it was thirty years ago. The effect of modern innovations on the social life of growing boys was not yet fully apparent. Thus, it was now the duty of schools to struggle strongly against this material onslaught and demand for youth time for leisure and thought and to create situations in which a boy was afforded the chance to think independently and critically. It was not the school's task to give boys material education to equip them for their callings; rather it was the school's obligation to teach boys the values of love, truth, loyalty, honesty and service to teach them Christian ideals.*

In 1960, Don Selth said:

*...We are often capable of accomplishing more than we think we can... I have never hesitated to push boys I have taught or coached into taking an extra step beyond what they think is possible.*

These are then the qualities of Launceston Church Grammar School.

**Launceston Church Grammar circa 1923 Classroom Block**



*Source: Paul AC Richards collection*

**John CH Morris**



# Dedication

*Dr John CH Morris*

1926-2017

In 1938, John left his family home in Sheffield, Tasmania to board at the Launceston Church Grammar School. His early years at Grammar were a new experience and it was not surprising that he was terribly homesick in those first few months in the boarding house. In 1939 war broke out.

According to many of his school friends, he was a born leader, conveying a natural yet gentle authority from an early age. Having just turned sixteen, he was not only the 1943 school captain, he was also captain of athletics, captain of Hawkes House, captain of the Boarding House, Senior Under Officer in the school cadet unit, and a part-time teacher in science due to a staff shortage given the war.

He still had time to win three prizes in Form 12, keep wicket for the First XI, set records in athletics, help run a gym, play in a symphony orchestra, lead two string quartets and be a member of Launceston's National Theatre Orchestra.

The war came to a personal crescendo in 1943 when, as school captain, John was asked to read out the full list of former students and staff killed in action every week. They included many of his friends. He fully expected to join the fray and went to university to fill the years before he turned 18 and could join up.

By early 1945, the war was concluding. First the army and then the air force advised they had no need of him. Armed with a science degree, he wondered what he should do. He found his answer when, in the congregation at Holy Trinity in Hobart, he heard his future father-in-law preach on the subject of the 'Parable of the Talents'. Despite his love of science, he realised he was wasting his talents pursuing it as a career. He felt the need to broaden his horizons.

John started his tertiary education at the University of Tasmania, and graduated in 1947 as a Bachelor of Science majoring in biology. In those days, Tasmanians aspiring to be doctors usually did a 'pre-med' year of science at the University of Tasmania in Hobart before proceeding to second year, ordinarily in Melbourne or Adelaide. When John turned to medicine, he was a little overqualified, and he proceeded smoothly through five years at the University of Melbourne to graduate MB BS in 1952. He came to Launceston General Hospital as a resident medical officer in 1953. He was admitted to membership to the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1957 and gained his fellowship (FRACP) in 1971.

John was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1985 for service to education and the community and an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2001 for service to medicine, particularly as a consultant physician, and to the community through educational, medical research and social welfare organisations.

In the book *A Tribute to Dr John Morris 1926-2017: A Remarkable Man*, Paul A.C. Richards AM and fellow colleagues pay tribute to his services to the community and mankind during his lifetime.

*Paul A.C. Richards AM*

## Foreword

This book consists mainly of memoirs of school life by students who attended Launceston Church Grammar School at some time between 1940 and 1965. It also demonstrates the contribution of a private education to the development of students and thus to their life after leaving school.

The approach of concentration on students' recollections contrasts with the traditional school history written by a person once connected with the school or a professional writer. I am aware that a Brisbane school arranges volunteers to interview former students and archives their memories of the school. I am not aware of another book like this one, which publishes such memories.

There is much humour in the stories. Many differ on aspects of life in the boarding house and the quality of the teachers. However, there were teachers whom all contributors acclaim. Many of the contributions are vivid in their description of events and give the reader a clear understanding of life at the school. The role of corporal punishment receives attention. World War II and its aftermath was a period of struggle for Grammar, both financially and in obtaining suitable teachers, this being well described by students from that era. The emphasis on sport was common to all the headmasters of the school and the period is one when the school excelled in competition.

This is a book will be an entertaining read. I have recently enjoyed re-reading it several times in the course of a sub-edit. It will appeal to all students of the school, not only those who attended in the subject period but all former and present students, many of whom will compare their own experience of the school with that of the contributors. Now that Grammar is co-educational, those who have attended will be particularly interested to contrast life in the school attended only by boys, with their own experiences.

The book has interesting chapters, concentrating on the houses, the prefect system, and a large range of subjects, which hitherto have received scant attention in the school histories. It also lists all the teachers in the period covered by the book and their nicknames, and the years (or less) when each of them worked at the school.

The editorial committee deserves praise because of its vision and arrangement of all the tasks leading to the publication of this book.

*Bruce H. Crawford, LL.B.Hons.(Tas.), LL.M.(Harvard)  
Class of 1955 - LCGS  
January 2021*

## Introduction

The concept of this book was initiated over a cup of coffee at the Transit Centre cafeteria in Launceston in July 2016. After fifty plus years I was meeting up with an old classmate, fellow cricketer and old boy Rafe Champion – affectionately known as Alf. We had made contact in the previous year when I was writing a book called *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School*. Alf had kindly agreed to contribute his memories of playing in the First XI team all those years ago. Also a close friend of Alf during his boarding days at Grammar, Ian Richards joined us, as we had all played cricket together in the First XI cricket team of 1961/2. Ian and I had hit the winning runs in a memorable partnership in 1961 when we won the State Premiership against Hutchins.

It was from this meeting and previous conversations that the idea of writing this book was hatched. And in true Paul A.C. Richards style, old boys were invited to contribute their memories of the school, their teachers and fellow students.

Rafe, now domiciled in Sydney, had come to Tasmania to visit family in Burnie. We reminisced about school days, cricket and the initiation of this book, *A Private Education: Launceston Church Grammar School*.

When we conceived the idea of the book and the notion of contacting past students to write about their experiences, we anticipated some would reject our invitation, others would be wary of exposition and a few would relish the thought of writing favourably – or in some cases unfavourably – about their experiences at the school. In any event we embarked on a mission to gather several old boys from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s to write about the school and their personal experiences, as we felt this period to be one of those golden ages in the development of the school physically as well as in sporting and academic achievement. The opportunity to contribute was offered to all old boys through the Alumni Newsletter, along with personal invitations to contribute.

Perhaps two of the most important aspects of a private school are its integrity and reputation. Launceston Church Grammar School has certainly maintained its integrity and overall reputation for the past 175 years.

In his book, *Play Together, Dark Blue Twenty*, Chester Eagle writes about Melbourne Grammar School. This book was first published in 1986 when he was working in Victoria's education system. Chester intended it to be, like its predecessor *Mapping the Paddocks* (1985), an evocation of a past Australia, and he wanted also to make a contribution to the building of a state education system of quality and achievement. He had hoped that those involved with government education would recognise the considerable qualities – mostly to do with pride, confidence, certainty and tradition – of Melbourne Grammar, and also see the ways – many of them unattractive – by which a famous school's prestige was maintained, to highlight the need to go in another direction entirely. In the weeks following the book's publication, he saw that what he wanted was not going to happen.

The book created a certain frisson at Melbourne Grammar amongst the old boy and old girl networks, but as a contribution to the changes then taking place in the state's education system, it had no effect at all and in 2006 he reissued the book – now as a record of a tradition, very powerful in its day, which has had some effect on our history. It will be of interest to gauge the reactions of our present old boys and old girls to this social history of the Launceston Church Grammar School.

Although there is an overwhelming desire to plunge into the heyday of *Tom Brown's School Days* of the 19th century and Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's *The Old School Tie: The Phenomenon of the English Public School* – which frightfully evoked vividly the isolated, hierarchical and conformist public-school world of beating, bullying, fagging and obsessions with games, sin and sex – we find that a very diluted representation of such behaviour at Launceston Grammar pre and post-World War II to the swinging sixties of the 20th century,

followed a similar English tradition of public school life. Unlike Harrow in the 1840s which was “an adolescent boy’s jungle” and Marlborough, (site of a boys’ rebellion), “an extremely inefficient prison,” Launceston Church Grammar emerged unscathed from the 19th century curricula, where anti-science and pro-classics, was an appalling state of affairs in the private schools of mother England.

In 1924, one year after moving from Elizabeth Street in the confines of the City of Launceston to spacious surroundings at Mowbray Heights north of the city, this is what was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* in June of that year:

*LAUNCESTON CHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL*

*This school has the honour of being the second oldest school in Australia, and can lay claim to being the school with the longest continuous history since King’s School, Parramatta, the only Australian school older than Grammar, although established earlier, was closed for a while and afterwards re-opened. The Grammar School record of scholarship has been steady and consistent, and its sports record is quite unique. Amongst the associated secondary schools of Launceston and Hobart, Grammar has won the premiership in cricket 17 times in the last 20 years, and in football 18 times in the same period. Since the Head of the River races were commenced eight years ago the Grammar boys have won six times, and in tennis have come first six times in seven years. So, it is little wonder that every Grammar boy is proud of his school. Lately the school has moved to a magnificent situation on Mowbray Heights, overlooking the Tamar River, and to encourage all boys in sports and manly development, has been divided into four houses, named Savigny, Hawkes, Wilkinson and Gillett, in honour of former headmasters and benefactors. The present head is the Rev. J. W. Bethune, M.A., Cantab, sometime Rector of St. Paul’s, Launceston, and Military Chaplain at Claremont.<sup>7</sup>*

This history commences in 1940 and concludes in 1965 and celebrates sporting and academic achievements and development of the school through the memories of its past students during this twenty-five year window in the life of Launceston Church Grammar School.

The school community suffered deeply during the war years as students served their country, many making the ultimate sacrifice. Headmaster, Captain Norman Roff, was among those killed in World War II action. The next major milestone for the school was its Centenary in 1946 under Headmaster Harold Vernon Jones. Although by then the school had built its own chapel, history records that “the final Centenary celebration was a church service held in the original church which school members attended, and two hundred present scholars and two hundred and fifty old boys lined up outside the old school in Elizabeth Street and marched to St John’s Church, as Grammar boys had done for so many years. This was an emotional occasion for many old boys as they relived their youth, and the Bishop gave an inspiring address to the congregation of a thousand, telling them they must develop international fellowship.”

In 1946, on celebrating 100 years of continuous education and speaking of the traditions and spirit of the school, the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Hugh Binney, had this to say:

*What is the public-school spirit? If I may be allowed to try to define it, I would say it is the fostering of all that is good, all that is honourable, and all that is true in the English life.*

*It’s the spirit of unselfish work for the community, the spirit which plays for the teams and not for oneself, the spirit that glories in learning for the sake of learning, and the spirit which takes satisfaction in a job well done, not for the reward.*

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<sup>7</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 9 June 1924, p. 7



*These lessons learnt fit our famous public schools, in the classroom and on the playing field, producing men of character who have built up and maintained the greatest Empire in the history of the world, . an Empire based on tolerance, freedom and fair play. They are, I believe, Sir Hugh added, the traditions you have fostered in this school.*<sup>8</sup>

The school has continued the traditions and, as one would expect from the first continuous public school in Australia, will complete 175 years in 2021 of continuous existence, building a most impressive record in all sporting arenas and academic achievement.

The school's reputation has spread far beyond the boundaries of Tasmania, and in times of peace and war the school has continued to grow along sound lines with the Christian principles it has always inculcated. It has wielded great influence for good, remembering that the school was founded in the days when education was a privilege for the few.

Today, Launceston Church Grammar School remains entrenched in a tradition of scholarship and learning but which is nevertheless modern, flexible and inclusive.

*Paul AC Richards AM*

It is important to note that there have always been times where boys were unhappy at Launceston Church Grammar School, as expressed in some of the contributors memories of their school days. However, in the main the school has had 175 years of achievements, especially that of past scholars and in particular the fields of politics, religion, business and the major traditional professions of medicine, law, engineering, the arts and academia in the era 1940-1965.

In making an assessment of the performance of the school, it needs to be remembered that almost half of the period covered was a very unusual era. This was particularly so during the period when Vernon Jones and Trevor Sorell were in charge of their respective areas and that nearly half the period covered by the book was during the World War II and the period after when food, clothing and fuel rationing applied. There were shortages of many items and an overhang of disruptions the war had brought about and which continued into much of the following decade.

The school's record of high achievers is second to none, many of whom have been honoured (Appendix X) and listed annually in *Who's Who in Australia*, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, *Tasmanian Dictionary of Biography* and *The Companion to Tasmanian History*.

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<sup>8</sup> *Mercury*, 17 June 1946, p. 7

## Preface

In 1946, the tenth headmaster of Launceston Church Grammar, Mr H. Vernon Jones, when addressing the Launceston Rotary Club in Launceston, outlined the establishment of the school, giving major credit to Sir John Franklin. In his address, he said “although there were many monuments in Tasmania to Sir John Franklin, none was as lasting as the Launceston Church Grammar School and Hutchins School, Hobart, which were eventually established through the indirect influence of Sir John.” He said the establishment of the schools really followed representations by Sir John to Dr Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, England. Dr Arnold became greatly interested in the idea of establishing a school along the lines of the English public school, and he sent out a man named Gell, who commenced a school in Hobart. However, the school was later closed, but Sir John and Dr Arnold maintained their interest, and it was actually through their foundation work that Christ College, Hutchins and Grammar were founded.<sup>9</sup>

The school has been operating continuously since 1846, celebrating its 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. There were many golden years attributed to this period; however this book focusses on the years following World War II through to the mid-1960s. During this period we saw seven Rhodes Scholars from 1946 to 1967 – a record number averaging one Rhodes Scholar every three years – and the sporting prowess of several cricketers, rowers, athletes and footballers representing at State level and some internationally. These were indeed golden years for the school.

It was a time when Latin was taught, the majority of staff wore an academic gown, corporal punishment was still in vogue, boxing was a house sport and a rigorous cadet system was entrenched in the curriculum of a Grammar boy. This was evident up until the mid-1950s when Latin ceased to be taught and boxing ceased to be a school sport. Oh, I nearly forgot... the cold showers endured by the boarders.

There were several divisions within the school and these included the academic division of commercial and academic streams, the House system and dayboys and boarders. However, such divisions made no difference amongst the student population and certainly did not worry the boys, as one of the major strengths of the school was a complete education.

No one told you at Grammar that you were the best and yet most left the school fortified with incredible confidence. Inside its walls, however, Grammar was surprisingly egalitarian. When I was there (1950-1962), few of us had any idea which of our fellow-pupils would inherit vast wealth. Popularity had nothing to do with wealth, and everything to do with style, character and *savoir-faire*.

Thomas Hughes’ novel about the mischievous but kind-hearted schoolboy, Tom Brown, inspired several other school novels, including Frank Richards’ Billy Bunter stories and J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series. Tom Brown is an early, well-drawn character in what was to become a familiar genre in English fiction: a chronicle of life at an English boys’ boarding school. In the novel, Tom, a student at Rugby School in the time of Thomas Arnold’s headmastership, is harassed by the school bully, Flashman, but overcomes his trials. During his school career, Tom does very well academically and on the playing fields. Tom is helped through his struggles by his friends Harry ‘Scud’ East and the frail but brilliant George Arthur, whom Tom protects and ultimately helps Tom develop into a young gentleman, ready for Oxford University.

Modelled on the English system of the public school, there may be similarities to what went on at Rugby, Eton and Winchester at Launceston Church Grammar School, expressed with passion and vigour by H. Vernon Jones “Tradition. Tradition. Tradition boys!”

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<sup>9</sup> *Examiner*, 13 June 1946, p. 5

Maintaining those ties with the great English public schools was highlighted by F.R. Adams, Headmaster 1929-1935, when he suggested building into the wall of the new school chapel relics from English public schools, which was met with enthusiastic responses from Harrow, Westminster, Rugby, Merchant Taylors (or Blue Coat) School, Shrewsbury, Eton and Charter House just to name a few.

The *Examiner* reported in 1933:

*THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL Interesting Relics for Chapel STONES FROM ANZAC*

*From a Special Correspondent. LONDON, 5 January*



*The appeal which Mr F.R. Adams, headmaster of the Launceston Church Grammar School, made to several English public schools for a relic of their chapels for building into the wall of the new chapel of the Launceston School has met with a generous response. Mr Adams, whose, patriotism and enthusiasm for the Imperial tie secured last year one of the flags that had flown on the walls of the Cenotaph during the previous twelve months, conceived that a further bond of Empire would be established if some link were provided with the famous schools of England. This, he suggested could be most suitably secured by some fragment of their fabric which could be inserted accompanied by a suitable inscription. In the walls of the Launceston Chapel some interesting contributions are shortly to be despatched to Mr Adams.*

*Westminster School, which uses Westminster Abbey as its chapel, is sending a fragment of the walls of the Abbey, removed during repairs. Similar alterations have placed at the disposal of Eton and Charterhouse, various portions of the fabric of their chapels, and each is despatching a large stone in both cases about eighteen inches square, and six inches thick. These are going through the office of the Agent-General. From Rugby, Harrow and St Paul's schools are sending out relics direct, and other schools Mr Adams approached are corresponding with him on the subject. But to Australian boys the most valuable of these memorial stones will be those from the Imperial War Graves Commission. They consist of a piece of the Gallipoli stone, of which the Lone Pine Memorial to the Australian and New Zealand dead is built, and a stone from Anzac Cove, the scene of the landing, which blazoned the name of ANZAC as synonymous with heroism unsurpassed in the history of war.<sup>10</sup>*

The laying of the foundation stone of the chapel occurred on Saturday 30 July 1932.<sup>11</sup> The ceremony was performed by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Tasmania Dr. R. Snowdon Hay. Following that ceremony, a football match was played on the school oval between teams representing past and present scholars.

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<sup>10</sup> *Examiner*, 7 February 1933, p. 6

<sup>11</sup> *Examiner*, 29 July 1932, p. 8

The stones duly arrived and were placed on display at the school. Major Conder, speaking at an Old Launcestonians' dinner in March 1933, remarked:

*Each of these (stones) will be suitably mounted and inscribed, and placed on the wall of the chapel. They should have a wonderful effect on the receptive imagination of schoolboys".<sup>12</sup>*

In 1934, it was also suggested that a stone from the old Elizabeth Street School should be obtained.<sup>13</sup> In late 1935, a quote for their installation was obtained by Mr. Hinman and Major Conder was prepared to assist in installing the stones.<sup>14</sup>

The opening paragraphs of Chapter 5 'Rugby and Football' in *Tom Browns' School Days* is hauntingly like entering Launceston Church Grammar, perched on the Mowbray Heights escarpment over-looking the City of Launceston, Cataract Gorge and the Tamar River.

*And so here's Rugby, sir, at last, and you'll be in plenty of time for dinner at the School-house, as I telled you," said the old guard, pulling his horn out of its case and tootle-tooing away, while the coachman shook up his horses, and carried them along the side of the school close, round Dead-man's corner, past the school-gates, and down the High Street to the Spread Eagle, the wheelers in a spanking trot, and leaders cantering, in a style which would not have disgraced "Cherry Bob," "ramping, stamping, tearing, swearing Billy Harwood," or any other of the old coaching heroes.*

*Tom's heart beat quick as he passed the great school field or close, with its noble elms, in which several games at football were going on, and tried to take in at once the long line of gray buildings, beginning with the chapel, and ending with the school house, the residence of the headmaster, where the great flag was lazily waving from the highest round tower. And he began already to be proud of being a Rugby boy, as he passed the school gates, with the oriel window above, and saw the boys standing there, looking as if the town belonged to them, and nodding in a familiar manner to the coachman, as if any one of them would be quite equal to getting on the box, and working the team down street as well as he.*

My first impressions of the school along with many others was its spaciousness, pristine playing fields, chapel, class rooms and boarding house blocks. Not wanting to sound like the description given in *Tom Brown's School Days* of Rugby School, the picture and description of Grammar was very similar minus the elms.

In 1919, a journalist writing under the pseudonym of 'Athenaeus' wrote:<sup>15</sup>

*THE SCHOOLS. (By Athenaeus)<sup>16</sup> In the reconstruction of civilised ideals, brought about by the war, we have to look largely to the education of our children, and with this end in view it is the intention of the Examiner to commence a weekly column dealing with the doings of the schools and various educational aspects that may arise. The aim is to enable teachers and those interested in education to have a medium of expressing their views and to arouse a public interest in what should constitute one of the most important matters of thought for everyone. It should be one of our aims to "educate the children of democracy under the best conditions and to the fullest extent of their capacity." The column is open to teachers and others interested.*

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<sup>12</sup> *Examiner*, 27 March 1933, p. 6

<sup>13</sup> Board Minute, 21 June 1934

<sup>14</sup> Board Minute, 18 September 1935

<sup>15</sup> *Examiner*, 9 October 1919, p. 2

<sup>16</sup> Athenaeus of Naucratis was a Greek rhetorician and grammarian flourishing about the end of the second and beginning of the 3rd century AD.

*...One of the features of the private secondary schools of Launceston of recent years has been the movement in favour of better buildings; Scotch College has moved to an improved situation; St. Patrick's College has built a fine up-to-date school, and the Grammar School is now improving in the same direction. One of the most important conditions of a first-class school is the size and suitability of its playgrounds. There should be ample room, and it should be part of idle work of the school authorities to provide for the economies of the ground, with as much care as is given to the building. It is a universally accepted pedagogic principle that character is formed more in the playing fields than in the classroom.*

In 1923, the Grammar School's move from the confines of Elizabeth Street in Launceston to the expanses of a 25-acre Mowbray Heights site was ground breaking and a triumph for the development of the school, with adequate playing fields just a step from the class room and boarding house – a major contrast to the inner-city days of having to play cricket and other sports on grounds far removed from the school. St Georges Square<sup>17</sup> and the Launceston Cricket ground<sup>18</sup> had always served for sporting features including athletic carnivals<sup>19</sup>.

Strengthening of the mind, intellect and body were the fabric of the school and mentioned especially by all the headmasters of the school, usually at the annual prize-giving speech night. This is what was remarked in the press from an early headmaster's (Rev AH Champion) report in 1887.

*Why did Mr Champion pay attention to rowing and cricket? Not that it was supposed the boys would take these up as a profession, but for the strengthening of their bodies. And in the same way, various studies tended to strengthen the mind, although they might be laid aside immediately after the boy left school. Were a boy thoroughly well grounded in the classics he need hardly open the A English grammar, as the same principle alike regulated them. Mathematics led to close reasoning, and other studies served to expand the strength and ability of the mind. As the sports in the field developed the physical powers of the body, so did the training in the classroom form the mind and polish the intellect.<sup>20</sup>*

It is also interesting to note that some of the past students who were approached to contribute for this book either: declined outright, wavered and complied, spontaneously provided a succinct essay of their memories and others who were emphatic about the content and requested no editing or additional information in their selective writings.

It has resulted in a pleasing spread of contributors who attended the school from 1940-1965 and who have penned an interesting social history of the longest continuing school, Launceston Church Grammar School in Australia 1846-2021.

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<sup>17</sup> *Launceston Examiner*, 3 March 1884, p. 3

<sup>18</sup> *Mercury*, 14 December 1904, p. 7

<sup>19</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 6 April 1921, p. 6

<sup>20</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 15 December 1887, p. 2

## School Chapel 2020



*Source: Paul A.C. Richards collection*

I grew up in an era where in my family political correctness was never discussed, you were just taught about life's rights and wrongs, good and bad manners, how to hold your knife and fork and not to chew with your mouth open, or for that matter speak when it was full! People said whatever they felt and thought about politics, race and creed and from that we learnt to form life-long opinions on people, their personalities and political and racial preferences. The 1950s were overshadowed by war and the stigma of the racial hatred towards the Japanese and Germans, just as the aftermath of World War I was influenced by a generation that had experienced the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the outbreak of war in 1939.

There was always the threat of the "yellow peril" as Robert Menzies preached during his prime ministership, and religious persecution was rife and inclusive of the Catholic faith banning their flock from attending another religious denominational church.

However, this generation was not easily brainwashed into following the Victorian and Edwardian psyche of our parents and grandparents, breaking out into free speakers and the enlightenment of what was to become the historic 1960s and 1970s. This was a generation of free thinkers – creative, vibrant and a breath of fresh air to humanity.

I visit the school formally every year to attend the *Elizabeth Street Chapter* Easter chapel service and luncheon, and later in the year *Remembrance Day Service* in November. On each of those occasions, I gaze at the stones of those famous English private schools, my house flag, the chapel and think of *Tom Brown's School Days*, but more succinctly of my days at Grammar.

*Paul A.C. Richards AM*

# Launceston Church Grammar School 2021

Source: Paul A.C. Richards collection



## Acknowledgements

The majority of research for this book was gleaned from old boys of the school, the school magazine 'Launcestonian', Alumni Newsletter and local newspapers of the day, *Mercury*, *Launceston Examiner*, *Examiner*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Cornwall Chronicle*, all of which have been digitalised on TROVE, an invaluable resource, and books written about the school by Basil Rait, Harold Vernon Jones, Alison Alexander and Paul A.C. Richards AM. We are most grateful to Peter Mercer OAM for allowing us to use excerpts from his book *A Brush with the Past* (2017), largely based on his experience at LCGS, and all those past students who have contributed their schoolboy memories from 1940 to 1965. The memorabilia of John Scott's photographs and school badges were very much appreciated along with John Brett, Owen Carington Smith, Frank Henderson and Richard Stark for their photographic collections of the school and memorabilia. We are grateful to Peter Mercer OAM, Barbara Valentine OAM and Bruce Crawford (copy edit and Foreword) for their review, advice and editing of this manuscript. The formatting to PDF-ready is acknowledged and I am grateful for the cooperation of Lisa Jones, Kim Neilsen-Creeley, retired LCGS Assistant Archivist, and archives volunteers John Brett, Alan Beecroft, and Headmaster Richard Ford.

Finally, a reading by John Scott and Peter Rae AO and their advice on the removal of any offending possible strong sexual or defamatory references was welcomed.

### Contributors

John Best, Peter Bridley, Rafe Champion, Bruce Crawford, Paul Edwards, David Esling, William Gray (formerly Bill Godfrey-Smith), Christopher Green OAM, Nigel Lazenby, Peter Mercer OAM, John Morris, Paul Rapley, Ian Richards, Paul Richards AM, Brian Smith, David Saunders, John Scott, Roger Scott, Bertram Thomas, George Toyne, Ryllton Viney, Bryan Walpole AM, and Mike Walpole.

The majority of the contributed memories of past students were individually penned. However, a few were taken with permission from the Alumni Newsletter, December 2016: Jan Haswell, Peter Jones, David Lean and Brian Smith.

Select photographs were provided by not only contributors but from keen schoolboy photographers: Owen Carington Smith, Frank Henderson, Richard Stark, Bruce Crawford and John Brett.

Select comments and recollections by several past students were supplied for several chapters by John Henry, David Henty, Richard Stark, Frank Henderson and Owen Carington Smith.



# Comparison of schooling in the UK and Australia

*We have lived with the ideals of an English school system in Australia since the beginnings of education and the establishment of what we call a private school education from the early 19th century until today. Such it was in the 1950s What we think was barbaric during our school days has little to compare to this account of his schooling as a boarder at Knossington Grange and then Oakham 1952-1959, by David Esling who arrived at Grammar in 1960.*

## Knossington Grange Preparatory School

*September 1952 - July 1958*

*The bigger they are the harder they fall*

*David Esling*

I was born in Nottingham, England in 1944 and at the tender age of seven years I was enrolled at a preparatory school called Knossington Grange. My parents had seen it advertised in the *Church Times*, offering adventurous boys a disciplined education in the countryside. It was a boarding school. Prep schools, as they were called, prepared boys for the English public school system. If you passed the Common Entrance Examination at the age of thirteen, one could apply for a place in a nearby public school such as Oakham or Rugby. Entering schools like Eton or Harrow was out of the question, unless you did extremely well in the exam, had your name down for generations, were a member of the aristocracy or had vast amounts of money. Public schools were not open for the general public as they once were in the 16th to 18th centuries. Elitism reared its ugly head in the early 19th century. Headmasters, like Dr Arnold at Rugby, wished to control the intake of boys. School fees were introduced or raised and entrance examinations had to be passed as a condition of entry. Gradually the schools became more elitist, competitive and prided themselves on the development of men with conservative values, a sense of tradition, leadership, bravery, survival, knowing your place in the pecking order, together with an extremely formalised education sufficient for entrance to one of many universities. Such as it was in the 1950s.

### Knossington Grange 1950s

So, Knossington Grange had six years to ready me for a public school. The prep school was an



old Manor House set in huge and impressive gardens complete with two large lakes, which were out of bounds, and two small areas of woodland called spinneys. There was ample grassland for play and woodland for adventure. The school building looked austere with its

three floors enclosed by sandstone walls, with battlements protruding from and protecting the slate roof. The entrance hall was enormous, above which there was a tall tower that overlooked the roofs of the building and the grounds below. It appeared to be a sinister place foreboding harsh times. The manor house was situated alongside a small village named Knossington in the county of Rutland. The nearest Town, Oakham, was four miles away. There seemed to be no escape.

The school had first opened in early 1952 with a handful of boys but by the beginning of the school year in September 1952, there were about sixty boys. The school terms were: Term 1 - Sept. to mid-Dec.; Term 2 – mid-Jan. to April; Term 3 - May to July. Holidays seemed to be a long way off when my parents first introduced themselves and little me to the headmaster, Mr Palmer, in September 1952. He was a large man with a beard and was about twice the size of my dad. Mr Palmer had been a captain of a merchant ship sailing across the Atlantic delivering essential supplies to Britain and its people during World War II. Tears fogged up my eyes as my parents farewelled me and drove away.

“Look at me young man. Enough of that. We don’t cry here. Do you understand?”

“Yes Sir,” I choked as I tried to pull my trunk through the front door.

“Blenkinsop! Help this young man with his trunk. His dormitory the *Ark Royal* it is, for the new boys in class C.”

My helping hand held one end of the trunk and I the other. Together we struggled up the stairs towards my dormitory. I took notice that all the dormitories were named after famous ships, as I had previously heard of the *Victory* and *Ark Royal*, but who was *Mary Rose*?

“Here we are,” said Blenkinsop. “What’s your name?”

“David,” I replied shakily.

“No, silly, your proper name?”

“Esling.”

“That’ll be it. There’s your bed, near the window. Your name’s on the pillow. Tea is at 5 o’clock in the dining room.” I then understood that we were to be called by our surnames.

I was left alone to unpack until Matron popped in to give me a hand and told me to leave my dressing gown and pyjamas at the end of the bed. She suggested that I had time to look at the noticeboard downstairs before tea. Matron was nice but I didn’t know her name.

The noticeboard informed me that I was in Class C and that the boys were divided into groups called ‘houses’. They were named after sea captains. Mine was to be ‘Drake’. Boys were swarming around the board, pushing shoving, squealing and shouting.

“Silence!” roared a tall thin man. “My name is Mr Barker. I teach C Class and don’t you forget it! Now line up for tea.”

My dog doesn’t even bark like that. What are we in for, I thought.

We were lead to our table by a kitchen hand and shown our places. Each table had space for twenty boys, ten each side. There were three tables at the end of which sat a teacher or the matron. Mr Barker sat at the end of our table, so I gathered that my classmates shared the same table. Boys sitting at other tables were older-looking, particularly the ones at the far end. They had to be from Class A. Tea was simple. Baked beans on soggy brown toast followed by a bowl of sago, which had quickly earned the name ‘frog spawn’. The boys were soon to predict the food before them each day. Every Monday had the same breakfast, lunch or tea and so on through the week. For example, every Tuesday breakfast was porridge, followed by a jelly-like pale yellow scrambled egg on brown toast. Every Tuesday lunch was tomato soup, brown bread under a burnt sausage, followed by a bowl of semolina. Every Tuesday tea was vegetable soup, tripe on toast, followed by a bowl of fruit salad. Glasses of water were aplenty to wash all the meals down.

The best day was Sunday. We had white bread, a nice cereal, a rather well boiled egg, a roast for lunch and for tea we loved bubble and squeak, followed by ice cream. We were allowed to speak to the boys seated near us during meals but if the chatter became rowdy, Mr Barker would stand and yell 'Silence!', which meant we all had to remain silent for the rest of the meal. If you happened to be the cause of the imposition, the older boys would target you for a bit of rough play and tease. Quite often you would see boys 'debagged'. A poor boy would be set upon by three or four older boys, turned upside-down, have his shorts removed, his bum slapped and his willie tugged – all in front of a gathering crowd, until a passing teacher took his time to suggest that was enough.

Mr Palmer stood to inform us of our bedtimes: Class C 6:30pm; Class B 7:00pm; Class A 7:30pm.

“Lights out half an hour after bed time.”

How could you have lights out at 7 o'clock? The sun was still shining at that hour. So, it was seven year olds to bed at 6:30pm, eight years at 7:00pm and nine years at 7:30pm. The school was in its infancy then. The following year would see the arrival of ten-year olds. By 1956, the school would cater for 120 boys from Grades 1 to 6. I was ready for bed that first night, even though it was 6:30pm. I felt lost, alone, a little frightened and still on the verge of crying.

Matron popped in to say goodnight, as all the boys in the *Arc Royal* were in bed. I felt cold. There were no extra blankets and no hotwater bottles. I hugged my pillow to hide my crying eyes. There would be thirteen weeks of this before I returned home for Christmas. I suddenly turned over. I could hear boys sniffing and perhaps some were crying. No longer did I feel so alone. I then fought off my tears, feeling a little stronger as I reset my pillow. Sleep was beckoning as I remembered Mr Palmer's voice in the hallway, “Enough of that. We don't cry here.”

The year was 1956. I was in my fourth year as a boarder at Knossington. My academic progress had been slow and my written work was at best considered untidy. My report informed my parents that I was a bit of a clown in class and must take my lessons more seriously, and try much harder. It suggested that I was untidy in appearance even though I wore my uniform daily as required. It was not my fault that my shirt had been ripped by one of the school bullies as I tried to defend myself from a rough up. Many boys had similar experiences and we longed for our revenge. There were now six classes of about twenty boys. Each fortnight we had to sit a test called the 'fortnightly order'. Where we sat in class depended on the results and I usually sat near the back end of row four. The teachers who rotated from room to room knew instantly upon entering your classroom where the goodies sat and where the likely trouble would stem from. Mostly their eyes were directly on row four. I was sick of it. I had to find a way into row three.

“Shush, Wilson shush! I'll give you my bag of marbles if you swap places with me next week, OK?”

He was sort of OK and smiled in agreement. The marble season was in full swing and he was short of a few.

In strolled Mr Barker first thing Monday morning for history. The 'Barker' stood before his class glaring down all four rows in turn. He didn't like Monday mornings.

“Esling! Come up the front please. I want you... to take this note... to the Head, straight away.” He finished writing the note and sealed it in an envelope taken from his desk.

I took the envelope and walked towards the door.

“Ooooh, eeeer,” sighed the class, meaning that I was in for it.

I knocked on the headmaster's study door and on his command, walked in and handed over the note.

“I see. You were not seated in the correct desk. Come to my study at bedtime and now quickly return to class.”

There was a long wait before bedtime, which in Grade 4 was 8pm. It had not been the first time. I knew what was in front of me. It was the waiting I couldn't stand. I had to endure taunts from a chorus of boys: “I wouldn't like to be you” or “In your pyjamas as well; that'll hurt.”

The day dragged on. Teatime came. I couldn't eat, but I had to. That was the rule. Everyone knew that. It was the way of things. After tea I had to sit down for 'prep', which was an hour's homework. My mind wandered over the inevitable.

At last prep was over and I gingerly walked up to my dormitory, undressed and put on my pyjamas and dressing gown. There were still ten minutes to go. At five minutes to the appointed hour I walked down the corridor towards the headmaster's study. To my surprise there was a queue of at least a dozen boys lined up outside the study. This would take some time. He might tire before it's my turn. You could hear the crack of the cane tasting flesh at first bite, soon followed by an anguished scream that pierced our waiting hearts. After three strokes it was over. A young boy of nine years struggled out the door trying to hold his bum with both hands and keep his pyjamas up at the same time. Those waiting could see the boy's eyes smarting as he struggled to contain his composure.

“Did it hurt? Tell us. Go on.”

“No!” he whimpered as he returned to his dormitory trying in vain to maintain his dignity.

“Next.”

And so, it continued. After half an hour, it was my turn. There were still two more after me.

“Ah! Esling, showing disrespect for the fortnightly order. Work harder to be better placed next time. Bend over. Take your dressing gown off.”

I walked over to the old leather chair in the corner. I had been there several times before. I knew what to expect. The seat hung low and as you buried your head you could smell the tears awash in the smelly leather. Bent over like that your bum was really tight. You could hear him coming towards you. Bracing yourself you heard the swish momentarily before the 'thwack!' and then felt the hot sting of cane against flesh. You remained silent, gritted your teeth and awaited the next strike. There were six strokes that night.

“You can go now.”

So, off I trudged showing as little emotion as possible. I didn't want to let that brute of a man know that he had hurt me. Walking down the corridor, the two boys waiting nodded their sympathetic approval as I made my way back to my dormitory. Just inside there was a welcoming committee.

“We heard you had six. Wow! Give us a look?”

I obliged as the tradition demanded. I let slip my bloodied pyjamas to the floor.

“Wow! You've drawn a lot of blood and the bruises are just appearing through the stripes.”

The thought of being a type of hero gave me some kind of status. It helped manage the pain. Matron appeared then, having heard of my wounds. She cleaned me up and gave me another pair of pyjamas. After that night I no longer suffered any more teasing and it was the last time I had the cane at Knossington Grange. From the age of nine, I had had, like most boys, the cane about once a month and on most occasions I thought the blood-lusty punishment to be unfair. In Forms 1 and 2 you were generally considered to be too young for the cane, and by the time you were twelve you were thought to be too old or was it that you had been thrashed into submission and finally knew your place in the ways of boarding school life?

The boys were placed in houses to heighten a competitive spirit, to provide an incentive for scholarly achievement, to encourage good behaviour and to facilitate intra-school competitions

in athletics, rugby and cricket. The houses were named after famous sea captains. I belonged to Drake House. I had heard of Nelson but who was Collingwood?

House meetings were held once a month and lead by the house teacher, so that interhouse sporting competitions could be organised. Autumn was rugby, spring was long distance running and summer was cricket. These activities were held on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday after morning school lessons. On specific Saturday afternoons there would be inter-school sport. If you did well in class, were seen to be nice to someone or did a good deed you might be awarded a house point by one of the teachers or supporting staff. They would give you a small green ticket from a raffle book with your name written on it, initialled by the teacher. The recipient would place his ticket in a letterbox or house box. Conversely you might be given a red ticket for being naughty. That had to go in too as it could be checked by looking at the butt of the book. Once a month, the house box was brought in and the tickets counted. House members were given the names of those with multiple tickets, red or green. The balance was withheld until the next school assembly. The winning house would have a half-day off school. Drake House only won it once and what an afternoon we had. A bus took us to town to see the film *Dunkirk*, which was really super, and on the way back we stopped at Burrow Hill to play war games. Many a dead soldier was seen rolling down the steep hills.

For those unlucky enough to have received multiple reds it was likely they would be set upon by fellow housemates – yet another reason for the teasers and bullies to ply their dirty trade. The school staff seemed to turn a blind eye to this kind of anti-social behaviour, that is until matters grew a little out of hand. It was quite common for a ten or eleven-year old to just give up and run away. Some would just scarper in daylight only to be brought back by car within the hour by school staff searching one of the three roads leading out of Knossington. Some runaways were well planned. I remember a boy of eleven who left our dormitory two hours before dawn. He dressed into his sports clothes over which he pulled on his dungarees. He took some coins from his bedside drawer and shoved his school uniform down his bed. He added a pillow for good measure before he silently slipped out of the dormitory. He was well on his way by the time the bell rang for everyone to have their cold morning showers. The car search couldn't find him and by 10am the police were called in. They too couldn't find him. The boy returned to school three days later to complete the term before moving on to another school. We later learned that he had walked across country to a village called Sommersby, caught a bus to the market town of Melton Mowbray and another bus on to Nottingham. On arriving home his mother looked in disbelief as her son stood before her in tears in the doorway. For a little while after that incident the school was a little less keen to hand out minus points and were seen to take a sterner stance against the teasers and bullies.

It was the summer of 1956. The Aussies were touring and were being spun out by Laker and Lock. Even my favourite player Richie Benaud was having a hard time of it. Back at school we were playing a practice match on our cricket ground in a field about a ten-minute walk from school. Robbie Fisher was playing for the A side and with his long run up was creating havoc amongst the B team. Robbie was one of the school bullies and he had roughed up many a lad younger and smaller than he was. He was in his element. He was quick but erratic and byes were building up quite nicely for us. He had hit a few batsmen before our innings was closed. It was our turn to field. After a couple of wickets fell, in came Robbie Fisher to bat looking as cocky as ever. I asked the coach who was umpiring the game if I could have a bowl. I had never bowled fast before but I was sure to let some go this time. I had the ball in hand and Robbie was on strike. I made sure my run up was a little longer than Robbie Fisher's. I charged in at full speed and discharged the ball at a rate of knots. It bounced, reared and whistled past his nose as he tried to back away. My follow through finished right under his nose.

“There are still five to come,” I whispered towards his ear. He raised his bat as if to threaten me but backed off and I returned to my bowling mark. The next one hit a patch on the wicket, kept a little lower and thundered into his groin. Down he went into a crumpled heap. He obviously was in pain. He wasn't wearing a protector. The coach and players rushed towards him to offer help and sympathy.

“We are sooo soory, Rooobbiee. Do you want to leave the field?”

“Yeah, I’ll leave. I don’t want to play this stupid game anyway.”

The coach led Robbie from the field and handed him over to a teacher watching on and he was taken away for medical attention back at school. Matron would give him a good looking over. For the rest of the over, I bowled off a short run.

The coach asked, “Why don’t you bowl fast all the time? I think you can do it.”

That is why I became a fast bowler, in spite of my short stature, all because of a bully. I was chosen to play for the First XI the following week. I replaced Robbie Fisher who was soon to be leaving for another school. I remained a fast bowler until I was forty-years-old.

On Sunday mornings, dressed in our finest we set off for church in Knossington. The services were a bit of a drag and the vicar’s sermons lasted exactly forty-five minutes. It was very difficult having to sit still, look attentive and behave according to Mr Palmer’s wishes. After church, we sat in our classrooms for letter writing. One of the teachers supervised as we laboriously set about writing letters home. After we had drafted a letter we had to have it checked by the teacher for spelling mistakes and any content that might show a poor reflection on the school. After the teacher had corrected mistakes and deleted parts with swoop of a red pen we then had to write a neat copy. On final acceptance, the letters were placed in an addressed envelope and posted. I remember the Sunday a few days after Robbie Fisher had a bad day on the cricket field. He turned up for breakfast with a black eye. Some of the older boys had given him one. Yippee. The first words of my letter home that week were “Robbie Fisher has got a black eye....” The letter was passed with very little editing. I still have the letter to this day in my safe keeping. My parents had kept it for me knowing one day it would bring a smile.

October 1956, the Rugby season had begun. Our first game was against Stoneygate, a prep school of long standing with a fine reputation. They had thrashed us on every previous encounter over two years. In fact, every side had beaten us to date. However, this year we had a few six formers in our side. We were well coached and looked to be more competitive.

Even though I had recently turned twelve, I had already had a season’s experience in 1955. The opposing teams lined up. There was a moment’s reflection. I remembered Mr Palmer’s first rugby lesson in 1953. There were about twenty boys on the field chasing Mr Palmer, who had the ball in his hand.

He raised the ball in the air and shouted, “Tackle me. Tackle me.” All of us rushed up to him and tried to push him over.

“No boys, grab me by the legs and then push me over.” Over he went and we raised a cheer.

“Remember boys. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.”

He then had boys in pairs standing side by side. He showed us how to grab someone with both arms just below the waist and at the same time jam the nearer shoulder into his upper thighs whilst the arms together slid down his legs. We practised standing and then tried it while running, before trying head on tackles.

“That’s it boys. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.”

There were ten minutes to go. Stoneygate was 3-0 in the lead. One try to nil. We were in attack. From the scrum Esling, at scrum half dive, passed a long ball to Cronchie. He had seen Brace do that for Wales on TV. Cronchie at fly half took the long pass on the run and at full speed fed the ball to inside centre who flicked it back inside to Cronchie, and there was the gap in Stoneygate’s defence. He was through. A try to Cronchie right between the posts – 3-3 as Cronchie converted; score 5-3 to Knossington. The supporting crowd of parents, boys and staff were enthusiastic in their cheers. Two minutes to go and Stoneygate were in attack. A line out. Stoneygate’s throw in. Ten yards out. The ball was taken by Stoneygate’s big second rower who towered above everyone else. He broke through the line. Only the scrum half was between

him and the line. This was it. The scrum half flung himself forward and dived full length at the second rower. The arms hit just below the waist. At the same time the shoulder hit the top of his leading thigh. The arms together slid down his legs. Down he fell as both players slid into touch. The game was saved. The game was won. Knossington had won their first game of rugby. Exhausted players shook hands with the greatest of respect. Mr Palmer had the last word.

“That’s it boys. The bigger they are, the harder they fall. Well done boys. There is a full day’s holiday on Monday.”

I wondered what he thought as he drove back to school in his Humber Super Snipe. Perhaps he relished the thought that his school was very much back on the map or perhaps he speculated that in ten years the boys would make splendidly brave soldiers floundering in a foreign field. Was that why we played rough games, to toughen us up for battle fodder? He remembered the Crimean War, the two world wars and the brave little ships in the Atlantic sailing in fear of U-boats and of their sailors drowning in a flaming sea of oil. Honour boards around the country were filled with names of old boys killed in foreign fields or seas. His school had none. It was only four-years-old. On return to school he dressed into his kilt and jacket and found his bagpipes. For the next hour or so he was seen roaming the school grounds playing laments on his pipes. Finally, he was seen perched on top of the school tower still playing a haunting melody. Then it was all over. An ambulance came and took him away. He was never seen again. The rumour was that he had a nervous breakdown. It was all very sad.

The summer of 1957, Mr Rathbone was our new headmaster. He was about thirty-five years old with fresh ideas. He carried no battle scars. He was keen to freshen up the curricula and brought in fresh teachers. He showed less enthusiasm for sport but was very keen on the arts. He was very religious and stopped boys from playing cards on Sundays. He encouraged all boys in Form 6 to sit the common entrance examination. The message was clear. I had a little more than twelve months to prepare myself. By then I was in Form 5.

We still had our home classroom but now travelled to other locations for special lessons: physical education, music, art and drama. In your home class you studied English, maths, Latin, history and geography. There was no room for science subjects at that time. During free time, after prep in the evening, you were encouraged to be a member of various clubs and societies. Boys in Forms 5 and 6 were offered modelling club, stamp club, debating society, extra art and drama. A teacher was a club or society leader. On top of that, on Saturday night there was the option of dancing or film appreciation. There was little time for mucking around common rooms where bullies had previously the rule of the roost. They were long days for both the teachers and students. On top of that, Mr Rathbone also called for auditions in the school play that was to be performed on successive nights just before the end of term in July. It was May, so everyone had to get cracking. The play was to be *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by William Shakespeare.

I thought I would give it a go. I was given the part of Bottom. Mr Rathbone, no lover of the cane, must have been aware of my previous experience with corporal punishment. Perhaps he even had a sense of humour. He gave us some strategies to learn our lines. He gave all participants a copy of the play with our lines underlined. He told us to memorise the lines that lead into your part. “Read aloud your part, then put the book down and try to say the lines before checking.” We were then told to say the lines again. This process was to be repeated over and over again. Thus, I learned my lines and as a consequence I began to learn the salient features of historical events and found that I had quite a good memory, whether or not I understood the meaning of them. Gradually I improved my position in class. This technique I applied to subjects Latin, French and geography. In no time I was able to rattle off my mathematical tables. Later I understood that it was even easier to learn if I actually understood a little of what I had remembered. Learning was understanding the meaning of it all. My confidence grew as I improved my position in class. I actively enjoyed class discussions,

particularly historical ones – the Elizabethan era, the Civil War and Charles I. The late bloomer was in flower.

At about this time music appreciation became a popular past time on Sunday evenings. Mr Crook, our sports coach and P.E. teacher, gave us an hour of his time playing records on his super Black Box. He introduced us to Rossini's overtures and pointed out his common signatures like crescendos. He played Dvorak's New World Symphony and pointed out features that we should look for the next time we heard it. He talked about opera and played us bits from *Carmen*. Mr Crook certainly made it seem exciting for us and it was not long before he organised bus trips to take us to symphony concerts at the De Montfort Hall in Leicester. On another occasion he took us to Nottingham's Theatre Royal to see *Carmen* and on the way home the bus stopped at our house in Bathley Street for supper. We did not arrive back at school until 1am. Music appreciation had added yet another dimension to our ever enriching lives. Nowadays, as an old man, I am still a lover of fine music and still see and hear the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra play regularly.

Some teachers do stand out in your lives. John Crook was one. Another was John Gabriel, who had recently arrived from Cambridge. He was a captivating teacher of English. His dramatic and imaginative approach could breathe life into even the study of English grammar. His skills in reading aloud were amazing. The voices of the characters were all different and far removed from that of the narrator. On some evenings he would visit the senior common room and read to us for the fun of it. I remember him reading from one of the William books and his voice of the little girl Violet Elizabeth with a lisp had us sprawling with laughter so much that he had to stop and join in. Then we stopped laughing and begged him to continue until well past our bedtime.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* proved to be a great success. It was performed at twilight, by the edge of a woodland setting, marking the end of a glorious summer's day. The audience loved it and we the players loved it. Although we might not have admitted it, some of us were enjoying school life for the first time in our lives.

The boys in the senior section of the school were aware that their bodies were changing. Most of us in Form 6 were twelve-years-old and fast approaching thirteen. Our singing voices slipped into growling mode, much to the annoyance of our music teacher Mr Weller. He took much pride in the recent success of the Knossington Grange School Choir at the De Montfort Hall. Mr Weller felt his senior choristers to be irreplaceable. The fact that some of his best choristers were suffering from broken voices was the cause of considerable frustration. He had to start all over again by training up junior boys to his required standard. That would take some time. The summer of each year was the highlight of his school year. He and his boys were on show. He had received good reviews in the media and he wished to further his reputation.

Another teacher certainly did just that! He befriended a young boy from Form 4. The young boy was eleven-years-old, was quite able with his studies, a good rugger player and a fine chorister. But, whenever there was spare time the master and pupil seemed inseparable. This same master taught young David to drive his Morris Eight. The young lad was seen to be driving around the school grounds, up the road to the sports fields and all around the cricket pitch. What the hell was going on? One evening the youngster was seen leaving Mr Weller's room. What was to be done and by whom? Surely Mr Rathbone was aware that something unhealthy was going on. I was not to find out until after I had left the school and returned for a visit during the following year.

Our bodies were certainly undergoing change. Some boys were shaving the whiskers off their faces. Some of them showed off the hairs on their legs and chest. All of the boys, one by one, became aware of weird and wonderful sensations in the area of the groin. The boys experienced their first erections. At first a penis would pop up at any time during the day. Many a senior boy was seen red-faced as he walked around holding a book or jumper in front of him. Back in their dormitory the boys learned the art of masturbation. At first it was a very private affair usually performed in the dark under the cover of bedsheets. Soon their curiosities won the better



of them. With lights on, the boys amazed themselves by comparing the sizes of their erect penises. Masturbation became a more public affair; the boys were less self-conscious. Many a night's sleep was disturbed by the cacophony of masturbation. One morning some of the boys in our dormitory embarked on a competition. Half a dozen boys stood at the end of their beds, pyjamas down working up a decent erection. On the starter's order they all began to flog away. The moans and groans grew more intense and a joyous climax was soon to await them. The door opened and in walked Matron with a handful of towels. The boys were caught red-handed with cocks in hand.

"What is the meaning of this?" she exclaimed. She dropped the towels. She stood, hands on her waist, staring at the boys.

"You might be needing these." She gathered up the towels, placed them on the nearest bed, turned and left the room.

The erections died to a flab. The starter declared a no-race and the boys headed for the shower bays downstairs. Every time after that little episode Matron always knocked on the door before entering our dormitory. She kept it to herself and didn't let on. She spared us from punishment as she had done on many occasions during the six years we had known her. The unspoken affection was mutual.



The last days at Knossington were soon upon us. In the summer of 1958, I was elected the captain of the First XI. I remember one game we played away against Oakham junior school. The grounds and buildings were so huge that we all felt swallowed up by the occasion. We were floundering in the corner of a foreign field. Our rivals Oakham had beaten us at rugby a few months earlier and this game was heading in the same direction. At none for 75, Oakham was going well, with the Berry brothers smashing us all over the park. The Oakham coach who was umpiring at the end from which I was bowling suggested that I pitch the ball up a bit. I then proceeded to take five wickets from five balls. I was showing my excitement after dismissing the Berry boys and I could sense by their reaction that this was not to be the last of it. We failed to reach the required target by about twenty runs, much to the delight of the Berry brothers, who reminded me that Oakham was the better side once again. I reminded them at least I was able to take five wickets in five balls.

"No need to boast about it," one of them sneered. I wished that I hadn't said that. I was to regret it some months later.

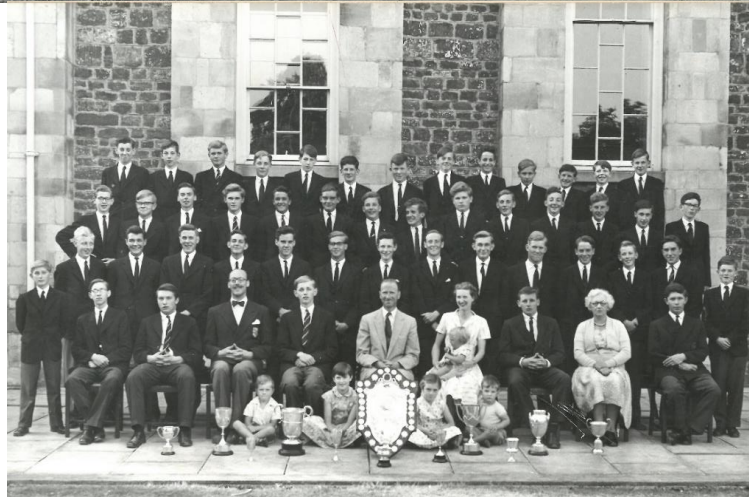
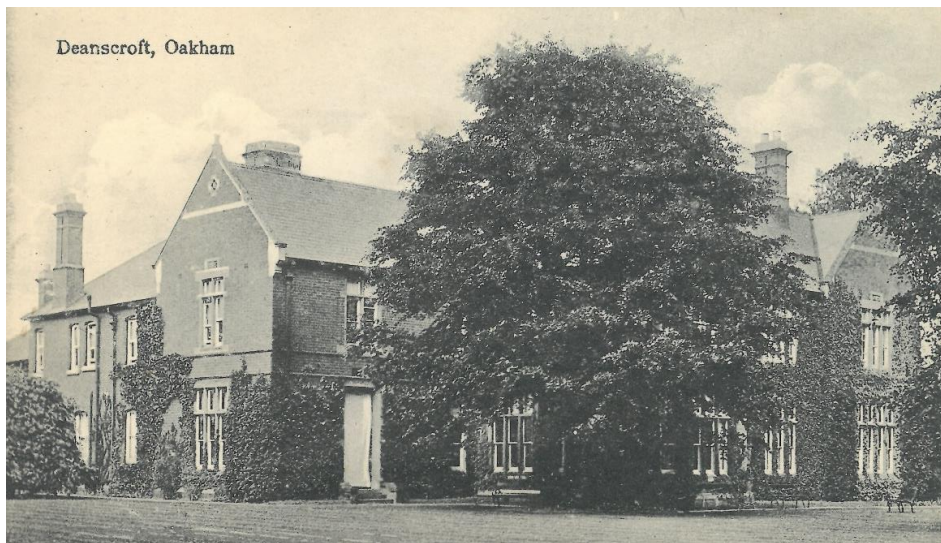
From June to July we were 'cramming' for the Common Entrance Examination at the end of July. None of us really knew what to expect. Our teachers did their best by showing us previous exam papers and tried to predict certain questions – 'the cause, the details, the consequences', the three essential ingredients of a short essay on perhaps the Civil War or the Spanish Armada. The exams came and passed us by. There was a question on the Civil War but the spotting was not so good for the others. Now was the endless wait for the results.

Some of the boys did quite well and soon had appointments with the Registrar of some nearby Public schools such as Uppingham and Oundle. My results were not so promising. History and English were good but the others were lacking the necessities required. I was considered to be a noble failure. I had left my run too late. Mr Rathbone felt so sorry for me that he visited Mr Buchanan, the headmaster of Oakham on my behalf. He convinced Mr Buchanan that I had the goods. I was just a late developer. On his hearing of my successes on the playing fields the balance may have shifted in my favour. I was offered a place at Oakham for the beginning of Term One, September 1958. I was ever grateful to Mr Rathbone and to Knossington School.

## Oakham School

*September 1958 - July 1960*

*That's the way of things*



The month of July was preoccupied with the preparations for moving to Oakham School. An endless list of clothing had to be sought and bought. Each piece of clothing had to be individually named 'Esling'. I had to practise dressing into my school uniform. The white shirts sported stiff white cuffs that were attached by brass cufflinks. The stiff starched white collars had to be attached to the shirt by a rear and front stud. It was not easy for clumsy fingers to learn the tricks of the trade but I was able to handle the dressing of my shirt with reasonable ease by the beginning of September. I didn't want to hand the inevitable bully a free hit. The idea was to wear the shirt for three days and to replace the collar and cuffs each day. I was to

use the same old trunk for my clothes but a strong, wooden box with a lock and key had to be purchased. This was called a 'tuck box' in which I could hide my sweets, cake and any other personal items.

### **Oakham 1958-1960**

I arrived in Oakham during the first week of September 1958. The school spread throughout the town. Large houses for boys to stay in and old and ancient classroom blocks for all ages were all over the place. I was to be placed in a house called Deanscroft. Forty-eight boys were members of Deanscroft. There were four dormitories upstairs, one for each year group and downstairs there were two common rooms, one for Form 3 and 4 boys and one for Form 5 and 6 boys. The prefects had their own common room. There were only six house Prefects and they had a lovely cosy room to themselves. The common room was a room for relaxation and for prep (homework). Our common room was partitioned off into four sections, one for boys in class 3b, one for 3a, another for 4b and one to 4a. There were usually about five boys in each partitioned area. There was a table in the centre of the room for common use but at prep times a house prefect would supervise us from it, making sure that we all stuck to our tasks and kept in our appropriately partitioned areas. We soon knew our place in the pecking order. That was the way of things.

The kitchen and dining room were downstairs. Inside the dining room were four large tables each set for up to fourteen places. Each table was for an age group. My table was for the Grade 3 boys. Our table was nearest to the door but furthest away from the kitchen from which the food was served. We all knew where to sit. It reminded us of our place in the order of things. We already knew which of the tables would be set for us the following year. Our housemaster was in fact the headmaster, Mr Buchanan. He and his family lived in apartments next to Deanscroft. In fact, there was a door leading from his lounge room straight into the junior boys' common room.

The school was steeped in heritage and tradition. It was founded in 1584 by the Deacon of Peterborough. The original schoolhouse still stands having survived several restorations. In my short time at Oakham, the old school house was still in use as a classroom. A short distance away, was the original boarding house, School House, which was rebuilt and enlarged during the mid-19th century. This was the period of expansion of many of the public schools in Britain. Many boys attending schools in the mid 1950s lived in a scholastic environment not dissimilar to that of Tom Brown at Rugby in the 19th century. The teachers were authoritarian and firmly believed that boys should be strictly disciplined and conform with the rules set down by the headmaster and his staff. The pecking order was established. The public school remained a cruel environment for many boys for many years, well past the middle of the 20th century. The teachers were often cruel but so too were the boys to each other, as they competed to find their place in the social and academic order of school life. By the time I arrived there were three boarding houses and one house was for dayboys. Altogether there were just over 250 boys in the middle and senior school. Over two thirds were boarders.

One week after my arrival at Oakham, I was to be tested on the history of my house and school. All the new boys were provided with a school calendar that covered the salient features of its history, a calendar of major events for the term, a class list, a map of the town as well as a list of all staff. All of us were most pleased to have passed the test given by the prefects. We had to wait a little longer to be placed on the Black List.

The school was divided into three parts:

The junior school for boys eleven to thirteen years – Forms 1 and 2. This school was geographically separated from the main school. Boys usually enrolled after passing an exam called the 'eleven plus'. This would have been the school that Knossington encountered playing rugby or cricket.

The middle school for boys thirteen to sixteen years – Forms 3 and 4. Boys usually entered after passing the Common Entrance Examination. Studies were up to O level.

The senior school for dayboys sixteen to eighteen years – studies up to A level and university entrance.

So I entered into the world of the middle school. My class was 3b, the middle of three streams. We were the little fish. Our classroom was in a small block of three classrooms, a two-minute walk from Deanscroft. Our class teacher, Mr Stevens took us for history and English. Teachers of French, maths and divinity visited our classroom. For chemistry, physics and biology we visited the newly built Sargant Laboratories. For art on Saturday morning we visited our house tutor Mr Quixley in the Barraclough Hall. Mr Stevens was a strict, authoritative master who maintained discipline by the frequent use of a ruler across the back of the hand. In his own way he proved to be an effective teacher by improving the results of long suffering students. However, there was little inspiration shown by the teacher or felt by the students. Most of the lessons followed a similar pattern. The master would sit behind his desk on a raised platform overlooking four rows of seven or eight boys. The master would read from a text and the boys would follow by reading the same text. Sometimes each of the boys in turn would be asked to read aloud from the text. If you were caught day-dreaming you would be called forward to his desk to receive his ruler across the back of your hand, a real little hand warmer.

Tuesdays and Thursdays were half days. Every second Friday afternoon we had C.C.F. Training, that is cadets, or playing soldiers. I remember my first afternoon with the cadets. On the school cricket ground we were divided into nine platoons of twelve Form 3 boys. Our sergeant and platoon leader, both about sixteen or seventeen-years-old, issued us with army uniforms complete with belts, gaiters and boots. We had fifteen minutes to rush to the change rooms in our houses, get changed into our military uniforms and get back to the school to meet our sergeant. One by one the stragglers returned with ill-fitting boots and some had little idea how to put on a belt or for what purpose were the gaiters.

“Now, come here you miserable lot! It’s my job to make a soldier of you and we have just one year to do it! This is how you put on a belt. All of you... put your belts on. Properly! Now this is how you put on your gaiters. That’s right. Now line up in four rows of three!”

We lined up as required.

“Now remember where you are. That’s how I want you to line up every time you are with me. Is that clear? Is that clear?”

“Yes sir,” we mumbled.

“Yes Sergeant!” he bawled.

“Yes Sergeant!” we shouted.

“Now stand easy.”

We stood still, not sure what to do.

“Stand easy means that you stay where you are but relax. Is that clear, platoon?”

We tried to relax. He then asked us to follow him to the arms room. There, we were issued with a rifle. He showed us how to put the safety catch on and how to place the rifle over our left shoulder. We were then told to line up outside. We lined up in four rows of three.

“Good, you have remembered. Now... platoon, quick march!”

We boys had no previous experience with marching. Most of us had no idea with which foot to lead. As a consequence, rows bumped into each other and soon the platoon was bums up sprawled upon the turf. Of course, the platoon sergeant had a good idea that this would happen. He didn’t laugh though.

“Get up you miserable bunch of twits and I’ll show you.”

He showed us how to lead with the left foot a second after the call of ‘March’. He told us to keep time by responding to the call, “Left... left... left, right, left.”

Gradually we were learning the knack of it. By the end of the afternoon he had us marching down the street that divided the two main sports grounds. No one laughed at us and he almost thanked us after we had returned our rifles to the arms room.

On Thursday afternoons during the first term of the year – September to December – often referred to as Advent term, we had rugby. At this time, I played with the under-14s even though I was already fourteen. In those days Oakham took the age groups from the beginning of the school year. That was a little unfair for schools like Knossington that took the ages from season to season. So that's why Oakham always beat Knossington. I was chosen to play fly half that season as we already had a useful junior to play at scrum half. We became a worthwhile pairing and were part of a fairly successful junior rugby team. Our matches against other schools were usually played on Thursday afternoons. Success on the sports field continued to be my saviour as most of the Form 3 boys suffered bullying or teasing.

Back in Deanscroft and for all of my days in Form 3, the dregs of the middle school, I was appointed as 'fag' to one of the house prefects. I was a fag for a Mr O. Byrne Esq. He was a seventeen-year old Form 6'er. I was a servant to him. My duties included: before going to bed I had to carry his dressing gown and his pyjamas to his locker downstairs in the shower room; in the morning I had to carry his uniform down to the showers, brush the dust off his black blazer and spit and polish his black leather shoes. In my free time I had to respond to his call 'Fag', and be ready for an errand, such as to shop in town. If I wanted to go out I had to first seek permission from Mr O. Byrne. If I was proven to be at fault in my service I would be awarded a black mark against my name. The Black List was pinned on the inside of the prefect's study door. If any fag were to reach five black ticks, the fag would be flogged by his prefect whilst bending over his own bed in his dormitory. I lasted until the beginning of November before I suffered my first beating from Mr O. Byrne. All the prefect had to do was to have the punishment book signed by the housemaster and then you were told to bend over your bed. It wasn't as bad as Mr Palmer's canings at Knossington but he brought out the stripes and drew a little blood.

It wasn't long before I had another thrashing. On Saturday afternoons it was customary for boarders in all houses to watch the First Fifteen play rugby at home. There we were, all lined up the whole length of one side of the pitch on one Saturday late in November. The only word permissible to cheer was "School" over and over again. Can you imagine, over 200 boys all shouting at once, "School. School." I'm sure we all looked and sounded like dills and nerds. I couldn't stand it any more.

I shouted out, "Poke 'em Oakham!"

"Who was that boy?" asked one of the teachers nearby.

"I know," said Mr O. Byrne, "I'll deal with it after the game."

I was a little spontaneous at times. I should have thought before I blurted it out. I just could not help myself.

"Ah Esling, just the one I wanted to see," said Mr O. Byrne later that evening. "That little outburst has cost you three black marks. That makes five. I'll see you in your dormitory in ten minutes.

## Oakham 1959

The lessons continued in much the same manner. We were supposed to remember the texts but they were so dull we didn't look at them outside the classroom unless there was a test looming on the horizon. My position in class was fifteenth out of twenty-eight boys. I was holding my own. The science lessons were all new to me. I was a long way behind the others. The results were poor and had a diminishing effect on my overall performance. My walk to class most mornings necessitated a walk by our neighbouring boarding house, Wharflands. Quite often, two boys would wait for me to walk past them – the Berry boys. They were housed in Wharflands and were a year ahead of me.

“Oh! Look who's here. He's the one who took five wickets in a row.”

Their sadistic and sarcastic tones felt like sharpened knives twitching in my back.

“Keep going Dave,” a fellow Deanscroft classmate would say. “Give them a wave or blow them a kiss.”

They told me to take little notice and that they were only jealous of my success. I did just that and so it continued for many months. I just had to grin and bear it. Stiff upper lip and all that. That was the way of things. The school thought the toughening up process was good for you.

Only a weakling would complain. ‘Why,’ I thought, ‘did some boys need to toughen up more than others?’

To survive we needed a thick-skinned arse. ‘Golly gosh,’ I thought, ‘I've had a thick-skinned arse ever since Mr Palmer flogged me several times over, back in Knossington.’

On Sundays, attendance at the school chapel was compulsory. Imagine the sound of over 200 boys singing along, with organ thumping and a trumpet or two blazing, to the tune of ‘Finlandia’.

“Be still my soul.” It was an amazing experience. I bet there was nothing like that going on in the Anglican Church across the road. It was a pity that we then had to sit and listen to a sermon for forty minutes before we could stand up and have another sing.

On Sunday evenings there was to be no prep. We had free time, as long as we stayed in our common rooms. However, Mr Buchanan, our headmaster/housemaster, invited the boys of Deanscroft into his lounge room to hear music played on his gramophone. Usually about fifteen boys attended, most of them being the boys from the middle school. The prefects had their own record player in their own cosy little room. For an hour and a half, we were invited to suggest which records to play. Usually it was a well known symphony or concerto followed by the soundtrack of a popular musical. I frequently made requests and I felt that Mr Buchanan was impressed with my knowledge of music.

“Easy, Dave, you're sucking too hard,” one of my newly found friends was to say.

He was warning me that I might become a further target for the bullies and teasers. So, I backed off a little to let the others make requests. I enjoyed the music and I also appreciated the joy of drinking coffee and eating biscuits and cake. Some of the boys cruelly referred to the music sessions as ‘suck sessions.’

At least once a week, on some evenings Mr Buchanan visited our dormitory before lights out. He had time to speak with every boy. He stood at the end of each bed and addressed each boy by their Christian name. Bedtime was the only time he called you by your Christian name.

“David,” he began, “Where did you find such an interest in music?”

I told him of Mr Crook at Knossington, how he played recorded music for us and how he would take us to see concerts and operas.

‘And he was your sports coach as well? We could do with someone like that here.’

I nodded in approval as he moved on to the next bed.

One night in March I was asleep in my bed when I was awoken by a tug on my left shoulder. I realised that one of the senior prefects had intended to share my bed. I could smell sherry on his breath as he climbed into my bed. I couldn't put up with this and I scrambled out the other side. As I stood up I found another prefect attempting to climb into another boy's bed. I ran out of the room and headed for the toilet block downstairs. I hid in a cubicle and locked the doors. I waited for as long as an hour before gingerly making my way back to bed. The visitors were gone. I felt safe once more. I was soon asleep. I told my newly found friends in Form 4 about it the next morning. They told me that it was a fairly common practice for senior boys to seek out the new boys for sexual pleasure. They assured me that these prefects would probably try someone else next time. A few days later the prefect for whom I was a fag, Mr O. Byrne, gave me a note. It was from my sergeant and CCF platoon leader.

"I want to see you outside the school chapel, 6 o'clock next Sunday."

I didn't think he was inviting me to church but I decided to risk going and found him waiting for me outside the chapel door.

"There you are, Esling. I thought you would come. I want to show you my house, School House."

He led me by the shoulder towards School House. We had walked half way down the quadrangle towards the front porch when suddenly he grabbed me and dragged my unwilling body into one of the cubicles of the School House bogs. He reached for my fly and tried to kiss me at the same time. I swirled around and lifted my right knee right up and into his groin. I scrambled away and ran all the way back to Deanscroft.

'What on earth is going to happen next?' I wondered.

On reaching the safety of my house it was not long before Mr O. Byrne appeared.

"Esling, you are back a little earlier than I expected. Everything alright?"

I didn't answer. I knew the bastard was in on it too.

The following Friday afternoon was set for a meeting of cadets. I longed for an excuse, but couldn't find one so I had to go. First, we had drill practice. Our sergeant marched us several times up and down the road. He then showed us how to shoulder arms. He was forever finding fault, particularly with me. In the arms room he showed us how to clean rifles using a 'pull through'. He picked on a few boys so as not to make it obvious. After my next mistake he said that he had enough of such dills and idiots and that three of us were on 'defaulters' this coming Thursday afternoon. We were all to meet him outside the arms room at 2 o'clock. So, instead of playing sport we had dirty jobs to do.

He was there waiting for us. We were led into the arms room.

"Now your job this afternoon is to clean all these rifles alongside this wall. There's 100 on this wall. I expect them all to be cleaned today."

He sat at his desk pretending to be doing something useful while we set about cleaning rifles. It took about five minutes to clean a rifle so each of us could clean about a dozen an hour. That would take over three hours. Everything seemed to be so unfair. We just had to get on with it. That was the way of things.

After an hour, he stood up from his desk and inspected our handiwork. Speaking to my companions,

"That's good work boys. You can go now. Esling! You stay. You have not cleaned enough rifles yet."

So, I stayed to clean a few more rifles. The tension grew. There was just him and me. What was going to happen next? He sat at his desk. I continued to clean rifles. I watched for his next move.

“Esling, all I want you to do is to suck my cock. Then you can go. Just like that.”

“No, sergeant. I will not.”

I continued cleaning rifles. He got up from his desk and came over towards me. He was trying to be nice.

“Heh, it’s not going to be that bad, is it?”

I headed for the door. I was outside quick as a flash and I ran all the way back to the relative safety of Deanscroft. The Easter holidays were to begin next week. They couldn’t have come any sooner. There seemed to be no one I could turn to. I don’t think the teachers would believe me above the lying statements of the prefects. I couldn’t live with the fear and shame of my parents or Mr Buchanan knowing. I just had to get on with it. That was the way of things.

At the end of my second term at Deanscroft I was relieved of my duties as a fag. Another boy from Form 3 was to take my place. What a relief. Mr O. Byrne gave me a tip of ten shillings for my services.

The final term of the school year was the summer term beginning in May and finishing in July. Our class teacher, Mr Stevens made it abundantly clear that we all had to knuckle down this term for our performance in a series of tests in July would have a large influence on our reports at the end of the school year. A fine piece of motivation that was. With renewed enthusiasm, the boys of 3b worked like never before. Mr Stevens cleverly pointed out the salient features of possible answers for questions in English and history. He would know for he was the master to set the questions. If we memorised as much as we could we would surely pass and Mr Stevens would stand as a teacher second to none. I’m sure that Mr Stevens would relish the thought of basking in his own glory. However, the summer term was a long one and it was difficult for the 3b boys to maintain sufficient enthusiasm.

Sometimes, on a Sunday afternoon I joined with a group of the older Form 4 boys and played a little association football at a nearby Oakham football ground. The playing of football (known as soccer in Australia) was looked down upon from the lofty heights of public school life. The game was considered to be too plebeian. Rugby union was thought to be the most appropriate game for those of the highest social order. Rugby was the game where the scrums wrestled for the ball in the muddy fields of Oakham. ‘Ideal preparation for the trenches, heh what!’

Billy Walker kept a round football in his tuck box. He took it out and placed the ball inside his sports bag. Dressed in our rugby clothes and carrying a rugby ball, no one would have thought that we were heading off for a game of association football. Billy Walker was the son of the manager of Nottingham Forest, Harry Walker. We were thought to be in illustrious company. There were always a few boys from other houses playing with the round ball at the football ground. On arrival, it was not long before we picked sides and had a game. I usually played on the right wing providing crosses for the bigger boys to head or volley towards goal. I seemed to have a natural aptitude for the game and I could certainly hold my own with the older boys. A week later Nottingham Forest was playing in the F.A. Cup Final at Wembley against Luton Town. Billy was given reluctant permission to attend and sat just behind the Queen in the Royal Box. Forest 2, Luton 1.

One lovely summer Sunday afternoon in June I sought permission from the prefects to visit my old school, Knossington Grange. The four-mile walk took an hour. On arrival, I was greeted by the few boys who remembered me. I was shown to the staffroom, was warmly welcomed and sat down to a lovely afternoon tea. They were keen to hear of Oakham so I told them the good bits. I too was told some news of Knossington. Mr Weller had left in December 1958 and David Weston had also left for another school. I heard of an impending court case against a former teacher and it would be inappropriate for me to hear any more. I had a chat with Mr Crook and as we approached Deanscroft he said, “Now please remember David, keep a lid on all that previous bad news of Knossington, We don’t want the old school to have a bad



reputation, do we?" I was invited to stay for tea. After the predictable bubble and squeak I was given a ride back to Oakham in Mr Crook's car.

The summer of 1959 saw me play cricket for the school's under-16 team named the Colts. I remember the headmaster was watching me bowl one afternoon. I was in the mood for bowling fast. All I had to do was think that I was bowling to one of the Berry boys. That was motivation enough. I knew I was being watched so I tried that little bit harder to impress. Most of my deliveries were too short and although quick, I lacked sufficient control to trouble the batsmen. That evening at bedtime Mr Buchanan dropped in to say goodnight.

"Ah! David. I watched you bowl today. I would like to give you some advice. Don't try and impress an audience. Just concentrate on dismissing the batsman. I think you should pitch the ball further up. I think you are a yard too short."

I thanked him for his advice. It proved to be the best advice I ever had as a cricketer.

I remember the summer evenings watching the last hour of First XI matches with my friends Nick and Billy. I can recall a fast bowler charging in bowling short in trying to scare the batsmen.

"Pitch it up. Pitch it up," I would cry.

My own opportunities to shine were only a summer season away.

### **A new school year – Term 1 September to December 1959**

For the next year, I was placed in class 4b. Our class teacher was the amiable Mr Roynon. The Form 4 block was near the centre of town, a stone's throw from the school chapel and a fifteen-minute walk from Deanscroft. Back in the house, our partitioned area in the common room moved up two places after we sat at the next table in the dining room and we moved dormitories. We were moving up in the world. We were the senior boys of the middle school. We now had someone to look down upon. However, I had no wish to be a bully or make fun of the junior boys. I tried to show a little compassion for those that endured tough times. I had learned the hard way.

Although we continued to sit in four rows of single desks, Mr Roynon tried everything he could to make our history lessons more interesting. He was keen to engage the boys in discussion. Often, he would make an outrageous comment about an historical event and ask us to challenge it. We quickly realised that if we knew more about a particular topic the more readily we would engage in lively discussions. He had us reading not only the prescribed text but other historical books of specific interest, for example, about the reign of Henry VIII or the Spanish Armada during the Elizabethan era. We felt a need and purpose for reading. Our English lessons were taken in the old School House. Boys were amazed to see the names and dates of previous occupants inscribed into the desk before them, for example 'Will Spencer 1845'. No one dared to think of adding their own name. It would seem to be so out of place, an act of vandalism. Sitting in that ancient place of learning was a source of inspiration to many of the boys of the present day. The desks were co-joined and bolted to the floor. There was a picture of the founder of the school on the wall. There was a small honour board on the wall with the names of boys from an ancient time. An imaginative mind would easily be distracted from the lesson in hand only to be quashed by the teacher shouting his name.

"Now, Esling! Where were we..." he would say.

Science lessons continued to be a problem for me. I felt two years behind everyone else. I could hardly understand enough of it to memorise. What baffled me even more was there we were sitting in brand new science labs but the teachers still had us seated in rows so that they could talk at us. Surely, budding scientists should be doing something with their hands. No, not that! I meant the conducting and the evaluation of experiments.

On Friday afternoons attendance was still compulsory for cadets. There he was, our sergeant armed with a beaming smile welcoming us all to another school year of square bashing. This

year he paid little attention to me. He had set his sights on another unsuspecting boy. That was some relief for me I can tell you. However, I still had occasion to direct a fierce glance in his direction that told him 'I haven't forgotten, you bastard'.

The rugby season was upon us. I was chosen to play for the under-16s, the Colts. I was back playing scrum half and was being earmarked for the first XV the following year. We still had to watch the First XV play on Saturday afternoons. I took special care to be noticed shouting, "School! School!" Perhaps I was gradually conforming to the expectations of the school. I dreamed of the year when, hopefully, I would be playing rugby for the First XV instead of shouting such a ridiculous war cry.

During the first term I put my name down for the school play. This year it was to be *Androcles and the Lion* by George Bernard Shaw. The auditions were heard in the school theatre, the Barraclough Hall. I was given the part of the Call Boy. Now, that is not to be confused with a 'call girl'. The Call Boy was the announcer of coming events and the commentator of carnage in the colosseum.

"David, I am most pleased that you have won a part in the school play," Mr Buchanan said one night at bedtime.

Our letters were delivered over breakfast. A prefect standing at his table would call up each recipient in turn.

"Esling! Come forward boy, no need to be shy. Ah! This looks an interesting one. It has 'S.W.A.L.K.' written on the back of the envelope. Sealed with a loving kiss, how nice."

That was a cue for all the boys to whistle and howl. I started to blush and the nervous tingles rose from the pit of my stomach up to my roasting cheeks. That only encouraged a further chorus of mocking cries. It seemed to me that the house prefect really enjoyed the role of being the master of ceremonies.

'That wasn't fair,' I thought, 'Lots of boys receive letters from their girlfriends. Why pick on me?' I said nothing. I hastily shoved the letter in my coat pocket and returned to my seat at the table. The buzz continued for some time.

"Give us a look, give us a look, go on..."

The letter remained in my pocket until I was in the safety of my partitioned area in the common room. I then opened the letter and began to read. Before I had finished, a group of boys swooped upon me and snatched the letter from my hands. They then began to read it aloud.

"Oh, it's from Drene," they were heard to cry.

Then they began to sing the well known song famed by the Everly Brothers. They substituted the word 'Drene' for Dream.

"Dreeeeeene... Drene Drene Drene... whenever I want you, all I have to do is Drene."

They then followed with howls of laughter. Finally, they had the decency to hand back the letter. I tried to be calm and continued to read Drene's letter. Somehow her words seemed soiled by those boys who had taken her away from me. I would have to tell her to refrain from secret coded messages on the back of envelopes. I cursed the name 'Drene'. Who the hell would wish to call their daughter Drene. It was probably short for Doreen. Oh! Perish the thought. I thought only Australians showed expertise by their use of abbreviations. That was not the end of it. Nearly every time I received a letter after that I had to run a gauntlet of voices singing...

"Dreeeeeene... Drene Drene Drene... whenever I want you, all I have to do is Drene."

After a month of that, the housemaster, much to my relief, put an end to it.

In March of 1960 we had to undergo the tests for Part B Officer Training. It was a practical test of our capabilities to drill a platoon of soldiers. If we performed well we could perhaps be promoted to a sergeant the following year. We all thought that would be easy. We had our

sergeant as our leader – what could possibly go wrong. All we had to do was give the orders and watch the boy soldiers do their work.

“Wilson, I want you to take command of the platoon and order them to shoulder arms. Is that OK?”

Wilson correctly fell out of the platoon and brought the platoon to ‘attention’. Then, standing in front of his platoon he bawled at the top of his voice.

“Platoon... shoulder arms!” The platoon responded.

“Barnsby! Keep in time with the others. Do you hear me?”

“Yes sir.”

“Don’t you ‘sir’ me. You call me sergeant, do you hear me?”

“Yes, sergeant.”

“Very good Wilson. I liked the way you remonstrated with Barnsby. Fall back in,” our beloved sergeant continued.

“Allbrook! Fall out.... Now Allbrook, I want you to order the platoon to quick march soon followed by a halt.”

On falling out Allbrook stood confidently in front of the platoon.

“Platoon... right turn!” The platoon turned right.

“Platoon... quick march! Platoon... halt!” The platoon came to a halt.

“Very good Allbrook but don’t forget to remonstrate with a slacker. Esling! Fall out!”

Esling tried his utmost to impress during his falling out.

“Now, I want you to order the soldiers to ‘quick march’ followed by an ‘about turn’, got it?”

“Yes, sergeant.”

“Platoon... attention!” The platoon stood to attention.

“Platoon... right turn. Platoon... quick march. Left... left... left, right, left.” The soldiers were marching well. The performance of the young platoon leader was impressive.

“Platoon... about turn!”

Some of the platoon continued to move forward. Some tried to turn around only to crash into oncoming soldiers. Soon some were on the ground. It was complete chaos. The aspiring platoon leader did not know what to do. He could not understand why this was happening.

In desperation he ordered, “Platoon, fall in!” Some of the platoon laughed. They had already fallen.

Our sergeant hardly came to the rescue. He was quietly enjoying every minute of it.

“Now, Esling! Where do you think you went wrong?”

I shrugged my shoulders. For the time being I was a broken man.

“Esling, perhaps you should have called your marching soldiers to a halt before ordering an about turn.”

Of course, he was right. I had forgotten the procedure in the heat of the moment. However, deep down I felt that he had intended to trick me. It was to be the trenches for me.

A week later, the headmaster paused at my bedside.

“David, I have heard that you have failed Part B for the C.C.F. You were the only boy in the school to fail.”

I longed to tell him the truth about the sergeant and how cruel he was to me. Instead I kept it to myself. I now had to look forward to ‘the trenches.’ That was the way of things.

It was May, the beginning of the last term of the school year. It was summer time. The cricket season had begun. I was invited to train with the First and Second XIs. I remembered to pitch the ball up and found that my left-handed deliveries frequently swung into the right-handed batsmen. I managed to rattle a few stumps in full view of the cricket coach, Mr Moore.

“Who taught you to do that?” asked the coach.

“It’s just natural sir. I found that when I pitch the ball up it swings.”

“Very good young man. What’s your name?”

“Esling, sir.”

“Keep that up and we will work on a few variations later. What form are you in?”

“Form 4, sir.”

“Good, that means you will be around for a while.”

The next week, I found that I was chosen to play for the First XI. There was my name, on the school notice board. I was so excited and surprised. The match was to be played on the following Thursday starting at 10 o’clock in the morning. That would mean that there would be no school lessons for me that morning. There was only one problem, The Berry boys were also selected to play.

Thursday morning had arrived. I peered out of my dormitory window. It was raining. My heart slid down to my bed socks. Later that morning, after the rest of the boys had left for their classrooms, I changed into my cricket clothes, put on a raincoat and headed for the cricket pavilion. Most of the team were already there.

“There you are Esling! What’s a little twerp like you doing playing for the First XI?”

That was the sign of a warm welcome from the Berry Boys. The coach was quick to pounce.

“Now then boys. That’s enough. Any more of that and you will be playing for the Seconds. This young man has earned his place. Is that clear?”

“Yes sir” was a somewhat muted reply.

I was beginning to like Mr Moore. I enjoyed that little episode very much.

The rain continued through the morning. It seemed that it was set in for the rest of the day. Soon after lunch the game was abandoned and I trudged back to Deanscroft feeling very disappointed.

A week or two later, my parents made the shock announcement that the family was migrating to Tasmania, Australia. At the time, I had no inkling of this decision and had no part to play in it. Apparently, the move had been in preparation for some time. I was absolutely staggered.

‘Why?’ I thought. ‘Why?’

I considered the possible reasons. My parents probably knew that I might be heading for a sporting career. They would have much preferred me to pursue an academic career. They may also have faced some financial difficulties. Even though fees for the sons and daughters of clergy were more than halved, it would have been difficult for them to support both me and my sister through private schools. They wanted, perhaps, a new beginning. The colonies might provide fresh opportunities.

Mr Buchanan was at the end of my bed.

“I see you are heading for the Far East. We’ll be sorry to see you go.”

“I’m sorry too sir. I was not expecting it.”

“I understand that you will be leaving in June. Try and work right up until the end. We will try and have a good report for you to take to Tasmania.”

“Thank you, sir, very much.”

I was never chosen to play for the First XI again.

I was to leave Oakham by the end of June. By late July we were to leave England. The sails were set for our voyage to Australia.

I believed Mr Buchanan to be a very reasonable man. I sensed that he questioned the value of corporal punishment. I think he envisaged a change in the approaches of teaching and learning and a modification of the social structure of School House life. I wondered also, if he doubted the value of the C.C.F., particularly the manner of its conduct. However, to bring about any change would mean less reliance on the traditional values set by the school. It would be most difficult to convince the Board of Governors of any need for change. Perhaps the British Government could necessitate change by legislation. Many boys suffered far more than I did at boarding schools in England. I was lucky; I had my sporting successes to lift my sagging spirits. In my view, there was a desperate need for change. No longer should any decent human being be content with the saying, “That’s the way of things.”

## **Launceston Church Grammar School**

*September 1960 – December 1963*

*The Wounded Warrior*

### **1960 – 1961**

My parents parked their secondhand Ford Prefect at the lower end of Button Street within sight of the school gates. We still had fifteen minutes before the interview with the headmaster, so we decided to have a little look around. On passing through the gates we could see the chapel on our left. It shared a similar design with that of Oakham. However, Oakham’s was built of stone and this one on Mowbray Heights was built of brick. On our right was the school cricket ground bordered by a curious looking wooden boundary fence. I pondered over any possible reason why there was a set of four posts standing tall at both ends of the ground. A motorised lawn mower was shaving the centre square. By the side of the cricket ground appeared to stand a rather dilapidated wooden shed, which I deemed to be the cricket pavilion. As we walked towards what appeared to be the original school building, we could see on our left a number of classroom blocks, both ancient and modern. On our right stood a rather fine assembly hall, conjoined to another building of the same period which looked like a library. These rather contemporary looking buildings were again built of brick. We finally entered the oldest looking brick building that must have been the original school building, perhaps a relic of the mid- to late-19th century. We entered the office area and announced our arrival for an interview with Mr Don Selth.

We were warmly welcomed and invited to sit down.

“How are you settling at the rectory at St Leonards...?”

I let my parents do the talking. The headmaster appeared to be a most reasonable man with a genuine interest in our affairs.

“School does not recommence for a couple of weeks, so you should have enough time to be organised for school. I suggest that David starts his life here in Form 4. I’ll arrange for a few boys to show him around. This will be the final term for the year, so I suspect that David will not be ready to sit the schools board examinations late in November, but we will see how he goes. He may find the curriculum a little strange at first, particularly social science and perhaps the science subjects. Now David, let me hear a little from you. I understand you are pretty good at cricket?”

“Thank you, sir. I was selected to play for the First XI last May, but rain caused the match to be abandoned.”

Well, perhaps you will have another chance soon enough. I have here a handbook that will help to be ready for school. Now, let me show you around the school.”

He began with the old school house, the one in which we already stood. He showed us where the boarders stayed, slept, ate and studied. There seemed to be only one boarding house. Most of the boys attending Grammar were dayboys. Only twenty per cent were boarders. At Oakham, nearly eighty per cent of the boys were boarders at the time of my leaving the school. Oakham was a school that spread across the town. This school was kept within its borders on Mowbray Heights overlooking the Tamar River. I can assure you I was looking forward to being a dayboy at Launceston Grammar after eight years of boarding school in England. Mr Selth showed us the sports fields, the assembly hall and library before leading us to the main classroom block. There I was introduced to my first classroom. It all seemed to be most impressive.

“David, try and become aware of a few of the common Australian sayings before you come back. You might find it more than useful. I suggest that you have a chat with the Medieke boys. They live near you at St Leonards. Ask them the meaning of ‘fair dinkum’ or ‘fair suck of the sauce?’”

I think he was telling me to remove the plum from my mouth and speak a little more like the Aussie boys.

After two weeks, I was ready for school. The school uniform was a lot easier to wear than Oakham’s uniform. No more starched collars and cuffs. Instead, simple-to-wear blue shirts, grey trousers and a blue grey jacket, together with black shoes and a blue cap; one looked pretty smart and the uniform was relatively easy to keep clean. I had met the Medieke boys. They had been most helpful and were keen to show me the ropes. On my first school morning, I was met at the bus stop by the Medieke boys. One bus took us into Launceston and another took us to Button Street. A walk down Button Street and we were at the school gates. Andrew and John were to be in other classrooms. I lined up outside the classroom. The teacher opened the door and welcomed us inside.

“Ah, you must be Esling. David Esling?”

“Yes sir,” I answered. He was to be my social studies teacher as well as my class teacher.

“Boys, I want you to welcome David Esling. He has recently arrived from England and may need a little of your help to settle in.”

Amongst a few voiced welcomes there were the expected jeers and boos.

“Not another pom!” shouted a boy from near the back.

“Don’t you worry. It’s not as bad as all that,” Mr Wilson assured me.” I want you to sit next to Bob over there.”

His name was Bob Cheek. I had heard sometime later that he was a pretty good Australian Rules footballer. It wasn’t long before Bob asked me, “What footy team do you go for?”

“Nottingham Forest, why?” I replied.

“Nottingham Forest! Who the by gees is that? No, I mean an Aussie Rules football team. It could be a Launceston team from the N.T.F.A. or a Melbourne team from the V.F.L.”

Over recess he made it clear that I had to adopt a team pretty quick. He told me a little of a footballer named Bob Withers and that he played for North Launceston. He told me that a lot of Tasmanians played for St Kilda in the V.F.L. He spoke of players like Darrel Baldock and Ian Stewart as if they were gods. ‘This must be some game’, I thought. So, I decided there and then to be a St Kilda supporter.

However, it was the cricket season that was fast approaching. The Aussie football had to wait a few months.

Bob Cheek had started the ball rolling. My first lessons had begun. The de-pommification and dinkumisation of an English migrant was becoming a work in progress.

The cricket season continued into the following year. I was chosen to debut for the First XI against Scotch College during a weekend in late February 1961. The weather was fine and a little sultry. It was ideal for swing bowling. I measured my run of twenty-three walking paces. I turned to see the fieldsmen in place and the batsman was ready.

‘Pitch it up’, I said to myself. “Pitch it up and let the ball do the work,” I remembered Mr Buchanan’s advice.

To the strains of Elvis Presley singing ‘It’s Now or Never’, booming from multiple transistor radios from the other side of the boundary, I began my run up to bowl. A slow and easy build up, strides increasing in length and speed and then, in a crescendo of movement, I delivered the ball. It was fast, it was pitched up, it swung in to the right-handed batsman. He couldn’t find bat on ball. The ball flew over the off stump and into the keeper’s gloves.

“Well bowled Ez,” was the response from my teammates. My moment of destiny had arrived. In my first innings as a bowler I had secured 8 wickets for about 20 runs. Scotch were dismissed for a little more than 50. There were cheers and backslaps all around. An impact had been made. I had won the acceptance of my peers and the Grammar community. An acceptance for which I had yearned, ever since I had arrived in Tasmania.

‘Oh,’ I thought, ‘if only the Berry boys could see me now.’

I shared the ecstasies with my new found friends before sharing the happiest of moments with my parents. Mr Selth walked over to us. “You must be proud of him today. We certainly are.”

I continued to enjoy my successes on the cricket field but it was that first game of the year in 1961 that would forever remain important for me. Once again, success in sport had seen me through difficult times. It wasn’t easy for a young lad of sixteen to find his way forward in a foreign field. I had at that time lived in Tasmania for only six months.

I was later to find that success in all sports was an eagerly sought commodity, not only for Launceston Church Grammar School but also for other private schools. In the north of the state, there was a fierce rivalry between three schools: Grammar, Scotch and St Patrick’s. If Grammar proved to be the better of the northern Tasmanian schools at a particular sport, for example cricket, Aussie football or hockey, then the winning team would fight it out for the state premiership against the winning team from the south of the state. The emphasis on winning was overwhelming at times. Success in sport provided a ‘front window’ for the school. The eager shoppers were looking for possible schools to educate their sons. The local media was often only too keen to oblige by a full coverage of inter-school sport.

Back at Oakham School, they played their sport for the joy of playing the game.

“Play the game boys, not the man.”

Playing the game was considered to be a major character builder. To cultivate a sense of bravery perhaps, so suitable for soldiers fighting on a foreign field; ‘stiff upper lip and all that’. Schools like Oakham had fixture lists unique to themselves. There was no ladder, there was no league. At the end of each season a report in the school magazine would read: Cricket; played so many, won so many, lost so many, drawn so many – followed by a full report on the notable highlights of each game.

Back in Tasmania, we bravely fought for that winning feeling. We had to be better than all the rest. I wondered if that attitude was a throwback to the colonial days where there were tremendous struggles for survival. The state premiership was the holy grail. In my time at Grammar, I experienced both the joy and relief of winning a state premiership and also the despair, together with the desolate feeling of failure in losing one.

In England, private schools were called public schools. They were open for all, that is if you wished to be well-versed in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Many of them became private schools in the 19th century. In order to control the intake of boys, the schools introduced or increased tuition and boarding fees. Entrance examinations were to be sat and passed by all hopeful school boys. Thus, the public school became a private school. The title 'public school' was retained. In some cases, they became schools for the elite. For others, they were to provide an education for the upper and middle classes. Prospective boys had to be pretty bright and their parents pretty rich. In my case, my parents were able to send me to Oakham and Grammar because the sons of clergy were awarded substantial discounts.

Some say the private schools in Tasmania, particularly Launceston Grammar and the Hutchins School were modelled on the private schools of England in the 19th century. This is true only in part. Schools like Oakham were heavily steeped in tradition, their teaching methods strictly formal and the use of corporal punishment was both extensive and cruel. At Oakham, even the prefects were permitted to use the cane, particularly upon the fags that served them. At Grammar, school life was far more moderate; corporal punishment was scarce. The headmaster Don Selth, was no fan of the cane. As far as I remember, the cane was only struck in anguish at the boarding house. Trevor Sorell, the boarding house master, may well have had cause to use the cane, probably a stroke or two across the open palm of the hand. Much to my delight, Grammar at this time did not employ the use of fags. It may well have done so back in the 19th century, but my research was unable to verify the matter. In the early 1960s, Grammar's educative environment was more humanitarian, built upon earned a shared respect both for the teachers and students alike. Oakham would have considered the approach to be too casual and be detrimental to the maintenance of discipline. I should know for I was too used to being told what to do.

Grammar had its tradition alright. One only had to spend a minute or two in the chapel to feel that. However, Grammar was not overrun by its past. It was not bound by tradition; it was open to change, and if ever there was a better path to travel, it would follow. The teachers at Grammar matched the teachers of Oakham for their academic excellence. However, I felt the social distance between teacher and pupil was closer at Grammar. Even in the middle school, one felt at ease with the teachers. We could engage in a conversation with them. They seemed interested in us as people. Apart from Mr Buchanan and Mr Roynon, I didn't feel that at Oakham.

However, Launceston Church Grammar School still maintained a cadet force. As an upholder of conservative values, it was expected to do so. I was still deeply battle-scarred by my unfortunate experiences with that sergeant at Oakham. I had no wish to take part in cadet exercises but I was told my attendance was compulsory. I just had to put up with it. I was not a very active participant even though there was less an emphasis on square bashing and more on field activities, such as orienteering.

The winter term had arrived and my progress in the academic world remained rather slow. Hockey was to be my relief and outlet for this season. Hockey was new to me. I had seen it played on the fields of Oakham but the experience was for senior boys only. At Grammar, I gave it a try. I just adapted some familiar soccer tactics and before I knew it I was playing for the First XI. We often played on cold frosty Saturday mornings at Royal Park. I took up the position of right wing. It was my job to run down the right sideline controlling the ball with the hockey stick. I would then send the ball whizzing along the ground to the more experienced players like Bill Taylor who would control the ball before driving it towards goal. I remember playing later that season in the premiership match against Hutchins on the small Friend's School hockey ground. Glory be, golly gosh (or should have I said, 'strewth?'), we won!

Just before the end of second term, I was informed that there would be a week-long army camp for all cadets at the Brighton Camp in southern Tasmania. The camp was to be held during the September school holidays.

'That was a bit rich,' I thought, 'Using our well-earned holiday for an army camp.'



During the first week of the holidays I thought over the matter very seriously. The prospect of being face to face with another of the likes of a belligerent sergeant was very frightening indeed. Battle scars from skirmishes past in Oakham were still raw and haunted my dreams. There was no way I could face anything like that again. I considered whether I was becoming a conscientious objector. My parents often spoke of peace in the world and dreaded the lack of it. I had never in my life thought myself as a coward. I had been cited for bravery many times on the sports field. I just thought it was wrong for schools to be engaged in simulated army exercises. Schools should challenge boys to think outside the square, to allow boys to question the worthiness of their direction and to understand a world that at times made so little sense. I thought that the young boys of today should be the changemakers of tomorrow and to try and make our world a better place for the children of the future. I saw cadets as having no place in the scheme of things. With those somewhat idealistic thoughts in mind, I decided not to attend the army camp. Instead, I swatted up for my schools board examinations, to be held in November. I expected repercussions for my absence and I knew that I would try to be brave in facing the consequences.

Back at school for the third and final term of the year, it was not long before I was called up to the headmaster's office.

"Now David, I would like to know why you were absent without leave from the army camp at Brighton recently?"

He appeared to be reasonable and not overly displeased with me.

"Well sir, I thought about it long and hard. I felt that I just couldn't go. I thought it was wrong for me to go. I think it would be evil of me to be a combatant in warfare, particularly with the war emerging in Vietnam."

I sounded rather like a pacifist. I was unable to tell him of my past experiences of cadets at Oakham; of the humiliation, shame and indignity suffered at the hands of my platoon sergeant. I could not even speak of it to my parents.

"Hm, I see. Would your father back you up on this?"

"I don't know sir," I replied.

Don Selth picked up the phone and rang the number of my home.

I soon gathered that he was speaking to my father. He was seeking support for my actions. My father gave me the support I needed and added that his son would have had to be very brave to make his decision and that he, my father, had played no part in the making of it. As I listened in part to this conversation tears began to swell up in my eyes.

"David, when you have composed yourself, I want you to return to class and speak no further of this matter. Is that clear? In the meantime, you are excused from playing any further part in cadets. Please remember to make yourself scarce during cadet parades."

"Thank you, sir. Thank you very much."

I stood up and quietly left the room.

The rest of the year flowed serenely by. I worked hard and was eventually rewarded by securing thirteen points in my schools board examinations. The results assured me of a crack at matriculation the following year. The school year was completed with a victory in the cricket state premiership against Hutchins in Hobart.

## 1962-1963

Early in the school year it was announced that attendance at cadets was no longer compulsory. The school made it clear that it preferred their boys to be active in the cadets but if they had reason not to they could discuss the matter with the headmaster. A few more boys withdrew from cadet training but the decline in numbers was gradual and minimal. However, my relationship with the cadet officer Mr Sorell remained strong.

I decided to take six subjects: English literature, history, geography, chemistry, biology and French. The target was to achieve three A-Level passes and two O-Level passes. To enter university at that time, I also had to pass at least one science subject and one language other than English. I would need the help from some very good teachers. Quite often they would call the senior students by their christian names. Now, that wouldn't have happened at Oakham, for there even the teachers called each other by their surnames.

Mr Charlton (Rags) was my English and history teacher. He had a great wit. His probing perceptions led us deep inside the mysteries of many a text. He was a great initiator of discussions. I remember in history, Peter Evans and I had a mammoth battle discussing the relative merits of church and state during the reigns of the Tudor monarchs. I found it somewhat amusing that here we were, living as far away as possible from England, studying English history. I would have much preferred to study aspects of Australian history. In our study of English literature, again most of the poetry, plays and novels were English. Shakespeare stood tall and Mr Charlton had a way that brought his plays and poetry to life.

Mr Clarkson (Basher), also was a lively teacher, full of passion for his subject of geography. He wished to make 'geographers' out of us all. His reports often included, '...beginning to sound like a Geographer'. One day he was seen to charge into the classroom in quite a temper. Someone must have upset him in the staffroom. We expected books to be thrown or heads to be bashed. It never happened. He just turned around and with a smile asked: "Now, where were we?"

"Volcanoes sir?"

Mr Horner was our chemistry teacher. We were often engaged in endless experiments in the science labs. Knowing that I had only been over from England a little over a year, he thought of having a little fun at my expense.

"David, please nick over to the fume cupboard. Just in front of it you will find some 'Durex'. Could you bring it over to me?"

I wandered off to the fume cupboard. I stood in front of it, I looked everywhere but saw no Durex anywhere. I stood there looking foolish and embarrassed.

"David! The Sellotape. It's called Durex over here. You must have been thinking of something else."

I brought over the Sellotape. He smiled a knowing smile that a joke had been shared between us. However, it didn't seem all that funny to me at the time. The number of names given to condoms never ceased to amaze me. I also appreciated Mr Horner's interests in the cinema. He had set up a film society at Grammar and I often stayed late after school to see the films he had to show. I have continued to show an interest in the movies throughout most of my life.

Mr Selth was a keen sportsman. He kept a watchful eye on the progress of his boys in most sports, particularly cricket. The cricket team was not faring all that well at the beginning of the new year. Our coach, Mr Tom Room, was predominantly the batting coach but if the team was seen to have a bad day on the field then Mr Selth would call a special fielding practice early in the morning for the following week. There we were, in our school uniforms lined up on the oval to receive balls belted by the headmaster. Some of those early mornings in Launceston were rather chilly. The hands were blue but they soon warmed to Mr Selth. Many catches were dropped, some were caught. We sought the relief of the school bell.

“Same time tomorrow,” he would say. “I want to see you all 8:15am, on the dot.”

Mr Selth liked all his sporting teams to do well. That is, to win premierships.

There was a match against St Pat’s played on the Grammar School oval. I was suffering some problem with acclimatisation mixed together with the hormonal changes of an adolescent. I had a huge boil on my chin. It looked doubtful that I could play. I could feel the throbbing pain as I ran. Don Selth whisked me away to the boarding house to see the sister. She lanced the boil, cut out the inner growth of the boil, gave me a stitch or two before securely covering the wound with a bandage that had no chance of falling off. The scars on my chin remain to this day. I looked like a wounded soldier but I was willing and able to take my place in the team. We had to win the game outright to catch up with the other teams. The game ebbed and flowed. There was very little difference between the two teams. The game seemed destined for a draw. There was one over to go. Two wickets were needed for victory. Captain Paul Rapley handed the ball to me.

“You know what you must do.”

The atmosphere was tense. I handed my cap and jumper to the umpire, the learned and distinguished Jack Parish. The first delivery whizzed past the batsman’s nose.

‘Pitch it up,’ I reminded myself. ‘Pitch it up.’

The wounded warrior began his run up, slow and steady, strides gradually becoming longer and faster, at full speed in a crescendo of movement he delivered the ball. It was fast, it was pitched up, it swung into the right handed batsman. He missed it and the ball shattered into the stumps.

‘Wow!’ we all thought. Just one more wicket was needed and there were six balls remaining.

The last batsman had arrived and had taken guard from umpire Parish. In ran the bowler, he stumbled in his delivery and the ball flew wildly down the leg side. The following delivery was wide of the off stump. The over continued until there were just two balls remaining for the day.

‘Easy Ez,’ the bowler said to himself. ‘You are trying to bowl too fast.’

The next delivery was spot on and thundered into the batsman’s pads. The ball had pitched in line but the bowler thought it may well have narrowly missed the stumps. There was a thunderous appeal from all members of the fielding side in harmony with the spectator appeals from the boundary. There followed a momentary silence, not a sound was heard.

Jack Parish raised his finger.

“That’s out laddy,” as he would often say.

Car horns blew. Spectators cheered. The players on the field were elated. The disgruntled batsmen trudged off the field in disbelief. Jack Parish, that most distinguished and learned umpire, had saved the day. Grammar had won the match and Don Selth would have been a happy man.

Teasing and bullying in my time at Oakham was forever a problem, particularly for the junior and middle school boys. The teachers often turned a blind eye. Some of the prefects were active exponents, particularly dishing it up to the younger boys who learned the hard way to turn the other cheek. Many boys with some status would seek opportunities to bully and tease those below them. The bright yet timid boys were those who often suffered most. Some boys of their own age group were seen to tease and bully each other. It seemed difficult to stop. It was part of the culture of public school life.

Back at Grammar in the 1960s, teasing and bullying was not embedded in the culture of the school. Reports of it were scarce and I don’t remember a serious incident in the time I was there. Of course, there would have been the odd skirmish or two but that would have been quickly settled and looked down upon by the teaching staff and the school prefects. There might have been a little more anti-social behaviour in the boarding house when the boys were mixing

it alone. I often stayed for meals at the boarding house before I was to attend a meeting, but I don't recall any serious incidents. There was plenty of what is known as 'rubbishing.' Australians were most adept to 'taking the piss'. I saw no harm in the odd leg pull. It was part of the 'mateship' culture; mucking in together to get along.

I was unaware of any form of homosexual behaviour at Grammar. There seemed to be no relations between teachers and boys or of older boys with younger boys. This may be because there were relatively few boarders at Grammar. It was normal for boys to engage in such activities. I was unable to recognise any signs of harassment imposed upon unsuspecting boys. This form of unacceptable behaviour was the eventual cause of Knossington School's closure and remained cause for considerable concern at Oakham. Some have kindly written that I was a breath of fresh air on my arrival at Grammar. I would like to add that Grammar was a breath of fresh air to me for all the time I was there. However, it must be remembered, that I was, for the most part, a senior boy at Grammar, and apart from the pressure of exams, life was certainly easier to handle. The view was much more to my liking from where I stood nearer to the top of the tree.

The new sports pavilion was opened in the spring of 1962 by the then Prime Minister Mr R.G. Menzies. I had heard that he was a great parliamentary speaker and since I was to be one of the first boys to use the pavilion, I was looking forward to what he had to say. There we were, all seated in several rows of chairs; teachers, boys, their parents and members of the community impatiently waiting for the ministerial car. The media was in position, ready to roll. We waited and waited a little longer. Then, we could see a fleet of cars approaching round the oval. The honoured guests were introduced to the local dignitaries. The pleasantries over, the Prime Minister stood to speak to the crowd of spectators. He was not at his best; he droned his muddled way through endless meaningless twaddle. I think he'd had a long lunch. He continued on and on.

I thought with increasing concern, 'I hope all these people are not damaging the surface of our cricket ground.'

"Finally, it is with the greatest of pleasure that I declare this fine pavilion open."

There followed faint but polite applause and a few cheers and chuckles too.

'Yes, I think he had a very long lunch,' I thought to myself.

By September, preparations were in full swing for the matriculation examinations which were to be held in November. Mr Horner felt uncertain of my success in chemistry. He strongly advised me to concentrate on biology. I responded to the challenge. I know that I had difficulty in understanding most of it but I could commit some of it to memory. I learned by heart preparation after preparation, equation after equation and diagram after diagram. I repeated them on paper over and over again. Perhaps I could pull this off. I also had worries about my French examination. It was crucial that I pass it. It wasn't so much the exam paper that worried me, it was the oral exam that was my fear and menace. I had to have a five minute conversation in French, alone with the examiner. My dear mother came to the rescue.

"Why not enter the room wearing your cricket clothes. If you do that she's bound to ask you why you are wearing such clothing and for what purpose. You say 'cricket' and she will ask what's that and away you go. You will have control of the conversation."

It was most fortunate for me that my mother could speak fluent French. We frequently rehearsed our roles. My mother played the examiner and I played the cricketer. I was confident of a good pass in history, English and geography. I held my hopes up high for chemistry and French.

November was upon us, as were examinations. The papers for English, history and geography were just as I had wished. The French paper was less so. It would depend on my oral exam. I had arrived at school wearing my cricket clothes, much to the astonishment of the few that knew me. There was no cricket that day. We lined up outside the appointed room. Memories

flashed through my mind. There I was waiting in the queue outside Mr Palmer's study at Knossington, waiting for the cane.

A boy walked out of the room. I was just about to ask, 'Did it hurt?' when I realised where I was. It was my turn. I opened the door and confidently greeted the examiner.

"Comment ca va, madam?"

"Tres bien, monsieur."

She beckoned me to sit down. She noticed that I was wearing white clothes. She asked me why. She asked me to explain the game of cricket. It all fell neatly to plan. I believe she was impressed. I had my mother to thank for that.

The chemistry paper was as I had hoped. Three questions appeared to be right down my alley. I regurgitated from memory onto my exam paper. The remaining questions required a little guess work.

The long nervous wait followed. School for the senior boys had almost shut down. Lessons were fun times for quizzes and chats. There was plenty of time to think of the impending results. It was a nerve-wracking wait. They finally arrived and the results were there for all to see. I had matriculated at my first attempt. I had A-levels in English, history and geography, O-levels in French and chemistry. I couldn't believe it. I had passed a matriculation exam on chemistry, with hardly an understanding of the subject. A letter soon arrived congratulating me on my results.

Don Selth suggested that I stay at Grammar for another year and attempt to win a Commonwealth scholarship. My parents informed the headmaster that they could not afford the cost for me to attend school for another year and that I had a job lined up with the Reserve Bank. We were all in a bit of a quandary. I did not fancy the prospect of being a banker. Just before the end of term, Don Selth offered me a scholarship to remain at Grammar for another year. It was a new scholarship, tailor-made shall we say. It was called the Ladies Committee Scholarship and was to cover all my fees for the coming year. The offer was accepted. Don Selth would have been pleased. He was planning his cricket team for the premiership battle of 1963.

My academic goals for the year were simple: credits for English, history and geography and a little biology thrown in for good measure. Fortunately, the subject matter had changed. In English we had new plays, poems and novels to read and analyse. For history, we were to include a study of the Stuarts. Geography seemed to cover the same territory, except for an emphasis on North and South America. It appeared that I would have quite some time for study in the library.

At the beginning of the year, I was appointed captain of cricket and hockey. I was also appointed a school prefect. I felt a little uncomfortable in my role as a school prefect. I had no wish at all to act in any manner resembling the prefects of Oakham. Well, I couldn't, even if I wished to do so. I tried to show some humility in my role and not be quite so authoritarian. One of our little duties was to encourage boys to refrain from littering the grounds with their lunch wrappings and drink bottles. I remember approaching a group of boys sitting on the grass near the library. There was litter everywhere around them.

"Boys, could you please tidy up before you go by placing your nearby rubbish in the bins?" I continued my circuit of surveillance around the assembly hall and back to the library. The boys were still there lazing and playing around. The papers lay about. I picked up a nearby bin and moved in amongst them and started to pick up the papers.

"Boys, I asked you to pick up the papers."

"They don't belong to us. They are not ours," some of them said.

I continued to pick up papers saying, "They are neither mine. We should all muck in and help to keep our grounds tidy whether we dropped the papers or not."

One by one they joined in with me and in a few minutes the area was litter free. A few days later I made a point of returning to the lunch spot. As I had expected the same group of boys were there finishing their lunch. I noticed not one piece of litter.

“G’day, boys. Go you sainters!” I smiled at or with them as I continued my little tour of duty.

Towards the end of each year, I wrote a letter to my previous head and housemaster at Oakham. I provided general news of the family, of life in Tasmania and of course my progress at Launceston Church Grammar School. Mr J.D. Buchanan was delighted to hear that I had matriculated and was thrilled with my successes on the sporting fields. He told me that he was planning significant changes to his school but the implementation would take some time. I could hardly tell him that I too was pleased to hear of his planned changes for I knew not what they were. However, I could make a shrewd guess.

The cricket team had started well and I had built around me a strong leadership team. The group met in the boarding house once a week after training on Thursdays. We discussed our approaches as well as selecting the team for the next match. So far, so good.

Over winter, the hockey team proved to be too strong for our northern opponents. This time around, I was the one in the middle waiting for crosses from either wing or the through ball from the centre back. I enjoyed scoring many goals and the pleasure of playing alongside my teammates. I watched the school football team play a few games and enjoyed learning the skills and strategies of the game. It was great feeling; free to cheer on your schoolmates in any reasonable manner you wished. No longer the compulsion to cry in unison “School... School...” I was enjoying life at Grammar. I felt that I played a part in it all. It was that feeling of inclusion that bound me to the school.

Towards the end of the winter term, the hockey and football teams had a state premiership to play down in Hobart. The hockey was played on the small grassy Friend’s School ground. Hutchins had chosen this to be their battleground for they knew our game was forged on the larger hockey fields of Launceston. The game was a dour dogfight, aggressive yet defensive, there seemed little room for our passing game. The match remained scoreless. With ten minutes to go, a Hutchins player entered the circle and attempted a shot on goal. He muffed his shot. As it dribbled towards our goalie, who ran out to meet the ball with the intention of kicking it right down the field, he instead kicked over the ball and missed it completely. The ball had sufficient force to trickle over the goal line. In anguish we stood as one, amazed in disbelief. We searched for the equaliser yet tried in vain. The match was lost. We sat dumbfounded in the change room. The silence was unbearable. Don Selth entered the room.

“Buckle up boys. It’s time for the footballers now. The bus will leave in fifteen minutes. Now David, I want you to go to their change rooms, knock on the door, enter and congratulate them on their victory.”

Conceding with grace was one of the hardest things to do. The shame of defeat weighed heavily upon my shoulders for the rest of the day. So much so, that little can I remember any details of the football match, such was the pain of losing a premiership.

Soon, the last term of my school life was upon me. The academic progress was good and I was confident of success. However, I had to be certain of my future. I applied for and won a scholarship from the Education Department. The State Government would pay for my university fees providing that I would serve as a teacher at a State Government school for the equivalent years of my training. I was happy with that. I thought I would become a good teacher, unlike those cruel and authoritarian ones of my past. I would seek a more humanitarian approach, coloured by a little compassion. I had no concern about working in a state school. Enough of my life had been spent with the privileged few. I was in need of playing ‘a fanfare for the common man’.

Cricket was with us once again. There were two matches remaining. We either had to win both on the first innings or win one of the games outright. The match against Scotch at Grammar

proved to be a closer encounter than anticipated. To win the game outright, we had a target of over 200 runs in an afternoon of cricket. Our openers had us off to a steady start. Peter Evans, batting at 4, played with considerable aggression, much to the pleasure of the crowd. When he was dismissed for a dashing 70, we were still in need of 70 runs with one hour remaining for play. Another wicket had fallen, and 5 were down with 60 runs required.

As I walked out to bat, all kinds of thoughts muddled my mind. 'We can't afford to lose this one outright. There's always the next match against St Pats. Play safe at least for the time being.' These negative thoughts were further enhanced by remembering my Oakham coach saying: "Now lad, you must not sell your wicket cheaply. Play straight and the runs will come in time."

I played out the over with a straight bat. Runs were gathered in a trickle. We were running further behind the clock. The crowd was becoming agitated, "Get on with it for heaven's sake."

I managed to nurdle a couple of 4s down the leg side. Then my partner Peter Hamilton was dismissed after going for a big hit. We were 6 down; 30 runs were required in fifteen minutes.

I just could not do it. I could not adapt to the situation as required. I was frozen, my feet felt nailed to the ground. Apart from a slog or two to the leg side the bat remained straight. The umpire called for the end of play. We were 15 runs short. The match was a draw. All that was needed against St Pat's was a first innings win.

'There was no need for panic,' I thought as I left the field of battle. Back in the new pavilion the atmosphere was a little different. Our supporters appeared to show anger rather than disappointment. The anger was pointed in my direction.

"Why didn't you go for the runs?" asked the headmaster, Don Selth. He had expected a more spirited effort.

My response was a simple shrug of the shoulders. I had no idea why. Some of the team turned their backs on me as I entered the pavilion. It appeared that I had lost the confidence of my teammates. I did not play in this manner to bring disgrace to the school. I thought of the book I had recently read, *The Loneliness of The Long Distance Runner* by Alan Sillitoe. There the runner of the race deliberately flunked his effort in order to offend his school. I had no intention of doing such a thing. I played the game as I had been coached on the fields of Oakham. It was set in stone. The trouble was, some of my teammates and Mr Selth thought otherwise. I sat alone for a while pondering my misfortune as the stone appeared to grow heavier upon my back.

The match against St Pat's was played and lost. The team had lost the will to fight. The captain had failed and the team sank like a stone into the sea. There was to be no cricket premiership for Grammar in 1963. Mr Selth's investment in me to win him a premiership remained unrewarded.

It was time for the school ball. The boys had been practising their dance routines for some time. There was much talk amongst the boys as to who they were going to invite as their partners. In town there was a girls' Anglican school called Broadland House. I think the boys were expected to invite a girl from the sister school to be their partner. I had lined up one of my sister's friends but I settled on a pretty girl from Launceston High School. She was from a state school and I thought she might be looked down upon as a commoner, as her father was but a wood merchant. I mentioned this to her as I invited her. She was not worried about things like that and was really looking forward to being in attendance.

My father dropped me off at her house and I told him that it would be a late night and I would be spending the night there. She looked stunning and was wearing a long dress and her hair looked great. She did have a very low neck line and her ample cleavage was most noticeable. I was wearing a newly dry cleaned school uniform. Together we walked along Vermont Road and then down Button Street to the school gates. First, we had the headmaster's cocktail party to attend for the prefects and their partners. We strolled into the room together holding hands.

The eyes turned and popped as her boobs were soon to steal the show. Every male in the room was looking and she didn't mind a bit. Mr Selth calmly introduced her to the other ladies mostly from Broadland House. They were wearing lovely fashionable dresses all with high necklines. 'Just as well,' I thought. They didn't have much to show.

You can imagine the flow of their conversation. "Oh, that's a nice name. What school do you go to for we haven't had the pleasure of meeting you before?" She proudly told them that she came from Launceston High. "Oh really? We don't know anyone from there, do we ladies?" they said in their falsified, upper crust manner.

She handled herself really well. She let them know when she had had enough of them. She imitated their snobby, snotty speech and told them not to be so pretentious. She suggested that they be more natural and be honest with themselves. They might even enjoy themselves. She then left the company of the girls and was soon seated on a chair by my side.

"Well done," I said. "I have been wanting to say something like that for some time." She smiled and sat a little closer. The headmaster and his wife treated us to an array of finger food and offered the girls a glass of white wine. Poor Don Selth had a full view of my partner's breasts as he, standing above her, offered her another sausage roll. I was enjoying a glass of scotch and soda. The party was in full swing. I was just downing my second scotch when we were politely informed that it was time for the ball. I think Don was much relieved as we headed for the assembly hall. Perhaps the full view of my partner's boobs would give him nightmares?

The ball was a great success. Everyone enjoyed themselves. Unfortunately, I could not dance with her all night as she had to be shared around. She proved to be very popular with the boys, much to the annoyance of some of the girls from Broadland House. We were a very happy couple as I walked Rendy home that evening-

The school year was rapidly drawing to a close. It was a time for prizes, farewells and warm wishes. Thankfully my private school education was coming to an end. It had covered three vastly different schools over a period of over eleven years

My matriculation results were as I wished. I had the three credits I needed. University beckoned. It was time to move on. At nineteen, I was too old for school. I remember shaking Don Selth's hand for the last time. He put one hand on my shoulder and said, "Goodbye David and good luck." However, his eyes were still saying something else, 'Why didn't you go for those runs?' Neither he nor I would ever know.

If one word could sum up what I had learned at the three schools that shaped my life, and prove above all else to be most useful for its duration, that word would be resilience.

## **Epilogue**

I was asked to write a comparison of my experiences at the three private schools I attended during my youth. I felt I could only achieve that by re-living a few of the experiences I had at Knossington, Oakham and Launceston Grammar, from 1952 to the end of 1963. It was difficult to write at times. Writing evoked emotions that I had for so long been able to control. I felt the pain of those injustices whilst putting them into words. I tried to tell of the experiences as if they were happening. I thought the use of first person would bring them to life and moreover assure the reader that these experiences were real.

As we write our reflections of youth, we must bear in mind that schools forever adapt to meet the changing demands of the society they serve. All three schools that helped shape my life have undergone profound changes since I was a student over fifty years ago.

In 1991, I revisited Knossington and Oakham. Knossington looked much the same. It was no longer a preparatory school for young boys. It had become a therapeutic school; that is a kind and updated version of a Borstal school. The staff were very kind to me and showed me around the facility. The dormitories were still on the first floor. The classrooms were still on the ground floor. The dining room was still there in the same place. The staff told me of a sex scandal early



in the 1970s. The then headmaster was exposed as a paedophile. As a consequence, the school was closed down. I was invited to speak to the boys in one of the classes. I spoke of Knossington when I was a boy of seven or eight. I spoke of living in Tasmania. Their questions asked me if I was one of the sufferers of paedophilia or if people used condoms in Australia. They were sex-mad. The teenaged boys were starving.

I said my farewells and continued my drive to Oakham. I parked my car in the centre of town and had a look around. The centre of town was much the same, but I could tell the town had spread to cover the green fields of my youth. I looked upon Deanscroft. It had enjoyed an extension or two though I still recognised many of the features. I dared not enter. I walked past Wharflands and said hello to the Berry boys. I walked over to the cricket ground. I noticed that the pavilion was no longer standing. I decided to walk back into town. I could still see the original school building built in 1584. I also noticed that the school was now co-educational. I decided to visit the school office. The receptionist invited me to see the registrar. I walked in and introduced myself. The registrar was Mr Stevens, my 3b maths and history teacher all those years ago. He said that he remembered me, that I had lived in Castle Bytham and that I was housed in Deanscroft in the care of Mr J.D. Buchanan. He told of some of the changes to Oakham. Except for rare cases, there was no corporal punishment, the use of fags was abolished, the school had more than doubled in size and the school had been co-educational for twenty years. The credit for these changes was given to Mr Buchanan. I asked of his health. Mr Stevens told me that his wife had died of cancer and that his health was deteriorating. Recent research had revealed that the school in 2017 catered for more than 1,000 pupils. There were sixteen boarding houses and a staff list as long as an arm. Two of the houses were named after two former masters of the school, Stevens and Buchanan. I liked hearing of those changes, so much so that I wished I could turn back my years and try Oakham once again. However, I don't think I could afford the equivalent of \$40,000 a year.

I have revisited Launceston Grammar a few times. Grammar, like Oakham, had developed to meet the ever-changing demands of the society it served. Since I had left, the school has become co-educational, more than doubled its number of students, built new buildings and has widely expanded the curriculum. In the early 1990s, I was appointed to umpire a cricket match between Tasmania's under-17s and Queensland. There I stood in the middle of the school oval, umpiring a game of cricket. The place looked so familiar that it was hard for me to concentrate on my duties. I could see that the school was co-educational. I saw both boys and girls in school uniform watching the game. After the game, I walked out to the centre square. The memories of my past were flooding back.

I walked the twenty-three paces back to my bowling mark. The wounded warrior turned and began his run up, slow and steady at first. Then his paces increased in length and speed and in a crescendo of movement he delivered the ball. It was fast, it was pitched up, it was... it was... oh what a time it was.

**The Portico circa 1923**



*Source: Paul A.C. Richards collection*

# Chapter 1

## *A Brief History of Launceston Church Grammar School*

On 15 June 1846, the Launceston Church Grammar School was opened with twenty-four boys of varying ages, at a time when Launceston was described as a small town with a population of about 8,000 people and the town was little more than a scattered village and claimed to be the longest continuous school in Australia. It precedes Hutchins School<sup>21</sup> in Hobart by some weeks and although the Kings School in Sydney opened earlier on 13 January 1832, it closed due to financial reasons in 1864 for a short period. The school's origins began with a meeting held in Launceston in 1838 called to establish Church of England schools in Tasmania. Subscriptions were raised in both England and Tasmania in 1845-6 and approximately £800 was allocated to establish a school in Launceston. The Launceston Church Grammar School was opened in temporary premises in 1846 in George Street, under the headmastership of Henry Plow Kane.

Kane had shared a passage on the *Aden* with William Pritchard Weston, having been employed by William Barnes as tutor to William Jnr. Kane was only twenty years of age and had recently graduated from the University of Dublin, Ireland. He had taken his Master of Arts degree from Canterbury. He took up residence at 'Plaisance', Kelso, on the lower reaches of the Tamar River. Correspondence from H.P. Kane dated 24 May 1845 from 'Plaisance' addressed by him to W.P. Weston, gives a brief insight into his thoughts whilst in the employ of William and Anne Barnes at that time. Unfortunately, the surviving letter is incomplete with perhaps several pages missing.

After the school's opening in temporary premises in 1846 in George Street, Henry Plow Kane was ordained deacon and licensed as a minister and chaplain at Paterson's Plains and Alanvale, where he officiated until 1850. In 1847, the school moved to purpose-built premises in Elizabeth Street. The Archbishop of Canterbury conferred on him a Lambeth Master of Arts degree, in honour of his scholastic services. In 1856, he applied for an appointment with the government for the position of inspector of schools. Unfortunately, the position had already been filled. Kane was ordained priest at Holy Trinity in May 1857<sup>22</sup>.

Prior to this he was assistant secretary to the Launceston branch of the Royal Society, and in 1857-59 was secretary. Correspondence, held by the Royal Society archive from Kane, discusses his requests for the loan of Aboriginal stone implements, as he was preparing drawings for a Mr Brough Smyth of several Tasmanian Aboriginal stone knives (as he describes), which he had been given by Mr Gunn and Mr Scott. Smyth was developing a manuscript on Aboriginal implements for the Victorian Government. Kane notes that other specimens, that had been procured by Mr Scott, had been passed on to the society in Hobart and that he would like to take drawings of these to fulfill Smyth's request.<sup>23</sup> He introduced cricket to the school.

Kane married Caroline Neilley, the daughter of Captain William Neilley of Rostella on the East Tamar. Following his father-in-law's death he conducted a private school at Rostella, educating the sons of many prominent Tasmanians until he accepted an invitation of the Bishop of Melbourne. Some years later, correspondence from him to the Archdeacon from his home 'Rostella', informs us that William Barnes Jnr., whom he had tutored in 1845, was now on the finance committee of the Launceston Church Grammar School.<sup>24</sup> In 1860, he resigned as headmaster and was succeeded by Rev FW Quilter.

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<sup>21</sup> *Launceston Examiner*, 15 August 1846, p.6

<sup>22</sup> *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 2, p. 3

<sup>23</sup> HP Kane letter, 19 Feb 1873, RSA/B15

<sup>24</sup> HP Kane letter, 6 May 1864, DV Gunn Archive, LCGS

In 1896, the school celebrated its fiftieth year under the headmasters Wilkinson and Gillett, with a jubilee service at St John's and a grand ceremony in the Albert Hall. In 1935, the matter of girls at the school had been raised by the Board. It was minuted 24 June 1935:

*"It was resolved that it is not desirable for girls to be educated at the school and the necessary action should be taken to terminate same."*

Growth in the school population led to a move to its present Mowbray Heights site in 1924 because by 1920 the school had outgrown its city site. After three years of planning, the school moved from Elizabeth Street to a new 25-acre site on Stephenson's Farm in Mowbray – purchased for £2000. The move was supervised by the ninth headmaster, the Reverend John Walter Bethune. A preparatory school was established in High Street in 1930 but closed in 1970, with classes consolidated at Mowbray. Co-education was introduced in 1973. The school absorbed the Launceston High School in 1912 and its sister school, Broadland House, in 1982. In 2003, the enrolment was 748. In 2016, the school celebrated its 170th anniversary.

The first bishop of Tasmania, Dr Francis Nixon, established the church schools Launceston Grammar in June and Hutchins in August, 1846 – 174 years ago. In those days people gave liberally for the cause of education. The bishop himself gave £1000, and about £6000 was raised by voluntary contributions in Hobart Town and Launceston, while another £5000 had been obtained for the same purpose by the bishop on a visit to England.<sup>25</sup> About £12000 was subscribed to start the careers of two of the leading public schools in Tasmania.

More detailed accounts of the school's history can be found in books written by Basil Rait<sup>26</sup> 1946, Vernon Jones<sup>27</sup> 1971, Alison Alexander<sup>28</sup> 1996 and Paul A.C. Richards<sup>29</sup> 2016.

In 1946, the school celebrated its centenary. A special service was held in the school chapel, conducted by vicar general archdeacon H.B. Atkinson, who chose his subject, 'The Torch of Life'. The choir was conducted by Mr L.T. McIntyre and Mr A.T. Sorell was organist. A centenary thanksgiving service was also held in St John's Church where the preacher was the bishop of Tasmania, the Rt Rev G.F. Cranswick. Special functions were arranged to celebrate the centenary along with a dramatisation of the school's history 'The Story of a Bell', broadcast by the radio station 7EX in Launceston, written and produced by Mr Arthur Evans.<sup>30</sup>

The figurehead of the school is and always has been the headmaster. The period 1940-1960 saw four headmasters of equal personality, strength and conviction. On the unfortunate death of Captain Norman H Roff in 1941, Harold Vernon Jones was appointed headmaster followed by Basil 'Jika' Holmes Travers in 1953 and Donald Victor Selth in 1959. They were all disciplinarians and were supported by housemasters and house captains, school prefects and probationers, house prefects and probationers, coaches of teams and their captains, vice captains and selectors. Power, duty and privilege were allotted to each level of organisation. Prefects in earlier times were not allowed to cane. Colours were awarded at the end of each season – meaning recipients wore them on their blazers – which was a white pocket emblazoned with the school badge. Those who received their blues were privileged with a light duck-egg blue cap, as opposed to the dark navy-blue cap worn by all students. House prefects were also entitled to wear the light blue cap. In the 1940s, prefects were distinguished by wearing a white cap and in the 1950s, they were recognised by their white shirt and prefect's badge.

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<sup>25</sup> *Examiner*, 25 April 1928, p. 2

<sup>26</sup> B Rait, *The story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1946*.

<sup>27</sup> H. Vernon Jones, *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1946-1971*

<sup>28</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue, Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*

<sup>29</sup> *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School*, 2016

<sup>30</sup> *Advocate*, 10 June 1946, p. 5

## Chapter 2

### *The Philosophy of Private Education*

*Rafe Champion*

#### **The Grammar Ethos**

A chapter in Jim Franklin's history of Australian philosophy, *Corrupting the Youth*, describes the many and varied ways that were explored to convert wild and unruly young males into well-mannered and responsible citizens. There were religious and secular youth groups, including the Boy Scouts, sports and games, which used up energy and possibly built character, as well as muscles, and copies of the great public (private) schools of England, one of which was the Launceston Church Grammar School.

The original models, the public schools of England, were not good examples because they were notorious for anti-intellectualism, sadism, and snobbery. There were some inspirational teachers and they enabled the myth to survive that the schools were seriously concerned with education. I think it fair to say that our Grammar did better than these models, although it is important to make the distinction between the official ethos of the school and the reality at the 'street level'.

The official ethos, based on my memory of the school between 1956 and 1962, was essentially about living a productive hard-working life, community service and leadership. That memory is supported by the words of the past headmaster, writing on the theme 'Strengthen us in all goodness'. The two headmasters in my time, BH 'Jika' Travers 1954 and Don Selth 1959, might well have said the same thing as Mr Ford the present headmaster, if not in the same words.

*"As the school approaches its 175<sup>th</sup> ... it is now our duty as the current custodians of the school and its traditions to give honour and do justice to those who have gone before us ... to look forward with optimism [and] to look back with pride...*

*The phrase 'Strengthen us in all goodness', taken from the service of Holy Communion, not only provides us with a reference point for what has gone before us at this school but also an exhortation for how we should proceed now and into the next 175 years. Strong educational institutions such as Launceston Grammar are based on firm ethical foundations. Seeking and strengthening goodness continues to be one such firm foundation.*

*The word goodness combines many elements, including what is right and honest, acting properly, commendable behaviour, correctness, excellence, kindness and the action of genuine rejoicing in another's good fortune.*

*There are multiple priorities in any school programme but as well as all the academic imperative ... seeking and strengthening goodness is the most commendable and enduring aim for our educational community of shared high expectations of all its people."*

That is much the same as the mission of the school as I recall it; effort and achievement in studies and sports, with community service and leadership. The mission was conveyed from the headmasters in the weekly assemblies, from the sermons, hymns and lessons from the bible in chapel, and from the evening prayers in boarding school. It was reinforced in the report cards filled in by subject masters, housemasters and the headmaster.

The exemplar of the mission was the Rhodes Scholar, judged on the basis of scholarship, sports, community service and leadership. Wikipedia provides more detail:

- literary and scholastic attainments

- the energy to use one's talents to the full, for example through achievement in areas such as sports, music, debate, dance, theatre, and artistic pursuits, particularly where teamwork is involved
- truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship
- moral force of character and instincts to lead and to take an interest in one's fellow beings.

It came in an interesting and perplexing way from Mr Hampton, not the first person who would normally be recalled for moral exhortations (but if you wanted to know about the role of the Gurkhas in the war...). In his capacity as the form master of Form 8 (whatever it was called in 1957), he wrote on the blackboard: 'What I am going to be I am now becoming'.

There was a second clause which I can't recall. Nobody in the class managed to work out what it meant and he had to explain that we were in the process of developing the values, beliefs and attitudes that would shape our lives in the years to come.

### **The Parallel Universe**

Later I realised that many boys, perhaps most, took little or no notice of the pep talks from the headmasters, the sermons, lessons from the bibles and the prayers. So, the sentiments expressed by the mission have to be considered alongside a parallel set of values, which the boys lived out hour by hour through the day.

The dominant values in the parallel universe were more rugged and primitive, approximating to the evolutionary struggle for survival of the fittest: toughness (manliness), guts, aggression, having a go and winning. The law of the jungle applied in the classrooms, and teachers who could not maintain control of the class could be humiliated and confronted with bedlam.

The two sets of principles are not perfectly aligned and one of the challenges of the school was to temper the energy, aggression and restlessness of hundreds of testosterone-charged young men to produce attentive and diligent students, maturing into well-mannered, polite and chivalrous citizens.

### **The Outcome**

How did the school perform between the mission and the model of anti-intellectualism, sadism, obsession with sports and snobbery?

As for snobbery, the aristocracy in the school were the sports stars. The boys were interested in the non-standard cars that some of the staff and fathers drove, but few were impressed by displays of affluence.

There was probably too much emphasis on competitive sport, especially in the house competition, and that created problems for boys who were not competent in games. That has been addressed, with more variety in modern times.

Boys who were short on toughness and aggression were likely to be bullied, and some alumni, including myself, have bad memories of ill treatment, although the practice was controlled as well as the staff and prefects could manage. It is hard to know what the authorities could have done better and I think it fair to say that the level of thuggery was very low, when compared with the recollections of Chester Eagle in his memoir of Melbourne Grammar and the legendary brutality in the great public (private) schools of England<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Chester Eagle, *Play Together, Dark Blue Twenty*, 1986

As for scholarship, swots were not held in high esteem, although it helped if the swot could hold his own on the playing field. There were enough good teachers to provide a very decent education for pupils who were diligent, and the standard improved during the time I was there.

### **Good and Bad Teachers**

In the end, a great deal depends on the leadership from the top and the possibility of meeting a truly inspired educator or two along the way. There were some very ordinary teachers, as there are in all schools. There were some who were good for particular types of pupils, like a native French speaker who would have been good for senior students with a serious interest in French, but he did not last because he could not control junior classes. An Old Launcestonian, whom I met years ago at dinners in Sydney and a man some years older than myself, had a somewhat low opinion of the school and said his best memory of education was a gifted teacher of social studies who left before I arrived. On the other hand, he enjoyed the sports and he won a Savigny Bat. Two especially good teachers arrived from England late in my time at the school. Ron Horner was the senior science teacher and head of the junior school and Malcolm Clarkson was my housemaster and geography teacher. They each brought something special and different. Their lessons, inside and outside the classroom, were life-changing and they added to the ethos of the school, which came from the other channels.

### **House Cups**



*L-R: Football, Swimming, Tennis, Rowing, Cricket Ball, Cross Country, Athletics.*

## Chapter 3

### *The House System*

*The houses provide leadership opportunities for the senior boys and a mentoring system for juniors, who are buddied up with an older student and nurtured through their school life. Each house has teachers allocated as housemasters/tutors and likewise offer further pastoral support to the boys.*

#### **The Origins of the House System**

The house system is widely used in British schools and schools in countries with past British colonial ties that model themselves after the British system, such as Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India and Singapore. The system began in boarding schools where students actually ate, drank and slept in individual houses during school terms. The house system still operates this way in prestigious British boarding schools, such as Harrow, Eton, and Winchester College.

There are numerous benefits schools have traditionally seen by using the house system. Harrow International School Bangkok, Thailand, considers its house system: “the heart of the secondary school. It is designed to encourage and increase competition between students and to create a supportive environment.”

The house system has always been a traditional feature of schools in the English-speaking world, particularly in Commonwealth countries, originating in England. However, Launceston Church Grammar School only introduced the system in the 1920s when the school relocated from the inner-central business district of Launceston in Elizabeth Street to Mowbray Heights at Mowbray on the outskirts of Launceston, overlooking Stephenson's Bend on the Tamar River.

#### **Introduction of the House System at Launceston Church Grammar School**

At the beginning of 1924, Launceston Grammar moved to the campus at Mowbray Heights. With new quarters, the house system was inaugurated by the headmaster, Rev John Bethune. Four houses were created and named in honour of Rev William Savigny, Rev Christopher Wilkinson and Mr Harry Gillett, former headmasters; and Mr William Hawkes, a generous benefactor.

Savigny and Hawkes were for boarders and Gillett and Wilkinson for dayboys. In 1937, with an enrolment of only 156, there were so few boarders that the two boarding houses, Hawkes and Savigny were combined<sup>32</sup>. In 1944, the two dayboy houses, which had also been combined, were separated once more in 1953<sup>33</sup> by the expedient of lining the boys up in front of the school gymnasium and dividing them ‘like sheep’.<sup>34</sup>

In 1959, an additional day house was formed and named in honour of former headmaster, Mr Norman Roff. The large number of boarders at the senior school in 1961 made it necessary to introduce another house for the purposes of administration. This was Fraser house and was named in honour of the late Mr Hugh Fraser MBE, who had been actively associated with the school for fifty-six years. Fraser house ceased operation from 1970 until 1997. In 1998, the boarding house was renamed Hawkes House and two new day houses were created; Fraser and Savigny. In 2001, Hawkes House discontinued as an entity for house competition and the boarders were reallocated across the five other houses. The name Hawkes has been retained as the name of the boarding house.

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<sup>32</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue, Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*, p. 141

<sup>33</sup> H Vernon Jones, *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1946-1971*, p. 78

<sup>34</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue, Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*, p. 141



### **Fraser**

- Motto: ‘Summum bonum’ (The highest good)
- Named after: Mr Hugh Fraser MBE, acting headmaster from 1928 to 1929
- Years in operation: 1961–1970, 1997–present
- Colour: Green
- House head <sup>35</sup>: Mr Patrick Moroney

### **Gillett**

- Motto: ‘Nulli secundus’ (Second to none)
- Named after: Mr Harry Gillett, former headmaster
- Years in operation: 1924–present
- Colour: Red
- House head: 2014: Mrs Fiona Hickman

### **Roff**

- Motto: ‘Meliora sequamur’ (Let us seek better things)
- Named after: Captain Norman Roff, former headmaster
- Years in operation: 1959–present
- Colour: Gold
- House head: Mrs Claire Green

### **Savigny**

- Motto: ‘Nil desperandum’ (Never give up hope)
- Named after: Rev William Savigny, former headmaster
- Years in operation: 1924–1996 (as Hawkes-Savigny), 1997–present (as Savigny)
- Colour: Royal blue
- House head: Mr William Rostron

### **Wilkinson**

- Motto: ‘Sans peur et sans reproche’ (Without fear and without reproach)
- Named after: Rev Christopher Wilkinson, former headmaster
- Years in operation: 1924–present
- Colour: Black
- House head: Mr Mark Webster

Launceston Church Grammar School has a strong and vibrant house system. Today each new student is placed into one of the six school houses, each wearing different house colours at sporting events. Each house has its own flag, motto and patron, and today they can be seen displayed in the school chapel.

These houses provide for healthy competition within the school. Points are awarded for academic, sporting and cultural successes as well as for service and citizenship. Merit points for behaviour and academic achievement may also be totalled up for comparison between houses. The houses compete in cricket, tennis, athletics, swimming, football and rowing where each win scored points. The house with the most points becomes ‘cock house’ and wins the prestigious Bethune Cup.

Interhouse sport became so competitive, intense and bitter and was such a strain on the senior boys that in the mid-1950s BH ‘Jifa’ Travers felt he had to lessen it and considered abolishing the cock house competitions, but this did not eventuate. Hawkes mostly won the competition

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<sup>35</sup> Housemaster or housemistress in charge 2014

though Wilkinson was victorious in 1958<sup>36</sup>. Some schools have a year-long programme of interhouse events, in which each house 'hosts' an event at which all houses compete, with points contributing to the award of the House Cup at the end of the year.

One of the first boarding school stories was written by Sarah Fielding, *The Governess: or The Little Female Academy*, published in 1749. They did not become popular until 1857, with Tom Hughes' novel, *Tom Brown's School Days*. The house system has since featured prominently in thousands of books, with many authors writing a whole series of books such as *Chalet School* and *Malory Towers*, which have been published around the world and translated into several languages. The Harry Potter books and films re-popularised this genre, and resulted in unprecedented awareness of British boarding schools (and their house system) in countries where they were previously unknown.

These stories depict the popular conception of a British boarding school rather than how modern boarding schools work in reality, and often focus on the most positive aspects. For example, loyalty to one's house is very important in real life houses, and is featured prominently in many of these books. The Harry Potter books have updated the boarding school to modern values, for example by depicting mixed-sex education houses. This has existed from the 1980s at Grammar, following its amalgamation with Broadland House Girls Grammar School.

*The Governess, or The Little Female Academy* by Sarah Fielding, published in 1749, is generally seen as one of the first boarding school stories. Fielding's novel was a moralistic tale with tangents offering instruction on behaviour, and each of the nine girls in the novel relate their story individually. However, it did establish aspects of the boarding school story which were repeated in later works. The school is self-contained with little connection to local life. The girls are encouraged to live together with a sense of community and collective responsibility. Fielding's approach was imitated and used as a formula by both her contemporaries and other writers into the 19th century<sup>37</sup>.

## ***House Sports***

### *Rafe Champion*

Sport was compulsory and it could only be avoided by producing a doctor's certificate or a note from the matron. Boys who were incompetent and/or uninterested had to train with a team anyway, although of course they were not on duty on Saturdays. It was harder for them to avoid house sports because both junior and senior teams were required in all the team sports, and sometimes houses were hard-pressed to make up the numbers with capable players.

Games between houses were bitterly contested, even if the level of skill was not up to the standard of Saturday games between schools. It is interesting to note that the great Australian World Cup rugby captain Nick Farr Jones recorded that the toughest games in his memory were not against the South Africans or the All Blacks but against the other colleges, played at lunchtimes on the ovals at the University of Sydney!

Some boys managed to avoid the team games but none could get out of the cross country and the athletics standards. There may have been swimming standards as well but I was such a poor swimmer that I refuse to remember them. The beauty, or the horror, of the cross country and the standards was that everyone's performance counted and, in the case of the cross country, the pressure was excruciating when the contest ended at the top of the hill with every boy

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<sup>36</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue, Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*, p. 193

<sup>37</sup> Foster, Shirley; Simons, Judy (1995). *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of "Classic" Stories for Girls*. University of Iowa Press. p. 195-197, ISBN 0-87745-493-0.

exhorted by the crowd lining the course to pass the boy in front to gain an extra house point! When the finishing line shifted to the oval there was marginally less pressure to run up the hill.

With the intensity of the competition there was a lot of pressure to persuade boys to go beyond the normal limits of human endurance to serve the house. Interesting motivational techniques were explored. At one stage there was a rumour that in one of the houses (Gillett?), boys suspected of slacking had to sing a song at the weekly house meeting.

My best memory of house sports came in the final year, playing in the winning Fraser House football and basketball teams and captaining the winning cricket team. Malcolm 'Basher' Clarkson was housemaster and he had a robust approach to physical combat. He also had a glass eye, courtesy of rugby union, which he played in England. Revving up our junior football team for a game against a much larger Hawkes House contingent, he urged the boys not to be intimidated because 'toughness is in the mind'. A great idea, but Hawkes still won.

### **Main School Classrooms**



## Chapter 4

### *Schoolboy Memories*

*Paul A.C. Richards*

*The formula of an Australian grammar school education was based on the British system, which evolved over hundreds of years. Since the first discussions in 1838 and foundation of the Launceston Church Grammar School in 1846, it has slowly changed from one generation to the next over time. However, traditions remain.*

*At the dawn of the 21st century, British and Australian societies are still shaped by a private education system devised to gentry the Victorian middle classes and produce gentlemen to run the Empire. Yet it is not on the political agenda, is rarely the subject of public debate and we remain blind to its psychological*



*implications.*

Much has been written about the psychological effects of sending children away to school, and the social system which has encouraged this habit. Nick Duffell's book, *The Making of Them: the British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System*, published in 2000, has received wide acclaim from doctors, therapists, educators, writers and general readers. It describes the history and social context of boarding, the inevitability of 'boarding school syndrome', as well as the process of de-constructing a 'strategic survival personality'. It offers pointers towards a philosophy of education that honours the needs and the intelligence of the natural child. His new book, *Wounded Leaders: British Elitism and the Entitlement Illusion – A Psychohistory*, published in 2014, shows how this uniquely British system has affected the whole of society and contributed to our political malaise.

An interesting perspective is given by our contributors who experienced boarding at Grammar at an early age, which is highlighted in some of the essays, of their education includes the discipline, routine, camaraderie and support from their peers and housemasters. All boarders felt superior to the dayboy – communally referred to as 'day-goes' or 'day rats' – and for the dayboys it was the other way around.

It is fair to say that several of the experiences were both good and bad, and can go some way to explaining the problems that ex-boarding school students experience. However, despite intimated criticisms, boarding schools can offer great opportunities for education, sport, the arts and the freedom to develop. Nevertheless, there is often a darker flipside to these ‘opportunities’.

In a similar fashion the experience of routine, discipline and a sense of place of the boarder does rub off onto the dayboys, especially in a school with great tradition such as Launceston Church Grammar. The discipline in the boarding house is mimicked but not enforced quite so severely in a day student’s experience in his own home. Parents play a pivotal role in developing a profound balance between school and home discipline, routine and, in both cases, a sense of place and respect.

## Boarding at Launceston Church Grammar School



Boarding schools have a long history that covers more than a thousand years. This history began in Europe, with the King’s school named ‘Canterbury’ the first boarding school. It was founded in early medieval times, around 597 AD. Families used to send boys to monasteries in order to be taught and disciplined by clergymen. These schools were called cathedral schools or monastic schools, which were dissolved together with the monasteries around the 16th century under Henry VIII’s reign. However, conventional English boarding schools seem to have several origins. From the early medieval period, boys of influential families were often sent away to be educated by literate priests or to monasteries, and many monasteries established schools, a few of which survived the dissolution of the monasteries. Other schools were established by royalty, guilds or wealthy merchants.

In the 18th century, a number of grammar schools attracted students from wealthy families who did not live nearby. Finally, in the 19th century, a lot of new private boarding schools were established to cater for the rising middle classes, or at least for the wealthier and more conservative section of them in Australia.

Nigel Sinnott, in his talk to the Atheist Society in Melbourne in April 2015, titled ‘The English boarding school system and muscular Christianity’, clearly expounds the establishment and transference of such an education to the Commonwealth saying:

*With the exception of a few progressive private schools, the ideology that pervaded conventional boarding schools by the end of the 19th century was muscular Christianity, an austere and spartan system that combined cold dormitories, poor food, lots of sport – especially team games – plenty of religious services and indoctrination, hierarchical discipline and a rather exaggerated masculinity or manliness. Dr Thomas Arnold encouraged sport and introduced senior boys acting as praepostors, or prefects, at Rugby School in the 1830s. The system was copied by existing private schools and by the many new ones founded in the 19th century. Muscular Christianity also became popular in books, for*

example, *Tom Brown's School Days* (1856) by Thomas Hughes, and Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke* (1850).

*English boarding schools aimed at turning boys into conservative Christian gentlemen and trained them for entry to Oxford, Cambridge and Durham universities, the civil service, the army and particularly as administrators of the growing British Empire. This explains why a number of new schools were founded in the 19th century and why the system was exported, with varying results, to Scotland, Australia, Canada, South Africa and elsewhere. The schools subjected boys to a process that I would sum up with a little-used word, induration: to become or make callous, hard or unfeeling: "Stiff upper lip, chaps!"*

Epitomised and upheld in Sir Henry Newbolt's hideous idea that war is like a game in his poem 'Vitai Lampada':

The sand of the desert is sodden red,  
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;  
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,  
And the regiment blind with the dust and smoke.  
The river of death has brimmed its banks,  
And England's far, and Honour a name,  
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:  
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'  
This is the word that year by year,  
While in her place the school is set,  
Every one of her sons must hear,  
And none that hears it dare forget.  
This they all with a joyful mind  
Bear through life like a torch in flame,  
And falling fling to the host behind —  
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

It was written in 1892, and I am hardly surprised that junior officers in the British Army died rapidly and in droves during World War I.<sup>38</sup>

The first boys who boarded at Launceston Church Grammar School were taken in by the headmaster, Henry Plow Kane, when the school opened in 1846 in George and then Elizabeth Street. With the move to Mowbray Heights in 1924 and development of a new purpose-built boarding house, the number grew until peaking at 219 in 1966, but has since declined to some 50-60 in 2017.

The life of a boarder is often described as spartan, but many look back on their days at Grammar and relish in the toughness they endured, especially the cold showers. Alexander, in her book, describes the era of change from cold to hot showers in 1965.

*In 1965 came a major change with the installation of a hot-water service. New housemasters like Arthur Packer and Greville Vernon disapproved of cold showers for boys, and these were abolished. This created a stir, for many old boys, daily cold showers were part of Grammar's tradition. Horner recalled that a member of the Board told him that hot showers were a luxury and cold showers had made him the man he was. Horner replied that this was precisely why hot showers had been installed.<sup>39</sup>*

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<sup>38</sup> Nigel Sinnott, 'The English boarding school system and muscular Christianity', Talk given to the Atheist Society, Melbourne, on 8 April 2014.

<sup>39</sup> A. Alexander, 'Blue Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996, p. 215

Living in cold dormitories with strict discipline and mundane food was to be soon a distant memory, only to those who had endured life as a boarder at Grammar. When discussing this with John Scott (Class of 1951), he told me that to this day he has a cold shower each morning before having a hot one – old habits never die. Likewise, in my own case at Officer Training School, Skeyeville circa 1970s (ADF), at dinner in the mess we had to cut our bread and butter into four triangles, a tradition which to this day I continue to do with my morning toast. “Tradition, tradition, tradition,” as Vernon Jones would say.

Despite all of this, boarders still remember their time in cold dormitories – particularly those on the verandahs – the mundane food, strict discipline handed out by housemasters – especially Trevor Sorell – routine weekly haircuts, sweeping rosters, sick parades, bells, inspections with the fun of a midnight feast, midnight swims and pillow fights.

One of the striking features of the boarding house was the number of wireless aerials strung between the boarding house and a large pine tree some 40 metres away from the main boarding house. The introduction and possession of a wireless or crystal set was encouraged by Headmaster Bethune when he introduced a wireless club in 1924. He thought that the wireless was a source of interest to the boys, who could hear concerts and church services. However, the club folded in 1927 and at this time there were about 100 boarders. Those aerials were still there in the late 1950s.

Phil Clemons arrived at Grammar at twelve years of age from King Island. His memories of his boarding days hold not disappointment but times of sadness. He remembers a young six year old known as ‘Boss’ who he always felt sorry for because he was such a young age. Years later, he met up with him and asked him how he coped at such a young age and Boss said “it affected me for life, something that I have never really got over.” One of the most difficult aspects of boarding for Phil, being from King Island, was that during school holidays it would often take him a couple of weeks to settle back into family life on the island only to be then bundled back off to boarding school. Phil remembers the crystal sets and a fellow named Tooley, who was a master of linking up all the headsets for several of us with headphones, so we could listen to music. This was only possible in one of the balcony ‘suites’, with only a canvas blind to keep out the whistling winds blustering the boarding house, and one of the few vantage points where access to an outside aerial was available.

For boarders, even the travel to school each term was arduous, as one parent wrote to the Editor of the *Examiner* in 1943.<sup>40</sup>

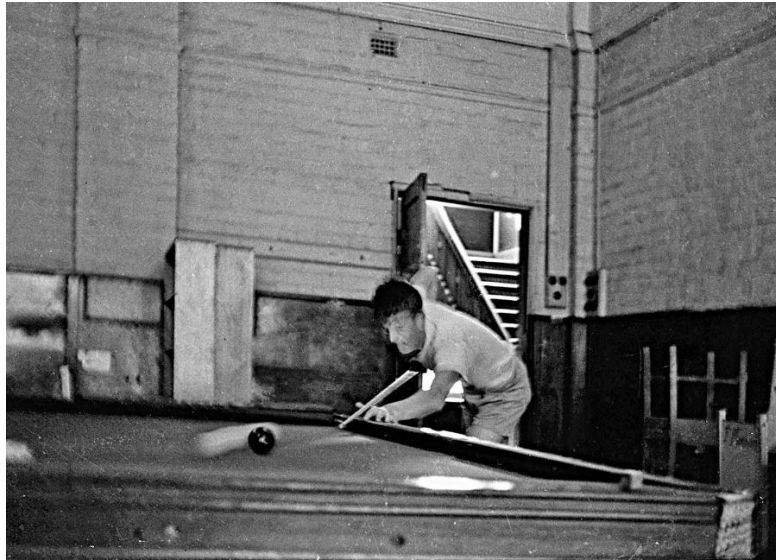
*Schoolchildren on Trains. Sir. On Tuesday next, February 2, the public-school scholars return to their various schools. I would like to ask just what provision the Railways Department is making to accommodate these young travellers. As one who has repeatedly witnessed the wild scramble at Western Junction, when these unfortunate boys and girls have tried almost frantically to find even standing room on the train, I marvel that parents and masters alike make no move to see that these soldiers and citizens of to-morrow at least have the seats for which they pay and are entitled to. Most of them make the long and tiring journey up and down four times a year. Surely this utter disregard for them can be remedied...  
NORTH-WESTERN PARENT.*

Unless you have experienced entering a boarding school at a young age, the anguish, anxiety, overpowering institutionalisation, indoctrination and servility is overwhelming. Many of my contemporaries have openly discussed this in their memories of those first weeks of entering the Grammar boarding house all those years ago. Some have said, “it can make or break you.” But then, boarding schools are far more about child rearing, class identity and indoctrination than about education, are they not?

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<sup>40</sup> *Examiner*, 27 January 1943, p. 4

## John Pickup playing billiards, a great pastime in the boarding house.



*Source: Richard Stark collection*

**John Pickup** has vivid memories of boarding at Grammar – of Trevor Sorell caning the whole lot of the boarders “when we had a pillow fight between the Hawkes and Savigny dormitories”, and of a nameless boarder who had a toaster and would sell pieces of buttered toast at 5c a piece. Corporal punishment was rife and one prefect caned a boarder, which was perhaps the last caning administered by a prefect in the school witnessed.

**Robert Winspear** arrived at Grammar as a boarder at the tender age of six in 1949. He recalls, “After waking us at 7 o’clock, bells rang throughout the day to determine where we had to be at any given time. We were not to question anything, just do as we were told. Boarding-house life was tough, but taught me tolerance, which has been a useful life tool. Another positive is that I formed life-long friendships that have endured to this day.”

“Some relief from the restrictive conditions in the boarding house came when I was old enough to start rowing and spend weekends on the river.

“In the first years of senior school, it became apparent that some of the teachers were shell-shocked from the war and others who went teaching because they could not find other work in a booming Australian economy in the 1950s. I remember one teacher saying, “I have taught you boys all I know... and you still know nothing.” In hindsight it was appalling, though we were led to believe that we were getting the best education possible. There were, however some teachers, such as Eric Charlton and ‘Lionel’ Hampton – the Savigny housemaster – who were always approachable, and in later years earned my respect, including Ron Horner, the deputy headmaster.”

In May 2017, the Alumni News featured an article by the late John Brammall, ‘Memories – Living on campus at Mowbray’

Shortly before he passed away in March, John Brammall (Class of 1959) contacted the DV Gunn Archives to donate a document pertaining to his father’s tenure as the first full-time chaplain appointed at Launceston Grammar. Rev Charles Brammall was a pioneer with the introduction of chaplaincy work in schools. A succession of chaplains took his place after he left to work at his old school, Hutchins.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Alumni News, 31 May 2017



In John's memoirs he said, "Boarding house life was going on nearby, and I was aware of the cold showers, boys sleeping out on the balconies and the rope-ladder fire escapes. My wife Sue had always wondered why Lady Sally Ferrall, in her fading years, had shown her a rope ladder, which Sir Ray, her late husband, had given her to aid her escape from their upstairs bedroom in case of fire. "Look at this Sue, this is what Ray gave me in case of fire!" Sue now knows why, because Ray (Pic) Ferrall whilst at Grammar was familiar with the rope-ladder fire escapes of the old boarding house in the 1920s and perhaps thought it was the quickest and most convenient way to evacuate."

## *1940s*

*Perhaps the most obvious change during this decade was World War II (1939-1945) and the resulting turmoil. It was a time of uncertainty and destruction and there were many boarders whose fathers, and in some cases mothers, were swept up into the armed services. The loss of Headmaster (1936-1940) Captain Norman H Roff in 1942 was a major blow to the school community.*

*The teaching staff of military age had been called up and were replaced as best the school could manage. Several masters came out of retirement.*

**Peter Mercer** gives a great and accurate description of the school at Mowbray Heights in the late 1940s.

The Launceston Church Grammar School had, and still has, one of the best and most scenic campuses in the nation. The school is situated high on the edge of the plateau of Mowbray Heights, some thirty metres above sea level, overlooking the River Tamar, with Launceston city and the hills of West Launceston and Trevallyn in the background. The layout of the buildings and sports ovals is much the same as it was sixty years ago except that there are many more and much larger buildings and they spread over a much larger area.

The school environment I remember was vastly different from the high-tech, comfortable classroom and study areas the students, now of both sexes, enjoy today. From the school's beautiful chapel, with the then incomplete west end to the school block, there was a remembrance avenue of Gallipoli pines. Each one commemorated one of the old boys who perished heroically in that frightful, ill-fated and futile campaign that achieved nothing except unbelievable carnage. On windy days the pines would sigh, as if poignantly reminding us of what they stood for. The school block, as it was called, was an L-shaped two-storey building with a short tower facing the main entrance gates to the east. Under the tower was the main entrance with the school crest above. Facing north was another formal entrance also with the school crest above it. Both were then rarely used as we all went around the back to go to our classrooms. At the rear of the school block was an open gravel surfaced assembly space called the quadrangle, or 'quad', which was bounded on the west by two weatherboarded buildings perched on the edge of the bank that descended to the Tamar River estuary. These were the carpenter's shop and the chemistry laboratory. In my earlier days, the quad was the favourite place for the headmaster, Harold Vernon Jones, to hold his school assemblies. But in the later years, the front of the gymnasium was preferred, for in winter the quad did not get the sun until late in the morning and it could be bitterly cold with the raw fog off the river and southerly winds.

In the school block there were eight rectangular classrooms, and two additional classrooms were added during the last two years of my time there. All activity centred on the quad, with open verandahs on both levels of the building providing a corridor link between classrooms. On the right of the northern entrance was the old school library. This was a small room, almost overstocked with books from floor to ceiling, with a ladder or two to climb up and make your selection. In the centre aisle were reading tables and chairs to sit on. It was opened during the lunch hour and a senior boy under a master-in-charge was rostered to supervise its use and try to prevent any misbehaviour or damage to the books. Back then there was no instruction on how to make use of a book as a reference tool for learning and apply it objectively for study purposes. In my time at Grammar, the school library was far from being the essential focus of knowledge it is in schools of today. It was just a place to pass the time and a source of amusement. We usually selected books from the shelves that interested us and my passion then was the natural sciences, particularly the animals of the world.

Opposite the library was the bursar's office, which was on the left of the corridor. Here we obtained our requirements such as exercise books, pens, pencils and other equipment. We also passed our prescribed reading books in here at the end of the year and, on the first school day of the next year, we would queue outside the office to be issued with the books we would need

for the subjects we were taking. These were, more often than not, second-hand and at a reduced cost.

At the southern end of the school block was the Percy Shearn Physics Wing. This was a lofty, single-storey unplastered, raftered room – no doubt inspired by English public school architecture. Whether it was built lofty to withstand explosions from failed experiments, I am not sure but the explosions usually occurred in the chemistry lab on the opposite side of the quad. Off the corridor were the toilets, referred universally by the boys as the ‘dykes’. The dykes in my time were rather run down and very basic, probably the same as they were when the building was constructed in the 1920s. The doors to the lavatories and the walls were usually a terrible mess, with masses of names and the usual obscene scribble boys felt obliged to scrawl on any suitable surface of a toilet area. For a few years, the doors to the lavatories were in place and there was some privacy for shy little boys like me, but then, because of the abuse they received, they were removed and thereafter one had to sit in full view of all the other boys. Naturally, it was extremely difficult to find a time when no one was around. Being very shy and modest about this sort of thing, I found it very unpleasant indeed and decidedly uncivilised.

Between the school block and the boarding houses was a large gravelled gap and towards the boarding houses end of this gap was the old, original stucco-faced farmhouse that preceded the school by probably 100 years. It still had a practical use, for it provided accommodation for the female domestic staff. At the other end of the boarding houses was the headmaster’s residence and the school vegetable gardens. These of course were ‘out of bounds’, unless you were invited to enter or, if you were a boarder, rostered to hoe and weed the vegetables.

Where the assembly hall, and music and recording rooms are today, there was an oval-shaped lawn with ancient looking pine and oak trees bordered by a gravel carriageway. This pre-dated the school by many years and was part of the farm homestead grounds. Beyond this to the north, were two small sports ovals called the ‘top and bottom cement’ because both had concrete cricket pitches, instead of turf like the cricket pitch on the main oval. The top cement was opposite the boarding houses and oriented approximately north and south. The bottom cement, oriented approximately east and west, was next to the main oval separated by a low rather ragged hedge. In between these two playing grounds and in line with the gymnasium, were the concrete cricket practicing pitches with their nets.

When the boys played cricket on the small ovals, there were some instances of annoyed neighbours having balls go over their fence and smash windows and glasshouses. A couple of owners were so frustrated with this aerial attack from the school, they even went to the trouble of putting up wire-net covered frames above the top of their fences. In winter months, footballs also found their way over fences and one property owner became so irate and hostile that he refused to return any cricket balls and footballs. No doubt he hoped that, by taking this punitive action, the boys would take special care to avoid his territory.

To the east of the lawn was the old weatherboard-clad gymnasium, with its wide, unevenly floored verandah across the front. From there you could watch a match being played sheltered from the weather. The gym, with its pavilion front, was a far cry from the splendid buildings there today and in front of that basic temporary structure was the main oval, which unlike the other smaller ovals, was bordered by a white wooden single-railed fence. To the right of the cream-painted school entrance gateposts, with the name, school crest and motto ‘Mos Patrius Et Disciplina’ on them, were the tennis courts. Then, beside the chapel, on the edge of the bank, there was the small swimming pool, which has long been removed and its place taken by the car park. There is now a splendid indoor replacement against the northern boundary.

The LCGS classrooms in the 1940s were very different from the carpeted, well-heated, comfortable rooms of today. They were stark and unadorned, except for the large blackboard in front, and they all had bare scrubbed, or I should say unstained, swept floors. These were more or less kept clean by the boys. They were rostered, usually as punishment by the form master, to do the sweeping job and empty the waste paper into the bins in the downstairs corridor, for burning in the furnace. The desks in the lower forms were, like the desks for the

senior classes at the prep school, the standard, not unattractive, late-Victorian style cast-iron framed structures, with wooden desktops and seats. Fifty years ago, they could be found in both the public and state schools in Tasmania. They were double desks, seating two boys, and hopefully your deskmate was someone you could get on with. They were screwed to the floor and each had a shelf underneath where you could put your books and writing equipment. The seat, which was part of the desk behind, folded back when not in use. The back of the seat, in fact, was the front of the desk behind and if the boy behind was of a mean disposition and delighted in jabbing nibs and other sharp instruments into your neck, life would not be all pleasant. All the tops of the desks at Grammar were unbelievably carved, scarred, ink-stained and generally defaced. They bore the names and initials of the boys who had used them over a period of at least fifty years and, like those at Grammar prep, it is probable that many of these desks came from the old school in Elizabeth Street. Carving one's name for posterity seemed to be part of the schoolboy culture at Grammar and it appeared to go back to the school's foundation in 1846.<sup>42</sup> Disfigurement of the desk tops continued, despite the provision of large boards in the hallway downstairs near the toilets for the boys so inclined to work on. These were well used but did not have the same appeal as the old school desk! Carving your name was a mark of immortality. By doing this you believed that hopefully you had left a record of having been at the school for future generations to see. There is no doubt that some of the deep grooves in the desk tops were caused by generations of boys biding their time, enduring complete boredom, not being interested in the subject they were doing or unable to comprehend what the teacher was talking about! In the senior forms, each boy had an individual desk of his own with a lift-up top for books and equipment he was not using. These were in a much better state than the desks of the lower forms, with very little disfigurement. In contrast, on an open day, I had the opportunity to see the interior of classrooms at the Launceston State High School and the desks, the same age as the old iron-framed ones at Grammar, were almost completely unmarked!

The classroom heating system was abysmal to say the least. Water was heated by a coal-fired 'black-jack' (boiler) on the southern side of the main entrance and flowed through pipes into tube convectors on each side of the rooms. It worked on the simple physics principle that as the water warmed up it rose but the very hot water, during the course of the day, didn't seem to get much further than the lower classrooms. The reason was that the furnace was never stoked overnight and the water was, of course, cool to cold the next morning. The chill of the icy, frosty and foggy Launceston winter mornings rendered the classrooms nearly as cold as outdoors, until about 10:30am when the pipes slowly started to warm up. On a fine winter's morning, the fog started to lift at about 11am and thereafter conditions began to improve for the rest of the day. Writing with a pen and ink while your fingers were completely numb and white with cold was very difficult. When the warning bell for recess went at about 11am, the only thing on your mind was to get to the nearest heater and jam your fingers between the coils. It was heaven if you were lucky enough to get a seat on top! If the fog had lifted and the sun was shining, the front of the carpentry shop was a good place to warm up. It was out of the reach of the chilly southerly wind off the river and the brown-painted weatherboards generated radiant heat. It was a common sight to see rows of boys lined up outside at morning recess in winter leaning against the building.

I used to suffer from frequent colds because of the spartan conditions that no school child would be made to tolerate today; but I suppose it was all part of the toughening up process that supposedly made boys men. The poor boarders were toughened up even more by having to endure cold showers every morning, winter and summer. How they could stand this physical torture long enough to wash themselves decently and get clean was a mystery to me. I was later told that some would try and skip it if they had the chance, particularly on icy mornings. Who could blame them if the housemaster was not around? To many, however, the endurance of a cold shower without wincing was proof to your mates that you were as tough as they were, a

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<sup>42</sup> Carvings of boys' names can still be found on the woodwork of the interior of the original school building in Elizabeth Street. Some of these date back to the 1870s.

very important thing at boys' schools. I thanked God that I was never sent to boarding school. I am sure I would never have survived.

Littering was a punishable offence. At strategic places around the grounds there were 44-gallon drums into which to pitch your sandwich wrappers, apple cores and orange and banana peels. If you did not use them and were caught in the act of littering, it was a trip up to the headmaster for 'six of the best' or a 'socking'.

The care of the gardens was a responsibility of the boys. It was called 'school service' or 'national service.' The latter seemed a rather strange term to me because it had absolutely nothing to do with the nation. All the various compulsory jobs the boys did around the school saved it money! The name 'national service' was definitely a carry-over from the recent war years, when it was expected that citizens made an extra voluntary effort for the good of the nation and the war cause. With the work the boys did around the grounds, it saved the school the cost of hiring paid gardeners. Each form had an area of responsibility, which was changed at the beginning of each term to avoid monotony. Boys were rostered for half an hour each week, usually in the lunch hour, to weed and cultivate the gardens. It was also a punishment for misbehaviour to do additional national service. With the gardens looked after by squads of boys, it left the groundsman only the task of mowing the lawns and the sports ovals, but even that work at times was done by the students. Some of the boys were allowed to operate the sit-on self-propelled revolving blade mower, much to the envy of others.

Another chore for junior boys was to be on a roster to roll the turf cricket pitch on the main oval for ten minutes during the lunch hour each day. The roller was a heavy concrete cylinder with a wooden shaft each end to hang onto as you pushed and pulled. About ten boys were needed each time and, with that number, it moved easily. It would have been a bit of a drag if it had not been for the head groundsman, George Drinkwater, who supervised us. George was a real character. His name gave me and others some amusement, for water was the last thing he would think to drink. After we had finished, it was down to the Mowbray pub for him and on occasion he would definitely be a bit under the weather when supervising us. George was reprimanded by the headmaster for being drunk on duty on several occasions but never lost his job. He was an excellent groundsman and always kept the ovals in good shape. Some of the jokes he would tell us while we were pushing and pulling were so crude and filthy that they would literally make our hair stand on its end. The headmaster, Vernon Jones, would have been shocked if he had known that his impressionable young gentlemen were being subjected to this but, not being young gentlemen, we loved it. It did us no harm and probably broadened our attitudes to life. George made rolling the pitch an experience and he was very popular with the boys. In fact, compared with the other Grammar staff members, George was one of the boys.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Extracted from Peter Mercer's, *A Brush with the Past*, Hobart 2017

## *My Schoolboy Memories – John CH Morris 1939-1943*

### **Boarding experiences at Launceston Church Grammar School 1939-1943<sup>44</sup>**

At the beginning of 1939, I came as a boarder to the Grammar School.

At that time the only way of gaining a secondary education for a student in the country was to leave home. So at the age of twelve, I left a warm and loving family with four sisters to a collection of all boys in a rather stark environment. From having my own bedroom, I was in a dormitory of about sixteen boys of varying backgrounds, but a similar age.

It was not surprising that I was terribly home-sick, but determined not to show it. From being used to roaming the countryside to being confined to the school's limited border was almost like becoming a prisoner. The bedsteads were simple iron structures with an arrow on them, which we believed were previously convict beds but were probably former Defence Department stock. There was little in the way of bullying but new boys were allotted special duties for the year; for example, stoking the coke-fuelled boiler for the boarding house. At the time I arrived boarders easily outnumbered the dayboys ('day-goes'), and the boarders felt they were superior to the city boys.

Regular routine softened the new experience. Getting up bell was rung at 7am, rather late for boys with a farming background, but OK for me. We had to have a cold shower and dress by 7:30am. There was no hot water supplied to the showers for the boys (there was hot water to the showers used by the masters however).

Then breakfast at long tables, with a prefect heading each table. And the food, though good, was not like home food. We had about sixty boys dining at breakfast time, and at the evening meal the masters sat at high table, which was raised above the floor the boys were on.

On every weekday, school started with a chapel service of about twenty minutes with a nice pipe organ, followed by classes. I had Latin and French lessons, which I had not come across before, being from the country. Boarders had casual clothes, while dayboys were in uniform, because dayboys were seen by the public. Boarders had to wear uniform when travelling beyond the school boundaries, which happened only occasionally. The bell was rung at the end of each school period, which was about forty-five minutes. The bell which was rung for class came from a naval ship. For the most part the teacher would move from room to room for each class, though occasionally the class would move rooms, for example geography, physics and chemistry.

Teaching in my first year was competent but coming from a government school, I found it hard to accept teachers throwing a piece of chalk or blackboard duster at a dreamy or lazy student. At lunch time, the boarders had luncheon at school, and some (not all) the dayboys had their lunch at school. Dayboys had lunch with the boarders or brought their own cut lunch. By then the mail had arrived and was displayed on a board in the boarding house, bringing welcome words from home. The tuck shop was open for all boys, dayboys and boarders alike, to supplement their hunger. Boarders were allowed threepence a week for pocket-money and older boys sixpence. The most senior boys were allowed a shilling a week. Masters raided boarders' lockers every now and then, and if you had more than a shilling in your locker you were in trouble.

After afternoon class work, which finished at 3:30pm, twice weekly sport was compulsory. Compulsory sport was conducted after school until 5:30pm. The choices for sports were very limited compared to present day. There was cricket, and for a favoured few boys, tennis in the summer time, and in the winter football or rowing.

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<sup>44</sup> Paul AC Richards, *A Tribute to Dr John Morris 1926-2017: A Remarkable Man*, 2018

In 1939, we had army cadets, which was not compulsory. Every Thursday there was a cadet parade. On Thursdays boarders went to school in cadet uniform – and the cadet uniforms were all ancient cavalry: red collars, navy uniform, polished brass buttons, polished leather leggings and boots. However, the weekdays were full and active, but the weekends were terrible. On weekends, there were no organised activities at all. We had to amuse ourselves, weren't allowed out of the school bounds and weren't allowed to use the oval (unless you were in the First XI). So, we used the gymnasium, played board games like Ludo and the newly-invented Monopoly. It was considered a sin to play board games on Sundays, but what else could a boy do in this situation? We had a chapel service on Sunday mornings and in the evening we walked down to St George's Church in Invermay for church. Sunday evening we wrote home. One of the prefects posted the letters at the postbox down at the corner of Button Street and George Town Road. After a light supper of biscuits and tea, we had prayers read by a housemaster prior to bed, and lights out for the youngest was 8:30pm, grading up to 10pm for the most senior students. Travelling was mainly by trams in the city – a trip cost a penny and the trams were reasonably on time. They came every quarter of an hour along Invermay Road. If we missed the tram at the Button Street/George Town Road junction, we could race down a cutting between houses (known as the 'goat track' – it is still to be found leading from Button Street to McKenzie Street at the bottom), and catch the tram in Invermay Road at the bottom of Mowbray Hill.

On Sunday night, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939, we were asked to congregate in the sporting common room in the boarding house, and the housemaster had the radio on. We heard on the radio that night the Prime Minister of Britain, followed by Prime Minister Menzies of Australia announcing that as at midnight, Australia would be at war with Germany. The world was about to change forever.

We soon lost the maids who made our beds and served at the tables. The boys then took over those duties. We had to dig large, deep trenches to go to and from our school building, and we had to be trained how to evacuate into the trenches quickly, with mock air raid practice. Everything was blacked out at night, so no light would escape to the outside. The city's parks and the CBD built air raid precautions, as shelters or trenches to accommodate citizens upon evacuation. We realised how unprepared we were for war. When an old boy on leave from the Air Force came to talk of his experiences, he was a shaking nervous wreck, having flown planes at top speeds of 90 miles an hour, against modern Japanese planes which flew at 300 miles an hour.

Each morning in the chapel service, the headmaster – soon to be acting headmaster – would read out the casualty list of former Grammar students, which gradually grew longer and longer, and eventually included the names of boys who had been at the school the previous year. Our headmaster in 1941, Captain Norman R Roff, was posted as missing, presumed to be a prisoner of war, but in fact had been killed in Timor, which we did not find out about for some years.

Teachers disappeared into the Defence forces to be replaced by retired, elderly and often hopeless teachers. Their skills were gone; discipline was gone. Then we had a number of displaced people, Poles and mainly Jews, who had emigrated to Australia to escape Nazism, and they were usually not of good quality, in fact they were often hopeless as teachers. After a while a few of us had to attend night classes at Launceston Technical College, mainly to study physics. However, few of the students at school at that time expected to go on to university study – only a handful, five out of about twenty-five in the final year class. Now, these days, most expect to go. On the whole, most of them did fairly well at university. Teaching at school suffered a great deal. Some senior masters were too old to enlist, like A.H. Harry and H.V. Jones, who maintained a semblance of good education.

We had to grow our own vegetables and maintain the school grounds under the guidance of Mr Harry Reinmuth, who was in charge of the grounds. We had a bumper crop of pumpkins, which were served – I don't know if it was eaten, but it was on the table – for the rest of the year. Everything else was rationed. If you paid a bit extra, you could get a bit of bread and jam for

afternoon tea. Once a week, some (those who paid) got a bag of fruit – which they shared with those who otherwise would have gone without.

With fathers away in the services and women having to go into the workforce, the number of boarders increased. Thus the boarding houses of Hawkes and Savigny became stronger and the dayboy houses, Gillett and Wilkinson, became united as a single house due to lower dayboy numbers. Younger children, as young as four or five years old, were forced to be boarders; far too young, but their families had no alternative due to the war. The older boys looked after them fairly well.

### **Extramural Life**

Boys were very cut off from the outside. There was an annual Grammar Ball in the Albert Hall – OK for those who went to dancing class, but agonising for those who had little experience in dancing. All were expected to take the poor girls, who themselves did not know any better. There was little in the way of acting, public speaking, plays, and such like. Contact with the other gender was a matter of more talk than do. Socially, we were quite inexperienced and unprepared.

### **School Cadets**

The .303 rifles disappeared from the cadet corps for active service, and we were issued with Boer War carbine weapons. The boys arranged a scheme by which we were changed to a cadet uniform of khaki and cadets went to a number of camps and officer camps, and extended to Air Force Cadets and Naval Cadets, and a Scout troop was started. Those who were not in a cadet unit when the war had begun were in other non-military type of work, like community service.

### **School Spirit**

School spirit was quite good. We were proud of our old boys' service record, and we had regular rostered matches between Scotch and St Patrick's schools in cricket, tennis, football and rowing.

### **Food Rationing**

Food was rationed, including sugar, tea, butter, meat, as was clothing. It must have been a burden for parents, as they had to give quantities of ration coupons to the school for bedding, boarders' clothing, etc.

### **Music and Art**

Music and art was practically non-existent, though later on migrant teachers, especially Dr Werther came out and played some records. I was one of two or three who were learning to play the violin privately. Peter Sculthorpe, who in later life became a world-famous composer and performer, was learning the piano privately and was composing even as a school boy. Trevor Sorell played the chapel organ as well as playing at Holy Trinity in town. I was not aware of any other musical education at the school while I was there.

### **Religion**

As a Christian school, which had a prominent and lovely school chapel, services were held before school. The boarders walked to St George's Church in Invermay and back for evening church every Sunday. There were a number of times the King called the nation to prayer, and crowds would attend churches when the nation was at risk of losing the war. The rector of St George's Church, Canon Lansdell, acted as school chaplain and came for a period with each class on Fridays. Few boys were Christian in any deep sense. Hugh Hadrill, Oliver Heywood and I formed a prayer group of our own, and tried to present Christian life before an uninterested lot of boys. It was our own family backgrounds that gave us faith rather than school influence, although the Christian ethics fitted well into our belief at school. It could have been much better than it was. The acting headmaster, HV Jones, in my view gave a good example in his church life, and Canon Lansdell who was acting chaplain helped a little, though he had



his funny (strange) ways. This last clause does not add anything without a summary of the strange ways.

### **Physical Education**

Apart from compulsory sport on two afternoons a week, and Saturday mornings if selected for a team, we had the gymnasium classes once a week. The boarders used the gymnasium a lot for physical activity throughout the week and at weekends. There was no hockey, cycling, soccer, rugby and other sports, other than those mentioned above. There was no real coaching of teams or athletics, though annual athletic carnivals were held without any real preparation of the boys. I did some boxing lessons of a type, but did not really learn much about it, as the teacher was too old.

### **In Summary**

Overall, I learned a lot at school. Apart from leaving home at the age of twelve, there were more positives than negatives. The prefect system allowed leadership without any punishment. I think I came out a better person than I would have been if I had not been to boarding school, learning to be independent and putting up with difficult things. Much of what was deficient was due to the war, but H.V. Jones continued to inspire the boys.

Memory, to some extent, is fallacious, but the overall story is correct for one boy. The experience would be different for each individual.

*John Morris*  
*[John died on 10 March 2017]*

# ***My Schoolboy Memories – Bertram ‘Snow’ Thomas 1942-1948***

## **Teachers, sport, cadets and school chaplaincy at Launceston Church Grammar School**

### **Memories of boarding school**

#### **Commencing School**

We (my twin brother Daniel and I) were born in 1931 and raised as ‘free-ranging’ farm boys at North Down, near Port Sorell.

My first memory of the school was being driven by our mother, sometime in November 1941, in her 1936 Buick to Launceston. We were interviewed by the acting Headmaster Vernon Jones and proceeded to Thomas Bourke’s (men’s outfitters) in Brisbane Street to be measured for tailored suits – short trousers, double-breasted coat – made from the best available English cloth.

Blazers with blue, black and white piping were not a part of school outfit unless one excelled in sport – having been awarded colours or half-colours. Ties were worn to class. Senior boys wore shirts with detachable collars held in position by studs. Shirts were not changed daily; collars were.

Our lives changed when we became boarders late in January 1942.

I recall being introduced to the matron, Mrs Irvine, and her assistant and housekeeper, Mrs Beveridge, both elderly (that is, seemingly much older than our parents). During my latter school years the matron was Geraldine Headlam, aunt of orphans Robin and John Archer of Woodside, Cressy.

We were conducted to our dormitory, Savigny IV and allocated a locker to hold our meagre possessions and shown our beds, a mixture of stretchers and Victorian iron bedsteads. There were seven beds along each side of the dormitory and bunks for eight or so on the balcony, which was open to the air except for a heavy blind that could be pulled down in the event of rain. It was not uncommon for those sleeping on balconies to wake to find frost on their blanket. Nonetheless, balconies were favoured due to their extra distance from patrolling housemasters. In 1942, beds were still made-up daily by maids who also waited on table. Those luxuries ceased during the year. Labour was in short supply due to the war; Australia was making an all-out effort to defend itself from the Japanese and to support our American ally. Domestic staff lived in the old two-storied Stephenson farmhouse adjacent to Savigny IV.

A senior boy, either a prefect or probationer, was placed ‘in charge’ of each of the six dormitories in use at that time. Ours was John Craze Henry Morris better known as ‘Mouldy’. He was generous with his time, talking with sympathy to new boys who might be homesick. He hailed from Sheffield.

For sporting and other competitive purposes, we were assigned to Savigny house. The other boarders’ house was Hawkes. There were two dayboys’ (‘dagoes’ to us) houses, Gillett and Wilkinson. They were later amalgamated when the number of dayboys became disproportionately low.

My first memory of school was on the day of our arrival, ‘big-boys’ Oliver Heywood, David von Stieglitz, Hugh Hadrill and others singing current hit-songs, “Does she love me, yes I know; Because the petals of the daisies tell me so” and *One Dozen Roses*. I wonder whether their choice of song was related to recent holiday activities?

We were placed in Mrs Huxley’s class – form 3A, along with six other boarders and three local day-boys. Most primary day-boys attended “Little Grammar”, operated by Mrs Nightingale,

adjacent to 'Annesbrae', the home of Dr G.H. Hogg, chairman of the School Board. Despite early homesickness, 1942 was a good year. Mrs Huxley's experience and skill enabled the small class, which was free of dunces, to complete its syllabus by August. The remainder of the year – to our great benefit – was spent extending our general knowledge.

### **School Life**

The school year was divided into four terms. We returned home only at term end. Mid-term long weekends were spent either at school or with families near Launceston. Boarders came from as far afield as Sydney. Vernon Jones assisted in finding hosts for boys with nowhere to go due to parents' wartime service, broken homes or death.

My first year at Grammar ended with Speech Day held in the old mechanics' institute. We schoolboys became very fidgety as Dr Hogg droned on for three-quarters of an hour. Presentation of prizes was more interesting. Most were good quality books about obscure subjects that Mary Fisher Book Club had had difficulty selling. I still have a copy of *Pancho the Great*, received as Form IVA English prize. Due to petrol rationing, few northwest coast parents attended. Their children returned home by train the next day. Broadland house broke up on a different day to avoid boys and girls behaving badly on the train journey.

### **Boarding House**

Life in the boarding house was spartan. The 'getting-up' bell clanged at 7 o'clock; no loitering in bed was permitted. Everyone, modest boys included, commenced their day with a cold shower; understandably brief in winter. Each bathroom had four or so open shower cubicles with leaden floors. Social and medical historians may note that circumcision was universal. We were unaware of our status until a boy who was 'different' arrived in 1946.

At its peak, probably 1946, there were 176 boarders. (This figure is disputed by Robin Jones who considers 172 was the maximum.) Hawkes 1 and Savigny 1, previously used for other purposes, were fitted out with lockers and bunks to accommodate the influx. Some of the smaller rooms across the main upstairs corridor were occupied by single housemasters. The 'dog-box', an architectural afterthought, was occupied post-war by Syd Evans and subsequently by Greville Vernon (Greville Richard Eustace 'Useless' Vernon).

Breakfast comprised of porridge, toast and vegemite or jam – IXL brand, usually plum jam ('axle-grease'), though occasionally a tin of much-prized strawberry jam appeared. Each boy's setting had a cube of butter. Some would use their knife to flick their ration upwards to adhere to the ceiling.

For a while we received tripe on Thursdays; few boys could manage to eat it. Fish-fingers on Fridays were little more appetising. Scrambled eggs (from powdered eggs) and bacon occasionally – a treat!

Tables were seated six a side. A probationer or prefect sat at each end. They enforced table manners and etiquette. Woe-betide any boy whose arm-above-the-wrist or whose elbow rested on the table, or held his fork like a shovel, or knife like a pen. Each child had their own napkin ring.

Rowers, in their last fortnight of training were privileged, receiving steak and eggs; and jealousy. I was one. As captain of rowing, my farm-boy skills were used in the maintenance of the boats. They were constructed of ¼" or ⅜" clinkered planks. If a plank were split or sprung, I would repair it with a wooden tingle using clenched copper nails. During my rowing career, two tub fours dating from the 1890s were burnt to create boatshed space for post-war plywood hulls. What heritage lost! There were no eights. All competitive rowing was in fours. Unsupervised recreational rowing was permitted on Saturdays; we would row pairs as far as the Gorge, or to Pig Island, or up the Cut. Lifejackets were unknown. Dr. Lachlan Wilson was our coach, occasionally assisted by the headmaster 'Slide' Jones – so named from his exhortation to rowers, "S-l-o-w-l-y up the slide and thump onto it!"

I was good enough at running to represent the school in 880-yard and mile races. Interschool sports were held at the old NTCA grounds. The Grammar cross-country course included the bank, Joffre Street, crossing to the Mowbray racecourse, the Remount Depot, and return to the school oval.

Supervised homework in downstairs common rooms occupied between a half hour and one and a half hours, dependent on age. A half-hour was set aside at 11am on Sundays for boys to write letters home. It was compulsory.

The school day commenced with assembly (the whole school) on the chapel forecourt at 8:50am. Mr Jones would speak on matters of administration, sport, changes, the progress of the war – including deaths of old boys – and discipline. On one memorable occasion, he publicly expelled an unfortunate boy who had been observed smoking at the Star Theatre. He concluded with, “You are a skunk, lad!”

During my seven years boarding, I was given several responsibilities. They included bell-ringing (I had a watch and was conscientious), collection of mail (seldom more than twenty letters), ink-monitor, probationer, prefect, and captain of boats.

Top positions in most subjects were shared between my brother, Jon Tyson, and me. My best friend was David Rolph. He had found the entrance to his grandfather’s cellar by lifting a carpet in his Elphin Road house. Nocturnal sherry parties were held above Hawkes IV balcony – the ceiling manhole accessed from a bunk.

I don’t know what escapade caused Miles Ford to climb a fire escape rope from Hawkes IV after lights-out. He could not avoid detection; he had the misfortune to break a downstairs window and gash his leg.

Some senior boys owned cars. On one occasion, three seniors, I think David von Steiglitz, Chris Evans and Stewart Rolph, dressed as adults (overcoats, hats, and ties) and drove to Freshwater Point, where they represented themselves as being from the Apple and Pear Acquisition Board. They acquired several bags of apples, which they intended to convert by fermentation to produce power alcohol. Good applied science, though disapproved by the headmaster!

### **Chapel**

After the daily 8:50am assembly, the senior school would march into chapel for a short service – one bible reading, one hymn. Teaching periods lasted forty minutes. My cohort was the last to study for the old intermediate certificate; important for pupils not proceeding to matriculation.

On Sundays, we attended two services. We were doled out our collection money, threepence or sixpence, by the housemaster before walking to St. George’s, Invermay (Canon F.H. Lansdell); the other service was in the school chapel. The chaplain for most of my schooldays was Rev Charlie Brammall. For a while, Grammar looked after a mission church in Inveresk (Saint Barnabas?). Services were conducted by schoolboys who had been confirmed. I recall having to read one of Bishop Stephen’s sermons to the lucky congregation.

Every fortnight or so there was a memorial service for an old boy who had lost his life. The first that I remember was for Peter Lord, whom I had known. He hailed from Devonport. He was shot down on his first sortie. Invariably the requiem hymn *O Valiant Hearts*, with its haunting tune played by Trevor Sorell would be sung, and with gusto, as was the practice in those days. Gordon Cawthorne, from the UK recently wrote, “Yes, I remember the chapel services when *O Valiant Hearts* was sung, and the hymn wrings the heart even more now than it did then.” ‘Boots’ MacIntyre was choir master.

## **Cadets**

All boys in senior school – excepting Trevor Sorell, whose parents were conscientious objectors – joined the Cadet Corps. Trevor, who spent his whole school and working life at Grammar, practised on the chapel organ on Thursday afternoons, whilst others practised drill or weapons handling. He became an accomplished organist. The Corps was managed by the school carpentry instructor, ‘Crutch’ Churcher. In his other life, he spent weekends handing out religious tracts. Weapons and uniforms were kept in the armoury, a solid brick building behind Savigny house. Uniforms, dating from the Boer War or earlier, comprised a dark navy-coloured jacket with brass buttons and red piping, a forage cape of similar colours and lace-up calf length jodhpurs. Puttees were wound around the lower leg. A well-polished leather belt was worn. In about 1945, the historic uniforms and rifles were sold and replaced with khaki uniforms and .303 rifles.

Martini-Henri .410 lever-action single-shot rifles and live ammunition were stored in the armoury alongside an old Winchester Hotchkiss and a Lewis machine gun. These were regularly dismantled and reassembled. Cadets were divided into platoons. Corporals and Lance-Corporals were appointed. Much of the cadets’ time was spent cleaning their rifles, the bore with a pull-through. For inspection, one held one’s thumbnail in the breech to enable the sergeant to examine the cleanliness and polish of the bore. Cadets received extra training at the Brighton camp, at the Evandale camp or at the nearby Remount Depot at Mowbray. Security of the armoury was not good. On one occasion, a couple of boys (rowers) broke in, borrowed rifles and ammunition, and using a rowing pair, went duck-shooting up the Cut. There was hell to pay! My only misdemeanour whilst a cadet was informing ‘Crutch’ Churcher that I had lost my ‘buggaree’ (meaning puggaree – the band on a slouch hat).

## **Away from School**

Amongst extramural activities were dancing classes held in the Masonic Hall, Brisbane Street, managed by Anthea Booth (nee Wood) and attended by girls from Broadland and MLC. Most boys, including me, required encouragement to approach the opposite sex. Being sister-less, I knew little of the nature of girls. Grammar held an annual ball in the Albert Hall. Selected parents, usually of daughters, held pre-ball parties to which they invited suitable Grammar boys, chosen, no doubt, by the headmaster, who had a good knowledge of Launceston society. Dances included: barn dance, waltz, quick-step, foxtrot, military two-step, Pride of Erin waltz, and the jolly Sir Roger De Coverley. I recall amused parents throwing pennies from the gallery to performers of the last.

Other activities included watching interschool cricket and football matches. Tram rides were relatively expensive. We would walk to York Park to see heroes Jock Connell playing for City and Gavin Luttrell for North.

Dayboys coming to school would leave their tram at the Retreat Hotel at the foot of the Mowbray Hill. Continuing incurred paying for another penny section. It was not unusual to walk as far as St Leonards to visit the Sculthorpes on a Saturday. Would a schoolboy be trusted on such an outing nowadays?

A cultural event I attended at the National Theatre in 1943 that stands out in my memory is the visit of the Boravansky Ballet; Tamara Tachinarova principal dancer.

I was a voracious reader. There was a school library, mainly novels, stocked largely with five thousand books bequeathed to the school in 1924 by Leonard S. Bruce. Some were not for young minds.

Often on winter mornings, standing in bright sunshine at the top of the bank, we would appreciate the fact that the school was sited at Mowbray; above the coal-fire induced smog that often shrouded the city and Invermay in those days.

## **War and Patriotism**

The school took control of boarders' food ration cards while the family retained control of clothes' ration cards. Near the end of the war, a British naval craft visited Launceston. As it passed Grammar, schoolboys standing at the foot of the bank (there was no road then) gave them a rendition of the school war-cry. It must have impressed the crew no end!

Patriotism was paramount. On one occasion in 1942, I was nominated by a group of five small boys to be their spokesman to advise the headmaster that he was harbouring a German spy on his staff. Douglas Moon claimed to have seen Mr Peron, the French master signalling with a mirror to someone in Trevallyn. Audley Pike had seen him conversing in Vermont Road with a woman who looked like a Communist (Russians had been on the German side in invading Poland). Vernon Jones let us down lightly, saying that, "He's certainly a strange man, but couldn't be a spy."

Senior boys dug four-foot deep slit trenches in the abandoned vegetable garden. Ours was dug by Goodwin and Harvey. Some were roofed over with timber, iron and soil. They proved ideal for illicit smoking. The only occasion that I was caned was for smoking; six-of-the-best from the headmaster for smoking on the train returning from holidays. I denied it because I wasn't, so I was punished for lying.

I took satisfaction in that he broke the light bulb with his final upswing! His informant had misinformed him. I had smoked on the homeward journey. I was a literal-minded boy.

VP (Victory in the Pacific) day is another to remember. At 10.00am, the headmaster advised teachers and all that they could leave the school grounds to go to see what was happening in Brisbane Street and need not return until evening. No one went astray. Hunger brought them back.

## **The Headmaster**

It was not until 1946 that returning prisoners confirmed that the headmaster, Captain Norman Roff, who was serving in Timor, had died in 1942. Acting Headmaster Vernon Jones was at last appointed to the position. He had carried the school and the school community with skill and tact. Good teachers were scarce. Food was rationed. Home and a feeling of security were provided to boys with no home. He managed on a tight budget. He had the respect of all. Sadly, during his tenure, the opportunity to purchase the Bethune oval adjacent to the school had to be foregone.

He was tolerant of human weakness. The groundsman, George Drinkwater, was an inveterate gambler and heavy drinker. He lodged in a room off the old wooden gymnasium. On Wednesdays he would open the tuck shop, also off the gymnasium. When I had enough saved from my 1/- weekly pocket money, my special treat was a pie with tomato sauce for threepence. Vernon Jones also gave employment to George's brother Harry on occasions, when he was not in prison!

Vernon Jones time-tabled himself to teach each form for one period a week, thus coming to know all school pupils. His subject was English. His pupils recall the screeching sound of his injured right-hand second finger scratching blackboards as he wrote with chalk. It was caused by an infection when he was working as a shearer in his youth. His three sons, Robin, Peter and David, attended Grammar. To their advantage, he granted them no favours. He received sound support from his motherly wife, May.

## **Teachers**

There are certain to be inaccuracies in the following notes, relating to teacher and the subjects taught.

Putting the only women teacher – apart from Mrs Huxley – in my time first:- Joan Hortle, at age sixteen or seventeen, taught kindergarten classes in the converted sick bay. The year was

1948. She had a brother, David, at school. I protected her from the attention of other senior boys.

Laurence 'Boots' MacIntyre was the longest serving teacher. I think he also acted as bursar, assisted by his sister Ruby Howard. Many of the teaching staff were elderly. Fraser, Harry, Huxley and Isherwood would have received their training during Victoria's reign. They were recruited from retirement to take the place of teachers who joined up early in the war.

Hugh 'Yog' Fraser. Short in stature and hard of hearing, had been principal of the Gordon College – later Institute – in Geelong in 1896, before coming to Launceston. He taught calculus and applied maths. He once asked me my name, and then told this classroom story: "What is your name lad?" Reply, "Tom, sir." "What is the rest of it, lad?" "Ass, sir." "That is correct, Thomas."

He asked the next boy his name: the reply, "Jack, sir." "Are you sure?" asked the teacher. Answer, "No sir, it must be Jackass!"

Mrs Huxley was teaching 3A in 1942. The following year her husband, Mr Huxley, came out of retirement to teach English (?). He lasted a couple of years before dying on the job.

Mr Isherwood was tall and dignified but stooped, probably in his mid-seventies, and likewise came from retirement. He died after a short while.

Neither Huxley nor Isherwood died from stress. Pupils respected them and behaved well. Both had taught my father a generation earlier at Hutchins 1915-1917.

'Yak' Harry, also elderly, taught English and inspired a love of literature and poetry in many of his pupils.

'Boots' McIntyre, aforementioned. I was an alto voice in his choir before my voice broke. I was, justifiably, not invited to re-join later!

Dr Wilfred Tenniswood, English and history. Though small in stature, maintained perfect order in class by use of irony.

'Paunch' Peron. French from Alsace. Did not last long.

'Hop-a-long' Donoghue. In his forties. He taught mid-school physics and maths. Despite his handicap, he devoted considerable time to training athletes.

Vivian Monds Lloyd. Launceston born. Dedicated teacher. Taught Latin and English. Housemaster. Single.

'Troppo' Ted Heywood. Taught French. He had been smuggled into Timor by submarine to establish contact with Australian troops at large. I took French coaching at his home. Upon arrival at his home, his wife would sometimes signal silence while he completed a piano concerto.

Syd Evans. Resident. Assistant housemaster after discharge from Navy. Did not teach.

'Snifter' Robbins. Housemaster. New Zealander. He was prone to sniffing. Whilst silently patrolling dormitories after lights-out, his position was often given away by the crunch of sugar sprinkled on the floor!

Lindsay 'Creeper' Hunter. Housemaster. Unpopular. Too ready to use the cane.

Greville Richard Eustace Vernon. Single – married later. Housemaster. Taught maths (?).

David Mattingley. Ex-serviceman.

Maxwell Albert Percy Mattingley M.A., taught the classics and geography. Appointed to headmastership of all souls at Charters Towers.

'Jimmy' James. English teacher. Like Vivian Lloyd, he was very thorough in marking pupils' work. Colourless, but thoroughly professional.

Harry Reinmuth succeeded 'Crutch' Churcher as carpentry instructor. Harry carried a remarkable quantity of gear in his lengthened motorbike sidecar.

Mr McCracken. Did not last long – for good reason!

No doubt there were other teachers and staff whom I have forgotten.

Boys of my time and older, when they hear the words and tune of *O Valiant Hearts* (below) still think of the boys with whom they were at school; who went straight into a defence service and did not return; many, the brightest and best of their generation.

### **Requiem hymn - O Valiant Hearts**

The hymn that wrings the heart of those who sang it during the war years.  
Hymn 632 in 'Songs of Praise' – The hymnal used in the Grammar chapel.  
Words by Sir J.S. Arkwright, 1919. (Sung to *FARLEY CASTLE 10,10,10,10*)  
(Alternative tunes ELLERS and ST. AGNES)

O Valiant hearts, who to your glory came  
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame;  
Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,  
Your memory hallowed in the land you love.

Proudly you gathered, rank on rank, to war,  
As who had heard God's message from afar;  
All you had hoped for, all you had, you gave  
To save mankind – yourselves you scorned to save.

Splendid you passed, the great surrender made,  
Into the light that nevermore shall fade;  
Deep your contentment in that blest abode,  
Who wait the last clear trumpet call of God.

Long years ago, as earth lay dark and still,  
Rose a loud cry upon a lonely hill,  
While in the frailty of our human clay,  
Christ, our redeemer, passed the self-same way.

Still stands his Cross from that dread hour to this,  
Like some bright star above the great abyss;  
Still, through the veil, the victor's pitying eyes  
Look down to bless our lesser Calvaries.

These were his servants, in his steps they trod,  
Following through death, the martyred Son of God;  
Victor he rose; victorious too shall rise  
They who have drunk his cup of sacrifice.

O risen Lord, O shepherd of our dead,  
Whose Cross has bought them and whose staff has led,  
In glorious hope their proud and sorrowing land  
Commits her children to thy gracious hand.



GENERAL HYMNS

632 FAIRLEY CASTLE, 10 10, 10 10.

ROSE LEWIS, 1818.

A-cant.

HARBOR, 10 10, 10 10.

REV. C. HARRIS.

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COMMUNION OF SAINTS AND LIFE EVERLASTING

[By permission of the Composer.]

ALTERNATIVE TONES, ELIZABETH, No. 41, and St. Agnes, No. 104.

Dr. J. S. Attridge, 1818.

**O** VALIANT heroes, who to your glory came  
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame;  
Trapezoid you lie, your knightly virtue proved,  
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved.

\*2 Proudly you gathered, rank on rank, to war,  
At who had heard God's message from afar;  
All you had hoped for, all you had, you gave  
To save mankind—youself you scorned to save.

\*3 Splendid you passed, the great surrender made,  
Into the light that never more shall fade;  
Deep your commitment in that best abode,  
Who wait the last clear trumpet-call of God.

4 Long years ago, as earth lay dark and still,  
Rose a loud cry upon a lonely hill,  
While in the frailty of our human clay,  
Courage, our Redeemer, passed the self-name way.

5 Still stands his Cross from that dread hour to this,  
Like some bright star above the dark abyss;  
Still, through the veil, the Vicar's pitying eyes  
Look down to bless our lesser Calvaries.

6 These were his servants, in his steps they trod,  
Following through death the martyred Son of God;  
Victor he rose; victorious too shall rise  
They who have drunk his cup of sacrifice.

7 O risen Lord, O Shepherd of our dead,  
Whose Cross has bought them and whose staff has led,  
In glorious hope their proud and sorrowing land  
Commits her children to thy gracious hand.

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Eighty-five years on and 'Snow' still has in his possession letters which he wrote home to his parents whilst boarding at Grammar during the war years. They are transcribed in the Appendix.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Peter Ross Jones 1945-1948*

### **Alumni Newsletter, December 2016**

*Kim Nielsen-Creeley*

Peter Ross Jones (Class of 1949) has sent a letter after he met with Kim Nielsen-Creeley (LCGS archive research assistant) in the chapel at the Launceston Grammar Remembrance Day Service; both then realising they had previously spoken to each other on the phone and made notes about his school days. Peter initially described his years as a boarder at Launceston Grammar as “a cultural desert” – he dreaded the weekends and organised sport. He missed the books his mother had at home, not just novels but a children’s encyclopaedia in twenty volumes with stories that stimulated his interest in faraway places. He dreamed of sailing the Inland Sea, the body of water that separates Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, three of the four main islands of Japan. Peter served with the Royal Australian Navy, and went off and saw the world, and did sail the Inland Sea. From 1959-1996 he farmed at Wynyard and now lives at Orford with his wife Valerie. When we did speak earlier this year, he told me about his love of working and turning Tasmanian timber and the thousands of different shapes of chess pieces in the world. He likes to get about, and forage for timber and loves this offshore island we call home. Many are compelled to leave and some come back, as he has.

#### **A note from Valerie**

*As you know, Peter spends a lot of time in his workshop either turning mainly Tasmanian timbers into chess sets, eggs, or whatever else takes his fancy, and making fine furniture; chests of drawers, tables for family members and in recent years large boxes of blocks for children, which he gives away to schools and such all over the state. Recently, we took five boxes to the Campbell Town Primary School for the infants class. This said, you will see that I have included a photo of Peter’s hands at the lathe, a rather emotive picture I believe.*



Below is a transcribed section of his hand-written letter, which he sent this week that we will also add to the biographical files. You will see that Peter Jones, and I suspect other old boys, have been trained in the art of the handwritten letter.

### **Peter Jones's Perspectives**



My considered opinion of my school days is not nearly as bleak as the picture that I painted in our telephone conversation of a month or two ago.

First point is what a boarding school means to a youngster: he is no longer held by apron strings, he grows into his own person.

Second, he learns to appreciate good food, because he learns what awful food is like. He eats it every day in the boarding house.

When I left school at the end of Form 10, I knew that I had had the best education that was to be had. I had been told – by Grammar - that Grammar was the best school.

*Peter Jones, a rare photo without a beard in the 1970s*

A year later, I no longer believed that because I realised that I knew nothing and was possessed of no useful skills. A year or two later, I had again altered my view because I realised that I had been taught how to learn; and learn I could, if I had the desire to put my mind to it.

I have, and always have had, a debt to the teacher Mr Ted Heyward, for giving me and fostering in me a love of the English language, which has helped me in many ways, although it is sufficient to love the language for its own sake.

My class in 1947 or 1948 was lucky to have a teacher of speech. His name escapes me, but he was at Oxford or Cambridge, though Australian. This was a one-year experiment by the school, but it was not continued.

History to me was meat and drink, and still is. I am amazed by people who don't know who William the Conqueror was and look blank at the mention of 1066.

The practice of caning should never have continued as long as it did because it was an assault on the dignity of the boy. I could see that it never amended behaviour in a boy. Mostly, an explanation would have done better.

The compulsory writing of a letter to a parent, always after Sunday morning chapel, set a pattern that was a life-long benefit.

My six years in the Navy 1951-57, was a continuous exercise in letter writing, several a day when at sea. Everybody wrote letters because of the sailors' saying that if you wanted a letter you wrote a letter. How wonderful it was, on the infrequent days on which mail came, to find ten or fifteen letters in one mail.

With hindsight, I also realise that mess/deck life fostered conversation. Boarding school prepared one for the rigours of shipboard life.

I found school sport of the cricket and football kind to be a waste of time. It literally was for me, because I wanted to use my out of school hours digging in the sizable school garden. The opinion of the then headmaster, HV Jones, was that sport was the thing! Lessons were something to fill in the hours when one was not hitting or kicking a ball.

I found I had a talent as a long-distance runner but as I was only fifteen-years and four-months old when I left school, I was only just developing my physical strength.

I remember George Drinkwater who was the school's 'Mr Fixit' and gardener. Almost every day he had to pump water from the dug-out under the classroom block so that he could light the boiler. I frequently helped him.

I was the youngest but one in my class. William ‘Bill’ Oldham (Class of 1950) was two or three months younger than I, and we were, I think, eighteen months younger than the class average. A fourteen-year-old cannot compete with sixteen-year-olds, although Bill Oldham and I were both in the top of the class in some subjects.

I left school at the end of 1948, having passed my schools board certificate examinations. It was understood that I would go home to my father’s farms and, if I wanted to, after a year I could go back to school. I felt at the end of the year that, after having worked with men, I couldn’t return to being a schoolboy. My father employed six or eight full-time men and up to a dozen seasonal workers.

*Peter Ross Jones*

One final note from Peter as we continue our correspondence...

*The first thing about boarding school was that it weaned a boy. Any cattle breeder will understand the meaning in that statement. H.V. Jones often spoke to us of our duty to serve; that we had to give service. He didn’t ever say to whom we had to give service or in what way we would serve. He left that up in the air, and, as a consequence we left school with an itch on our conscience that spurred us to do things for society, for community, for country, for others.*

*That was H.V.’s gift to the school, in fact, his legacy.*

**Note:** Peter now lives on a cliff-top at Orford with his wife Valerie. Thank you Peter for your personal perspectives on school and life.

### **Peter’s Memories of the Boarding House at LCGS**

My first memory is waiting with my mother in the waiting room between the headmaster’s office and the office of the housemaster. These offices were in Hawkes and Savigny houses respectively, and behind the waiting room was the quadrangle where the boarding house bell was hanging.

There was another new boarder in the room. He was twelve or thereabouts. He was rather teary, so my mother gave him a hug to cheer him. Less than ten years later he was dead. He had gone head first between some rollers in the Paper Mill in Burnie.

Then came the memory of memories. In the boarding house was a smell. It pervaded every nook and cranny. Eventually, I found it was the smell of cabbage that had been boiled for hours. The result was a pink substance that had once been cabbage. Some years later, when I walked into the dining room, I smelt something that could only have been from a cat’s regurgitated stomach contents, I told the housemaster about it. He told me to track it down. Finally, I discovered the source was the mince with onions that had been sitting too long.

The beds were memorable. The base was slats of wood interwoven with metal strips, not unlike but heavier than hoop iron. Many of the slats had broken and the result was that the body of the occupant had to be curled around the resulting humps.

There was a scheme whereby the boarders could contribute sixpence a week till the sum of twenty-one shillings was reached. This would buy a new bed and the name of the contributor would be engraved on a brass plate on the end of the bed. I contributed about fifteen or sixteen shillings, so no bed. I am unaware of anybody having a named bed; sixpence was a small fortune to a boarder.

Each week we were given sixpence – in Form 5 it could have been as much as nine pence. This was charged to our parents’ account. We were not allowed to have any other money. From this, we had to pay tram fares to go to rostered matches or to Launceston Technical College to attend tinsmithing or blacksmithing classes. Then, there were the weekly dancing classes in the town.

Each weekend, on Saturday or Sunday, I went to my grandparents’ house five miles away. If I caught the tram each way, I was broke before I had spent anything on myself. Frequently, I

walked the five miles to save a penny. To overcome this situation, I earned ten shillings in the holidays and kept it in a bowl on my grandmother's sideboard. A shilling a week kept me solvent.

Every Sunday night the boarders walked to St George's Church in Invermay for the 7pm evensong. I don't recall the source of the threepence we put in the church plate. The rector was the Rev Canon Mr Landsdell, who was also the school's chaplain. As a teacher, he conducted divinity classes, and he was unable to control us.

In 1945, when I started, we were required to perform something called 'national service'. This was work – unpaid and 'voluntary' for half an hour a week. I used to do far more than this. I recall that I dug around the macrocarpa trees in a two or three-year-old hedge separating the ovals on the northern side of the grounds from suburban Mowbray Heights. I did a lot of digging in the vegetable garden beside the boarding house. This was quite extensive and was the responsibility of George Drinkwater, who seemed to be responsible for everything that needed to be done around the school.

I dreaded the weekends because there was nothing to do. The library was a disgrace: it seemed that the latest acquisitions dated from just after the Boer War. One of its gems was *Brave British Soldiers and the Victoria Cross*. Its tone was jingoistic, bombastic and condescending. But I did learn from it that the father of one of our more ineffectual masters had won the Victoria Cross in the Boer War. This was the 5th Baron Gifford; his son Tony was the master. Eventually his brother became the 6th Baron but left no children, so Tony became the 7th Baron.

The masters who come to mind were Ted Heyward who was housemaster in 1945 and his deputy Trevor Sorell, who had been a prefect in 1944. In 1946, he became housemaster. Ted Heyward was a fine man and a good role model.

Robbie Burns' poem seems to describe them:

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!  
Our Latin master was Mr Lloyd.

Mr James lived in the headmaster's house next to Savigny House with his spinster sister. Maybe he taught history.

On thinking about the older masters who had spent their whole working lives as teachers – they were a colourless lot who seemed drained of character. I suppose that they had led lives of genteel poverty on what were probably meagre salaries. Their youthful vigour had been worn away by the repetitive nature of their work but they couldn't leave the teaching profession because they had no other skills, so they had to keep teaching until they could retire.

In my final year, 1948, I was in voluntary aid, Form 10.

One night, Mr Joscelyne was responsible for the orderly going to bed of each dormitory in its turn. I think it was in Hawkes Three that he walked the length of the dorm and, as he passed a boy who was bending over, he would smack the backside that was presented. This happened four or five times and each time he would say: "If you see it, hit it!"

I came in from the showers and there at the far end of the dorm, he'd foolishly bent down to tie his shoe lace. I ran down the dorm and kicked his up-turned backside and said: "If you see it, kick it!" The enormity of my action dawned on me and I raced back to the passage way, Joscelyne following, and was down the stairs in about two bounds. Fear lends wings to feet and out I went onto the main lawn where Joscelyne collared me. I admired him then because he laughed and frog-marched me back to the dorm. He showed himself to be a man.

Getting to school was an adventure. In the 1940s motor cars were not as widely used as they are today. There was still petrol rationing and quite a few cars had their own gas producers so that they had no use for petrol and were therefore able to go where and when they pleased. Most of the boarders travelled by train at the beginning and the end of each term.

The northwest coast was served by two trains at least five days of the week. The early train left Burnie at 7:33am and it was drawn by an 'A' class locomotive – coal-fired and steam-driven. These engines were small and not fast. At Lillico's Siding, east of the Forth River, the train would stop and then, before it could get up speed, it was faced with the Don Hill and it couldn't get up the hill on its first attempt, so it would come to a stop on the hill and have to reverse back down it. It couldn't get up the hill on its second attempt nor often on its third attempt. The driver would reverse the train back beyond Lillico's siding further each time, until, with the long run up to the hill, the train could build momentum sufficient to take it to the top of the hill and on to Devonport. We didn't mind the delay. We didn't want to get to school anyway.

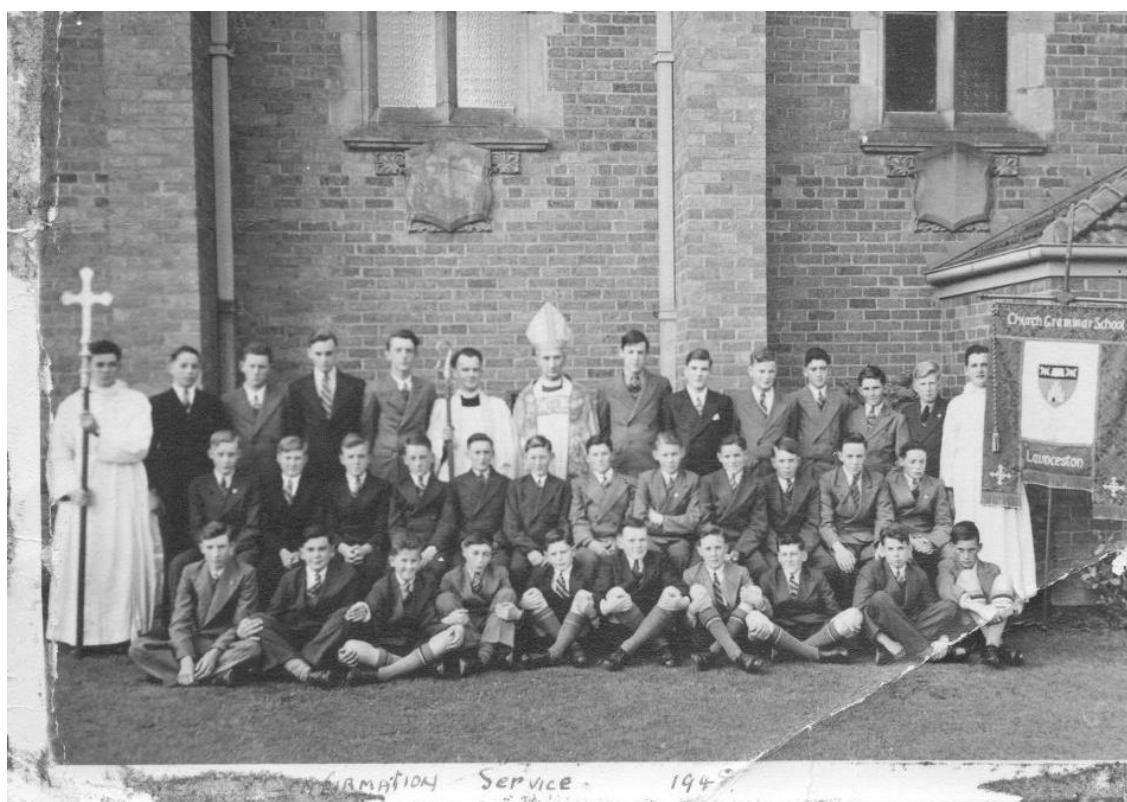
From the station in Launceston, we had to get to the school at Mowbray Heights, a distance of perhaps two miles. I suppose we caught a tram; we couldn't afford a taxi. Then from the tram stop at the end of Button Street, we would carry our case to the school – perhaps a quarter of a mile.

In 1946 or thereabouts, the Launceston City Council was faced with the need to rebuild Invermay Road, from the Tamar Street bridge for some distance northwards. Not for those days a fleet of heavy specialised machinery, but a small army of men with picks and shovels to dig out the black soil to a depth of one and a half feet or more, and many horse-drawn tip drays to cart it away. Into the excavation went innumerable bundles of tea-tree stems. These were called fascines and each was about six and a half feet long and one and half feet in diameter, bound somehow into a compact bundle. On top of these the road was built; they are probably still there.

## ***My Schoolboy Memories – Peter McIntosh Bridley 1946-1950***

*Peter was enrolled at Grammar in 1946 and completed his schooling in 1950 to take up a position with the Mercury newspaper at the end of January 1951. He still has a school metal badge that he wore on his first black cap the February he started school. He hated being sent to a new school, as he had been at Invermay State School and wanted to go to high school with his friends. He has fond memories of his school years, photographs of his confirmation with at least fifteen of his classmates, and of the annual cadet camp at Brighton in 1949.*

### **Confirmation class outside the school chapel 14 November 1948**



*Back row: Graeme Nixon (server holding cross), PHM Robinson, DA (Dennis) Frith, CJ (Chris) Binks, WRS (Bill) Chamberlain, Rev SC (Charles) Brammall (chaplain), Rt Rev GF Cranswick (bishop of Tasmania), WM Michael 'Sag' Curtis, JA Cross, TM (Tom) Busby, AR (Alan) Kay, GCR (Geoff) Best, MJ (Myles) Fisher, PR (Peter) Jones (server holding banner).*

*Middle row: CD (Charles) Bell, GF (Garry) O'Brien, PM (Peter) Bridley, JS (John) Prell, LT Parry, (unknown), RJ Cook, (unknown), GW (Graeme) Robinson, GHA (Alister) Keach, WP (Bill) Fisher, RE (Ron) Gee.*

*Front row: JE (Jim) Cameron, MA (Michael) Fitzgerald, KM Ezzy, PG Peter 'Mousey' Mercer, BA (Brian) Scott, RD (Bob) Gladwell, REA Richard 'Dickie' Hawson, RHC Gladman (uncertain), John Hurst, DG (David) Bennett, DC Loane and RND Radford (unidentified).*

*Jones and Gladman – uncertain.*

## The LCGS cadet band taken at Brighton camp 1949



*Drum major David Faulkner*

*Front row: David Youngman, Lyn Archer, John Scott*

*Middle row: Geoff Lethborg, Trethewie (bass drum), Ian Hosking*

*Back row: Barry Hawksley, Garry O'Brien, Peter Bridley*

### **Reflections on My Five School Years at LCGS, January 1946 to December 1950**

It is now sixty-six years since I left the school at Button Street in December 1950 and then commenced employment at the end of January 1951. A forty-year newspaper career followed with the *Mercury* in Tasmania. My life in the publishing industry took me to all states in Australia and to New Zealand, America and England.

My purpose in writing what I recall of my early school days and reflecting on them is perhaps to give some assurance that what I learned at Grammar was possibly the best available at the time. From our teachers and my fellow students, what I experienced eventually helped to involve myself in an income-earning activity, where I learned to work for someone else, with great fortune and self-effort. Most of you who read this item will also have had a career and found a great partner with whom to raise your own family. With my four sons, I have enjoyed a happy family life. Of those I first met on going to Grammar in 1946, many have had different careers, taking many different paths. Sadly there are few who remain.

Looking back now, it was a huge change for me to go to Grammar. At first I was not happy in the move. My departure was from Invermay Primary School, where I had my primary education.

In my first year at Grammar, Miss Stubs – the headmistress at Invermay Primary, whom I remember as grey-haired – transferred to the Grammar preparatory school in High Street, having been appointed as headmistress there.

I was aware of student bullying at the primary school. I knew to run when tackled by more than one next to our home; they were usually after money. I had no bullying problem myself, nor heard of similar activities at Grammar.

My new school was a huge change; more discipline and all male teachers, who wore black gowns and used a raised podium at the front of class. There was a form teacher to start the first lesson of the day and then a separate teacher for the other subjects. I never saw a class teacher wear shorts as we students did. At Grammar, each school day commenced with a short service



in chapel, where the pews faced the centre aisle. At my St Georges Church in Invermay, which boarders attended on Sunday, we sat in pews facing the altar.<sup>45</sup>

Trevor ‘Tadpole’ Sorell was the housemaster for the boarders and a form teacher. He played the chapel organ. I think the headmaster led the reading and often conducted the service. There were no fire drills in class. In war mode at primary school, we did have air raid training.

The two Hudson brothers, Don and Leigh, were Catholic and didn’t go to chapel. I cannot recall the Rev Brammall being school chaplain until about 1948. He became my form master and I was in the chapel confirmation class in 1948 (see photograph above). At Grammar, ‘Boots’ McIntyre was our choirmaster. I had a couple of early morning rides to school in his small soft-top roadster car. He picked us kids up from a group waiting at our tram stop in Invermay and squeezed us in. At least three young kids would sit on a one adult bench front seat with little space left for the driver. Boot’s son, Alan, taught us art and I still have my first school Grammar prize book, which I earned in Form 4B. ‘I wish I could draw’, the sticker records. The special sticker with the school badge has my name on it and the headmaster, H Vernon Jones, presented it.

We hadn’t worn caps at primary school, so there was another difference. The first year at Grammar we had navy blue caps with a metal badge, which I still have; shirt, tie, grey jumper and shorts uniform, plus socks and such. In later years, the cap was a lighter blue with a woven badge.

I soon learned that the teachers had nicknames. Silver-haired and possibly the oldest, and a kindly, very experienced teacher, was ‘Yak’ Harry. Nicknames were also widely used by the students for their fellow students. I liked mine as ‘Brid’ but there were a few others that weren’t so kind. Another noticeable difference in class was that we sat in surname, first letter of the alphabet, order. In 1946, the bulk of my class had been at ‘little’ Grammar. Fellow students who were boarders included John Archer (from Cressy), Tom Busby (Wynyard), Peter Blundstone (Flinders Island), Rex and Earl Kabalzar (Ulverstone) and Alan Kay (Irishtown), in the far northwest. John Archer and Tom Busby had older brothers who also were boarders. My class friend, John Curtis, and his older brother, Michael, who was a class ahead, had come from Friends School in Hobart – their father, Trevor Curtis, had been employed previously in the capital city. The other dayboys in Form 4B came from east Launceston and Trevallyn schools. I regarded John Curtis as possibly the cleverest in my class.

At Grammar, four of my years were in classrooms on the first floor and the fifth year classes were on the ground floor. So much for the saying in education jargon of ‘going up a class’. We sat two to a desk at Grammar, starting alphabetically at the left of the room furthest from the door. I think the letter ‘B’ completed the first row in order from John Archer, John Barrenger, David Burton, and next to me, Robin Bessant. In front of us there were Charlie Bell and John Bell, who were not related to each other. Behind me there was Peter Blundstone and Tom Busby. Over the next aisle was the ‘C’ group, which included John Curtis and Jim Cameron. In winter, this building used a boiler in the basement, which put some heat into the classroom. By winter, I was happier at Grammar than on my first arrival there.

In my first year in 1946, I formed the opinion (and I may be wrong in saying this) that at least three teachers may not have been fully qualified. I will not name the teacher, but one embarrassed me in front of the first-year writing format class by saying: “Bridley, Bridley common noun. Parse him up and parse him down. Neuter gender. Hopeless case. Governed by his ugly face.”

Another boarder, a bit slow in class and certainly from the bush and a farming background, was quite frequently asked to spell the name of the area he came from during lessons, which was Nabageena. At twelve years of age, this was a place I had never heard of.

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<sup>45</sup> Chapel design, like the choir of a cathedral in English public-school tradition.

I recall the headmaster, who always wore a mortarboard hat (they were not called principal at any school back then). Very early in that first year he gave our class the challenging task of producing, with some pride for the school, what he said was the school's "grand" entrance. To the right of the front gateway, between the tennis court and fence, was a triangular area of overgrown bushes and long grass. Our class had to clear this space to lawn level and give it flower garden borders. We students did the work that year in our own time, out of class. There were no power mowers or whipper snippers back then.

I think it was also in 1946 that we students heard that an older school scholar, Peter Rae, had won a scholarship by examination to join the Navy, become a midshipman and that at the beginning of 1947 he would leave to study for this career at Jervis Bay in NSW. In about 1949, he returned to school saying he hated life in the Navy.

I think it was in 1947 when some of us, including my friend John Curtis, became interested in pursuing a naval career. John often argued with a teacher about inaccuracies in maths and other subjects and was invariably found to be right. John and some of us, having showed an interest in sailing and the sea, were offered coaching to sit the naval examination. I am not sure who it was but I think it was a teacher named Lowe, Lowery or a similar name, who had given the two Curtis boys some additional coaching earlier. Both John Curtis and Doyne Hunt passed the exam and were accepted. They left Grammar for the Navy, possibly by December 1947.

I have a memory of a young English boy named Michael Rackstraw arriving. We were asked to treat him kindly in class, because he was a stranger from overseas and may have suffered some effects from the war. Another project was for us to have a penfriend. We were given the names and addresses of the UK school students of the same age to whom to write. I know I wrote to a boy a couple of times and got replies, but I don't believe the teacher involved did any following up or provided ongoing assistance.

In my second Grammar year, John Curtis, Dale Orchard and some other dayboy class mates, Robin Bessant, John Lord, Ian Hosking, Jim Tregaskis and Ian Millen, along with students from older years and I were in the YMCA Scout troop, and for some of the following years. For the first time our troop won the Governor's trophy, which was usually won by the Derwent Sea Scouts. It was given to us for the way we conducted our camping sites, food cooking and navigation expertise at the Scout Association's Corra Lynn Island. The Governor, Sir Hugh Binney, presented the trophy.

We dayboys gained a benefit that the boarders did not have. We gathered weekly in the Brisbane Street YMCA gym and played basketball. Clarrie Boon, who was at the Launceston State High School and a good footballer, was always the last we tackled at the game British Bulldog. It is interesting that Clarrie Boon and wife Lesley, in later married life, sent their son David to Grammar and David later became the well-known test cricketer.

In the Scouts, we had only small group packs of six or seven. Classmate Dale Orchard, Jock Millen from Grammar and I were in the 'devil' pack, as well as Clarrie Boon and Ewan Scott from Launceston High. When still a young Riverside schoolteacher, Ewan became a Tasmanian hero. He died in the Cradle Mountain National Park saving some school students caught in a blizzard.

For internal school competitions, the students were allocated to different houses. In my five years, the boarders had a sufficient number of boys to have two separate houses, Hawkes and Savigny, for school competitions. However, the dayboys were about a third of the school population and had one house called Gillett-Wilkinson. Our house colours were red and white.

From Grade 2 onwards, we all sat in class, each of us at separate and new single desks with top lids. The student number of our age group was so large that we separated into two classes: 4A1 and 4A2 in about 1949 or 1950.

By 1947, there were several new class students. Among them were two boarder friends I gained for life who came from Devonport and had gone to primary school together. They were Peter

Clements and John Scott. Three former Invermay classmates also joined me at Grammar. They were Barry Courtenay, Barry Hawksley – who was the first Legacy scholarship student, so we were told – and Ray Morrison, whose parents owned the popular lollyshop opposite Invermay Primary School. There were other boys from Sheffield, the northwest coast and from towns in the Fingal Valley. All these were new friends I probably would never have met had I not been at Grammar.

We played some good team sport against old mates at the Launceston High School. The football matches were rostered on Saturday morning and were played at Invermay Park and also on grounds near the Kings Wharf area, both long gone now. Many of the games were played in the thick fog and rain of Launceston winters. Grammar gym had cold showers, only to remove the mud, back in those five years. It was the private schools, St Patrick's College and Scotch College, who were our sport opponents.

From 1947 on, members of my school class had far more representation in sporting competitions in which Grammar was successful than in earlier war years. In summer, swimming was held in the old twenty-six yard pool at school. We were engaged at times in cementing the ground around the pool. I did the trials for my bronze lifesaving badge in the pool. I had wins at Grammar and at carnivals elsewhere in Tasmania. I had a good stroke style and roll turn.

We played cricket on cement pitches. There was a proper rolled pitch in the main oval in front of the gym for summer cricket matches, and in winter for football. I found it odd back then that some former primary male schoolmates played hockey at high school. Basketball, which I played at the YMCA, and hockey were not team games played at Grammar in my five years.

I rowed at school and a classmate, Eric Waddingham – who lived next to the hill steps in Button Street<sup>46</sup> – had some canoes in which class lads and I explored the Tamar River shoreline near the school.

In 1946, Sergeant Robinson introduced me to proper training in physical gym activity. He was outstanding in showing us the parallel bars, wooden horse and other physical activities, and was admired by most of those in my class. We had two gym periods a week. He left the school at the end of 1947.

The two or so years during which I studied the French language was a complete waste of time for me. The teacher's name was Haywood and I was not enthused to try to read books written in French language.

Woodwork was held once a week in the then small weatherboard clad workshop, sited over the riverbank hillside, with Mr Reinmuth as instructor. In those days there was no power equipment. It was all hand tools with which we worked. I enjoyed woodworking. In 1950, we had a weekly woodwork class with Mr Nott as teacher. I got two points in woodwork towards my School's Board certificate exam, which took place in the Albert Hall. My father, with a furniture factory to manage, helped my study efforts.

In 1950, my last year, having been in classrooms on the first floor, we moved to one of two classrooms on the ground floor. Next door was the bursar's office, the physics laboratory classroom, and the toilet block at the southern end. Some short distance over gravel was the carpenter's weatherboard building. My last form master was Max Donoghue, who had a clubfoot. I thought well of him. He also taught us science and chemistry in another small weatherboard building nearby. Our then cleverest class student, Dennis Rose, who went on to become a Rhodes scholar, had a most retentive memory. Dennis absorbed whatever Max taught us in seconds and he spent the rest of the lesson at the back of the class teaching himself Esperanto. It was a language he reckoned would rule the world corridors of power. I did ask my lawyer daughter-in-law who, many years later, was working in the Canberra Attorney

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<sup>46</sup> A pedestrian right-of-way from McKenzie Street to Button Street.

General's Department with Dennis Rose, if Esperanto was used by him. She replied: "He is well thought of by all there."

'Kinky' Connell was possibly the teacher most spoken about by we students. He certainly gave a good punch or 'crow peck' to those not paying attention or giving the wrong answer. He broke a few hearts in the class one day, vivid in my memory. Bob Haslam from Beauty Point had an ancient family heirloom – a hand-wound record player. In between lessons changeover, the Haslam desk lid would be lifted and we could all enjoy hearing the tune *Barney goo goo and his googley googley eyes*. One day, teacher Kinky Connell heard it... and quickly smashed it! I think the best thing he gave any of my fellow students was for my friends, Barry Scott and Barry Luck. He taught them to high jump with the western roll. We also saw him teaching younger aged David Lean how to improve his athletics by placing a matchbox on the hurdle bar when training. David went on to success with a fine record in the Melbourne Olympics and a later productive life in America. Both Barry Luck's family and the Lean family lived within a suburban block, a 'stone's throw', from Grammar. On reflection, Kinky may have been interested in improving the athletics of only the talented students.

We had a rather interesting visiting speaker address the whole school in the boarders' dining room. I was most impressed and listened intently. The visit caused me to read some of the speaker's books. I felt that our honoured guest, the prolific Australian author Frank Clune, probably annoyed the headmaster. At the completion of his speech, Clune asked or told Headmaster Jones to give us students a day off school in the future weeks. I think we got one!

I believe the teacher who gave me inspiration for some of the direction I took later in life was Philip Mattingley during 1948-49, I think he served in the Navy in World War II. I noted recently in a school news magazine that he had a brother, also an ex-Grammar boy, who was a pilot in the war. I know that Philip left and went to Adelaide to teach before I finished my schooling. Many years later, about 1958, I had my then Derwent Class yacht *Pim* on the Tamar Yacht Club slip in Park Street. When I arrived from work to relaunch at high tide, Philip was there admiring my paint and varnish handiwork with his friend, a Launceston accountant and sail boat owner, Ces Honey. I thanked Mr Mattingley that day for the education he gave me and for the suggestions he made for my future work life. He was a good fine-looking bloke. I don't think he married.

During 1950, the assistant headmaster, 'Shooter' Parish, at my request, gave me a good school reference, which I used for an interview with the *Examiner* editor, Mr Williams, and also at the *Mercury*. Strangely, Shooter had very nice handwriting, considering that frequently in class on the blackboard we students saw the white chalk dizzy with handshakes. He and George Drinkwater, the Grammar groundsman (and not much for tap water), both imbibed on the hops. Both men had quite a reputation, as we students knew, at the two closest pubs to the school. Shooter drank at the pub at the top of Mowbray Hill, while George's watering hole was at the bottom – the McKenzie Street corner pub. I guess we had to admire how George, with very short legs (I still believe a former jockey), got back up the step laneway to the school.

Drinkwater had a room and bed at the north end of the gym on the western side. On the eastern side of the northern end was the tuck shop. The tuck shop had a slide to open and serve food over the counter to students waiting on the gym verandah. George had his room walls plastered with racehorses and jockeys in their colours. My cousin, the late Michael Wardlaw, was in my class and in charge of the tuck shop in my last year, 1950. I was one of his helpers. When it was busy at lunchtime, on the verandah was a very popular place to gather and eat pies, maybe hot dogs and sauce in bread and other tucker such as lollies, chocolates, square black licorice and drinks via the use of a fridge and an electric-oven warmer. There were occasions that puzzled me. I believe that Mike and a few others used to sit in George's room and smoke cigarettes like chimneys and, I guess, told a few jokes.

I remember a story of student Bill Ward who was a Smithton resident. One particular holiday, he was travelling home on a northwest train in one of those small-seated sectioned carriages. Prefect Peter Rae, who was on the train to Longford, doxed Billy in for smoking and Bill had

the usual headmaster's cuts penalty on return to school. The Rev Charlie Brammall, as a housemaster, was known for wearing soft shoes. He walked the passages in the evening in an attempt to catch boys smoking and was called 'Creeping Jesus'. As far as I know, cousin Mike Wardlaw – and no doubt his three younger brothers Tony, Chris and Tim – was not dobbed in or ever caught smoking at school. Never smoked during school days.

Dancing lessons whilst at Grammar were a surprise for me. In 1946, I went to dancing lessons with a group of the same age and older students after school one day a week, probably during the two middle terms. We went into the city on the tram. Bill Oldham and Jim Tregaskis went too. The first year we met the Broadland House School and Methodist Ladies College girls at a hall in Charles St behind the Coles store on the corner of Brisbane Street. There we learnt the waltz and quickstep, and later the progressive barn dance and the Pride of Erin. Much later, we learned the Hokey Pokey and others dances popular back then.

The next dance rooms we assembled at with the same girls was at the Freemasons' Hall, which is on the southern side of Brisbane Street, west of Tamar Street. The 1946 Grammar centenary fancy dress ball was held in the Albert Hall. Beforehand, others and I met in a special group of some dozen Grammar boys and BHS girls at a cake and tea party arranged by Jill Valentine in Arthur Street. Then we went to the Albert Hall. Megan Callaghan, a good tennis player, was a friend I think who got me in the group. In the hall, a section of seats was reserved for our group. I was dressed as an artist, with a beret and such, holding brushes and a paint splattered board, on which many of our group wrote their signatures. The names of an older student, Martin Kjar, and the girl he eventually married, are on the pallet, which I still have.

Later, for other school dancing classes, we travelled from Mowbray by tram to City Park, then walked through the park to reach Broadland House School, where girls from Methodist Ladies College also joined us. Bev Gooding was at MLC and she had been in my class at Invermay State School in 1945. Bev's older brother, Harry, was at Launceston State High School and captain of the football team we played against. He went on to play in the VFL. Helen Craw from MLC and I won some chocolates as a dance prize at the BHS. Now in our eighties, I have talked to Helen about that day. She now lives in Brisbane. Mrs Millen<sup>47</sup> took over during 1949 and 1950 from Mrs Booth,<sup>48</sup> who had taught us the first three years. In 1950, we were learning dancing at the NTCA cricket ground pavilion<sup>49</sup> and I cannot recall how we got there from school.

Dancing was a particular popular evening activity in those days all over Australia. In Launceston, there were two commercial dance halls operating in the middle of the week. In 1950, my family billeted a Hutchins boy in their rowing team. At his request, I took him to the dance hall in a building upstairs opposite the *Examiner* offices in Paterson Street, where we danced with the girls. All venues had bands to play popular dance tunes. A number of MLC girls went to nearby St Aidan's Church Hall for dances on Saturdays.

The days of tram and train passenger travel for school in Launceston have long gone. We students mostly sat on the trams in the open-air spaces with wooden seats.

At Grammar there was a fellow who was brought in specially to teach our class in drama and elocution. We entered competitions in poetry and drama on the stage at the Launceston competitions, which were held in the National Theatre. Mike Wardlaw was in a Grammar and Broadland school play at the National Theatre, playing the part of Shylock excellently in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. I remember student Rex Crothers had a leading part in *Auntie Mame*. At school, on Saturday evenings, there were occasional plays performed and I recall Jimmy James, John Barrenger and I performed some short comic skits; John and I in our

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<sup>47</sup> Enid Millen was the wife of old boy, Cecil Millen.

<sup>48</sup> Mrs Booth was the wife of Dr Kim Booth, and both were champion golfers at the Launceston Golf Club at King's Meadows.

<sup>49</sup> Probably the Northern Tasmanian Cricket Association grounds off Dowling Street.

cadet army uniforms. Piano and other musical instruments were not on the lesson list at Grammar in my time there. Things are much improved in the modern Grammar

Mike Wardlaw showed talent by writing a couple of plays. A student from Burnie, who was homesick, was thought to have been induced to stay at school to take part in the Saturday night classroom plays at school. Mike had written a part for him, but he absented himself from the school.

I recall 'Spud' Murphy was another who once did a bunk from school, and went home to Hobart. Spud told me that his father gave him a good talking to and sent him back to Launceston on the train.

Barry Holloway was a quiet lad in class. He became the most famous of my classmates in his after-school life. He became a patrol officer in Papua New Guinea and later gained a knighthood as Speaker of the PNG parliament.

I was in the school Army cadets from 1948 to 1950. During that time we had two different permanent or reservist army staff that came to the school to train us one day a week. There was a locked steel-door armoury shed behind the boarding house. In my three years in cadets, I believe, as well as our .303 rifles, I saw a machine rapid-fire Austin weapon, a Bren gun, a Vickers Machine Gun, plus our band drums and bugles in that store. I doubt there was any ammunition. One school holiday, I had extra special training at the school to gain a lance corporal stripe. I know I learned to pull both the Bren and Vickers to pieces to clean and put them back together. My cadet section charged to lead when marching was the machine gunners.

When at Brighton Army Camp, we marched to the T.C. Simpson rifle range – north of Pontville on the eastern side of the Main Highway – for shooting practice. We had a sandwich lunch there, as it was an all-day excursion. When in the band in my last year in 1950, we had a ride back from the range in a truck. Around the hills at Brighton, we also had mock battles with dummy hand grenades and blanks.

I wore the same uniform for the three years I was in the cadets. I cannot remember how we were fitted out for them. The webbing items – ammunition bags, straps, belts and gaiters – must have been in short supply as, after I left school, some other students got those from my parents when I was working in Hobart in 1951.

I have a memory of the Brighton Camp in 1948. We shared the camp hut site with migrants. They put on a stage show entertainment one night for us, including tumblers, trapeze artists, magicians and music, of which I hold happy memories. We didn't have a drum band in 1948. Our drum major in 1949 was David Faulkner. After leaving school, he worked in Melbourne for TAA airlines. John Scott was the drum major in 1950. Spanner Hood was the bass drummer in 1949. Often, I was called upon to play his drum. This happened on Anzac Day, when the school band marched in the parade in the city. At drum practice at school in 1949 and 1950, we basically taught ourselves the tunes and rhythm. We practised by ourselves in the lunch hour in the open near the gymnasium.

At my father's furniture factory there was a furniture joiner from Scotland who played the drums in the Launceston Caledonian Pipe Band. I was fortunate enough to go his Invermay home after school and we practised with my sticks on a board in his backyard laundry. One school holiday, I took a side drum home with permission from the school. This chap showed me how to pull it all to bits, re-wet and tighten both skins, and even paint the top and bottom wood edges in the school colours, and to make some nice rope-woven hangers as added decoration. In 1950, when we were on the annual Brighton Camp, the band team got me to show them how to do the other drum skins, which we did.

The photo of the 1949 band I am supplying doesn't show the buglers we had in 1950. They were Peter Dineen and Alan Grundy. The latter student, Alan, must have had the longest trip to his home of all the boarders. His father was based in shipping at Strahan. Alan had to travel by train to Burnie and then to the west coast on trains from Burnie to Queenstown or Zeehan.

John Scott sat next to me at school in my last year. Included in my class in my earlier years at Grammar was Leigh Hudson. Leigh, who now lives in the Philippines, was the youngest of four brothers, all of whom went to Grammar. The Hudson boys were from Trevallyn and were Catholics. They were lucky, as they did their homework in class early, while the rest of us had to go to chapel before the first lesson.

In my last year, 1950, classmate, Bob Lovell, and a student who was a couple of years younger, Bob Grierson, went down with polio. Bob Grierson was also a journalist with me at the *Mercury*.

In the school archives there is a photo of prefects – including a great grandfather of mine – which the archives dated to around 1860-70. He and his brothers were at Grammar in Elizabeth Street. Embossed books were given in those days bearing the prizewinner's name.

## ***My Schoolboy Memories – Peter Mercer 1946-1952***

*Amongst many other projects which Peter Mercer resolved to do when he retired was to put on paper his experiences in life and, in particular, to record his impression as a child of what Launceston was like in the 1940s, and growing up there half a century or more ago.*

*Peter achieved this in his book, A Brush with the Past: My Early Years in Launceston Tasmania, published in October 2017, on page 247, where he discusses his childhood experiences in an Australian provincial city, and in particular being educated at the Launceston Church Grammar School during the 1940s and early 1950s. This is an extract of some of his reflections on life at Launceston Church Grammar School, ‘big Grammar’ 1946-1952.*

By the end of 1945, the war had ended and our part of the world was at peace again. In February 1946, after five years at the Launceston Church Grammar preparatory school, I left forever the tender care of dear old Mrs Florence Nightingale and made my way out to the senior school – or ‘big Grammar’ as we called it – on the other side of town at Mowbray Heights. It was a momentous change for a timid little boy and I wondered what to expect. From then on I was to be taught by masters not mistresses. What would they be like? It was a whole new experience.

I remember that I was very apprehensive and scared on my first day. With nervous anticipation, I had been waiting for the fateful next episode in my life to come around. I had heard from older boys that the senior school had some very unpleasant initiation rites such as ‘dyking’, which involved thrusting the victim’s head down a lavatory bowl and then pulling the chain. My fears were unfounded as nothing like this happened. The only rite was ‘grassing’, which happened to all the new boys and was unpleasant but harmless enough. Boys, a form or two above us, took us forcibly down the bank below the school and stuffed our clothes with grass.

While it was a strange experience to have a master in a black gown in the front of the class instead of a mistress, my fears were short-lived. Caning was much less frequent than I had experienced at the preparatory school and usually only the headmaster inflicted that punishment. The masters were, in many ways, less frightening and more even-tempered than the mistresses.

Increased homework meant that I had to get a small case instead of a satchel. Getting to school was also a much greater undertaking, as I virtually had to go from one side of Launceston to the other. I had to leave home at 7:25am to catch the 7:30 tram at the Kenyon Street corner to travel to the city. This would arrive at the St John’s Street corner in Brisbane Street at 7:55am and at 8am, with my friends, I would catch the Mowbray Heights double-bogie tram, either number 27, 28 or 29, to Button Street, which got me to school in time for chapel service at 8:30am. If I missed the 7:30 tram I would have to miss chapel but still be in time for the first class of the day at 9:05am. If you were not detained by sport or cadets, you returned home on the 3:45 or 4pm tram from the bottom of the hill at McKenzie Street – to get to it there was a pedestrian right-of-way with a long flight of steps from Button Street that we called the ‘goat track.’ In 1952, during my last year of schooling, the trams ceased operating on every route. The last single-bogie tram to Mowbray was on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September and for a few months the double-bogies ran on the Newstead route, which was the last to be used. Then on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December, the Launceston trams became history. They were replaced by trolley buses.

### **School life**

At Grammar prep, Mrs Nightingale taught all subjects but at the main school it was very different. Throughout our senior school life at Grammar, we had a change of masters at the end of each period, for they specialised in different subjects. The day started with a 20-minute service in chapel and then to the classrooms. In those days, the masters moved around and we stayed in our classroom except for chemistry and physics when we went to the labs. The class periods lasted about 40 minutes and a bell on the upstairs verandah was rung twice to alert the master that his time was up. A boy, delegated and rostered with others to do the job, proudly



manned it. This was called the warning bell and two minutes later a full peal of the bell announced the changeover. After the first two periods of the day there was a ten-minute recess, when you could use the toilet. During the morning recess, three days a week at a given location, a senior boy took we juniors in squads of about ten or twenty for five minutes of physical exercises. In winter, it was a great way for warming up and getting the circulation going. With the dismal heating system in the classrooms, we needed it! For five minutes, we did our forwards, sideways, upwards and backwards, ‘cow-kicking’, press-ups, hip rolling, touching toes and so on, then returned to the classroom for a further two periods before the hour lunch break. In the afternoon, there were three periods before 3:30pm, when the bell sounded the end of the teaching day.

Some boys were given money to buy their lunch but most of our mothers usually packed a cut lunch of sandwiches and a slice of cake. Some fruit and cordial in a bottle were also usually included. We set off to school with this and our homework in our school cases. At morning recess, we would usually grab a sandwich out of our lunch tin to curb the hunger pangs. This was the time for the starving boarders to try and cadge a sandwich off the dayboys or ‘day-goes,’ as they called us. My mother was not the most innovative maker of interesting sandwiches for her poor children. She reserved her talents for the ladies’ bridge and solo parties. My usual lunchtime fare was sandwiches filled with raspberry jam, mint or tomato sauce and vegemite and crushed walnut and occasionally tinned spaghetti! I couldn’t stomach raspberry jam for years afterwards. To follow the sandwiches, I had two slices of date loaf stuck together with butter and also an orange or a banana or an apple. My sandwiches soon got such a bad name amongst the hungry boarders they gave up asking me, which was a relief but also a trifle embarrassing. Occasionally my mother would give me seven pence to buy a four-penny meat pie and a three-penny bottle of lemonade from either the school tuck shop at the far end of the gymnasium or the corner shop at the end of Button Street. That was like Christmas to me. Sometimes, if I had a bit of pocket money, I would deliberately leave my lunch at home and plan to go to the shop. Invariably, Mum would bring it out to school and embarrass me further.

At morning recess or the lunch hour in the lower forms, if we were not otherwise committed and had eaten our lunch, we played hopscotch, marbles and knucks – as we did at the prep school – and had yo-yos and water pistols at different times. They progressed and rotated as crazes. One would go out of fashion or interest and another craze would come in. Most of the crazes were harmless enough and were tolerated by the school staff but eventually a stand had to be made with water pistols. Being squirted with a water pistol was not much fun in winter, though in the warm summer months, getting a trifle wet was not unpleasant and virtually unavoidable. At one stage, at the height of the water pistol craze, nearly every kid in the junior school owned one and some of them had a reserve in their tanks to fire 500 shots! The good-natured battles we had during the lunch hour resulted in some of us being decidedly wet when returning to the afternoon classes. A crack down finally took place when the headmaster declared that any water pistol found at school would be confiscated and the owner punished.

### **Trying to Fit In**

The senior school was a completely new world to me. It was much larger and more impersonal than Grammar prep. Christian names vanished and everyone was called only by their surname, which was a bit hard to get used to at first. Soon I was Mercer to both the masters and the boys but after a few weeks, because I was small and quiet, I was nicknamed ‘Mousey’, and that name stuck with me for the rest of my school days. In fact, I enjoyed it. Mousey Mercer, or just Mousey, was better than being called plain Mercer.

A junior boy was on the lowest rung of the school pecking order and, if you were small and puny as I was, you were the target of the school bullies, which were by no means lacking in numbers. Most of them generated mainly from the boarding houses and they went around in packs of three to four terrorising the junior boys who because of their size could do little to defend themselves. I was one of many who were subjected to this reign of terror. Even if you went to a remote part of the grounds during the lunch hour, they would find you and try to

make your life miserable. From 12:30 to 1pm you were relatively safe as they were in the boarding house having their mid-day meal, but come 1pm it was off to the school library where there was refuge until the bell for the resumption of classes went at about 1:30pm. There was absolutely nothing you could do about it. I retaliated once after being jabbed in the back of the neck in chapel with the sharp point of a nail file. It really hurt. When outside, enraged, I punched the bully in the gut and winded him enough to get away. But inevitably, I was the loser. I really copped it from him and his pals when they cornered me later.

The bullies held you in constant fear. Telling on them was completely against the culture of the school. If you dared to go to a master your name was mud. You were branded as a 'tit'. After that the bullying would get worse and you would be singled out, even by your peers, as a tittle-tattle. Thereafter, as per the school code, you were considered a very low form of life. If you were being bullied, you couldn't even tell your parents in case they went out to the school and complained. If the bullies got wind of this you were in worse trouble. One day I can remember one of my dayboy friends being bashed so badly by a pack in a corner of the gymnasium that he was rendered unconscious and left by his attackers on the landing mattress in front of one of the vaulting horses. He was comatose for over an hour. After the sports master found him in mid-afternoon there was hell to pay. The culprits were soon ferreted out and paraded in disgrace before a school assembly in front of the gym after a severe caning by the headmaster. One, as far as I can remember, was expelled and the school was in fear of being sued by the boy's parents. For a period after that the frequency of bullying diminished.

Bullying was a middle school phenomenon. As I became older my fear of being bullied got less and less until, in the senior classes, it disappeared. Then, with other former victims, I diligently watched for any acts of this despicable practice that, in being a bigger boy, I could stop. But, in the few instances I managed to prevent bullying, there were many other incidents, which went unchecked. Where there are gatherings of children of different sizes, ages and with varying intellect in the school playground situation, human nature is always at its worst. Children are fundamentally cruel to each other. Girls practise mental cruelty. They can be very spiteful and humiliating to each other. Boys practise a bit of both but they mostly go in for physical cruelty. The disparity between the strong and the weak, the large and the small, is ever present. It is the law of the jungle, the survival of the fittest.

### **The Class System**

Instead of grades as in Grammar prep, the method of progression was by forms and the lowest was Form 4B, then 4A. The middle school was 5B and 5A. If there were more than thirty-two in the class, it was divided into two, for example 4B1 and 4B2. At the end of each year, if you performed satisfactorily, you went on to the next form. After 5A, you then progressed to 5B – which was the School's Board examination year – and then 6A, where you sat for the matriculation examination and then left school, usually university bound, if you were bright enough.

On our first day of each new scholastic year, we queued up at the bursar's office and received our textbooks and exercise books for the year. The bursar was Miss Robina Howard and her office was opposite the school library, along a corridor from the northern entrance to the school block, which opened onto the open back verandah and the quadrangle, where most of the school assemblies were held in my junior years. Over the years, I got to know Miss Howard very well. She was a kindly person. Occasionally, if I missed the early tram, I would travel out to school with her – we would walk along Button Street talking about school and other things. She was a motherly soul, someone you could confide in. At the beginning of 1949, with the school growing rapidly in size and the pressing need to manage the school's precarious finances, the position of business manager was created and a pleasant Englishman, Reg Coutanche, was employed.

### **Sport**

Sport was compulsory during my years at Grammar and enthusiastically promoted and indulged in by the overwhelming majority of the boys. There is no denying that it was undoubtedly good for training the body and mind and, if you were inclined that way, great fun; challenging and very satisfying if you were good at it. But, being different, the one thing I did not enjoy playing was sport, or organised body contact games of any kind. I also knew that I belonged to a very small minority that considered playing sport and games an unproductive waste of time. Above all I found sport for me was very demoralising. I was physically a diminutive, puny specimen and, being timid into the bargain I was consequently a born loser. I was absolutely no good at it and had no sporting skills at all. Leisurely walking and riding bicycles I really enjoyed and this kept me reasonably fit.

I disliked playing cricket because I considered the ball too hard and dangerous. I also didn't see any rhyme or reason to trying to hit a ball thrown at me and then make runs on a pitch. I couldn't bowl straight or hit the ball when it was pitched at me because I was too scared. The few times I tried to play, I was a decided liability to my team and this made me very unpopular.

I found football far too rough for my liking and when forced to play I was terrified of getting badly hurt and as a consequence invariably panicked when the ball came my way. On one occasion, I grabbed the ball and, frustrated and bewildered, kicked it towards the wrong goal giving a score to the opposition. Needless to say, this did not go down well with my teammates. I was called names I cannot repeat here!

Although I did not like playing, I used to enjoy watching the independent school football matches at York Park and the NTCA grounds in Dowling Street after school. However, they were poor matches to watch for it was a foregone conclusion that Grammar would win. The Grammar boys were in general decidedly bigger and stronger than their opponents and I was envious of their skill and ability. Every few minutes, we would give the school 'war cry', which was nonsensical but easy to learn and very rousing. We would usually finish by spelling out 'G. R. A. M. M. A. R. then shout 'Grammar!' I remember one particularly boring match at the NTCA oval when the school was playing Scotch College. By halfway through the final quarter, Scotch had failed to score against Grammar's 78 goals. When Scotch finally managed to sneak a point through before the final bell, everyone in the stands – both Grammar and Scotch – cheered. The other northern independent school, St Patrick's College, was equally no match for Grammar, but the southern Catholic boy's school, St Virgil's College, was, and the state premierships in my time was always a close call. Occasionally Hutchins or Friends would represent the south but it was usually St Virgil's and Grammar fighting it out. It was disappointing to me but understandable that when the premierships match was played in the north, parochial sentiments and rivalry gave way to religion. The Catholic schools from the north cheered St Virgil's on and used to join in the chant 'Here we are! Here we are! SVC we are! We can beat the Grammar rats. St Virgil's is the best!'

There was nowhere near the choice of sport at schools that there is nowadays and as I thought I had to have a go at playing at least one sport, I took up tennis. The coach was Don Lovett. And, although the ball to me was soft and not dangerous like the cricket ball, I had a battle hitting it with the racket. I was slow to act and anticipate and never developed the knack. Realising that I was absolutely hopeless, I gave up after a couple of terms. With swimming, I was equally bad but enjoyed a frolic in the pool. Rowing perhaps I would have enjoyed but, as I was such a poor swimmer, I would have probably drowned if the boat had capsized.

With athletics I was also hopeless. I certainly tried but for short distance running I was too small and short in the legs to get anywhere in my age group and, to add to my problems, I froze at the sound of the starting gun because I hated loud noises. So, last or close to last was my usual placing, which was very embarrassing and demoralising. I used to join in cross-country runs along Button Street and around the Mowbray Racecourse but always came close to last. In the end I became, as far as sport was concerned, an incorrigible 'poler', which didn't worry me at all. It protected me from continual embarrassment and humiliation. If I could have been

good or tolerable at just one sport, I probably would have enjoyed it but physical prowess was not my forte in life.

To make sports and competition in general more interesting in the school environment there was, and still is, the house system. At Grammar, this had been in place since 1924 and took its model from the English public-school system. Four houses were created, two for the boarders and two for the dayboys. The dayboy houses were Gillett and Wilkinson and the boarder houses were Hawkes and Savigny. Three of them were named after former headmasters and Hawkes took its name from William Keeler Hawkes, who had a private school for boys in the middle of the 19th century in what is now *Franklin House*, a National Trust house museum at Franklin Village. Hawkes was honoured because in his will he bequeathed a substantial amount of money to the school for scholarships and prizes.

In my time at Grammar, there were three houses. Gillett and Wilkinson were combined into one house, Gillett-Wilkinson, and it stayed that way during my time at the school. The reason was that, at the time and probably the only time in the school's history, the boarders far outnumbered the dayboys at the senior school. In 1945, there were 126 boarders out of a total of 185 at the senior school. The prep. school had 80 pupils at the time. In my last year of school, there were no fewer than 176 boarders and 139 dayboys. Incidentally, Grammar Prep reached an all-time record of 145 in 1952, giving the school a total enrolment of 460.<sup>50</sup> How the boarding houses accommodated all the boys boggles the imagination but I remember that dormitories were fairly crowded and the beds were much closer together than they are now. The reason for the large number of boarders in my time at the school was largely because of the unprecedented post-war farming boom that reached its peak in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Boarders came not only from the wealthy pastoral properties of the northern midlands and the Fingal Valley but from the northwest and northeast coasts and as far away as Hobart, the southern midlands and the Derwent Valley. The boarder population then, in 1952, represents an all-time record.<sup>51</sup> Boarders only number about 60 today in a school of approximately 800.

Although you were naturally very loyal to your school at independent school competitions and matches, your loyalty to your house was fundamental. To the house you were placed in you belonged and in interhouse matches you barracked and cheered your team to victory. In the pecking order of the school hierarchy there was the headmaster and the masters, then the head prefect or captain of the school, the prefects, who wore a white cap and a special blazer, and the house prefects, who wore a pale blue cap. Then, there were the probationers, who had no particular distinguishing adornment. That was the highest rank I attained. I was definitely not seen as leader material.

Two class periods each week were devoted to physical training in the old gym. We were put through various paces, such as vaulting the horses, the parallel bars, tunnel ball and throwing and catching the large, leather-covered medicine balls which, although soft, were so heavy and dense, they knocked the wind out of you. There were also press-ups, climbing ropes and vertical ladders, swinging on rings and the like. It was really quite enjoyable but at the end of each session there was the stripping off and lining up for the cold shower, which I did not enjoy and dodged as much as I could, preferring to remain sweaty rather than suffer the physical torture. I often managed to succeed by using a variety of excuses I had concocted. As at the preparatory school, my first physical instructor was the redoubtable short and stocky muscleman, Sergeant Robinson. W.A.C. 'Tony' Seddon, who had left school a few years before, followed him briefly. A dapper Englishman, A.A.K. 'Toffee' Gifford, followed Tony and then, in my final

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<sup>50</sup> Alexander, op. cit., pp. 153, 179-80

<sup>51</sup> RA Ferrall, *Notable Tasmanians*, Launceston, 1980, p. 167

years, there was an old boy of yesteryear, A.J. ‘Mac Maggots’ McGaw, son of Andrew Kidd McGaw, the former manager of the Van Diemen’s Land Company in Burnie.<sup>52</sup>

Punishments were made to fit the crime and were inflicted according to the misdemeanour. Detentions after school or extra homework were for minor offences such as not paying attention or mucking about in class. More serious crimes, such as being caught in the act of smoking a ‘fag’ or insolence to superiors, led to corporal punishment which usually meant a ‘socking’ – six of the best on the backside in the headmaster’s study. The worst possible punishment was expulsion from the school and multiple offences for smoking could warrant this. One punishment the boarders dreaded was ‘gating’. Being gated meant that you were barred from going outside the school gates for an entire term or in severe cases, for the rest of the year. On long weekends and school holidays, when everyone went home, staying by yourself at the practically empty school was particularly tough, so I was led to believe.

Every week Vern Jones took our class in what was known as the headmaster’s period, when he instructed us on the history and traditions of the school. He also talked to us on moral issues and about the importance of being good, upright citizens and leading good, productive lives. Some boys found this a bit of a joke and referred to him as ‘Mr Tradition’, but I found it fascinating and it gave me pride in the school and its illustrious past. Vern Jones as the headmaster always wore a mortarboard with his gown to distinguish him from the other masters. It was an impressive sight to see the masters flanking him with his mortarboard, walking from the masters’ common room and their offices in the boarding house to the school block at the resumption of classes in the afternoon. It also meant you had to rush inside and resume your seat at your desk before the master arrived.

In the junior boarder’s common room we used to assemble at times to hear various speakers, illustrious and otherwise, talk about their careers and experiences. They were by the invitation of the headmaster and were often old boys who had done well for themselves in their careers and who people associated with the school. In front of the assembly there was the actual desk used by the school’s first headmaster, the Reverend Henry Plow Kane – a very appropriately named headmaster if ever there was one. His successor was the Reverend Frederick William Quilter, who was equally appropriately named, for when you were caned on the seat it was often referred to as a ‘quilting’. The desk, with its patina of age, was a real link with the past and made you conscious of the history of Australia’s oldest school with a continuous existence. The headmaster would address the assembly from the desk and then introduce the speaker. Some I can remember were Sir Ian Clunies-Ross, Dr Loftus Hills, Sir Hudson Fysh, John Amadio and a former headmaster, the Rev John Walter Bethune.

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<sup>52</sup> Later when I was farming at Ridgley, south of Burnie, I came to know him well. His father owned the property next to mine, which in its day was a showpiece and held a record for one of the heaviest crops of potatoes ever grown on the northwest coast. Jasper ‘Mac’ McGaw inherited the farm when his father died and settled on it about 1959. Unfortunately, he failed to make a go of it and sold out a few years later.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Brian Smith 1946-1957*

One of my earliest recollections of school was playing with Dinky Toys in the sandpit near the vegetable patch next to the junior oval. Marbles was also a regular game at recess and lunch for the eight and nine-year olds.

Another early memory was the assembly outside the senior commonroom to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the school in 1846. I think in those days the driveway was gravelled, not asphalted and the assembly hall was not built until 1953. Another assembly, early in the 1950s, was addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher.

Discipline has changed. One Sunday morning, dressed in casual clothes but wearing a Grammar short sleeved pullover, I was spied by a staff member walking across the Gorge Bridge. Next day I was summoned to Headmaster Jones' study to be told that if I was ever seen dressed like that again, I would be expelled! During the polio scare of the early 1950s, I can remember boys being made to stand in front of the school assembly and making public apologies for going to the cinema or other places that would put them at risk of catching the disease. Also, at this time, each class had to go to Matron Collins to receive their sugar-coated Salk vaccine. Each year, it was necessary for each boy to have a medical check-up. The class would go up to Hawkes IV where each boy in turn would strip off and either Dr. Neil Gollan or Dr. David Nathan would check their lungs, their sight, their weight and their blood pressure before being told to drop their underpants and cough. Every cough was met with a chorus of coughs from the remainder of the class.

Academic classes were always a hoot. In science, Lionel Hampton would be talked into repeatedly telling how he won the war single-handed in India and Burma. In mathematics, we always had a double period with Jack Parish on a Wednesday afternoon. During this class, Tony Rundle would run a book on picking how far Jack would walk during the eighty-minute class. Everyone in that class could count!

Our French teacher was Lionel Hickman. If you were late for class, he would get a 'slipper' from a locker and put it around your backside. We decided to get our revenge. After one PE class, we were all late. We had pre-arranged for everyone to bring a baby bootie and put it in their locker. When he called for the slipper, he nearly had apoplexy. After that episode, the slipper disappeared. If you excelled in French, you could always rely on getting a cuddle from the teacher.

Eric 'Rags' Charlton was a fine English teacher, but he didn't escape the deeds of the class. Stephen FitzGerald and Rodney de Balfour sat at the front of the class. Above the teacher's desk was a large water pipe. Before class, the two boys would throw a large toy spider, tied with black cotton over the pipe so when Rags sat down, they could pull the spider up and down until it almost sat on his head. At the end of the lesson his gown was covered in dust from the pipe. Peter Herbert was occasionally shown the door because he couldn't control his laughing. The Rev. Mortimer Tanner had a Model T Ford parked near the 'Cottage'. One afternoon, a potato was placed in the exhaust pipe and when the engine was started, it did untold damage.

I recall a cadet parade on a Thursday on the main oval when the unit was lined up in platoons. George Drinkwater, the curator, with a sugar bag of beer bottles over his shoulder, returned from the Mowbray Hotel. He was heading directly for the centre of the parade when a quick-thinking Captain AT Sorell called the company to open order march, which enabled George to weave his way unsteadily to the gymnasium.

Gerald Johnstone and I both made the First XI in Form 9, which was very unusual. House cricket was played in term one and we were selected to open the batting for Gillett house. In our first match against Savigny and facing Arnold Gunther and Ray Wright, both at least four years older, we scored fifty runs each. In the next game against Hawkes, we had an opening partnership of some seventy runs. The following week we were playing in the First XI and continued to do so for the next five years.

Another interesting facet of school life was the supervision of classes by prefects. When a staff member was away, the senior prefect had to draw up a roster of prefects whose spare periods coincided with the staff member's absence, and allocate them to supervise. On many occasions, the behaviour in those classes was much better than had the staff member been present. Can you imagine that happening in 2017?

In December 2016, Kim Neilson-Creely, the school assistant archivist, interviewed Brian and wrote about his years at Grammar.<sup>53</sup>

Brian Smith (Class of 1957) is a devoted Old Boy who has maintained his many connections with Launceston Grammar and continues to 'cross the ditch' and regularly visit Tasmania. Brian organises the annual Melbourne reunion (although he is ready to hand over the reins) and always visits the school that his devoted grandmother chose for him.

"For some reason, I was the golden-haired grandchild, and there was some family angst because of that." The family owned and operated the All-Year Round Hotel in Wellington Street from the late 1930s whilst David Youngman's (Class of 1950) family owned the Orient Hotel, further down the street, now the Pizza Pub. Brian lived at the hotel from the early 1950s when his family took over from his grandmother. There were quite a few Launceston Grammar boys living nearby and of the same age. He made the transition from Glen Dhu State School to Grammar. Brian spent much of his time either kicking a football or hitting a cricket ball in Coronation Park. Like many of us at that time, we played outside and dashed home for dinner when the streetlights came on.

During the 19th century, the All-Year Round was a coaching inn with stables at the back. It was the last hotel en route to the northwest coast, so it had a roaring bottle trade. After victory in the 1956 State Football Premiership, a celebration was had at the hotel. Unfortunately, after 10pm it was raided by the licensing police. School supporters and patrons included the local judiciary, prominent Launceston businessmen, as well as the headmaster and his wife, the matron and senior staff members, all suddenly disappeared – some upstairs to the bedrooms, some to the stables and others to the kitchen to hide.

Along with other boys, Brian caught the 7:53am tram after walking to the tram sheds and sitting on board until the driver and conductor arrived. He travelled to school with Gordon Scott (Class of 1955), Bob Grierson (Class of 1955), John Rouse (Class of 1952) and Rod Morice (Class of 1956). The boys alighted at Button Street where there was a shop on the corner of Vermont Road and there they stocked up on the day's supplies. Things became pretty exciting and a little tougher when Brooks High School opened and the Launceston Grammar boys became targeted, mainly by the Brooks' girls. Bill Oldham (Class of 1950), the white-capped prefect, would have his cap dispatched from the tram by the Brooks girls.

During the athletics season, I walked the five miles to school. It became a part of my training regime. Launceston Grammar won the State Athletics Premiership almost every year from 1952 to 1959, including every 100- and 220-yard race. We had some exceptional sprinters coached by Max Donoghue. We came to school to play sport – academic work was secondary. By 8:15am the boys were at school playing soccer with a tennis ball; one goal was the toilet doors, the other a cloister in the quadrangle. During recess, twice a week, the prefects took exercise sessions. We also practised high marking by throwing tennis balls against a wall in the quad and Headmaster 'Jika' Travers and Mr Tom Room took fielding practice on the oval. If you couldn't play cricket, you were sent 'down the bank to become a rower'. Travers was a young, energetic and physically present headmaster, and you can read more about his years at Launceston Grammar in Chapter 13 of *Blue Black and White: the history of Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*.

Headmaster Don Selth arrived in 1959 when Travers returned to Sydney as headmaster at Shore. Both men served Launceston Grammar from the age of thirty-three years. Selth, a most

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<sup>53</sup> Alumni Newsletter, December 2016

proficient sportsman himself, was driven by raising academic standards and maintaining the school's proud sporting record.

Brian was a dayboy and at times there was a noted animosity between the dayboys and the boarders, but because of sport, Brian never felt that. Today many of his best friends; Peter Herbert (Class of 1956), Barry Larter (Class of 1956), Rob Dowling (Class of 1956) and Mark Roberts (Class of 1954) were boarders.



*Rob Dowling, Tony Rundle, Brian, and Peter Herbert – Class of 1956, 60-year reunion*

In 1953, Gillett-Wilkinson was split again into two day houses, Max Donoghue was the Gillett housemaster and Jack Parish was the Wilkinson housemaster. David Lean (Class of 1953), Olympic silver medallist in 4x440 yards relay, became captain of Gillett and organised the sporting types to place a non-sports person between each. "The boys filed into the houses, one to the left and one to the right, so we were able to keep the sporting group together."



*Tasmanian Athletics Team, 1960, after Brian had left school. Brian (OLAAC), Ralph Crack (Newstead Harriers) Robert Armstrong (OLAAC).*

After matriculating, Brian went to university and studied law. This didn't work out for him and so he returned to Launceston. Over lunch at the Launceston Hotel with former Headmaster Travers and Trevor Sorell, he was advised to study education. "I did a teaching course at Launceston Technical College and returned to Grammar under the supervision of Jack Parish, who never once appeared to supervise one of my classes."



When Don Selth arrived as headmaster in 1959, he worked towards recruiting a stronger academic staff. He found Bob Wilson (teacher of commerce and social studies) throwing a shot putt at York Park, Bruce Dowse (history and English) cleaning a drain at his Burnie home, and then poached from Hobart High Grev Vernon (head of science and biology), a former friend from university. [Grev's daughter Jane Rogers (Class of 1974) has recently retired from Launceston Grammar, serving for several of her last professional years as head of studies.] He created the position of deputy headmaster, filled by Ron Horner, as well as employing Denys Walter as head of junior school. An interesting appointment was Jim Brassil as senior mathematics master and sports master from 1963-1965, who later became secretary to Labor Deputy Prime Minister, Lance Barnard. Jim Brassil drank at the Smith's business and home, the All-Year Round Hotel. According to urban legend, as well as Brian, and with a final edit from Jim Brassil, who now lives in Sydney; Gough Whitlam was out of the country on Christmas Day 1974 and Lance Barnard, Minister for Defence and in charge of natural disasters, was visiting friends around the lakes of northeastern Tasmania, so the 'red phone' was with Jim. News came through of the Darwin cyclone before nine that morning. Jim got things moving to Darwin from beside his swimming pool in Melbourne. Doctors, nurses, sailors and airplanes were on their way before Tasmanian Police found Lance Barnard at lunchtime.

One Board member said when Jim, a Labor Party stalwart, started teaching at Launceston Grammar, "we didn't mind. Jim was a good teacher, and he certainly wasn't a revolutionary." (*Blue Black and White: the history of Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*. p 206). Brian began teaching in 1959, so early in his career, Headmaster Selth's new wave of teachers were his contemporaries.

"After teaching history and English, Don conned me into teaching economics. Ian 'Mopsy' Fraser, who later became a long-serving member of staff, was in that class. I was thrown into teaching almost everything: Form 7 maths – I could add up and subtract. If it was trigonometry, I was in strife! The only subjects I wasn't asked to teach were religion and science." Combined with five days per week sports training, it was a busy life for a young teacher. Brian coached the First XVIII from 1970 to 1973, winning consecutive premierships in 1970 and 1971. At university, he played football for Sandy Bay in the Tasmania Football League and later with University in the Southern Amateur League. "In the following year, I was back in Launceston playing under the coaching of John Martin at the Old Launcestonians Football Club." Brian's school and sporting connections have continued to play out over his professional and personal life, and he is grateful for that.



1970 State Football Premiers, coach Brian Smith.

"I was always late home. School was my life." This seemed to have started as a schoolboy and became a part of Brian's working life. "I was an only child, so school was family in many ways.

With my sports commitments, Jan and I found it very difficult to set a wedding date between football and the athletics seasons.”

From the age of 14 or 15, Brian was working in the hotel, serving beers. “When appointed senior prefect in 1957, I was told by ‘Jika’ Travers that some sections of the school community were not happy about my appointment because of my hotel background. This motivated me and I had to work doubly hard to prove them wrong.” The whole experience suited Brian and so he started his teaching career with the strong support of his former teachers, the headmaster and his family, all of whom contributed to the disciplined person he is today. He also remembers cadets fondly. Brian adjusted to the early change of schools and eventually was school captain at Launceston Grammar. He grew confident in leadership, with sporting ability and success in competition. He remembers cadets fondly, winning the Bisley Shield as the Senior Cadet Under Officer in Tasmania. Thomas ‘Jock’ Swan (Class of 1957) was runner up whilst Bruce ‘Badger’ Dennis (Class of 1957) came first on the Warrant Officers course. Brian succeeded Trevor Sorell as OC of the school cadet unit.



*Guard Commander at the opening of the Launceston Show with Governor, Sir Ronald Cross.*

When Bob Hutchings became headmaster, Brian went to Caulfield Grammar – a very liberal Melbourne private school. He didn’t want to become totally defined by one school. “I only went for a year, taking leave of absence. One year became thirty years at Caulfield. Launceston Grammar is like a family, a smaller school, but Caulfield Grammar has over 3000 students on four campuses.” Brian has been a career educator through decades of growth; adjusting to the changes and having the opportunity to be involved in the academic and sporting life of that institution. At Caulfield he was a housemaster, master in charge of football for twenty-seven years and the principal’s delegate to associated public sport. He was the chairman of the rowing committee that moved the Victorian Head of the River event from Geelong to Nagambie Lakes, one of Victoria’s major watersports facilities in the Goulburn Valley.

Brian feels that private schools are about developing the whole of a child’s potential, whether it be academic, sport, music, drama or art. The more experiences children are exposed to enables them to make better choices for their future. The opportunity to attend Launceston Grammar afforded him the opportunity to develop his talents and perhaps changed the direction of his life.

*What is the educational value of games? Games provide an opportunity for the exercise of the mind as well as the body. They produce for many pupils the personal satisfaction of physical co-ordination and of self-confidence in the use of their physical strength. They provide for*

*definite development of pupils' character when they learn to apply to other life situations,  
including their scholarship, these principles learnt while playing games'.*

*BH Travers, September 1970*

## *My Schoolboy Memories – John Scott 1947-1951*

I was a boarder at Launceston Grammar from the beginning of 1947 until the end of 1951. These were wonderful and memorable years, although for the first few weeks I was very homesick and missed my parents and home very much.

It seems strange that the year I started at Grammar, World War II had only ended about eighteen months previously.

The teachers were all men except Joan Hortle from Longford, who took a class of young boys in a makeshift room on the verandah near the dining room. Probably because of the war, most of the teachers were getting on in years.

I remember with great affection the headmaster, HV Jones. He was like a second father, and until he died, I always called him 'sir' or referred to him as 'the head'. One day I was called to his office – I did not think I had done anything wrong. I need not have worried, all he wanted to do was give me some tips on kicking the football.

I also had a lot of respect for A.T. Sorell. Although not highly trained, he was an excellent teacher and good housemaster. He also knew how to use the cane, as I found out on several occasions, and a few pairs of underpants did not alleviate the pain!

Trevor was not sporty but took a keen interest in sport. He acted as a goal umpire at football matches and as a timekeeper at athletic events. He was an excellent organist, so much so that I asked him to play at our daughter's wedding in 2001 – she was married in the Chapel – but he said he was past it. Trevor loved the school. He was there 24/7, except for Wednesday evenings when 'Shooter' Parish was in charge – we never knew how 'Shooter' would be because he would come directly from the Mowbray Hotel. Another teacher, 'Kinky' Connell, was a great educator and very good athletics coach.

Not a teacher but member of staff was the matron, Kathie Collins. A wonderful, kind and caring person, she was not very much older than the senior boys. She was a very attractive blonde and I think we were all slightly in love with her; I know I was. She was very good to the young boarders such as Tim Chesterman, who started boarding at the age of five-years-old. She had her own rooms at the end of the boarding house and would eat her meals with the young boarders at their table in the dining room. When Kathie left Grammar, for a time she managed the Silver Sands Motel at Bicheno. She retired to Canberra where she died only a few years ago.

In my time, some of the facilities needed some 'TLC'. The swimming pool near the Chapel was unfiltered and certainly not heated. When the water was green it would be drained into the already filthy Tamar River and the boys would try and clean it. It would be refilled and used until again it turned green. I recall there was little room for spectators.

The gym was a weatherboard building near the main oval. The gym equipment was sadly lacking: a vaulting horse, a springboard, parallel bars and a couple of medicine balls – that was it. There were cupboards around the walls in which house football jumpers were kept, these were made from coarse materials and stank.

Boxing could be taught as an extra and my father insisted I be taught. A ring would be set up in the gym but there were no mats on the floor. One day I had to fight 'Funko' Faulkner – we belted each other and afterwards I found Funko in his bed crying. They wanted a re-match, so Funko and I agreed we would not hurt each other – it was like a dancing exhibition!

The boarding house comprised of seven dormitories – Savigny I, II, III and IV and Hawkes II, III, IV – Hawkes I contained a billiard table plus odds and ends. At the end of each dormitory was a balcony with about eight bunks. The only protection to the weather was a canvas blind that would flap madly in the wind, but we still liked to sleep there. A lot of the boys had crystal sets with aerials strung across to the trees opposite.

Each boarder had his own locker for clothes and such, and had to make his own bed and clean the dormitory. Each morning we had to have a cold shower and we were supervised, so we had to stay under for at least 10 seconds. Old habits die hard because I still have a cold shower each morning, but afterwards a hot one. Some teachers had bedrooms in the boarding complex.

Meals were only barely adequate and there is no way I will eat tripe today. Morning tea was a slice of bread and jam out of a large tin, there was no butter or toaster.

Basically, we had weekends to ourselves. If you were lucky, a family friend might take you out for the day. We were allowed to go to York Park to watch the football or we would sneak along Vermont Road to watch the horse races at Mowbray, and we often roller-skated in the gym.

On Saturday evenings, there were often films in the common room and Tom Busby would operate the projector. Tom came from Wynyard and now lives in St Helens.

Grammar boys are not known for being religious – we were ‘churched out’. Each weekday in the mornings there was a short service in the chapel and in the evening, there were prayers. On Sunday, if you were confirmed, there was a communion service at 8:00am, at 10:00am there was a 45-minute chapel service and in the evening, we would walk down to St Georges Church in Invermay for a full service including sermon.

Mr Brammall, formerly of St Peters Church, Oatlands, was the chaplain – we called him ‘creeping Jesus’ because he wore shoes with thick rubber soles and would creep around checking on us.

Another chaplain was Mr Browne and he and I did not get on. After I left school, I needed a reference from a minister and I asked him for one – he wrote, ‘I have known John Scott for five years.’ It did not help!

Of course, we were all sport mad. Back then, we had no trouble beating the other schools. How times have changed. 1950 was a great year as for the first time in about twenty years, we won the state football final, beating St Virgil’s on the NTCA ground in Launceston. ‘Spanner’ Hood was captain. That game has been replayed many times amongst the players.

I shall never forget my last year at Grammar. Robin Carter and I were the only prefects, and I was appointed head prefect. Unfortunately, Robin was not well and left school early in the year, leaving me as the only prefect.

I was also captain of football and athletics and of Hawkes house. I had the prefects’ study to myself, where I did my homework. In the evenings Matron Collins would quite often visit me for a chat – I think she was lonely.

I had decided to go jackarooing when I left school and my father had arranged employment for me with John Lyne at Powranna. During my last year at Grammar, I completed the first year of a wool-classing course at Launceston Technical College, where lectures were on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. I completed the final year of the course when I was at Powranna, and though I took little interest in my studies, I suddenly decided to work hard and I matriculated, which meant that some years later I could go to university.

After twelve months at Powranna, I was conscripted into national service at Brighton. When there, I decided farming was not for me and I returned home where I had a multitude of jobs, including driving taxis, working in a cannery and working for Motors Pty Ltd. After some time, I ended up at university... my poor parents!

At Grammar, I grew and developed, I became big for my age and very strong. One day I called on the bully, towering over him, I told him I had been taught boxing – he got the message.

Probably the most memorable thing about Grammar was the friendships that were made. Friends made at school were friends for life. Even today, a group of us meet for lunch every other Friday somewhere in and about Launceston. The majority of that group are old school friends from Grammar and include Dave Youngman, Brian Watson, Garry O’Brien, Peter

Keam, Ronald Gibson, John Ferrall and, previously, the late Robin Archer. If in Launceston, Dudley Dick (Brisbane) and Peter Clements (Devonport) join us.

I am forever grateful to my parents for having sent me to Grammar – it would not have been easy for them to pay the fees. I am delighted that I was also able to send my daughter and son to Grammar.

The above are only some of my memories of my time at a great school.

During his final year at Grammar, John kept a meticulous diary of his day-to-day activities. John was head boy and head of Hawkes house, captain of the football and athletics, and was involved in many committees under the headmastership of H Vernon Jones, who he referred to as 'Head', and A.T. Sorell, his boarding housemaster. He admired and had great respect for them both as well as his teachers.

*Diary entry Thursday 23 February 1951*

*"This morning I inspected Hawkes III, II and I. I went into town for my music lesson at 9am and got on better than I did last time. I wore my white cap for the first time. Coming back on the tram I talked to Mr Lloyd about Eyre Walker and Mr Moray.*

*At recess, there was fielding practice. Before dinner I got my uniform from Matron. She made me promise to do anything for her she wanted me to!*

*After dinner, Mr Sorell gave me his hat and tie. I went over to the Head's and got a pair of gloves. Dad came out at about 1:25pm. I showed him the study, cadet uniform and gave him the great coat etc. to take home. I had a period at 2:10pm so he left then. After school, I got all dolled up in my uniform for cadets. They said I looked very smart. Podge fell the parade in. I marched 1 and 11 platoons around the lawn etc. It rained so we broke off at about 4:20pm.*

*I got changed and went to the tuck shop with Podge and then went and sat on the hill and watched the crew with Frith and Podge. Tried to get a game of ping pong. Dad, Mum and Mrs Budge came out at 5:20pm. Showered and then study at 5:45pm. In prep, too hot to work. Blackened boots and shoes. H.V. Jones came in with Gother following closely. Put frog in Cole's bed."*

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Paul Julian Edwards 1949-1954*



I began my six-year sentence at the Mowbray campus of Launceston Grammar in 1949. I had earned a scholarship to the ‘big school’ as dux of Grammar preparatory school in High Street the previous year and I continued to win the Form prize each year, earning successive scholarships until my last year in 1954, so I had a generally easy time in class; less so outside the classroom. I had previously led a charmed existence at Prep. under the Nightingale and Stubs regimes (*Little Grammar 1930-1970 Our Formative Years*, p. 128), and was unprepared for the more spartan, masculine rule of Headmaster HV Jones at Mowbray, as enunciated in his 1949 Speech Night address: “The weakness and indulgence of many parents where their children are concerned constitute[s] a menace to schools as well as to the children ... I appeal again to parents not to indulge their boys ... not to make life easy ... Men are not made that way...”

I never did become comfortable with the discipline, the enforced conformity, the compulsory sports and compulsory military training. I developed an aversion to the headmaster’s wide-ranging and lengthy monologues on ‘school spirit’, and his diatribes against ‘polers’ (presumably a rowing term borrowed from English public school usage, akin to the pejorative term ‘leaners’ in contemporary use by conservative politicians). In fact, as time went by, I became increasingly alienated from the school ‘establishment’, despite well-meaning attempts by sympathetic teachers to soften the rigours of the system, attempts which, sad to say, I did not fully appreciate at the time. Nevertheless, I have positive memories of my fellow pupils – some of whom I number among my dearest and oldest friends – of the teachers, and to a lesser degree, of the school institution itself.

### **My Teachers**

I remember Mr James as a quietly spoken, generally benevolent Form 5B master, and as a supportive presence in the unsettling new school environment. Housemaster Jack ‘Shooter’ Parish took a generally benign interest in me, possibly because he and my mother had been education students together at university. His attempts to improve my poor mathematical skills were, unfortunately for my future career as a physicist, largely unsuccessful. He also tried (and failed) to persuade me to stay on for an extra year with hints of special privileges for senior students and school prefects.

English teacher ‘Rags’ Charlton stimulated my interest in scholarly matters generally, including literature, poetry and science. He occasionally appeared to challenge the school orthodoxy, thereby gaining significant credit in my youthful eyes. I didn’t much enjoy his English literature classes though and it took a few years before I could read Shakespeare and Galsworthy with any enjoyment.

Campus aesthete ‘Pansy’ Porter certainly harboured heretical views and I recall with gratitude his brief espousal of music, literature and the arts in what was a fairly philistine ‘boy’s own’ atmosphere. He doesn’t get a mention in Alison Alexander’s hagiographic *Blue, Black & White*. Form master and French language teacher Alexander Bryce was another ‘non-person’ in the official annals who left a lasting impression on the Form 5 room notice board. This quickly disappeared from view after being memorably sighted by Headmaster Jones.

L.A. ‘Hicky’ Hickman was an excellent but demanding French teacher. Science teachers ‘Max’ Donoghue and Mr Hampton (who was also my hockey coach) consolidated my interest in science. I don’t believe they were particularly well qualified, nor were their classes particularly challenging, but they quietly steered me towards a satisfying career in science and engineering.

Other staff members of whom I have positive memories were the Reverend ‘Charlie’ Brammall (although I had by this time become a professed atheist), Max Mattingley, who helped me learn to swim, and Max Burke, well-known local footballer.

It may be significant that most of the staff of whom I retain the strongest positive memories – Porter, Bryce, Burke, Hickman, Brammall and Mattingley – were at Grammar for relatively short periods of time.

Trevor ‘Tadpole’ Sorell, the school chapel organist, boarding housemaster and cadet commander was one of my *bêtes noires*. Although we did not get on at all well, in retrospect I remember him as an effective ‘master of the school’s music’. He encouraged the embryonic composer Peter Sculthorpe (a friend of my family’s), organised school choir visits to neighbouring churches and taught the organ to several of my contemporaries.

I think it was ‘Pansy’ Porter and ‘Rags’ Charlton who appointed me editor of the short-lived magazine *As I See It* in 1954 (not 1952, as stated in Alexander’s book, *Blue, Black & White*, p. 198). I contributed several adolescent pieces of verse and edited both issues. ‘Rags’ made me editor of the ‘Launcestonian’ in the same year. Several members of my editorial board distinguished themselves in later life: Stephen Fitzgerald, appointed first Australian ambassador to the Peoples’ Republic of China by Gough Whitlam; accountant and entrepreneur Colin Room; Chief Justice and State Governor Sir Guy Green; and noted expatriate poet Graeme ‘Blossom’ Hetherington.

### **The Headmasters**

I had lasting personal difficulties with both headmasters HV Jones and ‘Jika’ Travers. My school uniform seemed to be a particular problem with Jones. I remember my mortification when he drew the attention of the school to my improper dress at a school assembly one morning. On another memorable occasion Headmaster Jones singled me out, again at assembly, as the boy who, according to a vigilant Trevallyn neighbour, had ‘worn the school tie’ while engaged in selling the *Saturday Evening Express* on his weekly newspaper round. I had evidently forgotten to change my clothes after attending a weekend school event. My shame was heightened when he ruminated that this untoward commercial activity was probably directed towards augmenting the family income. Looking back, I suppose that in a way it was, as it was then my sole source of pocket money. These gratuitous comments may well have been prompted by my being a non-paying ‘scholarship’ boy. One of my contemporaries vividly remembers being publicly instructed by the headmaster to tell his father to pay his overdue school tuition bills without further delay.

Needless to say, I was not at all comfortable with Headmaster Jones after these incidents which both occurred in my early days at the ‘big school’. Not surprisingly I retain an impression of him as something of a bully, demanding and enforcing strict conformity to arbitrary school rules and regulations and seemingly endlessly extolling the virtues of ‘tradition’ and ‘school spirit’. I don’t recall anyone I knew ever receiving ‘six of the best’ from him.

I did not have much to do with Headmaster ‘Jika’ Travers. Like Graeme ‘Blossom’ Hetherington (*Blue, Black & White*, p. 201), I was intimidated by his overbearing physical presence and abrupt manner. He ignored me until, towards the end of my final year, I unwittingly attracted his ire in my role as the ‘Launcestonian’ editor. This was probably well-deserved, as several members of the editorial board (who shall remain nameless) had slipped mildly ‘seditious’ end-of-year class reports to the printer past my editorial pencil. I think he also took exception to some of the material in *As I See It*.



## Sports

I believe my parents' support for Jones' spartan school regime was probably stretched when I caught pneumonia and pleurisy and subsequently spent a month away from school after watching a school football match at the NTCA grounds in pouring rain. Although academically inclined, I was physically quite active, had enjoyed playing cricket and had competed successfully in athletics events while at prep. school. Indeed, I came from a sporting family. Both my parents were keen competition golfers, my mother was an enthusiastic tennis player and my cousin Neale Edwards, himself a Grammar old boy, had been vice-captain of the famous 1928 Launceston Football Club team which won the state premierships, captained by the legendary Roy Cazaly. So, it is difficult to explain why I became a reluctant sportsman during my six years on the Mowbray campus, a reluctance which persisted after I left school and which I now very much regret.

In hindsight, I believe it must have been the element of compulsion that turned me off. I played cricket and tennis for my house and hockey for the school but played no sport at university apart from the occasional social game of tennis or cricket. Only very belatedly did I discover the joys of skiing, swimming, sailing and spectator cricket. Sadly, never again did I play a competitive team sport.

## Politics and Pacifism

Military training in the school cadet corps under the command of the portly Captain 'Tadpole' Sorell was of course compulsory. However, a few of us dayboys were permitted to join the Air Training Corps. My prep. schoolmate Alan Pitchford and I and one or two others paraded weekly at the Paterson Barracks in St John Street. I don't remember having any initial feelings against military training, but I did feel increasingly disconnected from the military ethos of the school, which clearly promoted military training as a core activity.

It is true that my growing disenchantment with the values proclaimed by Headmaster Jones at megaphone level had a political side. The Cold War was underway, the Soviets had largely taken over the international peace movement, McCarthyism was rife in the US, and the Korean War had started. At home, pompous (to my mind at least), arch-conservative, anglophile Prime Minister Robert Menzies vainly tried to outlaw the Australian Communist Party. He was opposed by 'Doc' Evatt then leader of the Labor party who thereby became one of my political heroes, along with other left-wing politicians such as Aneurin Bevan, Welsh Minister for Health in the British Labour government and local 'fellow-travelling' politician Senator Bill Morrow.

Needless to say, this view of politics did not mesh well with the generally conservative opinions expressed at home, at school and in the *Examiner* so I kept my opinions to myself and a few other like-minded 'rebels'. However, unlike them, I carried my political baggage with me when I left school and acquired an antipathy to the military.

Encouraged by the sudden intellectual freedom of university life, I declared myself to be a conscientious objector to a sympathetic magistrate in a Hobart Court who registered me as a non-combatant in an unexpectedly brief court appearance. I had anticipated a lengthy interrogation by 'the beak' and was devastated when fellow Grammar old boy Guy Green, then a second-year law student and later Chief Justice, failed to appear to support my application, pleading attendance at a tutorial. Luckily legal representation was not needed, and I duly undertook my national service, ending up as a sergeant in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps 12th CMF Field Ambulance. My only regret at that late stage of my short military career was being denied further promotion because, as a registered non-combatant, I was not permitted to carry a sidearm. Such was my brief foray as a pacifist, radicalised by the military culture of Grammar in the 1950s.

## **Vale Grammar**

One of the few specific recollections of my final week was of returning home laden with a school bag full of secondhand textbooks. The bursar had summoned me to her office that day and informed me of this generous benefaction, due she explained to a small unspent balance in my scholarship account with the school. I remember my mother's outspoken disappointment that I had been paid off in scholarly kind, rather than in cash.

My final speech night was also memorable in a less positive way. For reasons now unclear to me, relations with Headmaster Travers had deteriorated in that last year, from indifference on his part to irritation with the unflattering comments that had appeared in the 'Launcestonian'. To the dismay of my parents, we parted company on bad terms, mutually declining to shake hands at the door of the Albert Hall at the conclusion of speech night.

The next morning, I celebrated my newfound freedom by embarking on a week-long hike through the Cradle Mountain Reserve to Lake St Clair with fellow free spirits Alan Pitchford and Michael Hart. This was followed in the new year by the glorious freedom of university life in Hobart, remote from home, parents and school. Happily, I carried away other more positive things in my schoolbag. One of these was an interest in radio and electronics, which helped steer me towards a career in physics and communications engineering. Boarders John Gatenby, Bruce Cutts and I had shared this hobby interest, sadly not supported by our science teachers. Later in the new year, at age 17, I passed an examination for an Amateur Radio Operators Certificate and became, as I still am sixty-two years later, a licensed amateur radio operator.

Another durable take-away was a love of music. I don't recall any formal music classes, but I do remember a group of us – Barry Adkins, Bruce Crawford and others – buying and sharing shellac and vinyl discs of New Orleans jazz and so-called 'light orchestral' music. Sidney Torch and Mantovani were among my favourites, though were rather frowned upon by my father who came from a prominent Launceston musical family. Dating from one of 'Pansy' Porter's inspired ballet outings to the old National Theatre on the corner of Paterson and Charles streets, I still treasure school captain Dennis Rose's gift of a piano score of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.

I also retained a life-long interest in scholarship and social justice issues, due in large part to my experiences at Grammar.

## **Final Reflections**

Looking back over sixty-odd years to the mid-1950s when I left the school, my overriding feeling is one of regret at not gaining more from my six years at Launceston Grammar.

A private school education is justly highly prized by 'aspirational' parents, prepared to pay for the privilege of educating their children at an elite school. Well-off parents, ambitious for their children, will surely always be eager to give them a competitive social edge by enrolling them in schools such as Grammar. Even if the egalitarian goal of equal opportunity through 'needs-based school funding' were realised, this would still be so. In this respect, I quickly discovered that a private school education did not count much in my particular chosen field in academia. It might have been different had I chosen commerce, the law or accountancy, or simply gone back to the farm, as many did.

Happily, I believe it is a different story today. Grammar has changed for the better in sixty years, along with Tasmanian society. The school is now far better equipped with private and public funds and better qualified, better paid academic staff to nurture the individual aspirations and interests of the boys and girls for whom it has accepted responsibility.

## ***1950s***

*The 1950s saw major changes in the school's building program. The school's £22,000 War Memorial Hall began and was completed in 1955. The new hall, together with the Brock Memorial Library, which was opened in 1953, were dedicated to the memory of old boys in World War II. The hall was 80' by 40' with seating accommodation for at least 600-650. Classroom extensions and the Warren McDonald Science building saw out the decade.*

In 1949, there was much activity to expand the school facilities as enrolments reached 403 and there was a need to double the size of classroom accommodation along with the development of an assembly hall.<sup>54</sup> However, the building of the Brock Memorial Library was an outstanding accomplishment when it was opened in March 1953.<sup>55</sup> The library was erected in memory of H.J. (Joe) and H.E. (Jim) Brock who were pupils at the school in the years 1934-40 and 1934-41 respectively. They were both shot down over the North Sea in 1944 and 1945 whilst serving with the RAAF in World War II. The library was built at a cost of £11,000 with more than half generously donated by Mrs H.J. Brock, mother of the two boys. Other improvements beginning in 1950 were the completion of the junior oval and construction of the dressing shed at the swimming pool. In November 1950, there was a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>56</sup>

The War Memorial Assembly Hall was completed and opened in 1955.

*Paul A.C. Richards*

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<sup>54</sup> *Mercury*, 21 March 1949, p. 6

<sup>55</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1953, No 2

<sup>56</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1950, No 65

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Roger Scott 1950-1957*

### **Selective Memories**

On the assumption that most of the generalised experiences will be covered by others, I won't dwell on the obvious – such as cold showers, frequent caning and truly awful food.

### **Schooling Background of Dubious Relevance**

I started Grammar in 1950 after attending Hagley Farm School, a large area school serving rural children brought in by school bus. A small group of parents in Westbury organised a hire car for their children to attend the farm school instead of the local school, which was much smaller and less well-appointed.

### **Social Background**

My dad, universally known as Dick, came from a farming background but there had been a major 'brawl' in 1939, which concentrated all the resources to the control of the eldest son, who promptly died and left the modest fortune to his widow. The next generation back were connected to Donald Scott and his family still owns 'Woodside', the main property based in Hagley. Donald and I were at Grammar at much the same time. He was small – 'Midge', and a rowing cox – and I think a year behind me. We rubbed along alright without much in common apart from enumeration as two of the eight Scotts in the school. Midge returned as soon as possible to help manage the estate at 'Woodside'.

By contrast, my father boarded with a family member in Launceston, attended Launceston Technical College to train as an electrician, demonstrated outstanding football skills and went to work as a trucker and played Victorian Football League during the depression years. He returned with enough capital to buy a bus, which he operated for commuters going to Launceston mills and later for shoppers as the fleet expanded to six buses. In retrospect, he was thus identified as 'a small businessman', as well as a sporting celebrity. Changes in government policy and increased competition from government-provided services meant the business declined over time and he himself ended up with only a government contract transporting students once a day to the Launceston High School and the GV Brooks Community School.

Midge was typical of most of the boarders when I went to Grammar in 1950 – from small-scale landed families. (The true elite sent their children to Melbourne or Geelong). I had won a scholarship based on results of a statewide 'ability test' – the equivalent of the UK 11+ but which I must have taken when only nine. For the most part, the rest of the boarders had rural connections, or their parents ran businesses or professional practices on the northwest coast. (Tony Rundle was a contemporary, with this background). None of them were much interested in any sort of schoolwork under H. Vernon Jones. The school valued sporting achievement much more.

### **Experiences at School**

I started as a weekly boarder, based on the assumption that I would be homesick. Apart from the food benefits, this was dead wrong. As an only 'bookish' child in a small country town without schoolmates, I much preferred to spend weekends at Grammar. Within a year, my desire to participate in organised sport at weekends overcame the resistance. As compensation for truly dreadful food, I was able to visit an aunt who lived opposite York Park to have regular Saturday lunches and attend the football.

In my first year, 1950, I studied with the same teacher for all classes, Mr 'Jimmy' James, and found the scholarly requirements easy to meet. Others I remember from that year were Brian Smith, Rolly Scott (yet another Roger Scott, of which there have been several in my lifetime, including an excellent classicist for whom I am occasionally mistaken), Baden Cameron and one of the Boags. The following year, the class split as many of the students made the normal transition from primary to high school. Smarter kids such as Roger Cook exposed my limitations in science and mathematics and Stephen Fitzgerald was better at languages and

‘artier’. My strengths were in history, English expression and what passed for geography. There was a small core who enjoyed learning new stuff, but we were very much in a minority. By contrast, everyone was expected to be enthusiastic about sport.

James apart, there were very few good teachers (credential for my arrogance – Director-General of Education in Queensland 1990-1994). The best of them in my direct experience were Victor Benney (history), Pansy Porter (English) and Max Burke (Asian history as well as sport), all of whom stayed short times – and there was ‘Jika’ himself, already discussed in Alison Alexander’s hagiography *Blue, Black and White*. Victor Benney was a fiery redhead who was known to get violent in class – once pushing the head of another redhead (Prevost) against the wooden back of his desk. In the tiny 1955 class – four, I think – he fired my enthusiasm for British and colonial history. At his suggestion, I entered for the Ellerton Brown Prize, awarded statewide by the university, and won. In 1956, with Benney sacked, I had the dour M.A.P. Mattingly working us through a boring textbook chapter by chapter, and I was not at all surprised not to repeat my victory. In general, I did slightly worse in my subjects second time around and dropped down the university entrance scholarship list. But we did win the football, and I got to play cricket for the First XI, though less well than a very young Allan Taylor.

### **Coping with ‘immaturity’**

I repeated Form 12 because I was considered too immature (as well as technically too young to matriculate). Grammar possibly provided some incentive for me to hang around and repeat Form 12. I probably was immature, as I mucked about and was a bit of a smart-arse to compensate for being the generally unappreciated swot. Back in Form 11, ‘Rags’ Charlton demonstrated his linguistic range by inviting us to fire words at him at random from our standard schoolboy Oxford dictionary. Someone – perhaps Stephen Fitzgerald – decided I fitted the bill for ‘mattoid’, defined then as being ‘half idiot, half genius’. After that, I was sometimes ‘matty’ to my friends, but universally ‘toid’ both at school and then university. Almost nobody knew my first name was Roger, which would have helped Rolly if it had become known earlier.

### **Keeping Up with Jones and ‘Jika’**

Moving from the personal to the analytical... I saw Grammar change dramatically with Jika’s appearance. I knew the Jones family afterwards as they settled near Hagley and the school I attended there. Vern made the school a family friendly place without much concern for academic achievement, which was the province of the high schools and of friends among the private schools. He was undemanding of both teachers and students, and some of the best teachers for the lower ability strand and the younger students were similar to Trevor Sorell. Trevor’s emphasis on discipline and in other aspects was shared by the first French teacher I had.<sup>57</sup> When he left (to implant his ideas and behaviours at Hutchins), his replacement was an Alsatian émigré who obviously spoke German as his mother tongue and, for good or ill, lacked empathy with the less gifted. Steve Fitzgerald seemed to cope but I dropped back into the ruck. At that stage, to qualify for a university entrance scholarship and perhaps to matriculate at all, you needed either a language or medium-level mathematics. I went through the motions in both to spread the risk and again did no better the second time around, with bare passes in both. Doing five subjects was considered an oddity in itself.

Jika was altogether more demanding than Jones. His teaching style in ancient history has been remarked upon – more about contemporary history, especially military history, than the classics – with a leavening of political science and the virtues of Plato over democratic tendencies in Aristotle.

Alison Alexander mentions his disdain for tennis and I had direct experience. My sporting family had taught me to play both badminton and tennis before I came to Grammar, and I also relished access to billiards and table tennis as relaxation while at school. I took tennis in preference to cricket and was coached (at private expense perhaps) by Don Lovett and topped

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<sup>57</sup> LA Hickman

my age group. At Don's insistence, several of us entered the state under-age championship, which is where I formed a long-lasting doubles partnership with Bill Gibson. Bill and I tended to get knocked out at semi-final level, with a particular nemesis from Scotch College, but did manage one title.

Jika had turned himself into an Australian Rules 'fitness' coach as well as in cricket and athletics, and he obviously appreciated that my main talent was an ability to concentrate for long periods, ideal in a defensive fullback. I remember him introducing me to squash when I had a sporting injury which threatened my ability to turn out for the grand final – in retrospect, playing a game against a learner was an extraordinarily generous use of his time as a chief executive and teacher.

His enthusiasm for cricket was infectious and I gave up tennis after his arrival, even though I was in the normal top four. I settled for being the captain of the seconds at cricket and a wicketkeeper, which put me out of the top side – unless they were short of a skilful fielder with good reflexes. But I did get to captain the house XI and even had passing success there as a batsman and a bowler.

The school under Jika started to take scholarship more seriously and my impression was that he bypassed many of the old hands in the teaching staff, but these same old hands made life difficult for newcomers. Nevertheless, the parent body was not as keen as he was, particularly 'old boy' parents. This was probably the peak of enrolments for the boarding house, which had set the tone of the school until then. Trevor Sorell as housemaster and disciplinarian seemed as important to us boarders as the headmaster was – at least until we reached sixth form. The matron, Kathie Collins, was an important corrective in the ethos of the boarding house, offering care (and attractive femininity) to the wide age-range of students in her care

### **Sex and the Single Boy**

Adolescence in a single-sex boarding school had its challenges. Girls were exotic flowers – unless you were burdened with a sister – and contact was strictly measured. Dancing classes were (I think) mandatory. Certainly, lots of boarders were enrolled in Mrs Millen's dancing classes at the Albert Hall on the corner of Cameron and Tamar streets. Here we met girls from both the protestant private schools – then called Methodist Ladies College and Broadland House. We perfected the intricacies of the 'Pride of Erin', the cha-cha-cha and the barn dance, and watched with awe the demonstration of perfection given by Mrs Millen and her nephew, dayboy Nicholas.

Any regular female links could be pursued by letter, chats at sports events, 'play-dates' in the holidays and 'shopping leave', which allowed a rendezvous at Pierre's coffee shop. Firm friendships have been attenuated by the years but easily resumed – for example at a fifty-year anniversary in 2006 at Prevost's farm there was lots of personal chemistry. 'V', my dancing partner and very properly behaved 'girlfriend', tracked me down via the university and rang me up to see how I was. We had not talked since leaving school. I was chuffed.

The constrained access to the opposite sex even when accessible, given the prevailing moral code meant homosexuality was a latent problem. As a prefect on duty upstairs, I found that there were frequent examples of bed-sharing and comparison of reproductive equipment.

The nerdy scientist types learnt how to build crystal sets with things such as cats' whiskers and they were much valued after lights out. I lacked skills with things resembling cat's whiskers. Instead, I pushed my parents for a rather bulky Frank Sinatra portable radio to which I could attach a single earphone. I spent most evenings after lights out listening to popular music and traditional jazz. The local stations were rubbish apart from the 'hit parade' which was broadcast too early – I became a devotee of 2CA (Canberra) and especially 2WG (Wagga), and even started correspondence with the disc jockey in Wagga. He identified the theme tune of their late evening program as Tommy Dorsey playing 'Song of India'. When I 'came' to classical music much later in life, I realised this was written by Rimsky-Korsakov. I used the radio on loudspeaker in the afternoons, often with company, listening to people such as Bill Haley and

Elvis. We were banned from attending the film *Rock Around the Clock* because bodgies and widgies were ripping up the seats in their frenzy. We tried to imitate the dance style, but Mrs Millen did not approve.

I had a small stamp collection before coming to Grammar but did not indulge in it systematically, likewise coins. Marbles were a major attraction in the early years at school, but I don't recall trading – lack of commercial entrepreneurial spirit being shown at an early age. Comics of the American 'Captain Marvel' super-hero style circulated widely. There was less enthusiasm for the 'Beano' comics, perhaps because they required a particular sense of humour and they contained long passages of unillustrated prose.

With regard to nicknames, I think the obvious ones such as 'Shooter' and 'Steve' have been mentioned – both of whom were seen to dash to the pub at the end of Button Street with increasing frequency. Also 'Tadpole', which seemed particularly apt when Trevor was fatter than he was later. 'Rags' I remember fondly, and I was entertained by 'Screw' Hampton's war memoirs, which were so very different to Travers', and more hands-on about the Gurkhas and their nasty habits with Japanese prisoners.

I have a poor memory for students nicknames apart from the obvious name-shortening. I think John Dainton was called 'Jackie' because of his aboriginal-like tall stature but I may be inventing this. 'Blossom' Hetherington I have already mentioned. His younger brother, Peter, sometimes played in the same football team as me in 1955 but was a scientist with whom I met up at Queensland University of Technology later in life when I was dean of arts. 'Bott' Thomas was a year behind me and a skilful footballer and athlete – I never knew his real name. An older boy joined us in the final couple of years from interstate, so his speed as a footballer was supplemented by a capacity to tackle in rugby – I think he was called 'Nigger' Hayward, but I can't recall his first name. Timothy Barrenger in the 1956 football team was 'Blue' for the obvious reasons of having red hair. David Mitchell, a year or two older, was called 'Toughie', not to be confused with another Mitchell who played in that 1956 football team. 'Gasser' Barnett and 'Brabaz' Belbin played beside me and Roger Cook in the backline. Brabaz was a shortening of Gerry Belbin's second name Brabazon. Bill Gibson was called 'Raker' for reasons I do not know. Ron Hay was called something like 'Boom', again for reasons unknown – both he and Bill were in the 1955 footy team with me. Rod Morice, 1956, was sometimes called 'Cracker-man' again for reasons unknown. I think he went on to a distinguished career in psychology in Melbourne. Our paths crossed at the 2006 reunion.

When I went to the University of Tasmania, I initially lived at Christ College. After three years, with a pass degree completed, I did an honours year as a resident assistant housemaster and sport coach at Hutchins.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – David Lean 1950-1954*

### **A Milestone Year for David Lean<sup>58</sup>**

Sixty years have passed since the opening ceremony of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. David Lean (Class of 1954) famously won silver in the 4 x 400 relay, the first Olympic medal won by a Tasmanian. David features in Launceston Grammar publication *Diverse Lives* where some of his athletic achievements are documented. David was a talented all-round sportsman and leader at the school, and competed nationally and internationally, moving to the US to further his career. Rosemary Hirst (Broadland Class of 1959) was a talented athlete and she still has and treasures this photograph from the January 17, 1959 Tasmania Triathlon at York Park with David Lean, second from left, Rosemary Hirst (nee Page, Broadland Class of 1959) and Ian Probert. We would love to identify the fellow on the left.



People are surprising and creative, and in later years from the age of sixty-one, David began playing the piano, something he started at the age of about ten in Devonport, Tasmania with teacher Miss Pansy Wood. Ultimately, he began composing and has recorded his original music – his CD *David Lean Plays David Lean* features seventeen works with delectable titles, available for download. This web link leads to the online store to purchase the downloads or the CD and a brief biography by David about his career and music <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/davidlean>

It seems fitting for this bumper issue of the Alumni newsletter to share these lyrics for the Christmas season. He regards ‘December Solstice’ as one of his best compositions. Our world is very small and linked together and via email David has sent more words directly to us about his music.

*‘December Solstice’ was recorded by David Chown (piano) and Miriam Pico (vocalist) a few years ago. You might Google David Chown and visit his web site: <https://www.youtube.com/user/DavidChown>. You might find a listing for it there. He was my piano teacher for twenty years. Miriam has also sung my ‘Benzie Blues’ and ‘Wondered How I’d Meet You’. Coincidentally, I just wrote and performed a new Christmas carol last Sunday at my church. It is called ‘Christmas Comes’. Lyrics were written by a retired, Pastor Robert McQuilkin,*

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<sup>58</sup> Alumni Newsletter, December 2016



*and sung by our organist, Stephanie Price. You won't find this on the web. Too new. But it was received quite well. I will perform 'December Solstice' at our Christmas Eve service. I have written eight new pieces since my CD David Lean plays David Lean. Will possibly be on a new CD one day.*

Here are the lyrics to 'December Solstice' reproduced with kind permission from David.

### **December Solstice**

Lyrics by David F. Lean (© January 27, 2007)

Verse:

Late in December when the sun seems to still,  
The birth of the Christ-child draws near.  
Star-guided wise men moving slow in the night,  
Approaching as angels prepare.

Chorus:

Hearth fires warm with excitement.  
Snowflakes drift down through the air.  
Children with great expectation  
await as did shepherds,  
with hope and elation, and

Verse:

So, in a stable a small boy was born,  
A Saviour for all who would hear  
And bright happy children now wake in the morn  
To learn that Christmas is here.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Ryllton Viney 1955-1962*

### **The Power and Allure of Tradition**

I was to be destined to be a Scotch College boy. My family lived in Newstead. My sister was enrolled at Methodist Ladies College. I had cousins at Scotch College and significantly my father was a staunch, committed Presbyterian and on the Board of Management at St Andrews Kirk in the city.

But subsequent events were to prove otherwise. To this day I know not why my parents quite suddenly moved to a house at Mowbray Heights in Dineen Street, just around the corner from Launceston Church Grammar School. So close in fact that the cheers from football or cricket being played on the oval could be heard from our garden – a sound so seductive to the ears of a small boy.

After perusing the family history in later years, I suspect that the decisive factor for my parents in choosing Grammar rather than Scotch was the allure of tradition. There had been Vineys and Waldrons (my mother's family) at Grammar almost since its founding. In the Viney Family History, *Somerton U.K. to Australia 1698 to 2000* and in *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846 – 1946*, both Vineys and Waldrons are recorded as students and, in the latter book, on the roll of scholars as early as 1850 (Lemuel B. Waldron) and 1854 (David Viney). The two family names occur frequently thereafter.

Thus, it was that in 1955, aged eleven, I began my schooldays at 'big 'Grammar, atop the hill at Mowbray Heights. What trials, tribulations, joys, delights and perhaps fears were to come. Already by this age and perhaps earlier, I was drawn to reading school stories. *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) by Thomas Hughes was the best known of these. It was the book that founded a new genre – the school story as moral tale. Hughes was followed by many others equally, if not more didactic, including Frederic William Farrar's *Eric, or, Little by Little* (1858), Talbot Baines Reed's *The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's* (1881) and, of course, *Stalky and Co.* by Rudyard Kipling (1899). However scornful most people have become of Kipling's jingoism and unswerving, sentimental devotion to the British Empire, few have completely withstood the allure of his stories. I still have my copies of the above three books inscribed therein with my name and date of purchase (1954) in a somewhat clumsy hand. I mention all this as I saw my schooldays, particularly the earlier days, at Grammar through this fictional image. Themes which recur throughout the genre – the cult of games, the house system, moral righteousness, Christian virtues and school as a training-ground for leadership roles in later life for example – were still dominant themes at Launceston Church Grammar School when I was a student there in the 1950s.

Such was the school to which Basil 'Jika' Holmes Travers was appointed headmaster in 1953. Travers was an old boy of Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore), had served in the armed forces in World War II, followed by a Rhodes scholarship, where he was prominent at both cricket and rugby. His appointment as headmaster was seen as the appropriate one to uphold and foster the traditions of the school and, indeed, it was to be so. Travers served as headmaster until 1958, long enough to put his stamp on the purpose and direction of the school. A man of tradition, it was apparent to a young, impressionable schoolboy that this towering physical presence, with the personality to match, was all powerful. With his relentless pursuit of academic, sporting and spiritual excellence, his influence extended far beyond the confines of the school.

Under Travers, it was a rigid routine based on "God, the rod and lines from Virgil", as described by Peter Earle in his contribution *The World of the Public School*, edited by George MacDonald Fraser (1977). Later in life I was to read the above book as well as *The Old School Tie* by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *Boys Together* by John Chandos and similar publications. The parallels with life at Grammar are evident. For better or worse such schools have influenced every aspect of our national life and years at Grammar have played a significant role in my

subsequent career paths of education and the visual arts. The power and allure of tradition indeed!

As I write, I have before me a photograph of the Launceston Church Grammar School staff dated 1956. The faces are all familiar to me and leap from the page with stories to tell. Portly Max Donoghue, housemaster of Gillett house and athletics coach, who always brought to mind Mr Prout, the housemaster in *Stalky and Co.*, "... a staunch devotee of compulsory games who felt very strongly about the moral tone of his house ...." The notion of *nulli secundus* was uppermost in his mind. Gillett boys whom he saw as a threat to the standards he required were quietly taken aside and reminded of *nulli secundus*.

Lionel 'when I was in India' Hampton, teacher of science, about which I discovered little. However, tales of India during the war years, the making of British India and the dying days of the Raj are still remembered. So much so that my library shelves contain many treasured volumes on the so-called 'imperial achievement' as Hampton would describe it. It was rumoured that 'Maggots' McGaw was an ex-Grenadier Guards. True or not, physical education classes were conducted with military precision and must have been feared by those whose fate it was to be more inclined to pursuits of a less physical nature.

Eric 'Rags' Charlton in his torn, tattered academic gown, a hanging shred about his person as he walked to class to teach often reluctant boys the glory of the English language, the profound wisdom hidden in the lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 or the joy of the romantic poets. In the photograph he looks very much the man of letters – erudite and scholarly, which indeed he was. Gown tattered, yes, but not so the man.

My ongoing love for literature is largely due to him and my monthly subscription to *Literary Review* journal is testament to that.

Seated to the left of 'Jika' Travers in the photograph is the Rev EC Rowland, school chaplain, a large distinguished looking man whose lot it was to preside over a considerably uninterested group of schoolboys with regard to their spiritual concerns. I recall publicly sharing this lack of interest but was, in silence, drawn to what I saw as the spectacle of the Church of England ritual, after many years of exposure to the austere interior and the fear of Calvinist doctrine from the pulpit at St Andrews Kirk. I was attracted to the Anglican liturgy, the processions and the ecclesiastical garb. Many years later I was to study traditional icon painting, first in Russia and later at the School of Spiritual Studies in Melbourne. Although it did not become central to my artistic practice, the study of the Christian tradition in art did, nevertheless, have a profound influence as an ongoing source for content.

It is worthy of mention that, sitting in chapel, my eyes were often drawn to the stones embedded in the walls. The stones were gifts from some of the public schools of England including Shewsbury, Winchester, Eton and Harrow. This architectural adornment appealed to my developing awareness of the power of art and architecture in the history of western art. Today, these memories are like an evocation of a specific milieu in the shaping of a boy's mind.

Of all my teachers, the one ultimately to be of most lasting influence was the art teacher, Rolf Henkl. It seems that very little was known of him at the time and only in later life was it revealed to me the extent of his learning. Henkl, this man of mystery, was a polyglot. For example, he had been professor in the Department of Languages at the University of Tokyo in the 1920s and deeply involved in other fascinating works of scholarship in many parts of the world. I was immediately intrigued by this man who was the first to recognise in me some degree of native talent when drawing, in the traditional manner, from plaster casts. His quiet but persuasive manner encouraged me to draw increasingly at home and, ultimately, influenced me to go to art school.

One could continue with descriptions of other staff – some eccentric, some admired, some derided and some wildly comic, but the teachers selected are those foremost in my mind. Schools such as Grammar have always been largely closed communities, variously described as shrines of enlightenment and cradles of character or, conversely, as privileged prisons and

nests of bullying. The truth is, of course, the result of one's personal experience. For me, schooldays at Grammar were, on balance, satisfying. The education provided by the teaching staff, although not always competent, was altruistic – a selfless devotion to the welfare of those in their care.

### **Mos Patrius Et Disciplina**

#### **LCGS Swimming Pool 1958**



*L-R: Wally Lyne, Ryllton Viney and Chris Hargraves*

## ***My Schoolboy Memories – Paul Rapley 1956-1962***

### **First Impressions**

Late in 1955, I realised that the following year I would be leaving my country primary school to attend first year secondary school at Launceston Church Grammar School. The full implications of leaving home and losing the relative freedom of country life were not apparent to me and I was yet to discover that school life in future would be tightly regulated, with strict enforcement of discipline and adherence to very traditional values. In retrospect, it was not surprising that this form of education, so soon after the end of World War II, should exist in an essentially English private school. In my deep psyche I can still feel the strangeness of passing through the school gates for the first time on my way to the boarding house. My first letter home revealed the alarm at my new surroundings but seemed to stoically hide the true nature of my homesickness.

First experiences of secondary school included academic streaming and the introduction to strange beasts such as algebra and French. The more memorable of my new teachers were the French master (an-ex French paratrooper who specialised in a painful knuckle blow to the back of the head called the ‘crow peck’), the chemistry master (when demonstrating the instability of sodium, caused a violent explosion in the sink) and the teacher of all things mathematical, a universally unpopular housemaster.

As boys will be boys, there were nicknames (in combination with surnames) for most teachers. I recall ‘Mudguts’ (the above French teacher), ‘Pinhead’ (small head and no hair), ‘Parrot’ (Mr Green had a big nose), ‘Sleekhead’ (wore dark suits and slicked down hair), ‘Creepy’ (one lung, with activity to match), ‘Charlie’ (the chaplain), ‘Rags’ (the English teacher), AT Sorell (an aloof academic who said grace in Latin), ‘Carter Brown’ (identified with the author of the novels), ‘Screw’ (easily distracted from teaching to tell tall stories about the war in India) and ‘Shooter’ (moniker lost in the mists of time).

Although the school considered its achievements in sport, liturgical matters and cadets as no less important than those of the classroom, the quality of teaching improved after the appointment of some excellent new teachers under a new headmaster. I am sure that the now coeducational approach has brought about an improved perspective to all the school’s activities and provided a definite social advantage to the students.

### **The Boarding House**

The boarding house was a very Edwardian/Victorian affair. Boarders were from diverse backgrounds. Their families were involved in many different professions and enterprises, from all parts of Tasmania and beyond.

### **Housemasters**

The boarding house was overseen by a resident housemaster who was obsessed with our discipline. He had an incongruous mix of responsibilities including organist, choirmaster, army cadets and junior maths.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Jack Parish, the school senior master, who in contrast to the regular housemaster, had personality in spades. He had taught maths to senior students since the 1930s and was then reputedly a very gifted mathematician, but by the 1950s his abilities were limited by poor health. When, on brief occasions, he acted as housemaster, most of us were fairly well behaved for he had a reputation for liberal use of the cane. I found him a kindly soul, but maybe he had mellowed with age. However, his impartiality as a cricket umpire was questioned on the day he gave five leg before wicket decisions in our favour in one innings of a First XI match against Scotch College.

Headmasters appeared to take little part in the affairs of boarding house, but one incident stirred our then current head, ‘Jika’ Travers, to address us in no uncertain terms. Travers was a formidable personality and, though he understood boys, he would brook no nonsense. The local

newspaper had published a satirical comment about a school punishment in 'On the Spot'. Travers demanded to know the source and referred to the article as "washing your dirty linen in public." We were all aware of the consequences of vandalism but I seriously mis-timed an experiment which involved the vigorous rubbing of a wooden ruler in a groove of the desk to produce smoke. No sooner had I been successful than Travers walked into the room, carrying as usual his cane, sniffed the air and wanted to know the source. There was a tense few moments in which no one spoke. I had never seen Travers use the cane, but I suspect that this could have been one exception. Perhaps he decided that unusual smell could have been the result of a bodily function.

### **Routine**

Term began with checking the notice boards for roster assignments and selecting a bed in the dormitory. In winter, the more blankets you could get the better, for it was nearly always necessary to supplement them with your dressing gown. In the boarding house there were collective sleeping arrangements, no doors on downstairs toilets and lockers without locks. There was no privacy, but the boys did not seem to mind this cheek by jowl existence. Each day began with a bell, a cold shower (one could often dodge the cold shower by wetting the hair and towel in case anyone needed convincing that a cold plunge had been taken) and thirty minutes to prepare for inspection. As well as a personal inspection, lockers, shoes and beds were included. Upstairs was out of bounds during the day apart from a further five minutes (of course there was a five-minute bell) after breakfast. The dormitories were out of bounds during the day. The evenings after dinner were followed by roll call, then homework. A hot shower, permitted one night a week before retiring, was a great thing to look forward to and gave the opportunity to wash hair (as I recall usually with soap). The rule of no talking after lights out was often ignored and sometimes more unruly behaviour followed, involving pillow fights and short sheeting of beds. Most were content to just listen to local radio programs on their crystal sets before going to sleep.

To facilitate competition, school boarders were organised into two houses – Hawkes and Savigny. Each house had a colour and I remember becoming quite fond of my blue Hawkes windcheater.

There were rosters to undertake recurring tasks such as sweeping, filling inkwells and assistance in the sick bay. One year I was rostered as a sick bay attendant, to help Matron with boys presenting at daily sick parade. The most common ailments were coughs and colds, boils, ingrown toenails and sports injuries. Ingrown toenails were treated with a bright purple dye, coughs with an evil looking black mixture from a flagon and sore muscles with Penetrene and a ray lamp. Each morning, I took Matron's written sick parade report to the headmaster. It has since occurred to me that perhaps a more proactive approach should have been taken with the health of boarders, particularly for the more junior boys. Despite an annual check by a doctor, there were instances of boys with prolonged respiratory problems and chronic boil infections that did not get any attention unless presented at sick parade.

Friday night Scouts provided an opportunity to dodge supervised homework and on Saturday evenings there was an option to attend an in-house film or dancing classes in town. Unless one was particularly devout, taking the opportunity to attend three chapel services on Sunday (compulsory matins and evensong, with Communion an early morning optional extra), time could drag.

Leave required a written application stating reasons and times. Whilst on leave, complete uniform including cap was to be worn and exemplary behaviour expected. On winter Saturdays, we often took the trolley bus to York Park, watched a football game and walked home with fish and chips from the Mowbray Heights fish shop. Sometimes parents attended a morning school event and took you out for an evening meal.

An arrangement for borrowing sporting equipment from the games room was particularly well used on Sundays. The almost ritual participation in either British Bulldog in winter, or tip-and-

run (concrete wicket, compo ball) in summer after the Sunday evening meal, was welcome entertainment.

The regular visit from a city barber occasioned the compulsory volunteering for a haircut; the style was mandated as, 'a one size fits all', basin cut. Otherwise, the weekly routines included the handing out of a bag of fruit and pocket money. The latter amount gradually increasing with age – from memory, it began at one shilling per week. The boarding house pound, a useful source of second-hand gear, provided me with a pair of running spikes. I marvelled at how light they felt on the feet and credit them with my time of 60 seconds for the 400 yards in the athletic standards.

## **Boys**

There was a tendency for boys from similar backgrounds (for example together at junior school, sons of locally prominent businessmen or boys from the northwest coast) to befriend one another. It was a little more difficult to make friends if you did not fit into such a category, but the mix was diverse enough for friendships to be forged, particularly when participating in team sports. As older boys, although still relatively young, we passed the time by making plans for later life and participated in more sophisticated activities. No doubt spurred on by news bulletins of the Vietnam conflict, we improvised in our study to recreate the din of battle. We expected of course to be enlisted into national service but did not anticipate the Vietnam draft. We made plans to form a band and we talked of things such as taking time to go crocodile shooting or cane cutting as soon as we left school. Grammar was a boys' school and social interaction with girls was very limited. I feel that co-education could have improved many aspects of school life leading to a wider perspective of the world and an improved social adjustment of the boys.

While outright bullying was not common, there was the occasional violent confrontation between boys about particular issues and of course there was always the 'stand over merchant' who liked to lead the gang and, as in outside life, there was often subtle pressure to be part of the gang and conform. I learnt a little about very young boys away from home in the year I was in charge of the junior dormitory, where boys ranged in age from perhaps five to seven years. They were too young to be boarding and should probably have still been at home, for bed-wetting and odd behaviour was common. In one instance, a lad had taken a tube of Tarzan's Grip to bed with predictable sticky consequences!

I remember fellow boarders for their idiosyncrasies, their escapades or just as friends. Notable among the escapades was the burning of magnesium ribbon and the application of touch powder to the floor with the experimental evaporation of urine, which caused a rotten egg gas odour to permeate the school block. Another project we dreamed up was to make cider by fermenting apples in a container. But where? Under the floorboards of course! This may have happened, and if it did, I do not remember the outcome. The brainchild of the cider stunt once received a very formal note from our little-loved housemaster suggesting he consult Mark 12:17. Intrigued, we investigated this biblical reference which turned out to be, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's", a warning to the boy who had harvested the few ripe nectarines from the tree outside his study. The culprits in all these activities, which provoked the rancour of teachers, moved on to be very prominent citizens.

## **Building**

The boarding house itself was an old, two-storied structure, with upstairs dormitories and downstairs common rooms, studies, dining room, sickbay and assorted other rooms. There were perhaps eight dormitories with younger boys at one end of the building and senior at the other. These unheated dormitories each had twenty or so beds divided between an inner section, and an open-air balcony protected from the weather when necessary by a large roll-down canvas blind. Each boy was allocated a locker where clothes were expected to be folded with military precision. I once discovered that my father had written his name in pencil in the locker allocated

to me. I was surprised and delighted by the coincidence, which served to demonstrate the generational continuity of the school.

A large bell, in an open quadrangle in the centre of the building, was rung (by the bell boy) to signal times to get up in the morning, mealtimes, start of school, et cetera.

The downstairs common rooms were for general use including evening homework and indoor games such as table tennis, billiards and snooker. Each boy had a downstairs locker in which a precious cake from home or a tin of Milo or cocoa was often stored, alongside smelly footwear. A mixture made in equal parts of Milo (or cocoa), powdered milk and sugar was often kept here for it provided the base for a welcome hot drink (water from the hot tap) at recess time.

Although I cannot recall there ever being a fire drill or indeed any instructions of what to do in the event of a fire, there was at least a rolled coil of thick rope hung in each dormitory balcony – one assumed for use in the event of fire. At one stage the two open fireplaces in the downstairs common rooms were replaced with wood heaters after a smouldering overnight fire had completely consumed a table, some chairs and part of the floor in a downstairs common room.

### **Meals**

Boarding house meals were repetitive and plain, often needing to be supplemented with spare helpings when available. The spare butter from any absent boy's allocation was always a prize possession. Tripe or runny scrambled eggs were not top billing, but we discovered that plum jam was a good accompaniment to sausages. Lunch was often followed by a sprint to the tuck shop to buy a pie or pasty, and the more senior boys were able to purloin slices of bread for later toasting on the radiator in their study. But against any suggestion that the food was inadequate, Travers, the headmaster maintained that a soldier could survive on only 300 calories a day.

### **Discipline**

When it came to maintaining discipline in the boarding house, the housemaster and prefects were effectively the judge, jury and executioner. Prefects were not permitted to use the cane, and most were reasonable in their use of their authority. However, a few were overzealous and vindictive. It was common to have the contents of your clothes locker pulled out or your bed stripped. Misbehaviour after lights out – for example talking, pillow fights, et cetera – was tightly controlled. Offenders were often marched to the housemaster's study for punishment. Great emphasis was placed on grooming, in particular hair needed to be tidy in the line-up for lunch. If not, you were hauled out and sent to put matters straight, resulting in a conspicuous lateness requiring a visit to the head table to be excused on the way into the dining room. To avoid this embarrassment, in the very short time between morning classes and lunch, it was usual practice to use a building window to assist in combing the hair. Other punishments ranged from Friday detention to the Sunday blacklist (tasks and deprivation of leave), and the cane for more serious offences.

Written applications were required for leave or use of the phone. Although considered necessary, a more mature view might regard it that this level of regulation was as imposition of discipline rather than the encouragement of self-discipline.

Boarding house life was often leavened by a good rumour – the housemaster who was regularly visited by detectives was a police informer, the clever boy tapped the headmaster's phone line that ran through the dormitory, a boy had absconded. 'Absent without official leave' was talked of in hushed tones but very few factual details were revealed to the boys. 'Gating' was a particular form of punishment which deprived one of leave.



## Sport

In the 1950s, the school placed much emphasis on sport and was proud of its achievements. Sport provided a wonderful outlet for energetic boys to develop skills, make friends, learn about teamwork and improve self-esteem. It was particularly appreciated by boarders, for it provided an enjoyable activity to while away spare time at school and the opportunity to participate in activities away from the school.

I was fortunate to experience two excellent headmasters: BH 'Jika' Travers and Don Selth. Travers would brook no nonsense but one sensed that he understood boys. He had attended Oxford University under a Rhodes scholarship, played first class cricket for the university and had represented England at rugby union. He served as a Brigade Major in New Guinea during World War II. Travers took few classes, but in third year I was lucky to be in his geography class. Travers did not interfere in boarding house matters though was once stirred into action after a boarder had written to the *Examiner* and had a satirical note about a school punishment published in 'On the Spot'. Travers addressed an assembly of all boarders, again demanding to know who was responsible for this "washing of dirty linen in public." He moved on from the school in 1958 to be head of Shore Grammar in Sydney.

Don Selth, who also had a fine record as a sportsman and academic, was the next head. Probably Selth's major achievement at the school was to elevate its academic standing by appointing some outstanding teachers. During his tenure, the school gained a new science block and gymnasium. School visits by the Prime Minister and sports identities such as Percy Cerutti, Richie Benaud and Alan Davidson were possibly testament to his standing in the national sporting and political arenas. Although he could seem austere, I experienced his caring side on one occasion – the first thing I was aware of, after having received a very heavy knock on football, was Selth picking me up off the ground. He let me play on, but for the first few minutes, I didn't know whose team I was on! Selth eventually went on to head Canberra Girls Grammar.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Bryan Walpole 1956-1961*

Having grown up on a mixed farm and been schooled so amicably in Spreyton, arriving at Grammar in February 1956, with its imposing gates, was a shock. I was eleven and entering Form 7 (also known as Class IVA2).

My parents and I arrived mid-afternoon on Sunday, found my dorm (Hawkes 2), and being one of the last in, accepted the only stained, lumpy, kapok mattress left. There were about twenty beds in two rows for the indoor dorm, and another ten bunks were on the cold, windowless open balcony.

My parents left for home about 4pm, and so I was alone in this terrifying new place, not knowing a soul. I found my dingy locker in the common room, loaded my books and biscuit barrel into it and proceeded to explore the grounds. A list on the notice board stated that tea was at 5.45pm and to assemble fifteen minutes before, on the asphalt, in rows.

The evening meal was an appalling stew with white bread and a tiny finger of butter, and some brown cake with lumpy custard for dessert. Tea till the pot was empty, but quite limited sugar and milk. The food remained the same for six years, hence the biscuit barrel!

I cried myself to sleep, as did others all the first week, having never been away from home before. We could hear the little boys – six-year-olds – doing similar in Hawkes 3 and 4 next door. Parents were not allowed to visit for the first eight weeks, to cure homesickness. A deep searing internal longing developed that I still feel.

And so began six years of purgatory – finally finishing on November 25, 1961, when, collected by parents after speech night and having gathered my book voucher as dux of school (the only prize I ever won), I felt as if I had served my sentence. Now for university, which I anticipated with great relish.

The school was divided into about 150 dayboys in the Gillett and Wilkinson houses. The boys were generally the sons of the ‘barons’ of Launceston. Most had been to Launceston Church Grammar junior school in town and knew one another. We only met them in class.

The boarders numbered about 150 boys. Two thirds were from farming communities on the northwest coast, the northeast, the midlands and a few from the west. Some were sons of diplomats, pilots and a few with families overseas. We were regarded as the second-class hicks, not so bright at studies, fairly agricultural in our speech and ways, but over-represented in the sports teams. Hawkes and Savigny dominated, probably as we had plenty of time to practise.

The boarding house was run on military lines by Trevor Sorell with a penchant for caning at the slightest infraction of the rules. He presided at all meals at a raised table and all had to stand on his entrance and exit.

A boarder’s punishment ‘blacklist’ was maintained behind the door in the telephone room, and any prefect or house prefect could add a name with no appeal, and any dissension could result in a multiple listing with obligatory caning and double cleaning duties on Sunday afternoon. Punishments included cleaning toilets and the gym, sweeping the driveway, weeding the grounds – basically slave labour that the groundsman had on his ‘to do’ list. Worse still, Sunday afternoon was visiting day for parents, so if on the list, we’d have to call them and tearfully say, “Don’t come today”, with great sadness at both ends.

Once I was listed three times, so at 3am, I got up, tiptoed downstairs with an eraser and rubbed off my last pencilled entry, which would have otherwise been transferred to the following week. A caning and four hours’ labour followed on Sunday.

On one occasion, when we were allowed at the discretion of the duty master to use the swimming pool on Sunday afternoon, the water was so dirty – the pool had no filter – and had not been replaced for well over a week. As it was smelly and putrid, I asked the master if it could be changed. He refused, claiming it was the groundsman’s job. So later, a mate (John,

since deceased) and I jumped the boundary fence and opened the drainage valve, and the water flowed down the bank.

Well, Trevor Sorell came to nightly roll call and thundered about irresponsible behaviour, wanting those offending to come forward. Anticipating this, John and I kept a pact. Trevor said we would all stand there until someone came forward. After twenty minutes he was looking rather silly, so he called over 'Jika' Travers, the headmaster who lived on the grounds. Jika thundered on about the morals and ethics of private schools and their students expected high behaviour level and, as no one had come forward, we would all have to compulsorily go to evensong to repent. So that night, I wrote and posted a letter to the *Examiner*, stating the LCGS boarders had been punished with a compulsory church attendance for trying to keep their pool clean and healthy. It was published on Tuesday on the front page in a column, 'On the Spot'. Well, Jika came to Tuesday night roll call, agitated and shouting about corporate spirit, washing dirty linen, the school's reputation, and vowed to find who did it, as my letter was anonymous.

The cane – a metre-long bamboo stick – was liberally used by the headmaster, senior masters Parish and Charlton, and Sorell, who did ninety per cent of the caning as he headed the boarding house. We were the rebels, and I was caned fortnightly. As Trevor's office was below one of the dorms, the 'swish thwack' could easily be easily heard – one, two, three, four, five, six, 'wow', 'the max'! And the red stripes were seen by all on a nude bum at the next morning's freezing cold showers.

The school boundary to the north was close to Brooks Community High (also known as 'Commo'), and we could look over the high fence behind the hedge and call to the girls on their way home from school.

The school educational path was mixed. Under Jika the school excelled at sport and was nearly always northern champion and often state champion in football, rowing and cricket.

My saviour in 1959 was when Jika moved to 'Shore' in Sydney and Don Selth was appointed headmaster. He immediately started reforming the teaching staff and expanded the library – fetching Greville Vernon then Molly Campbell-Smith, both outstanding biology teachers, and Ron Horner, a gifted Chemistry teacher who established a laboratory and a small science library in the new McDonald science block – with wondrous results. The classes took off with excitement at the change, and I made it into medicine – my seemingly impossible goal.

So, despite all that, Grammar got me over the line, which probably would not have happened at Latrobe High.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Rafe ‘Alf’ Champion 1957-1962*

The dining room was lined with photos of past sporting teams and headmasters. One lunchtime, when I was on duty and about to give the exit signal, there was a loud crash from the far corner as a big, framed photo fell off the wall. This invoked hysterical laughter from the boys nearby. I thought a falling picture was funny but not that funny. Though it was, because it was the Reverend A H Champion who fell off the wall! He was the eldest child of my great grandfather (my grandfather Alfred was the second eldest). He was the headmaster from 1885 to 1895, and at one stage his two youngest brothers were pupils. They were not impressed and, according to family legend, they once ran away to the family home at Relbia, near Evandale. Rev Champion moved on from Grammar to the Kings School near Sydney and then to a country parish at Bungendore near Canberra.

Hardly anyone knew anything about university in those days, with only about two or three per cent of school students attending. In the last couple of years, Owen Carington Smith led a group of us to see the University Revue on tour in Launceston. That was a fascinating glimpse of another world which soon became familiar. I made a small contribution to the 1963 revue, lending my red dressing gown to the student who played the eternally unsuccessful Communist candidate for Denison.

Cricket was the main summer sport and for some strange reason cricketers liked to regard rowers as second-class citizens, much like the hockey players in winter. Maybe it was only a joke because we were proud of our rowers and cheered mightily when they competed for the head of the river. Maybe the sport gained in stature while I was there. It was a time of innovation in design of boats, and coaches were looking for athleticism in rowers in addition to strength.

Strangely, tennis was a minor sport, and nobody took much notice of the performance of the school team. Basketball appeared during my last two years (1961-62) and nobody took any notice of that either. My puberty came late, and my football and athletics performance declined to the point where I played basketball in the final year, achieving some satisfaction from leading the B team to victory over the A team. The stars of the day were Owen Carington Smith, who was the tallest player on the court, and Peter Calder, who was the fastest.

One wet Sunday, the Ceylonese maths teacher ‘Colombo Joe’ brought some badminton gear into the hall and some of us had a hit. On the strength of this exposure, I later played the game at university where it became the centre of my social life, and I served two terms as president of the club. It was the biggest club on the campus, with both men and women playing in the same teams. Many of the Asian students, who were imported under the Colombo Plan, joined the club to play their national sport.

Speaking of Asians, Lincoln Wu, a Hong Kong Chinese, turned up at Grammar midway through senior school. He took my crown as the best table tennis player in the form. He was years older and played unfairly with a soft bat and the penholder grip, but we became firm friends. I wondered why he kept getting into fights with some of the tough and rude boys in the class, which he always won using judo moves, if necessary.

‘Jika’ Travers was a memorable headmaster, and he went on to become an institution for 30 years at Shore in Sydney. As a Rhodes scholar he played rugby for England and cricket for Oxford University. Nobody cared about his rugby credentials, and it was only forty years or so later that I did a search and found that he was a senior figure in the administration of the sport in Australia. The schoolboys play a national competition each year for the BH Travers Shield. His book on rugby coaching, techniques, drills and tactics was in the library and he trained with the school football team, running bare-footed in gigantic Bombay bloomers, shouting to the lads “Hit me! Hit me!” I do not recall that anyone ever did. He played cricket with the old boys’ Second XI, bowling a brisk medium pace (with shirt unbuttoned to the navel), and he placed car windscreens and the pavilion roof in danger when he came out to bat. A man who played for Shore under his coaching was interested in my “Hit me!” story. I don’t know if he challenged the rugby players to hit him but occasionally one would (there was closer

engagement in rugby training), and then Jika would point sternly to the offender and say “Save that for Saturday!”

About third form (Year 9 these days), our class had a few troublemakers – high-spirited young men – and some teachers complained about the noise from our room between classes. After lunch one day, Jika turned up with a bundle of canes and proceeded to allocate two of the best to everyone. He couldn’t be bothered finding out who was causing the trouble, he just wanted it to stop. And it did.

Happier memories of that class – Bill Godfrey-Smith (ahead of the pack in some ways) introduced me to *Mad Magazine* and lent me the three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings*. When the book achieved cult status many years later, I was ahead of the play and didn’t have to give up hours and hours as an adult to read it. Jonno Hawkes was the youngest and probably the smartest boy in the class. He went to the university in Hobart, joining the drama group that produced the revue team, did some serious drinking and failed all his first-year subjects. He moved on to Monash, where his father was the chaplain, worked in the book room and played safe with one subject a year. Then he became an editor of the Australian version of *Rolling Stone* magazine and sometime later he turned up as the strong man, juggler and business manager for Circus Oz. John Gee and John Bauld sat together and devoted most of their enthusiasm to World War II-related matters. One term they came fourteenth and fifteenth in the class. Later they found their vocations and became the first two in the class to achieve PhDs. Bob Napier was one of the top three in the class, with Chris Ikin and Bill Godfrey-Smith (now William Grey). Bob, Paul Rapley and I went through the agriculture course at university together and Bob went on to become the principal of the Orange Agricultural College.

Don Selth from Adelaide replaced Jika. He was also a top-flight sportsman – as a reserve for the Australian 4x440 relay team, which won silver at the Melbourne Olympic Games, and reserve wicketkeeper for South Australia. He was also an author, and his book about the 1956 Olympics was in the school library. He took an active role in training the First XI, especially the fielding practice, which he supervised every morning before chapel. He also took the field with the Sunday Wanders team, which was instituted by Ron Horner.

Mr Horner followed Don Selth from Adelaide. He was very English – tall, bulky, black-haired and rosy-cheeked. He also kept wicket, though not to first class standard. He arrived as we started the Schools Board certificate year, which was Year 10. After he administered some preliminary tests, he was shattered to find out how little chemistry we knew – he didn’t ask anything about the Ghurkas. He embarked on a crash campaign including lunchtime sessions and a return one week early from a mid-year vacation. He was probably the most effective teacher I can remember, always explaining from first principles (especially in one-on-one coaching sessions) and he used a lot of practical examples of chemical processes from industry and cooking, which unfortunately was not an interest for young men in those days. His influence extended beyond the classroom – he started a classical music club and a small science library in the new science block.

Best of all, Ron Horner initiated a cricket team that played Sunday games far and wide in the surrounding country, mostly against village green teams but sometimes against quite good players. The team consisted of two or three members of staff (often including Don Selth and Ron Horner), boarders in the First XI and the rest from the Second XI and the Colts. I enjoyed outings with this team for three years. In addition to an extra game of cricket each week, the country hosts laid on generous refreshments – a major consideration for boarders who never had nearly enough to eat. One afternoon in the country, ‘Screw’ Hampton commented, “Champion, I have never seen anyone eat cake like you.”

Cricket was my passion at school, and I made my way as an opening bat all the way up to the First XI in my final year – after a frustrating year as thirteenth man in 1961, when we won the state premiership. My models were Burke and McDonald, the Australian test openers, and my aim was to see the shine off the ball more or regardless of scoring runs. Burke and McDonald didn’t play limited-over cricket, and I didn’t have the wits to see that the tactics for a four- or

five-day game were not appropriate for a half-day game, which was of course effectively a limited-over game – almost a 20/20! My off-spin bowling wasn't much use in the lower grades, but in the First XI a little bit of off-field coaching from Ron Horner and some on-field coaching from Mr Hampton saw me assume the role of 'breakthrough' bowler. That story is told in *The Savigny Bat 1923-2015*.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Ian W Richards 1958-1962*

### **First XVIII, 1962**



*L-R: J. Martin (Coach), J. Hamilton, I. Richards, J. Stevens, R. Orr, P. Newson, Frank Nott, M. Walpole, P. Salmon, R. Napier, P. Richards, R. Kerrison and P. Evans*

I went to Grammar after being taken out of Scotch College in 1958. I was the only son, with three sisters, from the love hate relationship of my parents, which lasted twenty-six years before they finally divorced.

The first two years at Grammar I was rebellious for being taken out of Scotch College because I didn't want to leave. Father was on the Board at Grammar, and that was the reason. I was a dayboy for the first two years and a member of Wilkinson house. I didn't enjoy Grammar and showed it, and so the decision was made. I was to become a boarder to straighten me out.

That made me angrier with Grammar and life, but eventually it was the best thing that could have happened. It brought me back to reality and taught me discipline and respect for others, which I didn't have prior. The canings and weekends being gated for not obeying what I was told to do got through to me at last, and the last two years were by far the happiest and contented days of my school life at Grammar.

The teacher who stood out above the rest was AT Sorell. He hurt me so much with the cane; however he did have a side to him that listened when you tried to explain any problems you may have had, and he was a great maths teacher!

Matron Collins was a very caring but tough person. I reckon she was mother to a lot of boys. In a well-disciplined boarding house, the comradeship was excellent and plenty of antics went on. Amongst interesting events were Nic Lees swimming the Tamar River, and going home to Elizabeth Town without permission, and our early morning swims in the swimming pool before AT Sorell caught us. Then there were the trips to the chapel to sample the altar wine – not at a service. There was the occasional Saturday night trip, leaving the theatre while a film was on to go to Roy Frith's place for a few cleansing ales and then getting back to school before the film was finished. There was also the odd punch up with various boys in the shed behind the boarding house, the cross country down on the flats and up the hill below the school, the cold showers every morning and the cane if you misbehaved.

They are all wonderful memories and I am so glad I have them.

### First XV111 Football Team 1961



*L-R: J Boden, P Newson, H Denny, J Hartnett, R Napier, J Connell, I Richards, R Stevens, G Walkem, J Hamilton, Hamish Brown, unknown, I Freeburg, J Gebbie, J Parish, P Salmon, J Bain, I Barrett, A Beecroft and G Humphreys (captain).*



## ***My Schoolboy Memories – George Toyne 1960-1963***

*At the ninetieth reunion of the Launceston Church Grammar School alumni held in Melbourne on the occasion of the 168<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school, George Toyne proposed a toast to the school. It was during this toast that George spoke about his life at Grammar as a boarder in the early 1960s.*

763 in 2003. LEAS 26/03  
 Launceston Country Club (casino)  
 Tony Smith  
 the good  
 Paul Christie  
 Mum  
 Peter Selzer  
 Geoff Langton Smith



*I would like to thank the headmaster for the invitation to attend the ninetieth reunion of the Launceston Church Grammar School alumni held in Melbourne.*

*It is also an honour to be asked by Brian Smith to propose a toast to the school. In doing so, I would ask that you cast your minds back to 1846 when Francis Russell Nixon, Tasmania's first Anglican bishop appointed Henry Plow Kane as the school's first headmaster.*

*The school is reported to have started with twenty-four pupils, a far cry from today.*

*Kane is acknowledged as a man who endeared himself to his pupils through guidance and learning but was also known to punish those who deserved it.*

*Over time, the school moved forward, albeit occasionally through some tough times, to how we know it today.*

*One of the major reforms has been following a trial in 1973 with eight or nine girls being admitted directly to Grammar. In or around 1982, after the amalgamation with our sister school, Broadland House, Grammar then became a truly co-educational school, with a new motto, song and psalm.*

*So, now we look forward to the celebration of the school's 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary and as time flies, its 200<sup>th</sup>! And, as an aside, my birth year is 100 years after the founding and as such I look forward to 2046!*

*My memories of Grammar are quite numerous, but this is not the place for elucidation. Suffice to say, I was a boarder in the early 1960s, so stories of cold showers and poor food you have all heard from others.*

*On the flipside of this, one remembers other times. There was the clearing of the riverbanks of gorse bush below the boarding house with a mattock, no gloves and no water, so the spectators at the King's Cup could enjoy the race from a pristine bank. Brian Smith reminded me that the stroke of the winning Victorian crew was Philip Roff. As boarders, I guess we were captive free labour and, as a reward for our efforts one Sunday night, we were treated to a bowl of ice cream. Sunday was chapel, and if you befriended those of a different persuasion, you were assured of a slot at the billiards table.*

*The organ was a thing of mechanical wonder but even more so when Doug Brownrigg would wait until Trevor Sorell and other masters had left and play up a storm, much to our delight.*

*The school dances were a compulsory affair and we waited for the Broadland bus to arrive. Cadets were compulsory and under the control of Trevor Sorell, Bruce Dowse and Brian Smith, we put on magnificent Anzac Day parades. Cadet camps only strengthened our bonds and sense of belonging.*

*The 50-mile Kennedy walk came about when Bruce Dowse advised me that in order to be the RSM, I had to devise a menu for the participants and be there. They were a great success.*

*As a boarder away from home, sometimes you needed a mother, and the matrons were always there – understanding and soothing our perceived troubles. Thank you to Matrons Collins, Jones and Watkins.*

*Yes, I got disciplined for things that I obviously deserved according to higher authorities, but the cane did not do any harm psychologically.*

*The masters and head at the time were extremely generous with their time, their patience and their ability to be educators. So, discipline, education and patience were the go in the 1960s and, I guess, a legacy of the first headmaster, Henry Plow Kane.*

*The school has been a great mentor and guide to those who have gone before us. Service to our country and overseas has taken many on different walks of life, from involvement in wars, to many other fields where alumni have shone.*

*I won't attempt to embarrass myself by naming notable alumni for fear of missing a name. Those that come to mind made achievements in public service, politics, religion, science and technology, business, media, law, sport and others.*

*So, from humble beginnings in 1846, the school has guided, mentored, educated, inspired and delivered young adults with determination, courage and self-belief to the adult world.*

*I am quite sure the headmaster will enlighten us as to how the school intends to continue its proud history and role in education, leadership and ability to reach out to the rest of the world.*

*In closing, I would ask you all to be upstanding, charge your glasses and with three hearty cheers, toast the school.*

*Hip hip (response)*

*Hip hip (response)*

*Hip hip (response)*

*The school.*

I was a boarder at LCGS from 1960-1963 inclusive. In passing, I would also note my brother John was a boarder during 1960 and my younger brother David in later years became captain of school and head of debating. Both brothers are remembered on the honour board – John for service in Vietnam and David as above. My sister Suzanne also attended the school.

The following comments are my recollections more than fifty years on and may bear some scrutiny by others.

Mum and Dad drove me up to LCGS at the beginning of the year 1960. I was about to start in Form 3. Like a number of other boarders and day pupils, we were children of hoteliers, my parents being mine hosts at Furners Hotel in Ulverstone, seventy-eight miles away.

We were told to go upstairs and find our dormitory from the list provided. At the time Hawkes III meant very little, as I had no idea until later what Hawkes or Savigny were. I eventually found a long room with a wooden floor and about twenty beds, including a balcony group of about eight. I was shown to my bed and locker and was given one blanket, and one school bedspread with motif and school colours. Goodbyes said, I was left wondering what boarding school was going to be all about.

Over time, all became clear and routine. I found out that boarding house had eight dormitories, a set of stairs towards each end, and ranged from the younger boarders in Savigny I to the older ones in Hawkes IV.

Trevor Sorell, the housemaster, had a suite overlooking the library and hall, with its own entrance through one of the former dormitories, which had been converted into a model or crafts room. Model aircraft making seemed to be the norm. There were other masters' rooms upstairs and a masters' bathroom.

Our bathrooms were lead-lined and entrances were opposite the dormitory openings – toilets were halfway down the stairs. There were windows upstairs that were to be kept open, especially in the balcony areas. When I first arrived. I thought it would be great to get a bunk, even a lower one in the balcony, but as winter came I soon realised the main dorm was much better. The balcony acted as a fire escape, with a rope hanging on a hook on the right-hand side. We never had fire drill or were required to get out the window and negotiate the rope. The stairs were the only other means of escape..

A dormitory had its rules as did the other parts of the boarding house, such as cold showers every morning. When the frost appeared on the boards, we hoped it was cold enough to freeze the pipes, so no cold shower. Hot showers in the evening were by a roster and twice a week.

The general routine was... rise on the waking bell, cold shower, make bed, dress, tidy locker and wait for inspection. Clothes lockers had to have items folded a certain way and be very ordered otherwise the dorm heads would pull everything out and you started over. An untidy locker could lead to another cold shower after breakfast and before school. Polished shoes were another item that if not passed in the inspection, could result in the above.

The continuing routine... downstairs next, line up by table for the dining room – which was outside in good weather or in the common room – go to your table, stand and wait for grace to be said (Benedictus, et cetera), be told by the head of table when to sit and join twenty others to have a meal. Muck up and you were advised to stand up at the pole, which could mean missing the meal or to be on the blacklist.

After dining it was stand, thanksgiving and wait until the masters from the table on the dais to leave. Boarding house meals left a lot to be desired – thank goodness for loaves of bread and jam.

After school finished for the day, there was time to recreate and participate in training for one sport or another. Unless you were in a first squad, you were only allowed a cold shower, which was not much good removing the mud from cross-country training or winter sports.

As new boarders, we were not allowed any leave for at least the first four weeks. I guess this was so we became more accustomed to boarding life and were not tempted to disappear home due to homesickness.

Making new friends became easier as the initial year progressed for we were all in the same community as boarders. Boarders' weekends were a time when we went home and could invite friends to come with us, especially the overseas students. These included Wu, Soo and the Tan boys from Singapore. In term holidays, it was common to be invited to other students' homes.

The most favoured after-school footwear was generally desert boots. On Sundays, it was compulsory to be in chapel for morning or evensong, depending on the programme. Communion service was optional and held before breakfast. Other memories of chapel include that of an unfinished front section, a beautiful altar, a stained-glass window facing east, a grand pipe organ, the congregation facing each other, the bell, the honour boards and at the end of year, the song 'Those departing and those returning', which meant the release from the confines of the boarding house.

Homework, or prep, was held in two common rooms. The majority of us, up to Form 3, were in the junior common room with two prefects in charge and one could ask them for help. The common room had one small firebox, so it was jumpers on in winter. Prep finished in staged events according to the form you were in – one and a half hours, two hours, et cetera. Then it was up to bed, prayer, light for two minutes, lights out and then no noise or else! Other prep areas were for senior students, and eventually we graduated to those, including upstairs areas converted when masters retired, as no new boarding masters came.

Schools have rules for discipline and giving one a measure on how to behave. Misbehaviour, as judged by teaching staff, could result in the cane and up to six cuts were delivered whilst in a bent over position. Trevor (boarding house staff) was good at it, as were Don Selth and Jack Parish.

Other areas of the boarding house included the downstairs locker rooms, head prefect's office, an administration office – where your expense chits were signed – and a games room.

As a student you were not allowed to ride a bike in the school grounds until you reached the main gate. If you were caught, the penalty blacklist applied. Strangely, at least one prefect was allowed to drive to school and park outside the old gymnasium.

Blacklisting of a boarder meant loss of leave privileges. Being seen in town out of school uniform or without a cap meant you were on the list or lined up for the cane. Blacklist jobs were carried out at weekends and included, for example, sweeping the main drive from the headmaster's house to the maids' quarters, polishing the cannons and cleaning the swimming pool – all supervised by boarder prefects. The dayboy prefects never had this duty thrust upon them. House swimming sports were held in the pool near the chapel.

The general form of radio/wireless in the dormitory was a crystal set, although some boarders had a transistor radio. You put it under your pillow after lights out and if it could be heard, it was confiscated for a period. Repeat offences meant the blacklist.

Pocket money as a boarder was one shilling per week in Form 3 to two shillings and sixpence in Form 6. As a relief from dining-room food, you often rushed to the tuck shop at the end of the old gym for a coffee scroll, an ice cream or a chocolate bar. No wonder dayboy life looked good at times.

Boarders could be identified in a group because of their haircut. Once a week the barber ('butcher' as he was called by us) came and occupied the games room. If you were lucky and you escaped the haircut monitors, you didn't have to have a haircut. Eventually, at least once every four weeks, you were given the basin cut in under two minutes. What cost resulted to mum and dad, I don't know.

Weekends in the boarding house, after commitments on Saturdays and church on Sundays, were fairly casual affairs – get a few mates, kick the footy, go to the cricket nets, have a hit of tennis, hone some hockey skills, maybe go for a row, play billiards, table tennis or work on hobbies. Great games of 'keepings off' with a football or tip and run cricket were also held. Over fifty of us would play, but eventually they were banned because of damage to cricket greens, broken bats and stumps, or injuries suffered by players.

Like many students, I could have learned more academically if only I paid more attention to the efforts of the teaching staff. However, I did complete School's Board and subjects towards matriculation, which held me in good stead in later years at college and university. Looking

back, the staff were there to help and guide as well as teach the curriculum. Like others, I had 'run ins' with the cane, but ultimately it was my fault.

Some of the staff I was privileged to receive instruction from included the below, however, not all can be recalled as it was a while ago. Headmaster Don Selth – cricket coach, mad Holden driver, fair, disciplinarian, with the school at heart and upgrading the teaching staff. Deputy Head R Horner – a great science teacher, chemistry – inspired my taste for the subject, cricket coach, a gentleman and very patient. Housemaster AT Sorell – fair, understanding of boys and their being away from home, had a nice Humber Super Snipe, good billiards and snooker player. Chaplain G Harrison – led us in scripture lessons, took us to confirmation by Bishop of Tasmania Geoffrey F Cranswick in the chapel, good cricket coach, wrote a book *Credo* which became compulsory reading. Reverends Esling and Pickup followed in the footsteps of Rev Harrison. Mr LC Hampton – hockey coach, cricket coach, physics teacher, war stories. Mr JC Parish – great maths teacher. Mr MW Donoghue – my Form 4 master, physics teacher, guided us in football B team, unaware of us brewing apple cider under the floor in the old science lab, with the smell masked by us turning on the gas jets when he queried the smell coming from under the floor boards. Mr ES Charlton – English and rowing coach, drove a Skoda, passionate about the classics. Mr Clarkson – geography and form master, had a way of making you pay attention and went on to write books on classroom discipline and control, drove a Triumph Herald that as a prank we put sideways on the steps to the office of the main building, first housemaster of Fraser House. Mr Crickmore – physical education teacher, possibly ex British Army, liked order and being in charge, taught some gymnastics. Mr G Vernon – tennis coach, great teacher of biology and related subjects, showed me my path to favoured subjects through his enthusiasm and dedication, which led me to donate my insect and plant collection in later years. Mr B Smith – came into contact with him at cricket and cadets, he instilled passion and direction. Mr B Dowse – only came into contact through cadets, guiding and the fair. 'Lofty' – groundsman and curator, loved his job, came to know him as Lofty when I attended East Launceston State School 1954-57, likeable guy. The matrons – wonderful and understanding group of ladies, mothers at times, mentors at others, caring but firm – Matron K Collins, Matron K Jones and later Matron Watkinson.

Buildings were erected during my time and some of these included the new science lecture block, which had a grand official opening, a new sports pavilion on the opposite side of the main oval to the gym, and a new bike shed built on the top of the armoury.

Cadets were compulsory, either army or air force. Parades were held in uniform once a week and camp once a year during winter for army cadets. Such camps were held at Brighton. Typical activities of the army in those days included a route march to the rifle range up the main highway – no high viz or flashing lights. Food was better than the boarding house and a family block of ice cream from the camp store cost one and threepence and made a fantastic ice cream sandwich. I think cadet camp helped some of the dayboys understand what boarding may have been like. Not many chose to leave home to become boarders though. There were two companies of three platoons of about thirty-three cadets, two warrant officers, one regimental sergeant major and seven under officers.

Some memorable moments were at the rifle range where we watched Robert and Bruce Armstrong run up the hill behind the butts and run down a rabbit. They caught it live – fast boys! Another was to listen to the Army WO McGuinness and one other playing a tune on the Vickers machine gun by tapping out the rounds in rhythm.

My proudest moment in the cadets was leading the 1963 Anzac Day parade on the main oval and in review order of fifteen paces heading towards family, staff and visitors assembled outside the old gymnasium, then, as RSM, saluting and handing over the parade to Senior Under Officer Paul Salmon.

As you journey through your schooldays, you meet many characters in the student body, including bullies – who were put down when you had had enough and beat them in fist fights. Most of the more memorable ones have passed on and it would not be fair to discuss their antics

here. Suffice to say, at reunions the same names come up, and they added to a colourful background to the sometime grind of daily routine.

One tends to remember students above you, as you saw them as role models of the time – prefects, captains of sport, et cetera. You always remember the group you went through with as your classmates and even more vividly those with whom you boarded. There was a great roll up to our class of 1963 fiftieth reunion.

I mentioned at the start that the names Hawkes and Savigny meant little to me at the time of my arrival at the school. I soon learned that three other names were there – Roff, Gillett and Wilkinson. If you had a previous association with the school through a parent brother, cousin and such, you were put in the house they had been or were in.

Not long after I started, those without association as boarders were put in to a new house – Fraser. This evened up the houses – three boarder and three dayboy. It also reflected the increase in student numbers. Mr Clarkson was the first housemaster for Fraser. House sports were hotly contested and all had to participate, even in the cross country.

As you journeyed through the years, you gained experience in other ways, be it learning something about girls from school plays or socials, becoming the lost property officer, head of dormitory, head of table, mediator in school house debating, RSM in the cadets (some became under officers), captain of a team, in endurance, a 50-mile walk and cadet camps, being passionate about cheering, the war cry at interschool events and learning how to clear gorse and so on. The school hut at Mt Arthur was another adventure.

The lead up to the socials included dancing lessons. You were taught the waltz, fox trot and the Pride of Erin. As Form 4s, you waited for the Broadland House bus to arrive and the girls lined up on the one side and the boys on the other side of the hall. Eventually, you got the courage to ask a girl for a dance. In Form 6, you were allowed out to collect your partner for the evening and escort her to and from the social, but with strict curfews and uniform conditions.

The school blazer was only to be worn at sporting functions and, if you got blues or colours, a different breast pocket would be shown in white. My blazer was auctioned off with my cap at the fiftieth reunion, with some of the younger ones never knowing of such a garment.

I didn't know anything about the junior school or the junior boarding house. Some students started in the junior school and continued at the school for thirteen years.

At the end of the day, one really can't condemn the school and, in particular, the boarding house. I feel I have been given a legacy of respect of others, to fight for your rights, help those who are struggling, learn that selfishness does not survive in a group, accept the wisdom of others, accept also that discipline is part of living together, a sense of self-confidence – all of which comes down to character building.

Other things that come to mind were the grey Fergie tractor, the school Land Rover, the blue steel chairs in the assembly hall, the great wooden chair in the dining hall – another dedication in memory of a son lost.

I will leave it to others to judge my character and recollections.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – David Saunders 1958-1963*

### **Life as a Boarder**

As the child of devoted working-class parents and coming from a small country town, the prospect of becoming a boarder at LCGS was daunting. A friend, John Walker, who enrolled the previous year was able to give me a ‘heads-up’. I was aware of the strong discipline, cold showers, boarding house food and the need for extra clothing in winter. This did little to allay my apprehension! I had little previous involvement in sport and wondered how I would be accepted.

The first weeks were hard. I felt homesick and missed the freedom and warmth of home. I also missed fishing and enjoying the great beaches on the east coast. My life was run by bells defining a strict timetable. 7.10am wake up, 7.35am inspection, 7.45am breakfast, 12.30pm lunch, 6.00pm dinner, et cetera. Homework was done in a common room and the ‘no talking’ policy was strictly enforced by a prefect, under threat of having to write lines or being placed on the blacklist, with loss of leave privileges at the weekend and some hours of ‘useful’ manual labour. Repeat offenders could find themselves in the housemaster’s office for a caning, the evidence of which remained visible for a day or two after the event. It was a case of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’. Senior students had separate studies or common rooms and could provide their own additional heating. Seniority and promotion brought with it privileges and recognition, for example specific identifying caps and badges and a seat at the headmaster’s table at lunchtime.

Everybody slept in one of the ten or so dormitories accommodating about sixteen boys in each, with a prefect in charge. Lights were turned off on schedule, after which no talking was permitted. We listened to crystal radios and later transistors with earphones and this was a great comfort, keeping us in touch with the outside world and giving us the pleasure of hearing music. When the wake-up bell sounded, we had about twenty minutes to have a cold shower – except when the pipes were frozen during winter – tidy our lockers, make our beds and stand at the bed end for inspection. Polished shoes, short and clean fingernails, straight ties and a tidy appearance were required. Hot showers were rostered on two days per week, but members of first sporting teams were allowed the privilege of hot showers after sport, including after training.

Sport was compulsory and we had a good system of house sports, which allowed all students to ‘have a go’, earn some points for the house trophy and learn that it was about doing your best for the team, rather than for individual glory. This included the annual cross-country races, which involved running several miles around the streets of Mowbray and along the very muddy river flats. The events finished with a run up the long steep hill from the boat house, followed by a lap of the oval. This event saw many courageous performances – not all from great athletes. It was a great lesson – teaching us that when we think we are completely done in, there is still something in the tank that will allow us to push on. That lesson was also highlighted by our rowing coach of the Junior Fours, Dr Bert Sundstrup. We drew on that in all our races, including the Head of the River.

It didn’t take long before the rigours of boarding house life became normal and to my relief, my fellow students were friendly. The discipline made us stronger and the cold showers helped us feel warmer. The food, though not in the gourmet class, was plentiful and adequately nutritious. I can recall that there were times when the hard-crustured sausages could only be made palatable by the application of jam, and cutting through their crusts required such force that the sausages would sometimes scoot across the table and onto the floor. Treats from home (my favorite was coffee cake) were kept in our lockers in the common room and provided some welcome pleasure. I can recall the late John Gee, who was a great talent and wrote an original contribution to the ‘Launcestonian’ magazine, recorded a humorous timetable of daily events, including “12.30 to 1.00 – sat in dining room; 1.00 to 1.30 – dined at tuck shop.”

The protocols and traditions of the dining room have been described elsewhere in this book, but suffice to say that most of us will remember them clearly, including the words of the before and after prayers – the latter in Latin. The list of names on honour boards and photographs may be regarded as something exclusive by today's standards, but they helped to inspire us to aim for higher standards and achievements, and the need to uphold the school's proud traditions.

The housemaster was Trevor Sorell. During his nightly addresses, he instructed us in many aspects of the conduct expected at Grammar. I clearly remember him stating that "some people outside the school might regard us as snobs, but if that means that we had higher standards than the rest of the community, then that was a good thing." He lectured us on good manners, which he described as basically "treating other people with the same consideration that we ourselves would like to receive." He also educated us in good table-manners, including the correct way to hold our utensils, break bread, et cetera. He had an amazing awareness of anything occurring that was untoward, and his discipline was applied firmly, but fairly.

All students, without exception, slept in a dormitory. I think each 'dorm' accommodated about sixteen boys, with maybe six of those on a balcony. In the latter area, there was an abundance of fresh air, as we slept with the pivoting windows open unless rain was blowing in. Despite this, I cannot remember feeling cold or losing much sleep.

Heating was minimal and confined to a couple of 'coke' heaters in the common rooms. I think you could sit on them without fear of being burnt. It was our practice to wear two or more pullovers during winter. Again, I don't recall feeling unduly cold. Nevertheless, after leaving school, I have not maintained the practice of having cold showers!

Participation in the cadet force was also compulsory for all boys at the school. The army, air force and navy were all available choices, though most of us joined the army. In the cadet corps we were taught some very important skills and an added dimension of discipline. The tough camps at Brighton and Fort Direction were an exercise in survival and, as with many such experiences, produced some humorous events. I recall an exercise during a Brighton camp, as a member of the 'invading force'. We were 'parachuted' into the bush (by truck) and marched several miles with a full kit of equipment. The defending force was positioned a distance away and we eagerly anticipated the ensuing battle, using blank ammunition in our .303 rifles. Regrettably, the distance separating the opposing forces was too great, so we never fired a shot in anger and this was after spending a cold wet night under tarpaulins eating army rations cooked on hexamine stoves. Our unused ammunition was fired off in a great volley of gunfire before retreating to Brighton the next day. More importantly, being a cadet taught us something of the Anzac tradition and spirit. We knew that if the need arose, we would be ready to take up arms to defend our nation, and be proud to do so. The annual Anzac Day parade was a precision event, complete with the school band. We always had a good motivational guest who gave the address.

The military training reinforced the lessons we learned in our life at school. This included the importance of leading by example and having the necessary knowledge base to make effective decisions quickly. Honesty, both with others and with ourselves, was an imperative.

Along with day students, we enjoyed great sporting fields. I remember the smell of freshly mowed grass heralding the start of the athletic season and still today that smell every spring invokes wonderful memories of those sporting days. We had a gymnasium, a swimming pool (unheated) and an excellent boat-shed of Fours and Eights. The senior coach was Eric 'Rags' Charlton, who taught us well and gave great encouragement. When in the VIII, we rowed to his home at Dilston on Saturdays – a 26-mile return trip. He and Mrs Charlton always turned on a magnificent spread, for which the boarders among us were especially grateful.

The camaraderie, discipline, managing our own daily schedules, and such, taught us self-reliance. By carrying out assigned duties we learned responsibility. The need to consider others and to share was good for me, as a somewhat spoilt only child.



We were rostered for haircuts, which were given by the barber, 'Bluey', who attended weekly – I think on a Monday night. Bluey did not entertain requests for any variations in style. It was one size fits all.

We had movies at the weekend. For a period of time, Owen Carington Smith and I were the projectionists, using a single projector. Chairs were arranged on the stage with the curtains drawn to eliminate light. Owen played pre-movie music and introduced me to great Buddy Holly songs, the melodies of which I still recall and enjoy.

The annual school balls and later senior school socials were held by all the private schools in Launceston and were an important event in the calendars of boarders. These provided for some of us our first close encounter with girls, but it wasn't long before we were taking extra pains to look our best and to be as charming as possible. We were instructed in how, as young gentlemen, we were to treat our partners. Dances required the girl's prior agreement, which was indicated on our dance cards. I used to keep mine as a memento of an enjoyable night, and for possible future reference. Anyone who did not know a young lady to invite, had a partner assigned for them from Broadland House or Methodist Ladies College (now Scotch-Oakburn).

Boarders attended chapel every Sunday and, along with the day students, every morning before classes commenced. The school's religious beliefs and culture were well taught and reinforced. Sermons from the pulpit included emphasis on courage, with the difference between moral and physical bravery. The value of 'guts and determination' was well taught. These were important life lessons, which I have called upon frequently in my adult life.

Despite the relatively austere conditions of boarding-house life, I was happy and privileged to have been there. I looked forward to the holidays, but soon found that I equally looked forward to getting back to school, with the security of its traditions, the challenges offered and the friends with whom I would be reunited. *Mos patrius et disciplina* – 'In the custom and training of our forefathers' – was an excellent motto.

In school, as in life, truly inspirational people are rare. But there were many other good people who, by their teaching and example helped us greatly. We learned from them all.

We had many good teachers. In the middle years, Trevor Sorell made mathematics interesting and gave me a good grasp of and confidence in algebra, trigonometry and geometry. When, during my twenties, I studied navigation and flight planning for my airline transport pilot licence, I appreciated how good this man's teaching was.

Also, as our class teacher, Mr Sorell read us several inspirational passages from well-known texts. These included speeches by Abraham Lincoln, Sir Winston Churchill, and Sir William Slim. He taught us the value and power of speech, based on truth.

Eric Charlton taught us English – expression and literature – to a very high standard. He taught us the value of poetry and prose. His teaching was more than how to express ourselves in a technically correct way. He taught us the relationship between emotion and expression.

The most inspirational teacher for me was Malcolm Clarkson. He taught geography. Some would have considered him to be something of a rebel and strong-willed, but he taught us to value and to develop our own individuality. He cautioned us against becoming products of a production line, where it was all too easy to lose our individuality and our ability to think outside the circle of accepted conformity. He spoke the truth and gave us confidence to be ourselves and to speak our minds.

This was consistent with the way others taught us to say and do what we believe is right, even if our position was unpopular or would place us at personal risk.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Paul AC Richards 1950-1962*

When I started school at ‘little’ Grammar in High Street in February 1950, I made life-long friends, was only bullied once or twice by a fellow student and enjoyed six years of primary education under two heads – Miss Laura Stubs and Rev John Maddox. My kindergarten teacher, Sheila Atkins, was a sympathetic and kind-natured woman and exceptionally skilled in handling young boys, and very much recognised for her nurturing over her years teaching at Grammar.

My first day at school was not a traumatic or daunting one – no sadness or crying. Being left in the company of Jeremy Keach, Donald Marsden and Geoffrey Pickett was an interesting one, as Jeremy was crying and Geoffrey Pickett and I managed to push Donald into the fish pond, followed by Geoffrey wetting his pants. This was a great start to my education and what fun it had been that day.

I never looked back from that day on, and honestly admit that I enjoyed all of my school days, never feeling the whim not to go to school because of any fears of that which might await me, such as an argument with a fellow student, a maths, English, physics or spelling test, running in the cross-country, delivering the lesson in chapel or being the third speaker for the Gillett house debating team.

At little Grammar, the student body, kindergarten to Grade 5, were made up of young boys who lived in Launceston and within easy reach of the school at 8 High Street. When I first started, I was living in the city in Dean’s Lane and later, in 1952, moved to the suburb of Newstead. In my first few years, I was always taken to school and picked up in the afternoon. Some afternoons I would go and play with my friends Robert Wall, Tony Teague and Christopher Ikin, who lived quite close to the school in Adelaide and Claremont Streets, where I would be collected around 5pm. In later years, in Grades 1 and 2, Geoffrey Pickett, Richard Perkins, Donald Marsden, Philip Newson and I would be escorted by ‘big boys’ – normally Tony Jarvis and Peter Clemons – to the tram stop opposite City Park to catch the tram into the city. Geoffrey and Donald lived in West Launceston and caught the same tram as Richard and I. However, we usually got off in Brisbane Street and walked home, Richard to York Street, where his parents leased the Exchange Hotel and I to Dean’s Lane, which ran off Charles Street half way between Brisbane and Paterson streets, or to my grandparents, who leased the National Hotel on the corner of Charles and Paterson streets, only a further fifty metres.

Most of the events of those early days are vague and probably a little distorted, but some are embedded clearly in my memory, especially my first day of school, playing marbles, my teachers Barbara McCormack, Ms Holder and Miss Stubs and learning our times tables, which to this day I believe is the most successful way to teach the basics of mathematics.

In 1950, I remember that the school milk programme was introduced to all primary schools. At little Grammar, the full cream milk was left in a shed in the driveway which led into the school each morning – ¼ pint glass bottles stoppered with an aluminium cap in metal crates. It was never collected until mid-morning and, during summer, it was often extremely warm and was on the turn and sour to drink. Our only other sustenance was our packed lunch, as in those days there was no school tuck shop. We often swapped sandwiches because mothers tended to be so consistent with their daily sandwiches, with perhaps an apple, and such. Vegemite was always on the list, along with cheese, bread and butter, and variety only came when we swapped with each other at lunch time. In those early years, school meals were non-existent. It was not until I moved to Mowbray Heights (big Grammar), that I experienced a tuck shop and the opportunity of dining in the boarding house for lunch as a dayboy. My most memorable lunches were during my First XI cricket days, when independent schools matches were played on the main oval turf wicket and both teams ate in the dining hall and were served a hearty meal of sausages and mash. This has always been a favourite meal of mine.

Life was good, despite the deficiency of all the modern-day equipment and technology. Memories of those days with electric trams and then trolley buses and the joys of a protective

environment at little Grammar have remained in my memory as some of the happiest moments in my childhood.

After Grade 5, we left the warm environment of little Grammar and headed off to Grade 6 at the big school – little fish in a big pond. Daunting as we all thought it would be, we were welcomed with open arms by A Trevor Sorell, a past student of little Grammar, and made to feel comfortable in our new environment. We were all quickly introduced to the house system and an all-male teaching staff. The school was Sorell's whole existence – a disciplinarian particularly in the boarding house, where it was customary in the evening for him to deal out punishment by the cane, from a suite of whippy canes he kept in his office. The selection of your house was random, unless there was a specific request for you to enter a house through a family connection to that house. There were two boarding houses, Hawkes and Savigny, and two dayboy houses, Gillett and Wilkinson. I was drafted into Gillett house and was proud to remain in that house for all my secondary school days at Grammar. Their motto 'second to none' is a practice I have nurtured all my life.

One of the features that left a lasting impression on me was the six feet by eight feet wooden board fixed to the wall of the ground floor corridor that had former pupils' names carved into it. In particular, I can still see Peter Shepherd's name beautifully carved into its thick wooden border. There was also the odd desk with similar carved initials in the class rooms. We were encouraged not to carve our initials into furniture, but unfortunately there was no space left on the traditional board. Such tradition is found at the great private institutions of Winchester and Eton I am told, but on a grander scale. Future viceroys, admirals and prime ministers have recorded, in wood, impulses similar to our own. Churchill himself, the hero of World War II, cut his name in a desk at Harrow. While we don't have the long tradition of these schools, we have as much as it's possible to have in Australia. We're Launceston Grammar!

A passion for sport was entrenched in the tradition of Grammar, with an emphasis on teamwork and the bonding of males. Boys were to be transformed into men, and this was the belief of the headmaster, 'Jika' Travers, who supervised this transformation on a grand scale in the mid-1950s. However, academic pursuits were never overlooked, with a philosophy of 'a healthy mind and healthy body maketh the man'. An ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu famously once said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." And Grammar was that step.

The house system at Grammar had become the very foundation and infrastructure of the school. It built confidence, camaraderie and team spirit. House sports were always great events, especially in the pool. John Gollan, one of my house captains, a great swimmer and leader, left a major impression on my schoolboy days, especially on the subject of house spirit and the will to match up with our house motto 'second to none'. The only daunting moments were those experienced in house debating and cross country. I was petrified of public speaking but with the encouragement of Robert Jessup, a later house captain, I learnt to overcome this fear and have never looked back.

The cross country required a special level of endurance and that final climb to the finish from the Tamar River flats to the school oval was, to say the least, exhausting. However, each year I improved but was always in the middle bunch finishing the course. Who could ever forget that photograph of Ted Tyrall of Savigny house finishing the cross country with John Dean and Robert Findlay egging him on after this most arduous and debilitating climb.

How well I remember the school doctor's visit. In our case it was always Dr Neil Gollan, Dr Robert Wall or Dr David Churton, following the retirement of Dr 'Boggy' Grounds in earlier times. All had sons who went to Grammar and were either in my class or in my school house, Gillett. The medical physicals were always undertaken in class groups in the boarding house and infrequently in winter. Matron Collins would accompany the doctor and we would line up with only our underpants on and be examined one by one with the inevitable testicle clutch, turn head to the right and cough and move on. Naturally, we were all curious about this action of the doctor but never questioned the procedure or reasoned why he was doing this each year.

So, what exactly were they looking for when they asked you to turn your head and cough? In a word – hernias. More specifically, they were checking for something called an inguinal (inner groin) hernia, which accounts for about seventy to eighty per cent of all hernia cases and is surprisingly common in young men.

I also have a vivid memory of the IQ test, which was conducted around these early years at Mowbray Heights. I was informed that I had a great aptitude for the accuracy of selection. The example given was my ability to match a spanner to a nut and the revelation that I would make a good mechanic! Well, how far from the truth were they, as I have no aptitude for mechanics. However, in hindsight I do have the ability to match things easily. A number of my classmates who went on to have very successful and academic careers, like Donald Marsden and Peter Evans, were placed in the commercial stream and although I struggled in the academic stream, I did make it through to matriculation successfully.

This was a new environment, it was 1956. 'Jika' Travers was headmaster and Rob Dowling was head boy and there was an air of belonging, pride and a great sense of self. There was encouragement in every aspect of school life and studying, and new choices of academic or commercial classes and sporting achievement, providing a new dawn of opportunity. This was a time to grasp what opportunities were on offer, which were encouraged through academic and sporting achievement. When I arrived with my schoolmates, boxing was still practised at the school with many other sports, along with a traditional compulsory cadet system in place, catering for both army and air force units at the school.

I joined the air force cadets and spent my first camp at Fort Direction in the south of the state. I caught the train at Inveresk and travelled for about eight hours south. On arrival, we filled palliasses with straw for our mattresses to sleep on for the following ten days. Our commanding officer was Rev Guy Harrison, our school chaplain. My only other memory of that camp were the long drops – a daunting row of wooden toilet seats covering a trench, some three metres deep. All subsequent camps were at Brighton.

The Rev GA Harrison taught divinity. He assisted me to convert from the Catholic faith to High Church of England when I was confirmed in the school chapel in Grade 6. I had been christened in the Catholic church and when moving to Mowbray Heights from little Grammar I was told to remain in my classroom and not to attend chapel. I found this quite distressing and spoke with Rev Harrison about my desire to change religion, as I was missing my friends and wanted to attend chapel each morning with my classmates. My request was acknowledged and that year I attended confirmation classes and was confirmed along with several of my lifelong school friends. I spent three years in the choir of Holy Trinity (High Church of England) in Cameron Street in Launceston, led by my old kindergarten teacher Miss Sheila Atkinson (organist) and the Rev McDonald.

Latin was being taught by Max Mattingley and French had been enhanced by a new teacher, who was actually French, Jean P. Genest – commonly referred to as 'Frenchie'. He was a graduate in modern languages from the University of Strasbourg and, after a career in the French Army, taught in several schools in Switzerland prior to his arrival in 1957. I had the pleasure of studying French for three years.

In all my years at Grammar, the question of paedophilia was never the subject of conversation, nor have I heard of any molestation at the school.

I quickly developed my skills in cricket, football and swimming over hockey and rowing. However, I also enjoyed tennis and one year reached the quarter finals in the Tasmanian Schoolboy Tennis Championships at the Hart Street courts in Launceston.

The first Asian student to be enrolled at the school was Lincoln Wu. He was a great bloke and an exquisite table tennis player. He fitted in like a glove and was a very popular student. I spent many an hour at lunchtime playing table tennis against him, but was never able to topple him.

I was first introduced to stamps when I attended Grammar at Mowbray Heights. Although I was one of the youngest in my class, Jonathon Hawkes, who was the son of a Church of England minister and a boarder, was much younger and brighter than most of our class. It was a great pastime to take your collection to school and swap stamps, and I remember that Jonathon had a great set of Trinidad and Tobago stamps. His family had spent some time in the far southern reaches of the Caribbean in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. I admired that set of stamps, and time and again offered up the best of what I had to swap, but could not sway Jonathon to part with them.

My collection grew over the years and I remember having stamps given to me which had been torn from letters, and I had to soak them off in water and press them to dry for my album. Although I had stamps from several countries, I settled on collecting Australian stamps. When I left Grammar, I did not see Jonathon Hawkes again. He got in to Hytten Hall at the University of Tasmania because his father was a man of the cloth. However, John was cut from a different pattern to his father. He joined the drama society, went to a lot of parties and failed every subject. He also lined up the biggest collection of empty spirits bottles on his windowsill that the college had ever seen. He moved to Monash University, where his father was chaplain, worked in the book room and started his degree again, one subject per year. He became the editor of Rolling Stone (Australia), a prime mover in the innovative drama group based at the Pram Factory in Melbourne (David Williamson's first base), and then he was the business manager and strongman with Circus Oz. Rafe 'Alf' Champion kept in touch with him and said that he was the only person from the school Jon had spoken to. I wonder where Jonathon is today, sixty years on!

I liked the majority of my teachers. Those that stand out include Trevor Sorell, who in my earlier years guided us through that transitional period of Grade 6, preparing us for major decisions in what educational stream we were best suited, academic or commercial. This was how students were divided in the late 1950s. The academic stream catered for higher-level physics, chemistry, mathematics, French and Latin and the commercial stream focussed on bookkeeping and woodwork along with the sciences. Max 'Steve' Donoghue, our physics teacher, Lionel 'Screw' Hampton and Jack 'Shooter' Parish, who in my matriculation year taught maths, were all characters. However, most of my admiration for teachers goes to Rolf Hennquel, our art teacher, Malcolm 'Basher' Clarkson, my Form 9 and matriculation geography teacher, 'Rags' Charlton, my English expression and literature teacher, Bruce Dowse, who taught modern history, and Don Selth, who taught economics in my matriculation year.

The inevitable nicknames given to some teachers were endearing – for example: 'Tack Head' Kirkbride, who was a bachelor living in the boarding house. If he was upset by any class behaviour, he would announce that he 'was going', and he would leave and go to his room. Ron Horner was usually informed and he would go off to fetch him back to the classroom. 'Screw' Hampton was a great story teller. 'Rags' Charlton, 'Basher' Clarkson, 'Voltamater' Waters, 'Shooter' Parish, 'Maggots' McGaw were some of the others who spun a good story.

Class restructures and designated house systems all contributed to separation from your primary school chums of little Grammar. This was not detrimental as it made you quite independent and developed your maturity in the competitive world of the private school environment. My housemaster was Max Donoghue. The house system built lasting friendships, camaraderie and competitiveness. After leaving school, I always associated an old boy with his house.

Corporal punishment was still in vogue and I remember in Form 7 all the class received two cuts across the backside from 'Jika' Travers, because no one would own up to some misdemeanour and the class had been misbehaving at that time. We heard the whack but never saw the deed, all receiving the same punishment. Jika was considerate, maintaining our dignity by caning each boy outside the room. The behaviour of that class improved out of sight. I grew up with corporal punishment. At little Grammar, Miss Stubs used both the cane across your

backside and a wooden ruler across your bare knuckles. Rev John Maddox had a suite of canes in his office, which came out on several occasions.

When I was in my School's Board year, my class was the first to occupy the hut built on Mt Arthur – which was developed along the lines of Timber Top, an outdoors education facility of Geelong Grammar, famously attended by Prince Charles. It was a Friday and the class, after climbing Mt Arthur, retired to the hut to settle in for the weekend. Some of us had to play sport on the Saturday morning, so there was going to be a break in our activities on that day. Peter Evans and I had opposite top bunks and in conversation we were talking ill of our form master Mr Whybrow. Unbeknown to us, he was standing close enough to hear our conversation. We were told in no uncertain terms that we were not to return after our football match the following morning and were essentially banished from the mountain. On the Monday morning, on arriving at school, we decided to go straight to the headmaster Don Selth and own up and apologise for our behaviour. Selth listened intently, said "I am pleased you have come to me," asked us both to assume the position and proceeded to give us both two cuts of the cane. When he had finished punishment, he announced that Mr Whybrow had not reported any incidents from the weekend on the mountain.

Now, is honesty the best course of action? Well, yes, it is. A lesson well learnt and not forgotten. Whybrow never mentioned the incident to us nor we to him.

Form 7 was an interesting year as we were joined by a number of new boys, both as boarders and dayboys, who had received their primary education in the public system. Some had no connection to the school and others did. However, they settled in quickly and were readily accepted by those who had come through from little Grammar in High Street and the Mowbray Heights LCGS primary school. You quickly gained respect for each other both academically and on the sporting field, which was very much encouraged by the three headmasters I had in primary and secondary school – Vernon Jones, Basil 'Jika' Travers and Don Selth.

There were some things I did not like at Grammar and, although I was quite athletic in my primary school years, I was not keen on boxing or cross country. I did not like boxing because I did not like fighting – but more importantly getting hurt. And cross country, merely due to the exhaustive length you had to run – through the mud flats of the Tamar River near Stephenson's Bend below the school.

In Grade 6, I experienced difficulties in my first physical education class. 'Maggots' McGaw, the PE master, was keen on boxing as well as spring-board vaulting over a wooden horse. I was quite small and I saw this vaulting task too difficult and refused to participate. This refusal to take the vault found no sympathy from McGaw and he forced me to take the vault. The outcome was a dislocated elbow and a trip to St Vincent's Hospital to have it reduced. It was during my stint at the National Service Officer Training School at Skyville in NSW that I was faced with the same task. I was then twenty-five and, with the confidence of a springboard diving champion of Tasmania and a fitness level I had not achieved for some years, I relished the wooden horse vaulting in our regular physical education classes. The only other occasion of bullying I experienced was in Form 8 by a classmate, who saw fit to tear up a watercolour painting I had just completed in our art class taught by Rolph Henkl. This was probably one of the best pieces of art I had produced and Gebbie's action was not only vindictive but a malicious act – to this very day I have not forgiven him.

Expulsion was the ultimate punishment. There were also detentions requiring a set number of lines to be written and canings to a limit of six cuts – six of the best – on the backside. My personal score was two cuts from Travers and two cuts from Selth. Boarders were 'gated', and dayboys brought back for Saturday detention. The Saturday detention for dayboys focussed on polishing the two small brass cannons protecting the flagpole with Brasso and rag. I was fortunate enough not to have received enough consecutive detentions to warrant a Saturday morning punishment.

Perhaps one of the most inspiring speeches I heard at while at school was that given by Sir Robert Menzies on the occasion of the opening of the Gordon Rolph Pavilion. He was introduced by Mr Justice George Crawford, chairman of the School Board. In his speech to all the boys, parents and staff assembled on the oval, the Prime Minister made several points about individuality being a major focus of a private school education:

*The best proof, I think, of [the benefit of a private school education] is that as time has gone on, more and more people are sending their boys to schools like this, sending their girls to sister schools like this, with an eagerness to secure the advantage of this particular educational training. Nobody can tell me that is just keeping up with the Joneses or being snooty or superior. This is a growing recognition of the fact that when your son, or your daughter, comes out of school, goes to a university or goes out into the world of affairs or goes into some technical training, you want him or her to be an individual, with some personality developed with an individual mark, not just the mark of a mould.*

*To do that I believe that we have to draw out of all those who are at school, the best that they have. It may be the best that they have at cricket or at football. It may be the best that they have in Latin, if one may speak with respect of what I understand is now almost literally a dead language. We must try to get the best out of their minds and their personalities, so that at the end of it people will say "That fellow went to a good school" and won't say "I wonder whether that chap ever went to school."*

He went on to say the guarantee of liberty was to have truly individual characters who had their minds developed, who have put themselves in the way of learning more and more right through their lives, and who are, therefore, able to speak their minds and resist any petty aspiring dictator, in whatever field, who may come along.

I was amazed to find amongst the school archives, a transcript of the speech made by Menzies on that occasion. As we all appreciated, Menzies was a great advocate and barrister before he entered his political career, which was long and with ups and downs but ultimately full of achievement.

Some years later I met Sir Robert, dined with him at the Melbourne Club and shared a cigar with him only months before his death in 1978. I was the Sir Robert Menzies Scholar of that year and travelled to the UK to undertake research, which led to the eventual introduction of a new blood-screening test for diagnosing neonatal hypothyroidism in both the UK and later Tasmania. When I met Sir Robert it was in his office suite in Melbourne. He was in a wheelchair after suffering a stroke and was half shaven but exceptionally astute of his surroundings and the reason I was meeting with him. We exchanged small talk in his office. He offered me a cigar, so we both lit up. I inhaled and found myself spluttering and gasping for air before settling down and enjoying a few puffs out of respect for his offer of sharing such a challenge, as I had never before smoked a cigar.

The Melbourne Club luncheon was silver service and all was a pleasant experience – the toilets were like the Roman baths, sparse and with porcelain large urinals. It's interesting what you remember from an experience forty years before – the table setting with starched tablecloth and polished silver, very austere... and the urinals. It beggars belief that it is my only memory of the Melbourne Club.

There were of course many other inspiring speeches that were delivered at our annual speech nights, in school assemblies, by a visiting bishop or a sports personality such as Wally Grout, the well known wicket-keeper of the Australian cricket team, or Richie Benaud, its captain. However, one particular quote from Headmaster Don Selth has always remained deep in my memory, which followed an assembly in the War Memorial Hall. The headmaster during one of his addresses on morals, manners and respect said, "You don't do it because you're told to do it. You do it because it is the right thing to do."

As a dayboy, I either took a cut lunch or visited the tuck shop at the far end of the old gymnasium. However, it was customary to share your sandwiches with the boarders, who were always ravenous, as well as other dayboys who detested their home-made sandwiches – which we often swapped at lunchtime. Bill Godfrey Smith’s mother made a very nice vegemite and crushed walnut sandwich that he was always happy to swap or share.

I regularly ate in the boarding house during First XI cricket matches that were played on the main oval. This occurred usually on a Saturday, or occasionally during the week in my last two years at school. The boarding house dining room walls were lined with premierships photos extending back into the mid-19th century along with portraits of past headmasters. Athletes, cricketers, footballers and oarsmen ‘stared’ down from the walls, giving great inspiration to the boys seated at long tables. The top table oversaw the boys from which Trevor Sorell commenced proceedings with grace – that has been etched in my soul – having been said in the refectories of Oxford and Cambridge over the centuries.

I once graced the dining room walls for swimming, cricket and football teams but those photographs have since been removed, leaving the dining room stark and sterile and lacking the atmosphere it once had. Where are those capped, moustachio’d and blazered champions amongst young men with their coaches sitting sternly between captain and vice-captain or standing in the back row?

I never experienced breakfast or the evening meal but my cousin David Saunders recalls:

*At breakfast and dinner, the housemaster sat on the platform in a rather ornately carved chair. He was joined by the live-in masters. At lunch, the headmaster usually sat on the platform, along with some prefects. Occasionally, they were joined by a distinguished guest, such as Lord Casey.*

*The grace before meals was, to the best of my recollection: “May God bless this food to our use, us to His service and provide the needs of others, for Christ’s sake, Amen.”*

*The after meal, incantation was always given by the housemaster (Trevor Sorell): “Benedictus benedicat, per Jesum Christum, Dominum nostrum.” The English translation is: May the blessed one be blessed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. My research shows that this was a grace used in the formal hall at St Edmund Hall (College), University of Oxford.*

*The dining room had an aura of great tradition, with memorabilia of past students around the walls. We viewed these with great reverence, and I believe that this helped us aspire to greater heights in achievement.*

*At lunchtime only, masters sat at each table, engaging us in informal conversation. No tea was served at lunchtime, this being reserved for breakfast and dinner. We then drank water only.*

*A hundred and twenty boys stand at their benches. Trevor Sorell, school housemaster, grunts – it’s his call for silence – “Benedictus benedicat, per Jesum Christum, Dominum nostrum,” he said. All sit. The prefects on duty produce their rolls, calling names at speed. We answer “Sir!” The meal won’t be served until the rolls are finished, so the prefects hurry, answers coming two or three names behind the call.*

There were two things I would have liked to have achieved at Grammar. One was receiving blues in cricket and swimming – as I had achieved the ultimate in both sports, twice Savigny Bat winner and Busby Fielding prize, and all swimming championships U13 to open – and two was not becoming a prefect. However, if I had returned in 1963, my disappointments may have been rewarded. I will never know.

I often reflect on the values and qualities Grammar gave me, independent of my parents.

Self confidence – this was reinforced during my Army Officer training at Skyeville during conscription 1966-1972, after leaving Grammar in 1962.



Honesty and trustworthiness – be honest, sincere and seek the truth.

Integrity – act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds.

Respect – treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view.

Responsibility – be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, and take care of the environment.

Understanding, tolerance and inclusion – be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Bruce Crawford 1949-1955*

### **Canberra Trip 1954**



*Back row: Robert Dowling, Ronald Hay, Philip Roff, Senator John Marriott, BH Travers, Senator Denham Henty, Colin Room, Bruce Crawford, D Johnstone unknown, Michael Webb.*

*Third row: Peter Hart, Brian Faulkner, Roderick Thirkell-Johnston, Dennis Gebbie, Donald Johnstone, Alan Inglis.*

*Second row: John Mawdesley, John Sale, Robert Upton, John Costello.*

*Front row: Philip 'Pip' Hamilton, Graeme Coogan, Geoffrey Becher, unknown, Roger Dunstan.*

### **My Experience as a Pupil at Launceston Church Grammar School**

I had attended Grammar's preparatory school from 1944 until 1948. From 1949 until 1955 I attended the big school at Mowbray Heights. In what follows, I have been assisted by a diary I kept from 1951 until 1955, but much that appears below is purely from memory. Paradoxically, my diary has recounted events that I had completely forgotten and in some cases of which, even with the aid of the diary, I have no recollection.

I found my time at the school to be a positive and enjoyable one. In summary, I found the school buildings to be beautiful, the setting overlooking the Tamar River to be attractive, the headmasters and teachers to be dedicated and good people, and the opportunity to participate in numerous activities both sporting and otherwise and to associate with fellow students to be fulfilling.

Of course, there were unhappy moments – inevitable in the hurly burly of school life – but even they were formative in a positive way.

The neo-Gothic buildings created a mood of attractive solidity and permanence. I found the school chapel to be most beautiful. When entering the chapel, I found myself in a world apart. The fact that every pew faced across the building and brought into vision the exquisite wooden carvings by Gordon William Cumming and Ellen Nora Payne, the lovely windows, the stones

from prominent English public schools and the beautiful organ, made me feel I was in a precious place and at peace.

The music brought forth from the organ stirred me. I pay tribute to teacher Mr A Trevor Sorell who was a most competent organist. The hairs on the back of my neck rose when he played the last movement of Widor's 'Symphony for Organ No. 5'. On special occasions, I sang in the choir although normally the choir was limited to the boarders.

### **The Headmasters**

My first headmaster was H Vernon Jones. He impressed me with his high standards and obvious interest in students achieving as well as they could. He was an excellent teacher, though I think he relied somewhat too much on corporal punishment, which could have been reduced in favour of gaining the motivation of the student or in relying on the use of detentions.

He was a stickler for maintenance of tradition in the school. At one assembly – always held in the open in front of the boarding school – he remonstrated about the unknown students who had torn off branches from the avenue of pines on both sides of the path leading to the chapel, which were planted in memory of old boys who fought in World War I. He said this was tantamount to ripping the limbs off the old boys. Years later the trees were entirely removed by the school and I hope this was done after Mr Jones had died. On his departure from the school on 11 December 1952, the boys presented him with a chiming clock and he broke down with the emotion of the occasion.

### **Grammar Memoir**

When I arrived at the big school, I was given a booklet by the school which, under the heading 'Some of the school's traditions', contained the school motto, explained the school crest, set out important dates in the school history, the names of the past headmasters, the school prayer composed by Rev JW Bethune and the importance of the school chapel, grace before meals, school songs and the war cry. It emphasised the importance of service to the British Empire, the need to care for school property, and under the heading 'Playing the Game', set out fourteen rules of conduct such as There is no place in the school for a bully; We like boys to show guts; Never tell a lie; Learn Kipling's 'If' and try to live up to it.

The next headmaster was BH 'Jika' Travers. He was a considerable stimulus to the school. He played in Australian Rules teams such as the students versus old boys match on 11 June 1955 and I recall he had no trouble as a former English rugby player in fending off tackles.

Mr Travers was interviewed by my father George Crawford and Ray Ferrall and recommended to the Board. The second in line was WH Mason Cox, who became head of Hutchins School in 1954.

Mr Travers 'taught' ancient history. In that we were required to use the text book and research in the State Library reference section in order to complete assignments, such as on Peisistratus and Thucydides. The classes were taken up with interesting discussions on many subjects beyond the scope of the course. I recall that he told us he had viewed the film *High Society*, Cole Porter's musical, and had thought jazz star Louis Armstrong and his band in performing the title song were taking the mickey out of the wealthy residents of Newport, Rhode Island, depicted in the film.

Mr Travers was sparing with the rod but made up for it by explaining to the miscreant the high standards expected of him. The Rev Mortimer Tanner took up the scheme in April 1954 by giving me a detention of writing a 1,000-word essay on 'Disestablishment'. I probably used the opportunity to use the word antidisestablishmentarianism, being popularly considered at school to be the longest word.

## The Teachers

I mention only some of my teachers. I felt that nearly all of them taught at least at an acceptable level.

In 1951, when I was twelve and in class 5B, we were taught social studies by Mr MGE ‘Pansy’ Porter, who had come that year from Sydney. He made an immediate and lasting impression on me. I noted in my diary my reaction to him at the outset of the year: “Wednesday 14 February – had beaut fun with Mr Porter.” He had enjoyed the bohemian side of Sydney and regaled us with stories from that side of life. He was slim with a chiselled face and artistic hands. He showed us his appreciation of music and the theatre.

He encouraged us to accompany him to see *Swan Lake* at the National Theatre in Launceston, which we saw on 18 April that year. I remember how moved I was by the ballet. In the *Examiner* newspaper of 19 April, the review said: “The National Ballet Company’s presentation ... was the finest ballet work ever performed in Launceston.”

Mr Porter invited interested students to meet him at lunchtime at the masters’ common room and played records of excerpts from Richard Wagner’s operas, which made a strong impression on me. On 8 May, I noted in my diary that Mr Porter told the class shaggy dog stories. On 12 December, Mr Porter and our French teacher and form master, Alexander Bryce, took the class to the First Basin for a swim. Mr Porter was one of the best teachers at Grammar and I was disappointed when he resigned at the end of the year. The class gave him a farewell present.

Mr JC ‘Shooter’ Parish was a fine mathematics teacher. He readily gave me after-hours assistance on 7 July 1954. In winter, he placed himself up against the centrally heated hot water heater and stayed there much of the class.

While I was a student, Mr ES ‘Rags’ Charlton taught classes in English expression and literature from 1951 until 1955. He was a popular and excellent teacher. The ‘rags’ tag derived from the most amazingly tattered academic gown he wore. He was keen on motor cars. He was teacher in charge of debates held in the school. He told us there need not be speed limits as drivers should learn about safe speeds. He complained that a driver he knew speeded up for a time and then removed his foot from the accelerator so the vehicle alternately varied constantly in speed, wasting petrol. Like Mr Porter he entertained boys away from the school. On one occasion, he took a group of us to Valleyfield near Epping to watch the car races.

Mr VM ‘Blinky’ Lloyd taught social studies in 4A. He had a stentorian voice. He told us that the practice of writing three-act plays was wrong as it interrupted the flow of action and visits to the toilet were not needed that often. He assured us that he was about to write a two-act play, which would fulfil a need. He also startled us by saying he wouldn’t deign to pick up any coin from the ground if worth sixpence or less. Ice creams were then threepence. I awaited with interest the publicity which would undoubtedly follow from a two-act production of his projected play, but no word of the same ever reached me. He left the school in mid-1951.

On 12 May 1955 while on holidays, I attended the Devonport Association basketball at Ulverstone and saw Mr Lloyd there. He told me he hadn’t written the play but it was still planned.

In 1952 and 1953, Mr LA Hickman taught us French. He gained good results because he frightened us. I have a mental picture of him arriving in 5A, moving slowly from the door across the front of the class, his eyes darting about the room to seek a miscreant.

The next French teacher – 1954 and 1955 – was Mr Karl Metzger. He told us he was from Alsace Lorraine, which the Germans occupied in 1940, and fought for the Germans. He told us how he and other soldiers had entered a castle occupied by his army’s opponents. He had crept upstairs and listened rapt to a pianist below playing music by Sibelius. Then he and his comrades took over the castle. He expressed the view that as Sibelius’ most recent symphony had been published in 1926, he had probably written an eighth symphony which would be published on his death, but it was not to be.

He impressed as a man uncomfortable with his background. He was tense. My father, who was on the School Board, made Mr Metzger welcome and he visited us at our home a few times. Mr Metzger accompanied students on outings away from the school. For example, he went to the Queen Victoria Museum with Guy Green, Geoffrey Garrott and me on 19 March 1954. On 28 May 1954, he, a German friend of his and I attended film shorts at the usual Friday night session held at the Mechanics Hall theatre.

Mr Victor E Benney arrived in 1952 and taught social studies to 5A. He produced plays for the students. There was a dramatic society in which he was active. As part of the Golden Jubilee competition, he produced a radio play called *The Sword of Theseus*. On 23 and 30 April and 1 May 1952, we performers went to his home to rehearse the play. It was broadcast by station 7LA on 5 May.

I reproduce a news item from the *Examiner* newspaper dated 6 August 1952:

*Twenty-five young Launceston actors played to a full house at the Launceston Public Library Hall last night – the third night of the Youth Drama festival. Of ‘The King’s March’, the third play on the programme, the Adjudicator Walter Sutherland said: “It was a play of the mystery of the old and dark, intended to throw into relief the mystery of the new and shining and the hope of mankind.” He said the costumes of the players were extremely good. Members of the cast were John Cardenzana, Bruce Crawford, Gavin Chambers, John Rees, Robert Donoghue and Dennis Rose.*

I have noted in my diary that John Cardenzana was suffering from a fever during our performance but soldiered on. The junior section of the competition was won by the school in another play produced by Mr Benney.

On 30 October 1952, students from the school went to see *King Lear* produced by John Alden, the noted Australian theatrical actor and director. On 5 November, John Alden visited the school and gave a lecture on Shakespeare.

Dr Mendel conducted a course on Latin roots around 5B level. This was about the derivation of many English words from Latin. The only one that stayed in my mind was ‘pendo’.

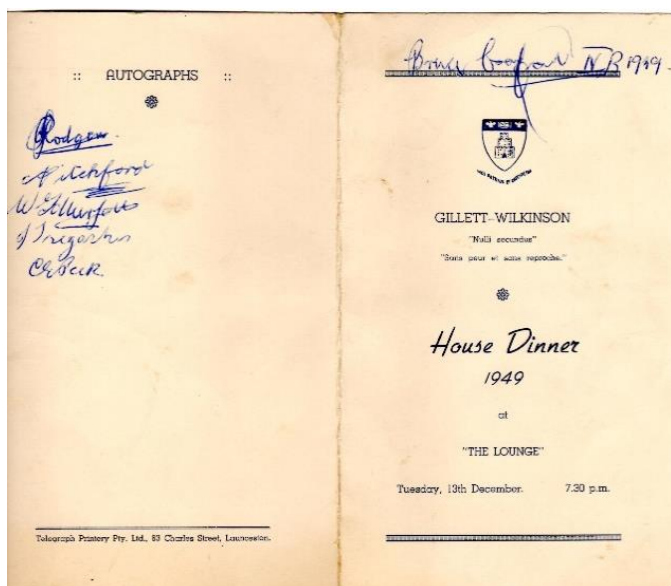
## **Sport**

It was compulsory to participate in team sport. When I started at the big school in 1949, team sport consisted of cricket, Australian Rules football and rowing. When Mr LC Hampton arrived to teach at the school in 1951, he introduced hockey, which was accepted as a team sport and was very popular. Mr Hampton told us he was born within sight of the Taj Mahal. He bore the facial scars of malaria. He taught arithmetic, geometry and science to 5B and 5A in 1951 and 1952, and interposed the history of the Indian Mutiny on 8 May 1951 and the virtues of soccer on 20 June. He was an asset to the school and very well liked.

Athletics were also compulsory at the beginning of the third term each year. There was no thought of tennis being an alternative to team sport. I believe this was a mistake, as mastery of tennis provides a lifetime of physical activity and team sports are generally limited to one’s younger years.

The school had a gymnasium in an attractive weatherboard building near the oval. This had a rural or rustic feel. A sign was on one of the walls, ‘mens sana in corpore sano’ – a healthy mind in a healthy body. Mostly the gym teachers were ex-Army members. Attendance at gym was part of the curriculum.

For those not at the acme of sporting skill, there were seconds and sometimes thirds teams. Also there were house competitions. These competitions also went into areas other than sport, such as cadets and debating.



On 13 December 1949, Gillett-Wilkinson held a house dinner at The Lounge in Brisbane Street. I believe this was my first formal school dinner – I was only ten-years-old at the time. The Mediterranean diet had not by then crept into Anglo-Saxon meals and the fare that night was tomato soup, lamb, beef and pork with baked and boiled potatoes, green peas and baked tomato, followed by apple pie and ice cream. The head prefect, Warren Craig, proposed the toast to the King, John Ferrall proposed the toast to the school with the headmaster responding. The toast to our guests was proposed by DR

Stephens with a response by Bruce Findlay. The house was proposed by Mr MW ‘Steve’ Donoghue followed by the school war cry and a response by Warren Craig, and the toast to boys leaving was proposed by leaving student, Bill Oldham, with the response by another departing student, Chris Binks.

In 1953, the house Gillett-Wilkinson was separated into two houses. In athletics there were standards set up and each student performed to his best and earned between one and ten points for his house, depending on the quality, or acquired none if a poor result ensued. My favorite athletic event was cross country, which was run across the swamp below the school.

Mr Donoghue and Mr GF ‘Kinky’ Connell were the athletic coaches, and the period when I was at the school produced some fine athletic performances for which the coaches received their share of the glory. Robin Hood, Arnold Gunther, David Lean, Brian Smith and Robert Firth come to mind as outstanding athletes. The majority of the students supported the talented players in all sports by attending and, where appropriate, giving the war cry. This built up an esprit de corps. I was a keen participant in the lower grades of football and cricket and attended to support our teams in competition.

### Cadets

There were junior and senior cadets. It was compulsory to join. One joined senior cadets in Form 6B. Uniforms were issued from Paterson Barracks. Mr (Captain) Sorell was the officer commanding and was firm but fair in discipline. Officers and lower ranks were chosen. We gathered each Thursday afternoon after school. In my final year, I worked in the orderly room with fellow student Graeme ‘Oscar’ Beswick.

Each year there was a camp held over at least a week during one of the school term holidays. Camps included corps from Scotch and St Patrick’s colleges. I set out excerpts from my diary as an indication of a typical camp.

*Friday 21 August 1953. Went by train to Brighton. (We marched from Brighton station to the Midlands Highway and along it to the camp.) Issued with blankets, etc. We occupied tents each holding four cadets. Each tent had duckboards for flooring. Straw-filled palliasses were the base of bedding, blankets were five in number and pillows were provided. We were also issued with .303 rifles. Each morning there was an inspection of each tent. Blankets had to be folded in a prescribed ordered way, three at the bottom, then the pillow, then the remaining two blankets at the top. The folds of the blankets had to face the tent entrance.*

*22 August. Had route march. Went to documentary films. The films were held in a large theatre/cinema at the camp. (The only one I can remember portrayed*

*soldiers wearing camouflage crawling on their stomachs to cross open ground between two hedges.)*

*Sunday 23 August. Had route march. Had concert in theatre. Went to church.*

*24 August. Went to (TC Simpson) rifle range. Shot .303s and Bren guns. Had dinner out there.*

*25 August. Had field exercises. Different ways of moving. Had route march.*

*26 August. More field exercises. Camouflage. Training film called Dangerous Journey.*

*27 August. Had drill and field exercises. Saw Francis Goes to the Races and selected shorts at cinema.*

*28 August. Had drill in morning. In afternoon had mock battle. A corporal gave us a lecture on signals, wireless.*

*29 August. Heard lectures in a tent. Given battle procedure. We had a padre's hour. Saw On the Riviera and The Return of Wildfire.*

*Sunday 30 August. Went to church in theatre. Went to cadet sports at Pontville oval. Grammar won both divisions. Captain Sorell congratulated us on our effort in camp.*

*31 August. Left camp after folding palliasses, pillows, pillowcases and blankets and giving them up. Removed duckboards. Left Brighton by train at 9.40am.*

Examples of activities at the weekly cadet corps gatherings are: on 1 May 1953 we held a cadet field day behind Rocherlea when we learned field camouflage and stalking; on 1 April 1954 we were given a new method of falling in to formation; on 11 March 1954 we had mortar training and attended training films at Paterson Barracks; on 30 September 1954 we were taught about the Owen machine gun; on 7 October 1954 about hand grenades; and on 18 November 1954 we went to the miniature rifle range to shoot .303s converted with a .22 bore. On 15 November 1953 Captain Mears talked to the senior school on 'Service to the nation'.

The Queen and Prince Philip visited Tasmania in February 1954. This was a big event not only in the school but in Tasmania as a whole. I formed part of the cadet corps guard of honour at York Park for the visit on the special school holiday, 24 February. Cleaning our uniforms took place with redoubled efforts.

At the time, I was at school it was not long since the end of World War II and the Korean War, and the Malayan Emergency was current. National service for boys eighteen and over was compulsory.

In my final two years as a matriculation student, I was active in interhouse debating. One of the debates was on the subject 'That military training should be compulsory'. It was held on 28 and 30 June 1954. There were three to a team and I recall that Guy Green – later Sir Guy Green, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Tasmania and later still Governor of Tasmania – Tony Smithies and I comprised the Gillett team of three, which was required to argue for the affirmative. I have Guy's speech summing up at the end of the debate.

*Mr Chairman, gentlemen, the opposition have based their case on a weak conglomeration of vague half-truths and on the frequent use of hackneyed expressions as a result of which they have presented no real case at all.*

*We, on the other hand gentlemen, by logical argument and clear accurate presentation of fact have shown the validity of our contention that compulsory military training is essential to Australia.*

*We have shown how compulsory military training is the only economically sound system which can exist in Australia and still provide an adequate defence force. We have shown how the attributes of self-discipline, self-reliance and harmonious living are all cultivated under compulsory military training.*

*And above all gentlemen – and this is far more important than the petty arguments raised by the opposition – we have shown how compulsory military training is essential if we wish to maintain our democratic way of life and other treasured institutions, principles and ideals on which our society is based.*

To which I said then and, with the added experience of later national service experience, say now: “Hear, hear.” The teams tied in the result. The Hawkes team consisted of Stephen Fitzgerald, Tim Payton and Peter Hetherington.

On 19 and 21 July 1954, there was a debate on the subject ‘That psychology should be put to better use in educational establishments’. Gillett competed against Wilkinson and was for the affirmative. Guy Green, Tony Smithies and I were in the Gillett team, but I do not know who was in the other team. Wilkinson won.

Guy Green left school at the end of 1954 and was replaced by Roger ‘Toid’ Scott. A debate was held in June 1955 on the subject that ‘A stricter censorship should be established to deal with undesirable literature’. Gillett was for the negative. Stephen Fitzgerald, Peter Hetherington and Bill Gibson represented Hawkes and won 230 to 228.

The expert training in debating by ‘Rags’ Charlton was invaluable in my first year at the University of Tasmania, when I was one of the university team competing in the intervarsity debates in Brisbane. It also helped when, in 1959, I was in the intervarsity law moot competition and was awarded the Blackstone Memorial Cup for being the best individual speaker.

#### **Other School-Based Events and Activities**

In 1955, I was the school librarian and, although a teacher at the school Miss Katharine Beattie was in charge, I was given much leeway. There were movable cork-fronted display stands. My first display was about the British royal family and, in order to keep displays changing, I gathered old illustrated magazines and unwanted books from relatives. The interest in the displays was slackening, so after conducting a client survey, I mounted a display of pin-up girls from *Pix* and other magazines. Although interest quickened, the headmaster had a quiet chat with me and I returned to pictures of historical buildings and events.

On 23 April 1955, I conducted a meeting of the jazz club – which I formed for the purpose of convening the meeting – and from 7-8.30pm I spoke on ‘Jazz; its beginning in New Orleans’ and played records from my collection. Mr Benney started to refer to me as ‘Boofy Hot Lips’ Crawford. Fortunately, the name did not stick.

The school swimming pool was a popular facility situated close to the chapel. I was taught to swim by a patient Mr Max Mattingley, who was a teacher at the school. I have vivid recollection of the performances of champion swimmers Ron Atkins and David Youngman.

We boys were expected to help run the fabric of the school. George Drinkwater, the school groundsman often gathered boys together to run the roller over the cricket pitch. After annual school exams, we were given school maintenance jobs. On 10 December 1953, a group of senior students removed gorse from the bank facing the Tamar River. The next three school days found us spring cleaning the boat shed. Before the opening of the memorial hall, Bill Gibson and I conducted a prefects’ detention to clean up around the hall. On 1 November Tony Smithies, Philip Roff, Ronald Hay and I continued the task. One year, in December, I was in a group of students who fashioned bent pieces of wire and removed corby grubs from the chapel lawn.

There was a school museum that was in a room off the first-floor landing in the classroom block. A student, Peter Mercer, was active as curator until he finished at the school in 1952 – he was assisted by a student committee, each person being in charge of a part of the display. In my diary for 5 March 1952, I noted the committee consisted of Anthony Finney in charge of minerals, Denis Moore overseeing the war display, Paul Edwards the shells exhibit and me, the eggs.



On 29 October 1954, the annual school fete was held in the Albert Hall. Guy Green turned himself into 'the Great Houdante' and was a magician and juggler. We set up in a room close to the northern entrance to the hall. He put on a successful show. My tasks were lighting manager and, using my aunt's portable record player, playing *In the Hall of the Mountain King* by Edvard Grieg at the climax of each performance, which succeeded eventually in wearing out the 78rpm record. Tickets were one shilling and I am confident a sizable amount was raised. Also noted in my diary as helping were Tony Smithies and Robin Wyly.

In about 1951, a group of boys played poker for money and one day I won ten shillings. That brought the practice to a close.

I mostly travelled to school on a Repco bicycle. Sometimes GV Brooks Community School boys passed me and tried to push the bicycle into the tram tracks, making it unstable. I travelled occasionally on the trams. There were twenty-nine of them, the first twenty-six being shorter than the other three. They all had Spurling photographs on display. When the polio epidemic was on in 1952, the girls on the tram attending St Finn Barr's School on Invermay Road wore camphor on necklaces, which they believed would prevent catching polio.

On arrival at school in winter, it was common to find frost crusted on the school oval fence, which led to frost fights on occasions.

From time to time, Mr Beamish came to the school to teach us about road safety or show a film on that subject.

Each year there was a Grammar ball held at the Albert Hall and the practice was to make up a set of dancers comprising the same number of boys and girls.

In 1954, the roneoed and stapled magazine *As I See It* was twice issued at the school, under the editorship of my friend Paul Edwards, and it contained original contributions from students by way of poetry, articles on film and book reviews. I contributed a review of three long playing records.

A sweep was organised within each class for the Melbourne Cup each year.

It was the practice to give a present from each class I was in to the form teacher at the end of the year.

On 21 March 1952, a party of interested students was taken by a teacher to a concert by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bernard Heinze, with the featured artist being violinist Bela Dehany, whom in my diary I described in accordance with the terminology used for migrants in Australia at the time – a 'new Australian'. On the afternoon of 25 March 1953, students from the school attended a ballet performance by the National Ballet Theatre Company at the National Theatre.

After the Queen's coronation, students went to the Majestic Theatre to see the coronation film *The Queen of England*. On 30 July 1953, the cadet corps was presented with a portrait of the Queen in commemoration of her coronation.

In late September 1953, there was a flu epidemic with, at one stage, 159 boys being absent sick.

On 11 November each year, there was a Remembrance Day service in the chapel and each boy was expected to place an especially polished penny in the offertory.

On 12 November 1954, we recorded twelve hymns in the chapel, which were later broadcast by the ABC.

Every now and again, the school mounted a physical education display and I have the programme for the one held at the Albert Hall held on 16 August 1954. Mr AJ McGaw, the physical education teacher, produced the display and trained the boys and Matron Kath Collins was in charge of the wardrobe. All classes contributed an item followed by the war cry.

### **Trip to Canberra with Mr Travers**

Mr Travers announced he would lead boys from the school on a visit to Canberra from 16 to 19 May 1955. Twenty-three boys took the trip. We stayed at the Hotel Queanbeyan. The first night we saw *Doctor in the House* at the cinema and cooked chestnuts in the lounge fire.

On 17 May, we toured the Royal Military College, Duntroon. An old boy, Bruce Watson, was a trainee officer and we spoke to him. In the afternoon, we sat in the visitors' gallery in the House of Representatives listening to question time, works bills and a motion of urgency on increased shipping charges.

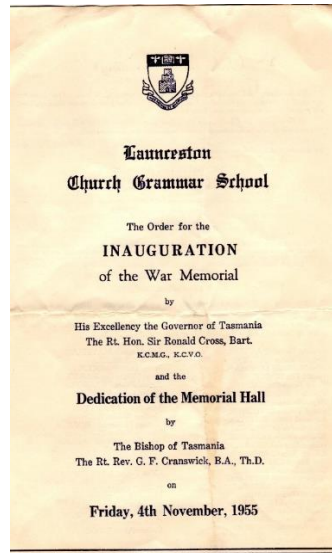
On 18 May, we toured Canberra – visiting the Institute of Anatomy, Government House and the Bureau of Census and Statistics. In the afternoon, we returned to Parliament House, where Senator Denham Henty received us. We had afternoon tea with Sir Robert Menzies, the Prime Minister, who told us about his school days. He also decried the practice of his members asking awkward questions of his ministers. From there we visited the President of the Senate, Sir Alister McMullin. There was a bed that folded into the wall and a loudspeaker that broadcast proceedings from each house. Whilst with the president, we were breathlessly shown where the Queen had changed out of her coronation robes. We returned to the visitors' gallery of the House of Representatives, where the subject was housing works. We then had dinner in the guests' dining room as guests of Tasmanian senators Henty, Robert Wardlaw and John Marriott, and the Minister for Air and Civil Aviation, Athol Townley.

On 19 May, Speaker Archie Cameron invited us to his room at the house; thence to the War Memorial and St John's Church before catching our plane to return home.

### **George Drinkwater, school groundsman**



*Source: B Crawford collection*



*Source: B Crawford collection*

### **Grammar Confirmation Class circa 1950**



*Back row: Geoffrey Cresswell, Gavin Youl, Tim Dowling, Patrick Davis, Henry John Foster, Robin Wyly, Roger Fowler, Ian Hull.*

*Third row: Brett Mansfield, William Holyman, Barry Dick, John Boucher, Robin Frith, Geoffrey Radford, Frederick Brown, John Prell, Christopher Roff, Philip Stephens.*

*Second row: Charles Peck, Barry Henry, Tim Henty, Robin Bessant, Malcolm Taylor, Bishop Cranswick, Rev S Charles Brammall, John Cardenzana, Mark Roberts, John Clarke, Robert Jones, Victor Clive Holyman.*

*Front row: Noel Barratt, John Heazlewood, John Rodgers, Barry Smith, Bruce Crawford, Graeme Hetherington, John Garrott, Max Field, Adrian Firth, Tim Payton, Peter Hetherington.*

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Jan Haswell 1948-1958*



### **Rags Charlton and Other Memorable Masters**

You'd see him striding briskly to who knows where – his tattered black tutor's gown airborne around him and a folder under one arm. He never ambled, never simply walked. He strode – with a light spring in his step, head thrust slightly forward, eyes focussed on the path ahead. Because of the ragged gown, Mr Eric Charlton was fondly known as 'Rags'.

He was British and highly literate. He taught English literature and expression, and after class coached successful rowing crews. In a quiet way, he was a powerful physical presence – tall and erect, square-shouldered and square jawed, with a rock-solid face like a road map of France and a shock of black hair with matching eyebrows. He wore large glasses with no-nonsense black frames. His voice was the essence of Oxbridge, clear and strong and without accent – a crisp Laurence Olivier. He was quite simply the finest man and teacher during my years at Grammar.

In class, if he digressed from the matter at hand it was concisely done. Only just into my teens, I insisted, "Sir, Shakespeare is rubbish. We'd be better off reading Leslie Charteris' *The Saint* stories." Mr Charlton responded with a single gentle shot. "Haswell," he said, "You may say that you 'think' Shakespeare is rubbish but you are not yet qualified to say that Shakespeare 'is' rubbish."

As far as I recall, Rags only once cracked a joke. He told it without smiling, but there was a twinkle in his eye. He strode into class and said, "In due course some of you might experience this, and pass your own judgement ... I've just been told that the pleasures of childhood are nothing ... compared to the pleasures of adultery." Frankly, I had no idea what he was talking about.

Rags told us that during World War II, he'd been on a plane ferrying an entertainment troop. He had the good fortune to be seated beside the beautiful actress Vivien Leigh, who had starred with Clark Gable in *Gone with the Wind*. Vivien fell into a deep sleep with her head on Charlton's shoulder and her hair tickling his face. He didn't move for hours and later refused to ever brush her powder from his uniform.

He suggested we make an effort to see the 1955 French crime film *Rififi*. What made it unique was twenty minutes of absolute silence during a bank robbery. I recently tracked down a pirate DVD in China. Rags was right.

One day, Rags assured us that it was quite easy to remove the human eyeball from its socket and put it back in again. A moment after delivering this riveting information, he positioned the thumb and index finger of his right hand around his left eye socket and began applying pressure.

Never has an entire class of students been so focussed on a teacher. We waited for an eyeball to pop out. It was an anti-climax when he relaxed his hand and, with a wry look, said “Now, let’s resume the lesson.”

I was sceptical about this possibility of instant eyeball removal until I recently read a biography of John Mortimer, lawyer and creator of *Rumpole*. His father had undergone this very treatment for a detached retina in Switzerland in 1935 – without anaesthetic. So Rags was right again. Mind you, the treatment on Mortimer Senior was painful and not successful.

Here’s one more tale about Rags. My great friend and classmate Rex Rice swore it was true. Rex probably remains the only boy to be cox (1957) and rower (1958) of Head of the River crews in consecutive years.

The incident took place by the river, outside the old boatshed immediately before training. It occurred only because the coach’s attitude towards shorts and undergarments was as casual as his attitude towards his tattered tutor’s gown. Shorts and undergarments hung loose as a torn flag in a light breeze. As he began to address the crew, Rags eased himself on to a slatted chair opposite the boys. Almost immediately a dreadful thing happened. His left testicle released itself ... and slipped down between two slats of his chair. Then, horror of horrors, turned itself sideways. The crew looked on, spellbound with unthinkable thoughts of the coach suddenly standing up. For ten minutes or so they watched in silence, anticipating only the worst. Rex never forgot how the crisis ended. Rags finished his talk and, by an act of pure muscular dexterity, drew in his stomach. The recalcitrant ovoid simultaneously straightened and raised itself between the slats and back to safety. Mr Charlton stood up and walked away. When telling the story, Rex always added: “Saved by Vivien no doubt.”

### **The Minor Placings**

Minor placings behind Mr Charlton, as far as champion men go, to Lionel Hampton and Max Donoghue, both in their fifties. They were humble men with little to be humble about. Their subjects were science and physics, lessons with Bunsen burners and rotten egg gas and charts of the Milky Way.

Beyond the classroom Mr Hampton coached junior cricketers and told thrilling tales of his experiences in colonial India in the 1940s. He’d obviously lived a fascinating life, vastly different from ours, in places where it wasn’t safe to touch the water, let alone drink it. His was a strong face damaged by pock-marks, presumably caused by the health hazards of the sub-continent. He told of a soldier who had half his stomach blown out and stitched back in with a bootlace. A mad dog would give you rabies, and you needed sixty-four injections to have a chance of survival. If a tapeworm got into your body, it was removed by seducing the head out of your backside with food, then wrapping the worm around a stick and winding it out, very patiently, over a long period. “And you’d better not break the worm. In that case, if you’re lucky, it grows another head and you can start luring it out again.”

Mr Donoghue magnificently ignored the handicap of a club foot, the result of childhood polio. There was no hiding it. He wore a large round leather boot, and did not walk easily. He used a strong rubber-tipped cane for support.

Outside the classroom he was master in charge of athletics, and coached a succession of state champions – Lean, Gunther, Holyman, Smith, Jarvis, Edgell and Armstrong during my years. A question: was Mr Donoghue the real hero in this group of winners?

Mr Donoghue was nick-named ‘Steve’, after a famous English jockey. The respect that boys felt for him did not deter a group from carrying his small car inside the old wooden gymnasium beside the main oval one idle afternoon. It was an old two-door British Austin with a canvas

roof. Nothing was ever said officially about the prank. Steve just drove out through the gym's double doors, and home.

### **A Penchant for Grey British Cars**

In those days trams and later trolley buses were the way most masters went into town. Very few owned a car. Among the few who did, British breeds were favoured ... in conservative grey. Headmaster BH 'Jika' Travers drove a menacing grey Humber Super Snipe. It suggested a very determined bulldog, as did the headmaster himself. He was almost two metres tall and easily carried the billowing proportions of his days as a rugby forward. He was a Rhodes scholar, and taught only matriculation classes Ancient history – first lesson every day.

Geography teacher Max Mattingley looked well matched when standing by his elderly and elegant silver-grey Daimler. Its deeply padded, pleated leather rear seat was an armchair fit for royalty. He generally parked it overnight between buildings near the assembly hall. During the annual Grammar ball in 1957, a handsome Casanova from a class ahead of mine, famously borrowed it to court a girl from Broadland House. Mr Mattingley would not have been amused. He was generally considered arrogant. Perhaps 'austere' suits him better. In any event, he was inflexibly strict. Mind you, when he caught me taking his photograph during a lesson, he said: "I'll overlook that, providing I receive a copy." There was no suggestion of a smile.

Boarding housemaster Trevor Sorell had an unusually obese grey Jaguar saloon – broader and rounder than previous sleek model Jags. A tad frog'ish, some reckoned. Trevor taught maths and could prove with algebra that  $1 = 2$ . You perhaps began by letting X be 1 and Y be 2. After much scraping on the chalk-board,  $X = Y$ . Good luck with that. After matriculating, Trevor lived much of his life at the school, adopting a small bedroom. My five years as a boarder from 1948 to 1952 are remembered partly for the canings he administered as housemaster. On Saturday nights, there was always a line-up of offenders in the passage outside his office near the quadrangle. He could be seen flexing his hands and testing canes from an umbrella stand for whippiness. Boys don't forget that kind of thing.

At a Grammar reunion at the Launceston Hotel in the 1977 with 400 in attendance, I did some roving interviews with microphone. My exchange with John Ferrall and Ron Atkins was memorable. They were seated halfway down a long table headed by Trevor. The interview questions were simple enough:

"John Ferrall, were you ever caned by Trevor Sorell?"

"No comment."

"Ron Atkins, did Trevor ever cane you?"

"No ... he wanted to ... but he didn't."

"Why not?"

"Because I threatened him."

Game, set and match to Ron Atkins ... a hero for many reasons that don't include the classroom, but do include defiance of life's adversities. Ron Atkins was a young champion athlete, however after leaving school he lost a leg due to a shooting accident. He took up snooker and became an Australian professional snooker champion.

## ***My Schoolboy Memories – Bill Godfrey-Smith 1949-1961***

*The child among his new-born blisses.*

*William Wordsworth*

### **Little Grammar, High Street 1949-1953**

The first of my thirteen years at Launceston Grammar was at kindergarten, which was part of the junior campus in High Street. I had only just turned four and can only assume that my parents were desperate to confect some child-free space. I'm sure I was bewildered and burst into tears (as did others) when first abandoned. There was finger-painting and a sand-pit. My elder brother Tony (then 'Anthony') also attended – he was a class ahead of me in Grade 1.

At this time, we lived at 10 Carnarvon Street in East Launceston. After settling in Tony and I commuted by tram, either along Elphin Road or an alternative route via Clarence and Abbott Streets. At the Abbott Street tram stop there was a lolly shop where a penny would buy an all-day sucker or several musk sticks.

My first educational trauma was being required to repeat kindergarten. (Was my finger-painting below standard? My sandcastles structurally unsound?) My elder brother was now two classes ahead of me, an unbridgeable social gulf! Eventually in 1951, I made it to Grade 1.

We sat at individual Dickensian desks with inkwells and practised our cursive script with steel-nibbed dip pens. We also learned multiplication tables up to twelve times twelve by chanting, a practice long since abandoned. If my children need to multiply nine times seven, they reach for a calculator app on their smart phones.

There was a Royal visit in 1954 and I recall standing outside the front of little Grammar with classmates, waving loyal flags while Her Majesty, in the company of her consort (now, thanks to Tony Abbott, a proud Australian knight), was driven up High Street, waving regally back.

### **Boarding School, Mowbray Heights – Savigny years 1954-55**

In 1954, following the separation of our parents, Tony and I became boarders at big Grammar, and members of Savigny house. There was some illiterate and ungrammatical doggerel that we chanted: "Hawkes are gawks, Savigny's the best, Wilkinson and Gillett are just a little pest." We were also introduced to the awful, asinine tribal Grammar School war cry: "Rick, rick, ricketty-dick, hoopla, hoopla, hey..."

During this unhappy time, I slept initially in the southern-most dormitory in the boarding house (dormitory number 8 as I recall), under the nocturnal supervision of Stephen Fitzgerald, who was later to become a distinguished expert on China and led Gough Whitlam's audacious delegation to China in 1971, and subsequently became Australia's first ambassador to China.

The opinion expressed by many other boarders, that the showers were cold and the food was by and large terrible, is one that I share. The teacher for Grade 4 and Grade 5 at the Mowbray campus was Mrs Stark.

### **A Dayboy at Last! Wilkinson Years 1956-58**

In 1956, our dad remarried and we abandoned the boarding school without regrets, necessitating a change of allegiance to the house of Wilkinson. My classmaster in Grade 6 was Mr Kirkbride ('Tackhead'). Up to and including Grade 6, there was no powerfully inspirational mind that excited me or reshaped my Weltanschauung.

The curriculum had a fairly heavy concentration on Church of England religious teaching which, up to about the age of twelve, I accepted uncritically, although some sceptical worries were beginning to emerge. Evidence for an omnipotent and benign deity was beginning to seem rather scant, though it was another decade before I encountered the rigorous philosophical arguments against natural theology, powerfully developed by Epicurus and David Hume. Epicurus, in Greek antiquity, argued that God either cannot or will not prevent evil – if he (or

she) cannot, he (or she) is not omnipotent, and if he (or she) will not he (or she) is not benign. Theologians have tried for centuries to refute Epicurus, in my view with complete lack of success. Hume broadly followed Epicurus and suggested, in his brilliant refutation of the arguments of natural theology in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, that the evidence suggests at most, an indifferent deity (or deities). I did not pursue the Church of England confirmation offered by the school. To the school's credit there was very little pressure on those of us who were disinclined to follow that path. However chapel was compulsory and continued to receive my increasingly sceptical attendance. The dubious ritual included some spirited singing and some hymns were sung with great gusto – William Blake's wonderful *Jerusalem* was always popular, though I don't think we grasped the anti-industrial Luddite sentiments it expresses. Kipling's jingoistic *Recessional* was a popular favourite, but the greatest enthusiasm was always reserved for *Lord Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing* at the end of term.

The other main focus of Grammar was sport – indeed sporting excellence was valorised in a way I thought, even then, was not altogether reasonable. Adopting anachronistic jargon, the 'jocks' had much higher status than the 'nerds'. Alas I was ever closer to the nerds, and my sporting prowess was undistinguished. Nevertheless, I did once beat Alan Beecroft in a 220! I surged past Alan on the curve coming into the straight, just after he pulled a hamstring. If Grammar had been founded in the antiquity of Peloponnese, its sympathies would have been much closer to Sparta than to Athens.

### **Roff House and an Early Departure 1959-61**

*He walked in science like the densest night...*

*Christopher Fry*

Following the departure of 'Jika' Travers at the end of 1958 and his replacing by DV 'Devious' Selth in 1959, there was some recalibration of the curriculum. Selth introduced a greater emphasis on the importance of academic excellence and in particular managed to appoint one quite remarkable teacher, Ron Horner, who taught chemistry. I am both fortunate and grateful for the guidance of Ron's gifted pedagogy. Nevertheless, his remarkable gifts had their dangers.

Ron's influence illustrates how a natural career trajectory can be seriously disturbed by excellent teaching. Ron was inspirational and his chemistry classes were deeply fascinating and absorbing. Ron's inspiration launched me into a BSc. However, the further I pursued chemistry, the more the fascinating and sweeping generalities became swamped by minutiae. The majestic epistemological forest of chemistry became obscured by a relentlessly expanding multitude of unprepossessing trees. Only once was the intoxicating synoptic perspective of chemistry re-enacted for me – in a lecture at the Australian National University by Linus Pauling.

The magic of chemistry slowly evaporated or, perhaps I should say, deliquesced. Eventually it became clear that my taste for sweeping generalities and synoptic viewpoints, nurtured by Ron, was actually a disposition for philosophical inquiry. And so, the meandering course of my life succumbed eventually to the gravitational pull of philosophy. Without Ron's inspirational presence that discovery might have been made much sooner. However, it must be said that the cul de sacs of life deliver much value, and I remain deeply grateful to Ron.

In 1960, I completed the School's Board, and matriculated the following year with a Commonwealth scholarship for university study. The normal pattern was to extend matriculation over two years, but there seemed to me little point hanging around for another year when the goal had already been reached. So, I took a premature departure and embarked on a university BSc, a venture for which I was a lot less prepared and a lot less suited than I then imagined. Although I departed at the end of 1961, according to convention, I should be assigned to the class of 1962.

The year 1961 was my third year in the Air Training Corps (ATC), a cadet corps in which I achieved the undistinguished rank of corporal. Someone in ATC had become rankled by the taunt of being part of 'the non-flying air force', and Tasmania was in consequence awarded



two flying scholarships. I managed to get myself onto the shortlist as the candidate from Grammar. There were about five cadets from other schools also on the shortlist for an ATC flying scholarship for northern Tasmania. Following the interview, I think I was ranked fourth, but the successful candidate had to pass a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) medical examination. It turned out that from the shortlisted candidates for northern Tasmania, two were colour blind and one had astigmatism. In consequence, I was awarded the scholarship and, in due course, earned my private pilot's licence by doing what is now called a 'Bradbury' – so-called after Steven Bradbury, who famously won a gold medal by staying on his feet after everyone else had fallen over. Learning to fly was very exciting and my first solo, at the age of sixteen, was an unforgettable and adrenalin-charged experience. I have fond memories of the two de Havilland DHC-1 Chipmunks in which I trained at the Aero Club at Western Junction – Bravo Sierra Quebec and Bravo Sierra Romeo. It's curious that I was able to get my pilot's licence before I could get my driver's licence.

In my final year (1961), I was instrumental in establishing the 'Dregs' club'. A requirement for membership was not being a prefect and little prospect of becoming one. Being a sporting hero or having any noteworthy social distinction were also automatic disqualifications. I organised an excellent formal photograph of the distinguished members of the Dregs' club, which was taken in the library. Unfortunately, this photo has been mislaid. (If anyone has access to a copy, I'd be grateful if they could send it to me).

In keeping with the Dregs' strict code of non-achievement, there was no constitution, no annual general meeting (or any other meeting), no reports, not even a press release. The only event was the photographing of the four distinguished members: Philip Shackle, Richard Stark, Bob Engisch and myself. Of all the groups at Grammar with which I was associated, I think it is the 'Dregs' club that I recall most fondly. The 'Dregs' club was my most outstanding achievement at Grammar.

### **Launceston Grammar and Preparation for Leadership**

When soliciting my contribution for this memoir, my old school chum Rafe Champion asked for my opinion about how well Old Launcestonians were prepared for leadership and community service. I haven't tracked post-Grammar careers in leadership in any detail, though I recall (vaguely) that Robert Cheek was (briefly) leader of the Tasmanian Liberal Party. As I recall, his stewardship was unremarkable – I was not living in Tasmania at the time so I may have missed something. Perhaps the old school can be blamed for insufficient diligence in preparing Robert for his task ahead.

The other party leader the school produced, who springs at once to mind, is Campbell Newman. With regard to Campbell, the school can be commended. It has been reported that Campbell was never made a prefect at Grammar because the headmaster judged that he lacked the qualities required for leadership. This was certainly a defensible judgement, subsequently vindicated by Campbell's achievement as Premier of Queensland. After winning 44 seats in the 2012 Queensland election, and thereby gaining government with a record majority of 78 out of 89 seats in state parliament, he managed to lose 34 seats including his own (and government), to Labor in the following election in 2015. Obliterating a majority of this magnitude in a single term is an achievement without parallel in Queensland's (and probably Australia's) political history.

### **Life After Grammar<sup>59</sup>**

After leaving Grammar and Tasmania in 1962, I studied at several universities graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Master of Arts from the Australian National University (ANU), and in due course, a PhD on the metaphysics of time from the University of Cambridge.

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<sup>59</sup> More information about my life after Grammar and contact details can be found on my Academia website: <https://uq.adademia.edu/WGrey>. In particular, see my curriculum vitae, 'Microbiographia Academica' and my University of Queensland valedictory address, 'Vale UQ'.

I have held academic positions at ANU, Temple University in Philadelphia in the US, the University of New England in Armidale and the University of Queensland (UQ). My academic career was punctuated by several stints as a Canberra bureaucrat – a role in which I did for public administration what Florence Foster Jenkins once did for Mozart's *Queen of the Night*. I retired from UQ in 2012 and I am now an honorary Research Associate Professor in the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry at UQ.

My credo, for what it's worth, has been shaped by the vicissitudes of my history. My philosophical interests include environmental philosophy, the metaphysics of time and the epistemology of paranormal belief. I am an anti-realist about the future and one who is deeply sceptical about so-called paranormal phenomena – as I have been in all of my previous incarnations. I am concerned (and cautiously pessimistic) about our planetary prospects. It is puzzling how we can purport to care about the future when our actions and investments threaten our future prosperity. My political sympathies are left-of-centre and green.

Fundamentally, philosophy – as I conceive it – shares a common aim with art, science and religion, and indeed with inquiry quite generally. For inquiry, when it is not concerned with immediate and practical needs, is concerned to locate us intelligibly and satisfyingly within the complex web of contingencies that constitute history, and to refine and fortify the vision and the values we need to shape our individual and collective destinies.

In general, I remain sympathetic to the post-enlightenment scientific worldview, which has provided us with an ever-deepening understanding of the world and its origins and destiny – a tale more marvellous than the inventions of the shamans and poets, marvellous and fascinating though their stories may be.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> These recollections of Launceston Grammar were recorded in response to a request from my old classmate and friend Rafe Champion to contribute to a book of reminiscences about Grammar over the period 1940 to 1965, edited by Rafe and fellow classmate Paul Richards. Rafe told me that he still remembers gratefully that I introduced him, many years ago, to *Mad Magazine* and Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings*.

## ***My Schoolboy Memories – Christopher ‘Gus’ Paul Prosser Green 1953-1957***

I left the preparatory school High Street site at the end of 1952 and in February 1953, I began my first year at the Mowbray big school site. This was a special day for a young boy of twelve-years old. From there I completed my school education at the end of 1957. The final year exams were held in the Albert Hall – I did not pass my Schools Board exams, so my business life started without qualifications. My father had arranged for me to start work at Layh Hart Room and Hyland as a trainee accountant. My father commenced the last years of his education at the Mowbray site in February 1924. It was the opening day of the new school which had moved from Elizabeth Street.

One of my fondest memories was to be told by my parents that the family had a long association with the school and that I was the fourth generation. On the occasion of the school’s 107<sup>th</sup> birthday on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1953, a photograph was taken of a group of us boys – the fourth and fifth generations – with Archdeacon HB Atkinson, who had attended the school sixty-three years earlier. The photo appeared on the front page of the *Examiner* on a Tuesday. What a moment for me! My mother and father were married in the school chapel on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1939. I had a special connection with the school and its chapel, having been christened there on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1941, when I was five months of age.

Riding a push bike from 2 Gloucester Street, West Launceston to school was a long ride for a fifteen-year-old – I think we had hub gears in later years. There was a lane from McKenzie Street through to Button Street. I carried a 16” Gladstone bag (named after William Ewart Gladstone 1809–1898) between the handle bars. It contained homework, lunch, a yoyo, a bag of marbles and stamps for buying and selling.

Getting to school during winter, a few of us would go to the boiler house, where George Drinkwater would have the fire for the boiler well stoked up. Often one of the boys would scale up the drainpipe outside the boiler house and open the school from inside. This was not pleasing to the school authority.

### **Watching a football match 1953**



*Source: Christopher Green collection*

We soon understood the layout of the grounds. The new assembly hall had, I think, recently been completed when I started at the senior school. The concrete posts for the entry gate to the swimming pool was to the north of the chapel and are still there today. The pool was filled in and is now the car park. I remember it for many a great sports day and personal swimming. The tuck shop was at the northern end of the gymnasium and service was from the verandah. I took my lunch but many boys bought theirs from here. There was a good range of sweets available. We trained in gymnastics and performed in the gym, our master being Mr McGaw.

From memory, it was after Term 1 of 1954, that nearly fifty boys from a similar age level were divided into two groups: 6B 1 academic and 6B 2 commerce – the class I was selected to be in. Term reports over the years covered subjects English expression, English literature, social studies, French, mathematics I, mathematics II, general science, commerce, woodwork, art and physical development. Physical development was interesting. In 1954, my report said that I had aptitude – this was the year of the Queen’s visit with Prince Phillip.

I well remember the day in 1953 that we received our class nicknames. Mine was ‘Gus’, and it has stuck with me throughout the years. In a report from Mr Parish in Term 1 1954, I was listed as a useful member of Wilkinson house. In 1955, Ronald Hay was our house captain and in my last year, 1957, Tim Barrenger was the leader.

Confirmation classes were taken from 9<sup>th</sup> June 1955 and the confirmation ceremony was administered by the Bishop on 30<sup>th</sup> October in the school chapel. The school chaplain was the Rev EC Rowland.



This was an activity on the oval in front of the gym during a lunch break. As well as I can remember, the masters over the time were Headmaster BH Travers, Mr R James for commerce, Mr Hampton for general science, Mr M Donoghue for physics, Mr E Charlton for English literature and expression, Mr Causley for woodwork, mathematics I and II, Trevor Sorell for social studies, Mr Johnson for English expression and Mr McGaw for physical development. Mr Watson took us for mathematics in my last year and he was also the form master.

The year may have been 1956. I will always remember that a group of us formed a three-tiered pyramid for a photo. It has been a wonderful reflection of the friends one made at school doing strange things. My report from the form master, namely Mr Mattingley, in Term 3 1956, recorded that I was occasionally silly and irresponsible.

Ink wells with blotting paper dipped in and then put on the end of a ruler and shot up to the classroom ceiling created some interesting times with the masters. In bewilderment they would ask “Who did that?” There was always dead silence, and always a good design on the classroom ceilings. We had interesting times reading comics about Julius Caesar and Brutus, so we could begin to understand the subject a teacher with the nickname ‘Parrot’ was trying to teach us.

We always had a bit of a good time in the woodwork class with Mr Errol Causley. We would knock on the green coloured workshop door and use the phrase, “What’s behind the green door?” He would often catch us saying, “Where’s Errol?” He was easy to get along with most of the time. I still have most of the items I made in the woodwork class. These include a match box holder, a bedside cabinet and a folding chair we made to develop our skills of working with wood. I also have my woodwork books from that part of my education.

An interesting sport for me was rowing, particularly the way that the cox held the crew in stroke management. Head of the River races were held on the Tamar River. In those days, there was a beach at the Royal Park where you could swim and that was where the races finished. We always got excited for the blue, black and white colours, shouting out the school war cry. The Head of the River was won by Grammar in 1954-1956.

For cross country running, the route was on the muddy river flats across the sewage outlet named the 'Golden Gate'. It was run over black mud, et cetera and often boys would fall during the race. Occasionally it would include Mowbray Hill. I remember the time that bread from the back of a baker's cart fell onto the road. Bread was not wrapped in those days and we would take the fresh bread from the centre and eat it on the run.

At cadets, I was a Lance Corporal. We used to go on a route march to the rifle range carrying a .303 rifle. The range was out along Vermont Road to Remount Road, so it was quite a distance for a young boy in his army uniform.

The teachers had nicknames. I remember 'Rag's' Charlton, 'Joho' Johnston, 'Toad' Sorell, 'Shooter' Parish, 'Screwball' Hampton, 'Pinhead' Kirkbride and 'Maggots' McGaw'. One master we called 'Parrot' used to roll his tie up and then let it unroll itself. He would give us a whack with his size twelve slipper when we were naughty. Then there was 'Pegleg', I think that was Mr M Donoghue. He used a walking stick.

Punishment with the cane, together with many other forms of punishment, was for misbehaviour, and we used to play up at times – an essential focus of life at Grammar.

I enjoyed watching and playing football, being part of the combined schools' sports days and interhouse competitions in cross country, cricket and football. In athletics, we would watch David Lean, Arnold Gunther, Tony Jarvis and Alan Beecroft. It was great to be at a school with such a group of inspiring performers on the track.

One of my many other memories of school life was to be at the Olympic Games as a school group from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November to the 8<sup>th</sup> of December in 1956. I think the airfare was £7, and it may have been my first flight in a plane. We boarded the plane at Western Junction at 8.50 am. This photo of the group shows a diverse range of lads boarding a TAA Electra aircraft.

It was on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1956 at 5.10pm that I saw David Lean (class 1954) with



his teammates win an Olympic silver medal in the 4x400 metres relay, the first Olympic medal

won by a Tasmanian. I still have my part of the ticket to the MCG that day. I was seated in G9 row W seat 4, and the ticket price was 16/- including tax.



The uniform in July 1956 was a double-breasted suit, school jumper and tie with cap. I have my photo and my school report from VI B2 at the end of term II, 1957. There were twenty-three in the class and there was a wonderful photo taken at the time. I look at it quite often as the death of one of my classroom friends occurs.

The last term of my private education at Launceston Church Grammar School commenced on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1957. One now looks back at school reports with regard to performance, the happenings and the friends of fifty-five to sixty years ago. We remember each master, their personality and what they endeavoured to teach us, and the mischief we used to get up to with those teachers. They were a very diverse group and one sometimes wonders how we learnt anything at all. But here we are, and life has been a wonderful journey, made all the better from our education at the LCGS.

## ***My Schoolboy Memories – John Best 1956-1962***

I turned into Button Street for the first time in nearly fifty years. I had come to Launceston for a couple of weeks to care for my elderly father, and we were reviving memories by going back to places we hadn't been to since I was a boy and when Launceston was my home.

I must have walked the length of Button Street thousands of times, to and from Grammar, and occasionally at midday to buy fish and chips from the corner shop. In those days the deep fried lunch was wrapped directly in pages from the *Examiner* and cost one shilling.

My mental picture of the Launceston Church Grammar School of 1962 was almost as clear as when, as a boy, I walked out the front gate for the last time. As we drove through the same gates, much looked familiar. However, the tennis courts on the right that had been located between the gates and the oval, and where Don Lovett taught us the skills of the game, had gone. The chapel on the left, though it had grown in length, and the original classroom block in front of us were still there, but the shady tree-lined promenade that linked these buildings and the outdoor pool had gone and been replaced with car parking.

As we drove into the grounds, we were suddenly engulfed by students who had flooded out to enjoy the sun and lunch, and that was when I noticed the new sign that told me we weren't to proceed 'past this point'. It was too late. So, while half expecting to be stopped and sent to the headmaster's office, I continued on, through the throng of students, circled the flagpole and made a cautious exit.

Adjacent to the traffic sign was a gaggle of girls chatting and laughing on the lawn, where I had memories of playing British Bulldog with other adrenalin-charged boys keen for the physical contest. At that time it was a boys only school, and I wondered in what ways co-education and time had changed the culture.

In my haste to return the car to the correct side of the traffic sign, I almost didn't notice that the old weatherboard gymnasium had gone. The gym was a large timber-framed hall with a three-to four-metre wide verandah that ran the length of the building and faced out to the oval. It had an iron-clad trussed-timber roof, timber floors, mesh-fronted lockers that extended along the wall and backed onto the verandah, and an ablution and toilet block located behind a section of the opposite wall. A distinctive odour had emanated from these dank lockers – stuffed with wet towels and sweaty sports gear that slowly grew in intensity with the advance of the school term. About 1960, a brick pavilion was built on the far side of the oval. This facility had its own change rooms and gradually senior boys were promoted and given a new locker there.

The tuck shop was part of the gym building and located at the far end. It was staffed by volunteers (probably from the Parents and Friends) and its servery faced onto the verandah. At midday, you'd hear the sound of boys racing across bitumen paving, past the flag pole and then the thumping sound as they continued along the timber verandah to secure a place near the front of the lunch queue. I used to buy a pasty for nine pence, which left me with three pence for lollies.

Soon after arriving at the big school from prep school, I was enrolled with a few others for boxing lessons. On completion of our training, we had a competition where we were matched up against similar sized opponents. I went three rounds with Peter Evans. As I remember, we did a lot of fancy footwork, feigned a few punches, but I don't think either of us actually landed a serious blow for the whole encounter. So, if these classes were supposed to toughen us up, they were unfortunately a dismal failure.

In the early years of senior school most of us were identified for our numbers- or words- skills or lack of either. I was directed away from English subjects that required understanding of grammar and the ability to arrange words, or clearly express opinions and ideas, and was steered instead towards those maths/science/manual subjects where words, grammar and composition weren't of much importance.

When I failed a French exam, the opportunity was immediately seized upon to move me into the woodwork class, despite my protests. It hadn't occurred to anyone that the awkward boy I was in those days may have more trouble constructing a folding chair (that would actually fold) than constructing a sentence in a foreign language.

The woodwork shop was located behind the classroom block on the other side of the quadrangle and overlooked the river. It was a weatherboard building with a timber floor, similar in construction to the old gym. The pot that kept the animal glue hot was strategically located in the centre of the building – PVC glues were still a product of the future. For a prank, a boy applied glue from the pot to the base of the woodwork teacher's stool when he was out of the room. The boys thought it hilarious when the teacher returned the next day and tried to move the stool from an inappropriate place.

The school swimming pool was a half pool, I guess about twenty-five metres long, and had stepped diving platforms and a springboard at one end, lawn at the other, small stands either side of the gate, and a shelter/ablution block opposite. It was near the chapel and at the top of the bank that descended to the river. There was a two-storey hostel next door that overlooked the pool, and amused young housemaids would occasionally appear at open windows to sit on the sill and observe the antics of some of the equally amused boys, as they changed into and out of their bathers on the lawn.

### **The swimming pool circa 1960s**



*Source: Roy Frith*

In those days there was no road to form a barrier between the school grounds and the Tamar River, and the cross country course ran through this area. The land further south was being reclaimed with mud dredged from the bed of the river and provided a challenging section of the course, where a runner could have a loose sandshoe sucked from his foot, never to be recovered. The course ended with the uphill climb from the boatshed, over a fence and then on around the oval to the finish. I can still visualise, in about 1960, Gavin Thomas clambering over the stile in his blue t-shirt to go on to win.

I have many recollections as a boy attending Grammar School in the late 1950s and early 1960s, though most of the names and details have blurred with the years.



I remember school balls in the hall where we danced the old dances – waltzes, foxtrots, barn dances, et cetera, that many of us had been taught at classes in the Albert Hall. We were generally driven by parents and came in our school uniforms with our partners.

I remember when ‘Basher’ Clarkson arrived as a teacher with instructions to tame an unruly senior class. His accuracy in hurling a wooden duster across a classroom and knowing just how hard he could ram a skull against a door without damaging either was legendary.

I remember the time a boy inverted the filter on a tap over a sink – a sink where a teacher used to clear his congestion. The tap of course then sprayed horizontally when turned on.

I remember the ample form of ‘Jike’ Travers, our headmaster, framed in the doorway with a cane in his hand. As our teacher had failed to find the person responsible for a student crime and as no one would confess, it was decided that every boy in our class would be punished. In the change rooms afterwards, sets of pink and blue stripes were compared to confirm who had received the more severe beating and which who had been treated with lenience. I remember that the head boy in my final year was named Humphreys – perhaps one night I’ll wake up and recall his first name.

## *My Schoolboy Memories – Owen Carington Smith 1957-1962*

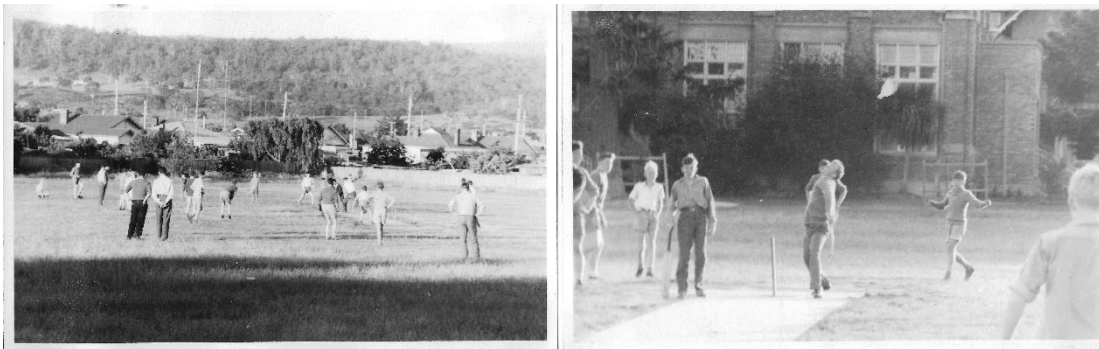
### **Cricket**

When we arrived back at the boarding house from the Christmas holidays, there was still enough summer light to play 'tip and run' cricket after tea on the Sunday nights.

There were about ten cricket balls in play.

It was played at a whirlwind pace with a continuous line of about six bowlers pounding the ball down the pitch, one after another. There were usually anything from twenty to fifty fielders. Sometimes the whole boarding house would play, say one hundred and fifty!

If you got someone out, you went in to bat. If you fielded the ball, then you lined up to bowl. Anyone could play – from junior school to those in the First XI and teachers who lived on site... most did.



## *My Schoolboy Memories – Mike Walpole 1958-1963*

### **Reflections of My Time in the Boarding House at Launceston Church Grammar School**

The boarding house at Grammar wasn't my favourite place and boarding was not my favourite thing. Discipline was taken to the highest level. Having been caned by the headmaster and housemasters *on a regular basis* for five of the seven years and having spent many weekends on detention, working in the chook house or sweeping the quadrangle, I certainly had my share of bleak times. I consider I was not a naughty boy, maybe just against the 'system', although being good at sport helped me overcome the not so good times experienced.

There was great camaraderie amongst my classmates. Dayboys took boarders to their homes for the day on weekends. These occasions were a break from the monotony of the boarding house. My fond memories are not so much of the school or the boarding house, but the friendships that were made.

One particular happening I recall, was a scary encounter I had with another boarder. He was a head of me by a couple of years, physically strong, well built and a real bully. He came from the far northwest coast, inland from Smithton. His family lived on a remote property there.

I remember a Sunday morning after chapel, I was walking back to the boarding house along the path that lead from the chapel to the quadrangle and was approached by him pointing a small pistol (or hand gun) directly at my head. I was terrified of him already and now I was really frightened. I had no idea what he wanted or what he was going to ask me to do. I had my hands up and he then opened the chamber of the pistol and to my horror it had live bullets in the breach.

He then demanded I stay watch under a tree he was going to climb, which I did. I was to let him know if anybody came near. He then climbed the tree and started firing at cattle that were grazing down by the boat shed, some distance away. The gunshots were so loud and could have been heard for miles. After a few shots he pointed the gun at me and yelled, "Stay there," as I was the lookout. At last the gunshots stopped and he yelled out, "I've shot myself in the leg." He then casually came down from the tree as if nothing had happened.

He was a tough bugger, and he wandered off yelling at me that if I told anyone about this I would be on the receiving end of the pistol. About a week later, his leg had become infected and he was at the sick bay being treated by Matron Collins. He told Matron and others someone shot him. The headmaster, Don Selth, didn't believe him and acted accordingly. He ran away from the boarding house soon after he was released from hospital. Trevor Sorell and a few prefects went looking for him and returned him to school. I am not sure if he was expelled as a result of this.

### **Some Other Recollections**

A few of the boarders were really too young to be sent to boarding school. They were so young that they used to wet their bed overnight. Matron Collins effectively was their de facto mother. As a fifteen-year-old, being in charge of a dormitory where there were two five-year-olds was a challenge for me. I think it taught me about being considerate to others, despite their circumstances.

The terrible mattresses in the dormitories were legendary. There were two types, horsehair – which were so hard, you couldn't get a hip hole – and kapok – most unfortunate for asthma sufferers – which were very soft and we used to make them into sausage beds by tucking the sides in very snugly. The springs or wire bases were very soft and backbreaking. I would hate to sleep on them now. In later years, there were a couple of rubber mattresses in each dorm and we used to try to get our parents to take us back early from the holidays, so we could claim one of the new comfortable rubber mattresses. It was always a treat to be able to sleep on the balconies. These were open areas, having no windows but a canvas blind. If you slept on the beds close to the blind, on frosty mornings you would sometimes find snow and ice on the top

bed cover. Those who had the old-fashioned crystal sets liked to be on the balcony for better radio reception and could check their antennae wires tied to the big pine tree outside the library.

We used to dread getting up in the mornings. Lining up naked on cold, frosty Launceston mornings for the compulsory cold shower, supervised by a prefect, was definitely not fun. We used to have to wait for the first boy to knock the ice off the shower for the cold water to come through. Then it was supervised for a minute each. It was absolutely freezing. Boys who did sport were allowed a hot shower after exercise, which was usually twice a week.

In Form 10, I went to Brighton army camp. I enjoyed cadets. I played in the band and in my final year I was an Under Officer. Smoking was rife at camp and the masters who attended generally turned a blind eye to this army camp tradition. Smokers were very discrete and cigarettes were not easily obtainable, but you could always work out where to get one. Two other cadets and I were having a fag and one of the masters saw us, though said nothing to us at the time. After we got back to school at the next assembly, the headmaster asked for all those who were smoking at army camp to put up their hands. There were only three hands that went up, even though many others were smoking. My hand plus two others went up. The three of us were prefects. The headmaster asked us to immediately go up on the stage and, in front of the whole school assembly, he removed our prefect badges. We were demoted. We were devastated by this action of public humiliation. My parents were asked to a meeting with the headmaster, as a matter of urgency, and they drove all the way from Devonport to be told their son had been smoking in army camp. Not amused, my parents thought I must have done something quite drastic and were amazed at the pettiness of the misdemeanour. The three of us were promoted back to prefects at the last assembly before the end of the year.

Breakfast menus were quite repetitive. Porridge followed by something else hot, maybe an egg or mince. I do recall on more than one occasion pulling weevils out of my porridge bowl and having weevil races around the edge of the bowl. Other boarders found it very amusing and devoured the weevils as a source of protein. Being selected to row in the First VIII was a real achievement. Those in the First VIII who were boarders were given steak for breakfast – a real treat. We used to devour our steaks and watch the others with their porridge and Weeties. I always felt it was unfair to single out the rowers for special treats.

One late Saturday afternoon, I was on my way to Mrs Millen's dancing classes at the Albert Hall. A few other boarders accompanied me. We used to go to the classes, as it was our only chance to have any sort of contact with the opposite sex. Walking down Button Street, there were two girls walking in front of us, both in Broadland House school uniforms. I said in a quiet tone to my mates, "Gosh, that one has got fat legs."

On the following Monday morning, I was called into the headmaster's office and reprimanded for telling a young lady who attended chapel that she had fat legs. I did indicate to the headmaster that I was only telling the truth and I didn't say it to her face. Anyway, it didn't make any difference – I got six of the best on the bum and was disqualified from dancing classes indefinitely. At the time of the incident we had no idea who the girl was. Maybe I should have taken more notice!

## 1960s

### *My Schoolboy Memories – Nigel Lazenby 1960-1964*

I am not going to talk about the cold morning showers nor the inspections of polished shoes, the hand inspections before every meal, the clothes locker checks or the freezing cold swimming pool, because when you are young, you just accept these things for what they are. In the long term, I doubt that it hurts one. But it does give you something to complain about when we are older.

Grammar was not my first foray into boarding school life. I had first experienced it when, at age four, I was sent off to boarding school in the UK. At the time, my father was dying a very painful death with throat cancer and my mother was nursing him.

After my father's death, I went to a boarding school on Jersey in the Channel Islands. This school was St Michael's. From St Michael's, my mother and I came to Australia, arriving in Sydney in 1956. Whilst attending King's Cross State School, I was heavily encouraged to get rid of my beautifully cultured accent. I attended a number of different state schools in New South Wales and in 1958, we moved to Launceston.

My first school here was Scotch College, first as a day-boarder and then as a boarder. My mother removed me from there when I was falsely accused of spitting into another student's cap. Mr Dean, the principal, didn't believe my version of the story but my mother did and so, she removed me on principle, and thus I began my time at Grammar.

A couple of memories of Form 10 in 5B. We were fortunate to be one of the first groups to go to the hut at Mt Arthur, not that I can remember what we did up there. However, I do remember sneaking off with one of my good mates and being caught smoking by a teacher, Malcolm Clarkson, whose nickname was 'Basher'. When he caught us, we were 500 metres from the hut, we were sent back to the hut to await his pleasure. We knew we were going to receive a caning. So we ran as fast as we could, back to put on extra underwear, and by the time Basher arrived, I had three pairs of underpants on.

The scary thing was when Basher arrived, he was holding two saplings, about 120 to 150 centimetres long and two to three centimetres in diameter. I think they were dogwood. We were standing in the dining area of the hut and at the other end of the room was a servery from the kitchen. Johnny Horn was the first to receive his punishment. He was asked to bend over and Basher whacked him twice, and on the third whack the sapling snapped, causing a thirty centimetre length of sapling to fly through the window of the servery, about six metres away. You can imagine how I was feeling at the sight of this, knowing full well that I was next to receive the same punishment. In hindsight, we may have been particularly lucky that the sapling broke because we might have received six cuts instead of three if it hadn't.

Just recalling this memory reminds me that Basher, unlike his fellow staff members who used a standard cane, was far more experimental. He used to put a chalk mark across the bottom of the intended victim and whack them until the chalk mark disappeared. Quite often, he would use this technique for the most trivial of crimes, such as talking in class or asking questions that he considered insolent or silly. Of course, not all our crimes were detected.

Gary Self was the head altar-boy. The fact that his family owned The Waggon & Horses Hotel in Hobart may have some bearing on this next memory. One Sunday afternoon, Gary and I snuck down to the vestry, where all the altar wine was kept. Whilst we were sipping on a bottle of cheap (probably) red wine, we heard footsteps. We quickly jumped into a closet full of ecumenical robes and choir-boy tunics. It was 'Charlie the Chaplain', also our scripture teacher. After what felt like a lifetime, we finally heard the door close and managed to escape before being caught. That act would be worth a minimum of six of the best from Mr Selth, the headmaster, or it could have been expulsion.

Cadets was a great area of enterprise for me. I would be given a pound from my mother prior to departure on the 'cattle truck' to Brighton Army Camp, and turn it into two pounds by the time I got home. To achieve this 100 per cent profit on my investment, I would sell cigarettes for one to two shillings each to other cadets. I also would clean officer's gaiters and belts, and polish their brass for a small charge.

On arrival at camp, the first job was to make up our palliasses (mattresses) to sleep on, filling them with straw. This was usually followed by lots of marching and obstacle courses, marches to the rifle range and shooting six to ten allocated bullets at targets ninety metres away. Most of the day was taken up waiting around and marching. We also went camping out overnight – setting up tents, cooking tinned food, eating hard biscuits and waiting for the enemy (one of the other private schools), so we could shoot off our six blanks. Funny thing, I never remember seeing the enemy. By the time the camp was over, no one was looking forward to the five-hour return trip to Launceston on the cattle truck.

On our last trip home, Johnny Horn and I were marching crocodile fashion back to the rail departure station. We had decided that we were not going to take the train, so with the aid of some of our mates who filled the gap in the ranks as we jumped into the bushes unseen, we proceeded to hitchhike back to Launceston. Wanting to impress our mates – we got home in about two hours rather than the five hours it would have taken on the train – we got changed and then went back to the station to meet our incoming mates on the train. All that happened prior to the school holidays, so it wasn't until the beginning of the following term that we realised we were in deep trouble. It was the first day back and we were called up to Mr Selth's office, where we had to explain ourselves. We were duly punished, I can't remember how many cuts we received for absconding, but we thought it was fair and we did get some accolades from our peers for a couple of days. In retrospect, I really quite enjoyed cadets, not that I ever had any desire to achieve any status in it.

In conclusion, I would say that my time as a boarder, a day-boarder and a dayboy was overall an enjoyable experience. Ninety per cent of staff were fair and reasonable as far as discipline was concerned. I enjoyed the social aspects of the school immensely, as being an only child with a widowed parent who had to work, I was never lonely with my band of mates.

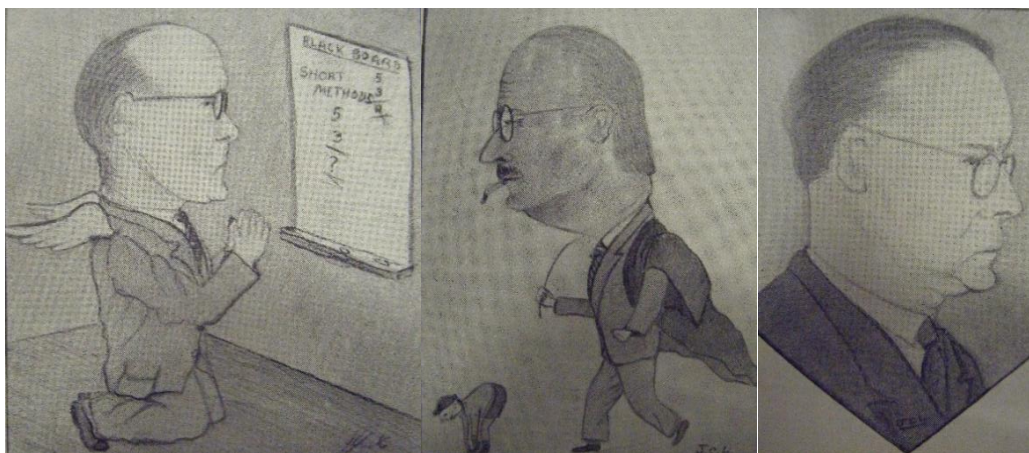
With respect to my artistic career, I'm not sure that Grammar helped my artistic development. However, I do remember one comment on the school report that said: "If Nigel was to put the same amount of effort into his studies as he does into decorating the front cover of his books, his results would be far better."

## Chapter 5

### *Masters Remembered for Their Idiosyncrasies*

*There are many descriptive stories within these pages of the teachers who taught at Grammar from those who have contributed to this book. On occasions they appear to be repeats. However, the teachers are captured in the spirit of that contributor, in admiration of their idiosyncrasies and without exception their characterful nature.*

Paul AC Richards



In 1957, Chris Carr wrote an interesting essay for the 'Launcestonian' on a generalised view of schoolmasters. You may recognise one or two.

#### **Schoolmasters**

There are nearly as many varieties of schoolmasters as there are cigarette ends in the hedge behind the chapel. I can only hope to account for a few of them. Firstly, there is 'the intellectual type'. He is generally bespectacled, brilliant and very quickly disillusioned. He is the type who graduates with honours from university, and fondly imagines his Diploma of Education automatically turns him into a fully fledged Dr Arnold. It is not long before he realises that to make youth absorb knowledge is like milking a goat, in that he has to have enough strength, both moral and physical, to match the combined strength of his class. This type generally either succeeds with amazing results or finishes an alcoholic, usually the latter.

The science master is hard to analyse. First of all, one has to decide what made him take up teaching science when he could be making money out of it. Usually he is the sort of B.Sc. graduate who, on receiving his degree, resolves never to sit for another examination or never to work hard for the rest of his life. Naturally, he thinks of teaching. He too is generally disillusioned but combats this by doing as little work as he can, knowing full well his school daren't fire him, as science masters are as rare as orthodox experiments in the lab. Since I have not yet said much in defence of schoolmasters, I will attempt to do so in dealing with the next two species.

Perhaps the rarest type of schoolmaster is the 'natural' or the 'born to be one' type. He is the exception to the rule, that where a master is popular there must be something wrong with his discipline. This type has brains, teaching ability and psychology. He can make school work not only interesting but entertaining, and it is his initials that appear the least in the detention book, as the forms he teaches are never unruly in his periods. Normally, this species of schoolmaster has also a bent towards sport, which adds to his ability to strengthen the 'teacher-student' relationship, so often the subject of discussion at Parents and Friends' meetings. Seriously though, it is very rare for any school to have more than one 'natural' teacher and they are indeed a very valuable asset. A discourse on schoolmasters would not be complete if no reference was

made to headmasters in general. These men would make excellent public relations officers in any business concern, for they have the amazing power of being able to convert the most irate parent who comes to them complaining of the way in which their offspring are educated, into staunch supporters of the school's policy in an incredibly short time. Headmasters also teach as a sideline.

In conclusion, I would like to add that in my schooldays, which by the end of this year will be over, I have observed the scarcity of good teachers, and that I have decided to help them out by becoming one myself.

*C.J.S.M.C.  
Chris Carr*

John Henry has some vivid memories.

### **Trevor Sorell**



As the master-in-charge of the boarding house, his signature was often required or seen. We repeatedly practised it, but as far as I know our skill in forging wasn't put to use. If it had, he would have been on to it at once. He had an un-nerving skill for knowing everything that was happening in the boarding house, just as he did for knowing what was going on behind him in the classroom while he was writing on the blackboard. There was one chink though. In an assembly on one occasion, he told us that if anyone had a complaint, the way to put it to him was not by setting our mother at him. It sounded as though he was smarting from just such an experience.

One of Trevor's sayings was, "If you want something done, ask a busy man." He was a busy man. He not only ran the boarding house and taught Form 8 maths, he was also the school organist and choirmaster, and announcer at school and at interschool athletics events and, we understood, had some function at St Luke's Hospital and Medical Benefits Association, and was a special constable (whatever that was) with the police. Consistent with his constabulary function, he at one time acquired and kept at the school a German shepherd dog. That phase ended when the dog, while being walked on a lead, suddenly darted in an unexpected direction and broke Trevor's arm, so that he had to have it in a sling for quite some time.

By the early 1960s, Trevor was somewhat portly, and was heard on one occasion to explain to a boy of similar build that some people are built for speed but some are built for comfort.

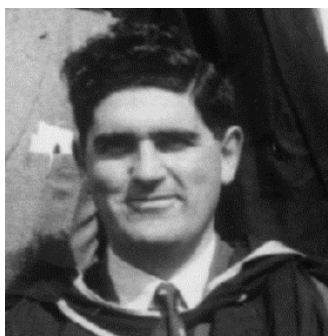
### **Max Donoghue**



'Steve' was a kindly family man and well liked. He had a club foot and got about with a stick. He taught physics but also coached athletics and was the starter at school athletics events. He wasn't highly progressive in his teaching, which with his Form 11 class earned him the sobriquet 'Stone Age'. He drove a little Singer, that on one occasion was carried into the gym for him to find – a joke that he took in characteristic good humour.



### **Ron Horner**



He taught chemistry and was the deputy headmaster. He came from Birmingham. He was a big man of some presence and no one felt inclined to mess with him. He was right on top of his subject matter and always able to throw in a dry quip or extra snippet of information. Ron got his 1963 Form 12 chemistry class through the matriculation syllabus for that subject and then started them on the first-year university syllabus. He knew that in practical classes, occasionally we ‘cooked’ the results of experiments by adjusting the supposed measurements to produce the desired result, and he happily turned a blind eye. His view

was that if we understood what we were doing well enough to cook the results, that was the level of understanding he was after.

Ron also encouraged the formation of a recorded music society, whose members brought along and played records of a wide range of music types to talk about and listen to. He interested himself in the implementation of athletics standards in which everyone took part, their individual performances being awarded points adjusted for age, weight, height and other factors intended to level the playing field.

### **Jean Genest**



‘Frenchie’ was a French-speaking Swiss who taught French. Our first exposure to French was in Form 7. There were two separate Form 7 classes, IVA2 and IVA1. I was in IVA1. His first class was with IVA2 before morning recess, his class with IVA1 not being until after recess. The members of IVA2 described to us what he was like and the way he spoke and some of the things he said, taking off (and exaggerating) his accent, which all sounded quite hilarious. When he arrived to take the IVA1 class he had barely opened his mouth when someone started to laugh. This infected the whole class and we all fell about laughing helplessly to the utter mystification of Monsieur Genest.

### **Lionel Hampton**



The nickname ‘Screwball’, shortened to ‘Screw’, was a somewhat opaque reference to Lionel Hampton’s proclivity for telling stories of his days as a subaltern in a Gurkha regiment in India. At times, he could be quite fierce, but his bark was worse than his bite. He had a moustache and a clipped manner of speech. There were words he pronounced differently from us. For instance, a ‘cigarette’ was pronounced as if spelt ‘cigret’, with the emphasis on the first syllable, and ‘cylinder’ was pronounced with the emphasis on the second syllable. He taught physics and was a Form 7 master. He was also the master-in-charge of hockey and coached the hockey Firsts.

Once a week, the first period was devoted to having a student stand up in front of the class and give a 10-minute talk on a topic of that student’s own choice – a terrifying ordeal for an eleven-year-old. We all had a go at that. The lasting memory though is of the stories. There are two I can still remember, but to be fair I can still also remember some of the physics.

## Nick Wilson



‘Creepy’ taught French to Form 9 (and other forms I suppose) – a subject that everyone had to do. Some boys weren’t interested and couldn’t see the point of learning it, so maintaining order was a problem. At times a hubbub of conversation would start to build up. Nick was inclined to take this personally. When his anger reached boiling point, in front of the class he would lift the lid of the desk he was standing behind and slam it down so hard that we all jumped and there was silence. In the silence that followed, I remember him fumbling with a little packet of pills he carried, taking one out and swallowing it, recovering his composure and then lecturing us about our rudeness.

His passion was dramatics, and he was an enthusiastic master-in-charge of the production of the annual school play. We did an extra performance one year in Campbell Town and another year in Devonport. He lived in a little room accessed via the Savigny I dormitory, above what was then the headmaster’s secretary’s office. He went on to teach at Poultney Grammar School in Adelaide.

## Eric Charlton



‘Rags’ Charlton was English and he taught English. He was always the soul of courtesy, never raising his voice unless to emphasise a point. Everyone was addressed politely by his surname. If you were fighting off sleep during a double period of English on a warm summer afternoon, he didn’t draw attention to it as some of his colleagues would have done.

Elegance of attire seemed to be low in his order of priorities. Rovers remember the awful old shorts, and the nickname is attributed to his occasional use of a corner of his academic gown to rub chalk off the blackboard. One thing he was proud of was his Skoda, and how quickly he could get from his home at

Windermere to the school.

Besides English he taught us hymns on Fridays. The daily service of morning prayer for the senior school in the chapel before school gave way to teaching us a hymn from the Book of Common Prayer, which had replaced Hymns Ancient & Modern. This was done by standing out front and leading us through the new hymn with a baton held up horizontally and raised or lowered for each note, as if to indicate its place on an imaginary musical score.

## JC Parish



‘Jack’ taught maths. He was nearing the end of his working life when we knew him. At one time, he had acted as the senior master, but those days were past. He still chaired the games committee, which had power, subject to veto by the headmaster, to make rulings about interhouse sport. At the time we knew him, he wasn’t terribly good at names, and you could expect to be addressed as ‘boy’.

Jack once had a knack for drawing a perfect circle freehand on the blackboard. It amused some matric students to egg him on to do one. “Come on, Sir! Do a circle.” And he would, but it wasn’t a perfect one. He was also the judge of the William Keeler

Hawkes annual handwriting prize.

## Mr Metzger



'Mud Guts' was German and spoke with a strong German accent. At weekends there was always a master rostered as the master-on-duty, to sign people out and back from leave, give permission for anything requiring permission, and so forth. In summer, he would unlock the swimming pool gate for a 2pm Sunday swim, and again at 4pm if we were lucky, staying in attendance throughout the swim. Mr Metzger went one step further – he donned bathers and had a swim too.

As a matter of interest, my father who started at Grammar in 1925, once told me that it was the boarders while he was at school who dug the swimming pool, which used to be at the top of the bank near the chapel.

## Mr SH Smart

He was form master of Grade 5 Form III. We didn't know what the SH stood for but someone, Bill Ross I think, told us that it was Sullivan Harry. Whether or not we believed him, that is what we called him. In the course of a year, he had the undivided attention of the class while he read us the whole of *King Solomon's Mines* by H Rider Haggard and the recently published *Reach for the Sky* by Paul Brickhill.

## Lionel 'Screw' Hampton

Remembered by all for his tall tales and war stories, and as a cricketer in his younger days, with a keen eye and plenty of advice to impart to any inspiring young advocate of the game. Not unlike the stories in Chester Eagle's *Play Together, Dark Blue Twenty*, where he relates a story during a divinity lesson:

*Our school contains hidden reserves of cruelty. In divinity one day, Jack Brooksbank, a small man and an old boy, one of whose sprinting achievements still stands in the records, breaks his boredom by posing a problem. 'You're flying through the New Guinea mountains,' he says. 'You're well below the peaks and you're losing height because you're overloaded. You've got some Japanese prisoners on board. Do you throw them out, or do you take the risk?' He puts it calmly so someone says, as he presumes he's intended, 'Chuck'em out.' Jack looks at his class. 'That's what we did.' Our stomachs quiver. The lesson – lesson? – and the way we view our masters can hardly recover. Why does Jack ask us in Divinity, a lesson we thought secure? Shrouded Papuan mountains and plunging Japanese fill our minds. Jack stares glumly at his class. 'Page sixty-four,' he says. 'Who'd like to read?'*

Hampton, it can be said, was an easy target for a war story and nearly all were told about his days in Colonial India. At the start of the lesson he would be asked, "Sir, can you tell us about the war." There would be a moment of silence as he contemplated a gruesome tale and then would announce, "We were in the Punjab in India and one of the soldiers had been hit by shrapnel, had his stomach hanging out. It was a quick fix using a bootlace to sew him up and evacuate him back to the nearest medical post..." The stories usually lasted a lifetime, but 'Screw' was cunning enough to just give us a taste, which lasted about five to ten minutes into the forty-minute science lesson, leaving him plenty of time to inculcate the basics of physics and chemistry to middle-school lads, as such we were.

## Eric 'Rags' Charlton [*Richard Stark collection*]



*Jan Haswell recalls* from p172 - The finest man and teacher during my time at Grammar was Mr Eric Charlton. In his fifties, he was fondly known as 'Rags', for the tattered black scholar's gown that forever trailed behind him.

He was British and highly literate, taught English literature and expression, and coached successful rowing crews. In a quiet way he was a powerful physical presence – tall and erect with a shock of black hair and a rock-solid face, like a road map of France. His glasses were large with plain black frames. The essence of Oxbridge – his voice was clear, strong and without accent – a crisp Laurence Olivier.

You'd see him striding briskly who-knows where, tattered gown dominating, a folder tucked under one arm. He never ambled, never simply walked. He strode. If he ever digressed from the matter at hand, it was brief.

Just into my teens I insisted, "Sir, Shakespeare is rubbish, we'd be better off reading Leslie Charteris' *The Saint* stories."

"Haswell," said Mr Charlton calmly, "You may say that you 'think' Shakespeare is rubbish but you are not yet qualified to say that Shakespeare 'is' rubbish."

Mr Charlton only once cracked a joke. He told it without smiling, but there was a twinkle in his eye. He came into class and said, "In due course, some of you might experience this and pass your own judgement ... I've just been told that the pleasures of childhood are nothing ... compared to the pleasures of adultery." Frankly, I had no idea what he was talking about.

In another digression, Mr Charlton told us that during World War II, he'd been on a plane ferrying an entertainment troop. He had the good fortune to be seated beside the beautiful actress Vivien Leigh, who had starred with Clark Gable in *Gone With the Wind*. Vivien fell into a deep sleep, with her head on Charlton's shoulder and her hair tickling his face. He didn't move for hours, and later refused to ever brush her powder from his uniform.

He mentioned that the best crime film he'd ever seen was the French *Rififi*. What made it especially thrilling was 20 minutes of absolute silence during a bank robbery. A few years ago, in China, I tracked down a pirate DVD of *Rififi*. Rags was right.

Again, digressing briefly, Mr Charlton assured us that it was quite easy to remove the human eyeball from its socket and put it back in again. A moment after delivering this riveting information, he positioned the thumb and middle fingers of each hand around his left eye socket, and applied slight pressure. Never has an entire class of boys been so focussed on a teacher. We waited for an eye-ball to pop out. It was an anti-climax when he relaxed hands and, with a wry look said, "Now, let's resume the lesson."

Frankly, I was in thrall about the possibility of an instant eye-ball removal until I recently read about John Mortimer's father – Mortimer being creator of *Rumpole* and not totally averse to the truth. He said his father had undergone this very treatment for a detached retina in Switzerland in 1935 – without anaesthetic. So Rags was right again. Mind you, the treatment on Mortimer Senior was painful and not successful.

## The Minor Placings

Minor placings behind Mr Charlton go to Lionel Hampton and Max Donoghue. They were humble men with little to be humble about.



*Lionel 'Screw' Hampton [Richard Stark Collection]*

Their subjects were science and physics, lessons with Bunsen burners, rotten egg gas and charts of the Milky Way. Beyond this, Mr Hampton coached junior cricketers and told riveting stories of his experiences in Colonial India. A soldier had half his stomach blown out and it stitched back in with a bootlace. If you got rabies, you needed sixty-four injections. Tapeworms were removed by seducing the head out with food, then wrapping it around a stick and winding it out, inch by inch, over a long period, "And you'd better not break it."

Mr Donoghue magnificently ignored the handicap of a club foot, the result of childhood polio. There was no hiding it. He wore a large round leather boot and did not walk easily. He used a cane for support. Outside the classroom he was master in charge of athletics, and coached a succession of state champions – Lean, Gunther, Holyman, Smith, Jarvis, Edgell and Armstrong during my years. A question – was Steve Donohue the real hero in this group of winners?

Mr Donoghue was nick-named 'Steve' after an English jockey. The respect that boys felt for him did not deter a group from carrying his small car inside the gymnasium one idle afternoon. It was an old two-door British Austin with a canvas roof. Nothing was ever said officially about the prank. Steve just drove out through the gym double doors and home.

Among the few cars owned by masters in the 1950s, British breeds were favoured in conservative grey.

Headmaster BH 'Jika' Travers drove a menacing grey Humber Super Snipe. It suggested a very determined bulldog, as did the headmaster himself. He was almost two metres tall and bore the blooming proportions of his days as a Rugby forward. He was a Rhodes scholar, and taught only matriculation classes ancient history – the first lesson every day.

Geography's Max Mattingley looked well matched by his elderly and elegant silver-grey Daimler. Its deeply padded, pleated-leather rear seat was an armchair fit for royalty. One Saturday night in 1957, a romantic senior used it successfully at a school ball. Mr Mattingley was perhaps austere more than arrogant. In any event, he was inflexibly strict – well, almost. When he caught me taking his photograph during class he said: "I'll overlook that, providing I receive a copy." There was no suggestion of a smile.

Chaplain Mortimer-Tanner broke the British run with an ancient American Ford. It was a genuine curiosity – very square, seemingly produced not long after the Model T. It travelled

well until some kid jammed a potato in the exhaust pipe. Definitely not me, sir. At this late stage would anyone care to own up?

Boarding house master Trevor Sorell had an unusually obese grey Jaguar saloon, significantly broader and rounder than any previous Jag. A tad frog'ish, some reckoned. Trevor taught maths and could prove with algebra that  $1 = 2$ . You perhaps began by letting  $X$  be 1 and  $Y$  be 2. After much scraping on the chalk-board,  $X = Y$ . Good luck with that. Trevor spent almost his entire life at the school. My five years as a boarder in the late 1940s and early 1950s are remembered partly for the canings he administered.

At a Grammar reunion in the 1977 with 400 attending, I did some roving interviews with a microphone. The following exchange with Ron Atkins was unforgettable.

“Ron, did Trevor ever cane you?”

“No ... he wanted to but he didn't.”

“Why not.”

“Because I threatened him.”

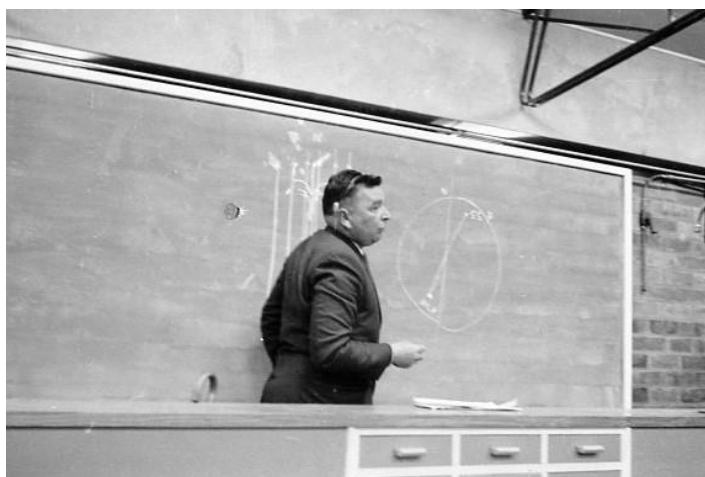
Game, set and match to Ron Atkins, a hero for a whole lot of reasons that don't include the classroom but do include defiance of life's adversities.<sup>61</sup>



### **John Roberts recalls**

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, it was forbidden for boarders to go to the dormitories on the first floor of the boarding house during the day. At weekends the then chaplain, Rev Charlie Brammall, used to sneak around the first floor during the day endeavouring to find boys breaking the rule. He earned the nickname ‘Creeping Jesus’. He would then advise Trevor Sorell the housemaster of his findings. This inevitably meant a visit to Trevor's office which at times he named the *House of Singing Bamboo*, the name of a song on the hit parade at the time.

### **Maxwell W ‘Steve’ Donoghue**



*Source: Frank Henderson collection*

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<sup>61</sup> *Authors' note: Ron Atkins had been a champion athlete at school but, not long after he left, a motorbike accident led to him losing a leg. Ron took up snooker and became an Australian professional snooker champion.*

## Max Donoghue

In the early 1950s, Max Donoghue, known as ‘Steve’, was a teacher of science. He was terribly deaf. On one occasion, he was writing on the blackboard with his back to the class, when one boy pushed a chair on top of an unoccupied desk to land on the floor with a deafening noise. Steve turned around and said, “Stand up the boy who is tapping a ruler.” Of course, no one owned up and this infuriated Steve.

Maxwell W. Donoghue was welcomed into the school in 1945 and came from All Saints at Bathurst in New South Wales. He immediately took over physics and senior mathematics. He was joined by GR Vernon, the chemistry master, and two student teachers, JM Joscelyne, recently discharged from the RAAF, and AT Sorell. Mr E Heyward returned to the school following his discharge from the AIF, taking up the position as housemaster.



## Peter Mercer (Class of 1952) recalls<sup>62</sup>

The masters at Grammar were an interesting bunch. The War years had taken their toll and some of the masters in my first three years at the senior school were well past their retiring age. The oldest person on the staff was Hugh Fraser, who at that stage was honoured with the title of Master Emeritus having semi-retired in 1936. ‘Old Hughie,’ as we all affectionately knew him, filled me with awe. He was truly a ‘blast from the past.’ He had been there since 1897, and in 1946 he still came once or twice a week to take Latin classes for a handful of boys. He was truly Grammar’s ‘Mr Chips’. Like Mr Chips, he too had served a short term as acting headmaster between the resignation of the Rev JW Bethune in 1928 and the arrival of his successor, FR Adams, and had taught several generations of fathers and sons.<sup>63</sup> In 1946, he must have been well into his eighties. ‘Old Hughie’ kept bees for many years as a hobby and had in the past been known to have left his class to flee home instantly when told his bees were swarming.

Another ‘old stager’ was LT ‘Boots’ McIntyre. ‘Boots’ had been there since 1924 and, in my time, was a kindly old man – a little dithery and hard of hearing, but still a good teacher. His areas of expertise were geography and history. He seemed to me to be quite oblivious to his personal appearance. What hair he had left on his head was usually dishevelled. The suit he always wore was baggy and had certainly seen better days. His gown was faded and ragged. ‘Boots’ was the school chapel choirmaster and, until my voice broke, I was in the chapel choir. To give him full credit, he managed to get our voices up to such a degree of perfection that the ABC recorded us for an Easter cantata, and we were on the air. When he was instructing and in rehearsal, ‘Boots’ used as his conductor’s baton a cane, and if we hit a wrong note or got out of tune, it was a gentle whack on the bottom for sure. I never found out how he got his nickname. Earlier in his career at Grammar, he was apparently known as ‘Quim’ or ‘Aspro’,<sup>64</sup> My guess was that, as choirmaster, he probably told the boys to raise their voices and stop “singing in your boots.”

‘Boots’ and his wife – a dear old lady whose head and hands shook badly with Parkinson’s disease – lived in a modest little house at the bottom of Belhaven Street, not far from my family. We were all shocked to hear that Mr McIntyre had died suddenly at a monthly meeting of the

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<sup>62</sup> Excerpt from book by Peter Mercer, *A Brush with the Past: My Early Years in Launceston Tasmania* 2017

<sup>63</sup> Basil W Rait, *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School, 1846-1946*, Launceston, 1946, p. 109

<sup>64</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue, Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*, Launceston 1996, p. 169

Old Grammarian's Masonic Lodge on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1949, when proposing a toast to the school.<sup>65</sup> My father had died suddenly just a month before. We all had an affection for 'Boots' and he was sadly missed. One of his sons was Sir Laurence McIntyre, a distinguished diplomat, and another was the well-known Launceston artist and art teacher, Alan McIntyre.

Then there was AH 'Yak' Harry who had been teaching at Grammar since 1923, before the school moved from Elizabeth Street to Mowbray Heights. In his general appearance he was the opposite to dear old 'Boots' McIntyre. 'Yak' was an imposing, fine looking elderly, white-haired man, with a neat and equally white moustache. He was always neatly dressed and had a soft, cultured, English sounding voice. He may have indeed been an Englishman. He taught English and classics, and expected and achieved respect and discipline from the students. 'Yak' was the type of man I imagined would be the archetypal schoolmaster in the British public school system. To me he fitted the mould perfectly. But in my time, he was getting past his prime. Like 'Boots', he must have been well past his retirement age. While we were doing assignments, such as writing short compositions, he would sit at the master's desk with his eyes closed and we would snigger to ourselves and say, "Yak's gone to sleep and he is going to fall off his seat!" – waiting for it to happen. It never did. He taught my class for two years and then, in 1948, he finally decided to retire. He lived to a ripe old age. Years later, I saw him in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. At that stage he was frail, old and bent, and needed two walking sticks to get around – a shadow of the upright, dignified man I once knew. I was nearly going to go up to him and introduce myself, but I did not do so for I felt that he would not remember me.

The Grammar masters in my time were all memorable characters and none more so than JC (Jack) 'Shooter' Parish. An old boy of the Hutchins School in Hobart, he was on the teaching staff there before the War and served in the Royal Australian Air Force.<sup>66</sup> On his discharge, Shooter joined the teaching staff of Grammar at the beginning of 1946, my first year at the main school, as a maths and chemistry master. These were two subjects I disliked, for I just did not have a mathematical brain, but I had to persist because they were compulsory. Shooter, or Jack – as we also called him behind his back – was an unforgettable character, with his black hair greased and parted neatly in the middle, stern expression and a Hitler or Charlie Chaplin trimmed moustache. As with all the other masters, it was always respectfully 'Sir' to his face. Shooter had a harsh voice, like a whip-lash, which reverberated in the classroom to the point that sometimes, if you had a double period of him, you had a headache at the end of it. Tough years of teaching recalcitrant boys had probably given it to him and had moulded his character.

Shooter's vocation as a teacher – trying to 'pressure cook' knowledge into often resistant juveniles – had made him a nervous wreck. He chain-smoked cigarettes out of the classroom and liked his drink, probably as a solace. It was well known that when the bell rang he used to 'hot foot it' to the Mowbray Heights Hotel for a 'nip' or two in the lunch hour, and sometimes, on a warm summer's afternoon, he would reappear in class rather unsteady on his feet. The VB classroom was upstairs on the corner of the school block and had a good view of the front drive – from there we would have bets on how long it took him to reach the front gates.

When dictating or discussing the principles of science or mathematics, Shooter used to relentlessly pace the floor of the classroom, around the boundary of the room and up and down between the desks. In his perambulations, he often had his hands behind his back and would lightly cuff a boy across the head if he thought he was not paying attention or messing around. "Get on with your work, son," he would say or, "Your work is disgraceful."

In my second year, Shooter's gown visibly and rapidly became more and more frayed, to such an extent that he had a job to put it on and keep it on. Eventually, he had to discard it for a new one and that too soon became tattered. This of course mystified him and his colleagues and, as

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<sup>65</sup> Alexander, op. cit., p. 129 and an obituary in the 'Launcestonian', the magazine of the Launceston Church Grammar School, No. 64 (New series) December 1949, pp. 9-10.

<sup>66</sup> The 'Launcestonian', No.57 (New Series) July 1946, p. 2



far as I know, he never found out how it happened. He no doubt was suspicious, but could never catch the culprits. But every time he passed, some of the boys would pick up one of the razor blades they used to sharpen their pencils and, with his back turned, make a slit – much to the amusement of the rest of the class. This act of wanton vandalism to Shooter's attire was admired and not condemned by the rest of the class – we 'egged' the perpetrators on. I was far too timid to attempt it.

At the blackboard, Shooter put up a good performance. At times, shouting to the class with his penetrating voice and breaking chalk when endeavouring to emphasise the importance of an equation or formula. If you happened to be sitting at a desk at the front of the class, you were often sprayed with his spittle. When he passed by you in his endless pacing of the floor, you also 'copped it.' He was also accomplished at throwing the blackboard duster and bits of chalk at boys whom he thought were not paying due attention, and was usually a good, accurate shot. It may well have been how he acquired his nickname. Shooter must have been tough, he survived the rigours of teaching through to the 1960s, when he retired.

MW 'Maxie' or 'Steve' Donoghue also taught maths and general science, particularly physics. He had a club foot – apparently caused by childhood polio – and walked, assisted by the aid of a walking stick, with a limp or swagger. This did not really impede him in any way. And though, of course, he could not run, he took a very keen interest in organising athletic competitions and no doubt wished that he could have been an athlete. His nickname 'Steve,' given to him by the boys, was not very kind. My schoolmates informed me that it apparently came from one of the very sinister characters in a 1930s American movie, where the villain, with a limp and a cane, stalked victims and killed them in the dark alleys at night. Another suggestion was that it came from the name of an English jockey.<sup>67</sup>

Max Donoghue was as unlike that underworld character as it was humanly possible to be. He was much loved by all the boys and his patience at times was legendary. He was a very kind-hearted man and also a good teacher when he had the chance, but he was too kind-hearted to demand strict discipline and at times the class got almost completely out of hand. This was the case, particularly in the physics lab, where on several occasions he could hardly be heard over the noise generated by his unruly students. Poor old chap. The perspiration would be running off his brow in his struggle to make himself heard. One thing I vowed to myself was that I would never be a teacher! Later in his career at Grammar, he had a hearing aid and would apparently turn it off if the class became too noisy, to allow him to continue the lesson.<sup>68</sup> He retired about the same time as Shooter Parish, in the 1960s.

Another interesting character who taught us for a couple of terms in 1947 was an Anglo-Indian, H. Eyre-Walker. We nicknamed him 'Airy' Walker. He came to the school direct from India and had quite a pronounced Hindi accent. We used to joke behind his back on his pronunciation of certain words and names and mimic him. He had a good sense of humour and used his accent to good effect. For example, the film star Gregory Peck, he called 'Eggery Speck.' Eyre-Walker was also something of a disciplinarian and he could at times be rather cruel. If he thought you were misbehaving, he would first stroke you gently on the back of the head and then give you a sharp cuff, which would make you see stars. He would also whack you across the knuckles with a ruler if he thought you were not concentrating.

After the hot Indian climate, the shock of the bleak Launceston winter was too much for Airy. In the middle of the second term, he resigned and went to live in Sydney, where he took a position at Knox Grammar School. MH Moray from Sydney took his place. I cannot remember much about him for he was only there for the second half of 1947. BN Robson also appeared on the scene at about this time as a maths and science master for forms VB and VA.

In the junior forms, we had an art of speech period each week conducted by Ian Lewis, in which our vowels were refined and our other imperfections were addressed. It was not about public

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<sup>67</sup> Information from John Corrick

<sup>68</sup> Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 169

speaking, it was how we spoke, for we were supposed to be groomed as young gentlemen and the early teens were considered a good remedial age. As a child, public speaking was a thing I dreaded for I invariably became tongue-tied and stuttered. My vowels were OK and I did not drop my h's. My main problem was pronouncing the th's as f's, and I was instructed to remember to poke my tongue between my teeth to say 'thing' and 'with', instead of "fing" and "wif." I do not know how this came about because I certainly did not have a cockney background! Even to this day, I sometimes have a lapse, to my embarrassment.

Our social studies master in my middle years was VM (Vivian) 'Blinky' Lloyd. He had taught at the school before and returned at the beginning of 1948. Vivian Lloyd was kind-hearted, friendly and pleasant but a rather strange, soft sort of character whom, as a boy, I liked but never really trusted. He enjoyed inviting and taking boys out on excursions in his car and took me out on a couple. One trip we went on was to Entally National House, as he knew that I liked old buildings and history. However, both occasions were very enjoyable and he made no improper advances to me whatsoever. He was a bachelor and probably lonely. I suspect he just enjoyed company. He said to me on one occasion, "My hobby is people. I am a student of people. I study their personalities and enjoy discovering their interests and aspirations." He was a good teacher and had great enthusiasm for highlighting interesting points in both history and geography and would often end with, "Make no mistake about that!"

French was difficult to learn because we had three different French masters in five years, and each man had a different method of teaching. As a result, I still remember a bit of this language but nowhere near enough to carry on any sort of a conversation with a French person. The first was EH (Ted) 'Troppo' Heyward, a very likeable chap who was interested in the correct pronunciation of French and taught us to write the words phonetically. He served in the Second Australian Imperial Force during the War and on his discharge, rejoined the school staff in 1945. Troppo – so named because of his slow drawling voice – was far from being mad, in the way World War II soldiers used to go in the humid heat of the tropics. He was highly intelligent and what is more, he knew his nickname. One afternoon, when faced with a very noisy and unruly class, he said, "Now let Troppo have a go!" It silenced us immediately. But like Shooter Parish, he was not a good example to his students for he was addicted to the 'weed' (tobacco), whereas for the students, it was a severe caning or even expulsion if caught smoking, Troppo chain-smoked all the time. No sooner was one cigarette out, he would light up again. What his lungs were like, I shuddered to think, but I was convinced that if I as a teacher had to handle some of my classmates, I would need to smoke myself to calm my shattered nerves and preserve my sanity.

In 1950, 'Troppo' was followed by a witty Scotsman, Alexander Bryce, who taught French very differently. He had a delightful, broad lowland, River Clyde brogue. His pronunciation of French was consequently very good, for Scots have a similar intonation. Following Bryce was LA (Lyndon) 'Hicky' Hickman from Hobart, who used yet another method and had us thoroughly confused. I was never told but as far as I could gather, when he was young he was rather smitten with my mother when she was single. How he came to meet her, I never found out. As a middle-aged bachelor, he probably saw Mum – after she became a widow at the age of forty – as a 'good catch'. She lived in a big house and, misleadingly, looked to be 'well healed'. Hicky used to regularly come out to our home for the evening meal. As he was one of my teachers, it was a thing I did not like, and the idea of possibly having him for a stepfather was not a pleasant thought. Fortunately, my mother did not think much of him and his set bachelor ways. She was also annoyed by the fact that he always made a move to leave after the last tram for the evening had gone. She would then have to get the car out and take him home to Mowbray Heights.

Of all the strangest and most unforgettable of the characters who taught us at Grammar, the prize would have to go to GF 'Kinky' Connell. 'Kinky' arrived at the beginning of 1949. He was a Melbournian, and for some years was a master at my father's old school, Malvern Church of England Grammar School. He came to the school from his previous posting, Scots College

at Warwick in Queensland.<sup>69</sup> Despite his peculiarities, as a teacher of history, geography and English in the senior classes and at matriculation level, he had no equal in the school. A balding, bespectacled, well-built man with short-clipped, stubbly grey hair, a roundish face and pronounced wrinkles on his brow, Kinky used to always get outstanding results. Fellow teachers, like Hickman, wondered why. One night when Hicky was spending the evening at our home in Elphin Road, he asked me how a strange person like Mr Connell got such good results and I told him. As soon as Kinky entered the class he would go up and take a seat at the master's desk. Then, with his hand on his chin, he would say in a peculiar rather falsetto voice, pitched from the back of his throat, "Pick up your pens and write the following." Then the entire period would be devoted to dictation, and of course it is the best possible way to remember things. If you write it down, the script more often than not is indelibly etched on your brain.

He allowed no time for slow-writers like me. We just had to get it down the best we could, and in my case, with my almost illegible writing, I used to take my work home and rewrite it in the evening. At the end of one of Kinky's periods, my fingers and wrist were aching but it was all very worthwhile. Being the schools 'poler' extraordinaire at sport, I did not have much to do with Kinky's after school contributions, but he was apparently a champion athlete in his youth and an excellent athletics coach. He was usually a very fair and conscientious teacher but, if he felt that the class had played up, he would take it personally and either get the huff or go around every member of the class and individually tick them off, taking swipes at their shortcomings. Mine was being timid and so, on one of these occasions, he called me "a gutless runt." This really hurt for I had been innocent of any misdemeanours and what's more, I knew that there was quite an element of truth in his assessment of me. At the end of each year, it was the usual thing to put in and buy the master-in-charge of the form a small present to say thank you. In Form VIB in 1951, Kinky was the form master and we put our hard-earned pocket money into buying him a nice wallet, which was presented to him on our behalf by the form captain. He duly accepted it with gratitude and then later in the day in exuberance with the end of the year and long holidays ahead, we cleared out our desks and had a paper fight. We were almost at the stage of tidying up and Kinky walked in, turned quickly on his feet and stormed out. A few minutes later he returned, crimson with rage. He drew a pair of scissors from his pocket and ceremoniously cut the wallet into shreds, flinging the pieces at the class, many of whom were swearing under their breath. "That's what I think of you all!" he said and stormed out again. He took our little bit of fun as a personal affront and was quite unforgiving.

At the end of the second term in 1952, Kinky got a bee in his bonnet about something. I think the trouble had been brewing for some time. On this occasion, so I was told, he apparently stormed into the headmaster's office and told him in no uncertain terms about his dissatisfaction with the running of the school. Most of this was probably in his imagination, but he handed in his resignation and insulted poor old Vern Jones to such a degree that he called a school assembly in front of the gymnasium and forbade anyone to speak to Mr Connell before he left the school grounds. I never knew the full story and did not know what happened to him later in his career. I presume he returned to Melbourne whence he had originally come.

Each form had a master-in-charge or form master, and ours for the first year in Form IVB was Mr JM 'Jossie' Joscelyne, who was also the school sports master. He was a youngish man – although anyone over twenty-five looked middle-aged to me at the age of twelve – and not the most likeable of people. He had served in the RAAF in World War II and had joined the Grammar staff in 1945. He was classified as a student teacher and had apparently never taught in class before. 'Jossie' had a sleek black moustache and considered himself handsome, with an ego to match. He saw himself as a good disciplinarian and presented a tough, intolerant front to us small boys, which was certainly intimidating. He also had a cruel streak in his nature. If he considered you were playing up or not paying due attention, he would creep up behind you and give you a sharp cuff over the back of your head, which made you see stars. In this day and

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<sup>69</sup> 'Launcestonian', No. 63 (New Series), June 1949.

age he, like many of the other masters, would have been up on a charge of assault. On the credit side, Jossie was a cultured man and a lover of classical music. He took time to instruct the class on its beauty and quality, as opposed to some of the popular music of the day, which he detested. He sometimes brought a record player into class to demonstrate the different forms of music and on one occasion he played a piano sonata and asked what it was. There was a few seconds silence, then one boy put his hand up and said, "It's a Sinatra, Sir." This was too much for Jossie. He exploded and vilified the rather stunned boy for his utterance. "You stupid boy! That is the name of that dreadful popular singer. To bring his name into this discussion is a sacrilege! For your ignorance you will see me after this period for a detention, which I trust will improve your mind."

During Jossie's year as master-in-charge of the form, each of us had to give a short talk before the class on a subject of our choice. Every student had to do one. As the weeks went by and my time got closer I became more and more terrified. There were no exceptions and there was no way of dodging it. It had to last only five minutes and I knew the subject I had chosen from A to Z, but that did not help. I got to my feet and went out to the front of the class and, after mouthing and stammering through the first sentence or two, I began to feel as though I was going to faint. Fortunately, Jossie realised what was happening and got me to abandon it and sit down. I felt so humiliated and annoyed with myself that I vowed I would eventually overcome it. Public speaking was a thing I greatly feared but, on the other hand, looked upon it as one of the greatest challenges of my life. I feared it because by nature I was extremely nervous and shy. From early childhood, I would get tongue-tied under stress or pressure. This took me years to overcome and, unlike King George VI, I had no one to help me. I eventually cured myself. Making a phone call was a real trauma. I had awful trouble getting the words out to introduce myself, and if one hears heavy breathing on the other end of the line one usually hangs up. This used to happen to me on numerous occasions. I realised that if I was to get anywhere, I had to conquer it and I succeeded in my early thirties. I also had a stammer, which I likewise managed to conquer, in my mid-twenties.

JM Joscelyne probably realised that teaching was not his vocation and at the end of the year, he left to enter the business world. What happened to him after that, I know not.

Our forms IVA and VB form-master was Roy A. 'Jimmy' James. He was a very kindly, middle-aged, bespectacled man with dark brushed back hair, popular with the boys and a good teacher. He was firm and fair but he did have his favourites, or 'teacher's pets'. In his eyes, they could do no wrong. There were a handful he called by their Christian names, whereas all the other boys were surnames only. Much as I tried to join their ranks, I failed, but he was nevertheless very kind to me. In the last two years of my school career, when I was the curator of the school museum, he was the master-in charge and was very supportive. Apart from teaching other subjects, for a period each week in Form IVB, he took us for craft-work of our choice. I tried my hand at embossing sheet copper for bookends, with limited success.

For a year in Form IVA I attended an art class once a week, conducted by the well-known Launceston artist Alan McIntyre, a son of Boots. He was very easy to follow and the course was very enjoyable. It was from him that I learnt, amongst other things, the principles of perspective. I found that I was very good at drawing scenes and objects but not people. Portraiture was definitely not my forte.

Trevor 'Tadpole' Sorell was another of my teachers in the junior classes. He taught English grammar and expression as well as maths. I respected Trevor as a kind, even-tempered young man and although he had had no university training, he was a good teacher and able to get the knowledge across very effectively. With the exception of a short break teaching overseas in England, Trevor spent a lifetime teaching at Grammar, retiring in 1990 after forty-five years of outstanding service.<sup>70</sup> When I went on to the senior school in 1946, it was his second year as a teacher and he had grown a black moustache to make himself look older. Before 1945, he was

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<sup>70</sup> Alexander op. cit., p. 276

a student at the school. In later years, I used to enjoy meeting him at old boy's reunions and having a word.

In Form IVB, I took up woodworking as a subject – in the old weather-board carpentry and joinery shop – tutored by a rather jovial character called Harry Reinmuth, who was also the maintenance man at the school. Besides teaching boys to saw and hammer and make things, he had the responsibility of effecting any repairs that needed to be done and generally keeping the school buildings in good shape. I spent only two terms in the woodwork class and during most of that time I tried to learn to saw straight. Come what may, I could not master that simple craft. While other boys were making things, I was still sawing away. Eventually Harry gave up on me and gently told me that I was wasting my time and his. So that was that. I realised that I would never be a carpenter, although I enjoyed the atmosphere of the workshop after the stuffiness of the classrooms. Harry retired at the end of the year and whether I had anything to do with his decision, I know not. He was replaced by R. Nott.

When I was in the middle forms an old boy, MAP (Max) Mattingley, joined the staff in February 1948 and took us for certain subjects. He had come from the Brisbane Church of England Grammar School.<sup>71</sup> Mattingley was a tall, fine-looking man, in his late thirties or early forties. He had steel grey hair and a pronounced 5 o'clock shadow. His parents lived a couple of doors from us in Elphin Road, in a fine old late Victorian-style house with a very large formal front garden. It was called 'Fairlawn'. He was a good teacher and very fair, but would stand no nonsense. If you played up or 'stepped out of line', you were in trouble. He only stayed two years, leaving for a study tour of English public schools at the end of 1949. In the mid 1950s, he was appointed the headmaster of All Souls Anglican College at the old gold-mining city of Charters Towers in northern Queensland, but in doing so, he had to join an Anglican order of brothers who ran the school. So, he became Brother Mattingley, and sadly died in office there not many years later at a relatively young age.

Another master, in my first couple of years at big Grammar was Dr WV (Wilfred) Tenniswood, a strict but kindly man who taught the senior classes. Other masters in my later years who did not teach my class were Max Burke, who was a former champion footballer, ES (Eric) 'Rags' Charlton and LC (Lionel) 'Screw' Hampton. Then teaching the small class of junior (primary level) boys – with their classroom on a glassed-in lower verandah of the boarding house outside the boarders' dining hall – was the diminutive and dumpy Miss LH Thraves. She made up for her size by a loud and incising voice. The class was made up of very young boarders and a few dayboys who lived close to the school. As you walked past you could hear her shouting at the poor little children in the normal course of teaching, so it seemed. This made me feel relieved that I was being educated by masters.

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<sup>71</sup> 'Launcestonian', op. cit. No. 61 (New Series) June 1948, p. 4

### **Paul Richards (Class of 1962) recalls**

Rolf Hennequel was a well-respected academic, speaking several languages and a great teacher of art at Grammar. Formerly Henkl, Rolf was a writer and publisher whose works, mainly classical in theme, were written using the pseudonym Albin Eiger (a fact he denied to all but the closest acquaintances), as well as his own name. Earlier writings, particularly scholarly ones, bear the name Henkl. He was the son of a French mother and a Yugoslav father and was born in Vienna in 1897. As a small boy he was taken to China, and it was at St Joseph's College in Peking that he learnt English. He studied also at Seattle, Cairo, Athens and Paris, and became fluent in French, German, English, Latin, Italian and Spanish, and competent in Egyptian hieroglyphics. His studies included classical and oriental languages, archaeology, philology and comparative literature.

During the World War I he served as an officer in the cavalry and general staff of the Imperial Austrian Army. It was here he trained cadets in officers' school in military fencing. He furthered his studies in fencing in Vienna, Rome and Paris and later wrote several works on the subject. It was this which became the undoing of his career at Launceston Church Grammar School, as a group of parents lobbied the school about his army career with the Imperial Austrian Army and its association with Adolf Hitler. It was mid to late 1950s and the stain of World War II were still strong in the minds of Launcestonians.

His fencing skills were impeccable and he encouraged several of us to dabble in the art of fencing. Although this was not part of our curriculum at school, we joined his class and were taught by Rolf in a second-storey space in the Ingles building in the quadrant in Launceston.

In 1925, he was appointed Professor in the Department of Languages at the University of Tokyo. While in Tokyo he married Claudia Alexeievna, a white Russian. In Paris from 1926 to 1927, he worked as the chief editor of two newspapers. During 1928 he visited Ceylon, India, Japan and China. From 1929, he studied philology and comparative literature at the University of Washington in Seattle. He later took up teaching posts at Shanghai Public Western School (where he also conducted a fencing course), Nedjat School in Kabul from 1949 to 1952, and during the same period, Kabul University, where he was Professor of Letters.

On migrating to Tasmania in 1952, Hennequel taught French, Latin and art at Launceston State High School, St. Patrick's College in Launceston, Scotch College in Newstead and Launceston Church Grammar School. From about 1960, he also conducted lectures in ancient history and oriental studies for the Adult Education Board. During 1955, he wrote articles on Afghanistan for the current affairs bulletin of the University of Sydney. In the same year, he and his wife were naturalised and in 1957, they moved to Newnham in Tasmania, where the Wattle Grove Press was set up in 1958.

Hennequel published first his own poems and semi-factual scholarly novels. When this program was completed, he embarked on publishing limited editions of works by Pat Flower, Rodney Hall, Howard Mitcham, Marguerite Harris, Wilhelm Hiener, Dorothy Hewett and Philip Ward, and conducted lively correspondence with Dorothy Hewett and other writers, literary agents and artists, including PR Stephensen and Rigby Graham.

In the later years of the Wattle Grove Press, illness hampered Hennequel's activities and in 1969 this forced the closure of the press. He died on 30 January 1971, survived by his widow Claudia and a married daughter, Eleanor.<sup>72</sup>

It was Rolf's influence and encouragement during those early years at Grammar that led to my interest in art. I only found time to extend and practise my art after fifty years as a scientist, completing a post graduate advanced arts diploma in 2014.

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<sup>72</sup> News item in the *Examiner*, Launceston, 18 November 1960. Obituary, the *Examiner*, 2 February 1971.

## Malcolm Clarkson



He arrived in all his glory from the UK – freshly gowned and a shock of golden blonde hair, lengthy but neat, which he would brush back with his right hand as he strode into chapel like an Etonian. Malcolm Clarkson had presence and he had found a place at Launceston Church Grammar. The Hugh Grant of the early 1960s, he was respected and very popular with all the students.

He was nicknamed ‘Basher’ Clarkson after a young student, Damien Churton, was caught talking in class. Clarkson picked up a global map of the world and hurled it across the classroom at Churton, striking him on the head leaving a massive dent in South America. However, there was no damage to Churton’s head and no complaint from his parents. There was perfect behaviour thereafter from all and sundry that year.

*Malcolm Clarkson [Richard Stark collection]*

## Paul Richards, Richard Talbot and Malcolm Clarkson on Flinders Island 1963



*Photograph taken by David Saunders*

I studied A-level geography under Basher in my matriculation year and when I left school in 1962, he invited a group of us to his home for an evening meal – to teach us the virtues of dining out and the selection of wines with each course. David Saunders, Paul Rapley and I enjoyed the evening immensely and some months later at Easter 1963, David Saunders, Rick Talbot and I invited Clarkson to come with us to Flinders Island to collect topaz, locally known as ‘Killiecrankie diamonds’. David Saunders had gained his light aircraft pilot’s licence when he was sixteen and it was in a Cessna that the four of us winged our way to the Furneaux Group. It was a true adventure, with Malcolm driving a hire car from Bowman’s. His son, Abo, had been a boarder at Grammar and so we were able to get a substantial discount. We arrived in the north of the island in the dark and pitched our tents, unknowingly, next to a pile of dead kangaroos. It was not long before a utility, blazing with ‘roo’ lights containing three mad men, drove up and announced that they were shooting roo and would we like to come with them, as

we had .22 rifles with us. It was Thursday, and Rick and I decided to go with them on the back of their utility. At midnight we returned to camp, as it was now Good Friday, getting a good night's sleep in our tent while David and Malcolm chose the back of the station wagon we had hired. What an adventure that was. By 2pm we were in our tents ready for our Killiecrankie diamond fossicking the next day.

### **Kerry Holloway remembers with great affection**

Malcolm 'Basher' William Clarkson – I could write a book on him. Deeply charismatic and an excellent, if somewhat unorthodox, teacher. On our first visit to the geography room, he was lying full length on one of the tables. He raised his head and said, "Welcome to the room of thrills and spills, mainly spills." He gained his nickname from the way he punished us. He would put a cross on a wooden pencil case with chalk, command the miscreant to bend over, and would transfer the cross with a hefty wallop onto the miscreant's backside. He was in charge of the library and in sorting what he considered appropriate from inappropriate books, heaved the latter the length of the library. He was an outstanding teacher and an inspiration, and in my year sixteen out of twenty-five students gained a credit in the School's Board exams. True to his flamboyant image, he would sweep his hand dramatically across his brow to push back his hair. His image was further enhanced by driving a rather sporty Triumph, a Herald model I think. He had a great influence on me and is undoubtedly the reason I went on to take an honours degree in geography and become a teacher. I was very sorry when he left Grammar.

Ron Horner – A colleague of Don Selth and straight from St Peters College in Adelaide, Horner was a great chemistry teacher and was a popular master with the boarders.

Jack Parish – There is no doubt that Jack was a great mathematics teacher. However, his failure was that he taught the brighter students and left the rest of his class students struggling. I for one fell into this struggling category in my matriculation year and favoured a mixture of science and arts over mathematics. A very likeable character, he used to sit up next to me on the organ stool and literally bawled out the hymns. He must have had some bronchial condition which necessitated him using yellow stationery chits to get rid of what we called 'greenies'. His regular trips to a building in George Town Road, with several stops around the oval to get his breath, were a notable feature.

Mr 'Tackhead' Kirkbride – When a class got out of control he would say, "I am walking out," and retreat to his bedroom in the boarding house. It was then up to the deputy headmaster, Ron Horner, to coax him back to class. We all thought this was very funny and caused him to walk out on numerous occasions.

Mr Northcote – Took the first students to the Mount Arthur hut in 1961. On the second day most of us climbed the mountain with him. On the descent, we became lost and had to spend the night in the bush around a huge fire. Several students became 'discalced' due to their boots being thrown into the fire on the misassumption they were logs of wood. Mr Northcote later married Matron Wylie, matron of the junior school I think.

Chaplains – E. Carl Rowlands was the first chaplain I remember. He was followed by Guy 'Gad' Harrison, who was very English. Harold 'Harry' Pickup was the chaplain for most of my secondary years. He was erudite and highly qualified, and was able to wield the cane most effectively.

Jim Brassil – A big man, both physically and mentally. He taught advanced maths, or maths B. One day he brought to our class a visiting American mathematician, with the intriguing name of Cletus Odious Oakley. I remember this distinguished gentleman wore a bow tie, something quite outrageous to us. 'Big Jim' had a Bachelor of Economics – the only staff member who did. He went on to a career in politics, I think.

LV Berenger – came from Sri Lanka. One memorable saying of his was, "De crust of de ert," which translated to 'the crust of the earth'.



Eric 'Rags' Charlton – English teacher and rowing master. Is remembered as having proclaimed on the river once, "Stop all that row in the bow." We had singing practice in the chapel on Friday mornings, which he ran, conducting with much flourishing.

Bruce Dowse – Died recently and was an old boy of the school. He returned to us after teaching in Africa, where, he told us, he kept a loaded rifle under his bed.

Lionel 'Screw' Hampton – Taught science, was the hockey master and had been in the army in India.

Arnold 'Angus' Neale – Used to rub his chin and say, "Mmm." An English gentleman who had been an officer in British Intelligence during World War II. His gentle appearance belied the fact that he was quite capable of caning an entire class. He endeavoured to teach us French. We were all intrigued by his academic hood from Manchester, which had a whole lot of rabbits' fur on it.

Arthur 'Floyd' Packer – A very practical, hands-on approach to teaching. He had worked as an industrial chemist. When one student questioned his qualification, Floyd stormed out of the lab, got in his car and drove home, returning with papers attesting to his qualifications.

GRE 'Grev' Vernon – Taught biology. A thorough gentleman. He was the tennis master.

MW 'Steve' or 'Stone Age' Donoghue – He always started the races at carnivals, and very proudly wore a green jacket. He was partially deaf and so wore a hearing aid. Our favourite trick was to lower our voices when talking to him, so that he would have to turn this up. When it was turned to the maximum, a student would drag a chair across the concrete floor. The effect on Steve was electrifying.

NW Powell Davies – One of the most 'English' people I have ever met. A very accomplished organist, he taught physics, and managed to summarise for us a thirty-page information sheet in thirty-six pages! He later moved south and became an Anglican priest.

Professor Heinkel – tried to teach us art around 1960 by getting students to draw a grid and then use this to draw, for example, a rabbit. I can still remember him saying, "Now rub out ze auxzillary lines." We used to annoy him by calling him Professor Henkel. He would retort, "Ze name is de Heinkel and not de Henkle."

Bob 'Crikey' Wilson – Taught commerce. A very genuine man who is remembered as having said, "A millyun millyun make a billyun."

The Rev 'Elmer Fudd' Ivor Clark – Came from South Africa to be assistant chaplain and to teach English.

Vaclav 'Vac' or 'Vacuole' Hersta – Taught geography and was a real character. Typical of the advice he would dish out to us was, "You say, she be all right, but she not be all right. I know der life, I've seen der life." We asked him at the swimming carnival if he fell in the pool would he be a wet Czech. He didn't seem to understand the joke. Perhaps they have another word for them in Prague.

Trevor 'Mallee Roller', 'Trev' or 'Beer Barrel' Sorell – Knew how to use the cane and frequently did. He caned me once for naming the angles of a quadrilateral "T. R. E. V." Two of his favourite sayings were, "One day the death rate in this room will be 100 per cent," and when speaking of Hobart, "120 miles south of Carr Villa, and twice as dead." He sometimes produced a big roll of money from his pocket during class and was rumoured to be a special constable in the police force.

Mrs Stark – This happened at Grammar prep and involves Mrs Stark, who later went on to teach at the big school. Standing in front of a class of Grade 3s who were sitting on a mat, she exclaimed, "Who has emitted foul air." Mystified silence followed, then one of the boys who was more worldly-wise than the rest said, "She means who farted."

### **Frank Henderson (Class of 1963) recalls**

It must have been over a period of three years or so that Jack Parish promised to tell us about the Pharaoh's daughters, "Don't forget to remind me to tell you about the Pharaoh's daughters some time, laddies!"

He finally got around to it!

*One day the Pharaoh's daughter was walking by the Nile,  
She stepped into the bulrushes and came upon a child  
She took him to the Pharaoh, said 'I found this on the shore',  
He sighed and smiled and winked and said,  
'I've heard that one before.'*

Pity I didn't remember many of the important things Jack told us. Some of the classic school reports to two mates of mine read, "Throughout the year ... has endeavoured to do as little as possible. He has succeeded admirably, and does no work."

It is also worth noting that the two students who were found to be lacking effort, and shall remain nameless, have each gone on to very successful careers. Perhaps the problem lay with the author of the reports.

Support for new boys in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in the boarding house, was lacking. I well remember being deposited at the boarding house on day one in 1957, knowing not a soul, apart from my older brother and he doesn't count! Had there been a 'buddy' system in place, it would have made such a difference settling in – it was not a particularly happy start to the year for me.

Being from the west coast, it was not possible to go home for boarders' weekends or Easter holidays. I will always be grateful to the mates and their parents who took me to their homes on these occasions. In my seven years as a boarder, there was not one occasion when I was not invited to go home with someone else from the boarding house, so I had a number of 'second' homes, which I remember with gratitude.



### **Owen Carington Smith recalls**

Mr 'Voltameter' Waters – In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Owen remembers the classroom antics with a physics master, who simply had no control over such a rumbunctious group as the class of 1962. Owen managed to disguise his camera and was very successful in taking some classroom photographs. As he recalls those heady days:

*The classroom shots were taken by cutting a hole in the middle of a notebook and sticking the lens of my Minolta Rangefinder camera through it. The photos in Voltameter's class were easy, as there was always pandemonium and he was constantly distracted. As you can see, Page was pretending to thump him from behind while V was being distracted by Maury Hill (now deceased).*

Voltameter was such a terrible teacher that, led by several classmates, his classes revolted and he was prevented from teaching. However, he had a contract that could not be broken, so he had to supervise work gangs during that glorious period between the end of exams and end of term. A photo never lies and, as you can see, he had little control, but we got to know him better and, while a hopeless teacher, we came to quite like him during this period.

**Physics master Mr Waters affectionately known as 'Voltameter'**



*L-R: Maurice Hill, Mr 'Voltameter' Waters and Adrian Page.  
Photograph: Owen Carington Smith*



*L-R: Graeme Nott (Frank's brother), younger Crawford (brother of Scott ?), Geoffrey Pickett, obscured, David 'Mable' Taylor, Ferrall, obscured, Peter Calder.  
Photograph: Owen Carington Smith*

### Billy carrying – the crash scene



*L-R: Graeme Nott, 'Digger' Whitehouse, Peter Calder, Gary Donaghue, Frank Lawrence, Adrian Page and Dick Millen ?*

*Photograph: Owen Carington Smith*

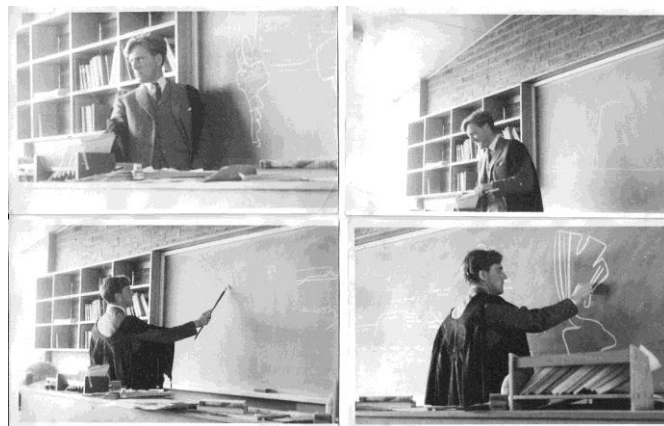
We often called each other by our surnames – some quaint Victorian custom – hence 'Carington'.

These photos were taken during that great period between end of year exams and end of year breakup, when we did various jobs around the school on warm November/December days. From memory, the crash scene resulted from making a very large billy cart and rolling it down the hill to the right of the boat shed. It disintegrated at full speed on the way down, trailing debris in all directions.

One of our most popular teachers, Malcom 'Basher' Clarkson, is captured by Owen in these photographs. Owen recalls that much greater caution was required in taking these photos, as Basher had absolute control over the class after bashing David 'Digger' Whitehouse's head into the door three times on the first day of class. It was just a tactical statement by Basher that he would not stand for any nonsense. He was a good teacher and had respect. I liked him. I had always aimed to get a photo of his famous chalk-drawn map of the Americas, which he could do in about one minute. He would say, "The Americas map is simple and boring, which you can all learn to do – just a few stokes here and there for the outline, one stroke down for the Rockies, one stroke down for the Appalatians and there you have it."

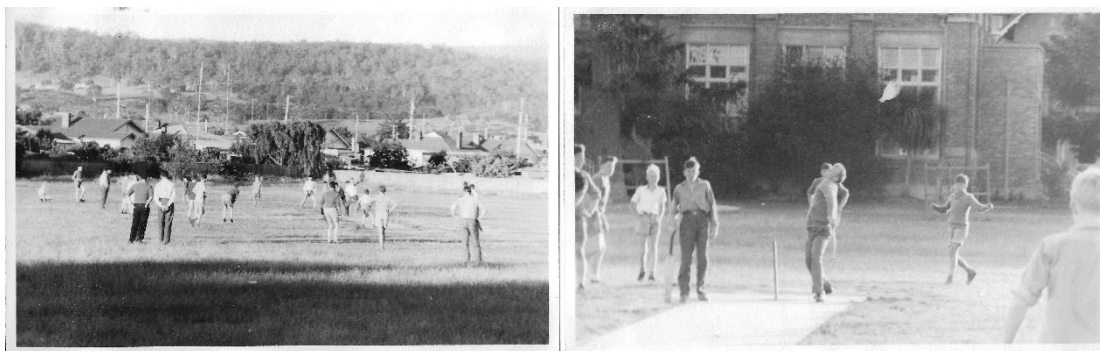
The photo got it perfectly. The other photos capture something of his personality.

### Malcolm Clarkson circa 1962



*Photographs: Owen Carington Smith*

## Sunday night cricket



*Photograph: Owen Carington Smith collection*

### The Enigmatic J Genest

The Frenchman Genest suddenly appeared at our history class in 1957. He launched into the lesson in French, having not even a smattering of English. He had a deep scar on his cheek, reputed to be a sabre wound from his time in the French Foreign Legion. To say we were taken aback was an understatement. I liked him and was a little fascinated about his true past, but cannot remember if he was a good teacher or not – once he learnt English.

When we were in second year, I had just been given a newfangled device called a ‘transistor radio’, which I smuggled into J. Genest’s class on Melbourne Cup day. At the encouragement of the class, I tuned the little radio on just before the commencement of the cup. Mr Genest immediately said, “Turn that radio off at once.” However, he was shouted down and then we explained the significance of the cup. He quietened down and pronounced, “You is all mad,” but he let us listen to the full race. I believe the winner was Baystone, ridden by Mel Schumacher.

### J Genest – French master 1957



*Back row L-R: Rafe ‘Alf’ Champion, Phillip Newson, Frank Nott, Frank Henderson and John Gee.  
Middle row L-R: Paul Rapley, Chris Ikin, Robert Napier.*

*Front row L-R: Alan Beecroft, Jack Bain, Owen Carington Smith, Bill Godfrey-Smith, John Bauld and Mr J. Genest.*

*Source: Owen Carington Smith, taken by Hamish Brown*

This particular photograph, taken in 1957, shows modern desks with no inkwells as biros were now being used. Also, we were allowed to have film star pictures on the wall. This photo was taken in Steve Donoghue's class with Hamish Brown looking at the camera.



*L-R: Hamish Brown. With their backs to the camera L-R: Chris Ikin, Michael Collins and Lincoln Wu.*

### **William Grey Godfrey-Smith (Class of 1961) recalls**

Ron Horner illustrates how a natural career trajectory can be seriously disturbed by excellent teaching. Ron was inspirational, and chemistry was presented as deeply fascinating. This launched me into a B.Sc., but the further I pursued chemistry, the more the fascinating sweeping generalities became swamped by detail. The majestic epistemological forest of chemistry became obscured by a relentlessly expanding multitude of unprepossessing trees. Only once was the intoxicating synoptic perspective of chemistry re-enacted for me, in a lecture at the Australian National University by Linus Pauling. So the magic of chemistry slowly deliquesced. Eventually it became clear that my taste for sweeping generalities and synoptic viewpoints, nurtured by Ron, was really a disposition for philosophical inquiry. So, the meandering course of my life succumbed to the gravitational pull of philosophy. Without Ron's inspirational presence, that discovery might have been made much sooner.

I haven't tracked in detail how well Old Launcestonians were prepared for leadership and community service. I think that Bob Cheek was (briefly) leader of the Tasmanian Liberal Party. As I recollect, his stewardship was unremarkable. Perhaps the old school can be blamed for insufficient diligence in preparing him for his task ahead. The other party leader whom the school produced was Campbell Newman. With regard to Campbell, the school can be commended. It is widely reported that Campbell was never made a prefect at Grammar because the headmaster judged that he lacked the qualities required for leadership. This was certainly an astute judgement, subsequently vindicated by Campbell's achievement as Premier of Queensland. After winning forty-four seats in the 2012 state election, thereby gaining government with a record majority of seventy-eight out of eighty-nine seats in the state parliament, he managed to lose thirty-four seats, including his own (and government), to Labor in the following election in 2015. Obliterating a majority of this magnitude in a single term is an achievement without parallel in Queensland's (and probably Australia's) political history.

## The Dregs Club

William Godfrey-Smith – I have a dim recollection that in 1961, I was instrumental in establishing the Dregs Club. I think Philip Shackel and Richard Stark were distinguished members. A requirement for membership was not being a prefect and little likelihood of becoming one. Being a sporting hero or having any remarkable social distinction were also disqualifications. I organised an excellent formal photo of the distinguished members of the Dregs Club, which was taken in the library. Unfortunately, this photo has been mislaid – if you have access to a copy, I'd be grateful if you could send it to me. In keeping with the Dregs Club's strict code of non-achievement there was no constitution, no annual general meeting or any other meetings, no reports, not even a press release. The only event was photographing the members. Of all the groups at Grammar with which I was associated, I think it is the Dregs Club that I recall most fondly.

Richard Stark – A member of this club, recalls that its creator was Bob Engisch and he doesn't think it survived his departure. A photo did exist, but what he thinks may have happened is that Bob Engisch 'borrowed' all the negatives of the play *The Government Inspector*, and they were never returned. It is very likely that the negative of the Dregs Club suffered the same fate.

David Henty – I recall the 'Dregs Club' didn't appear until Form 12. It was at the time all the prefects were made – but none of us, leaving a small number of 'dregs' in Form 12. We decided to become a special group! Also at that time, there was compulsory summer sport, so a Dregs cricket team was made up of those who didn't play cricket – it was the only time I could vaguely tolerate cricket. The members of the Dregs team were basically the same as those who had not been promoted to a higher status. Bob Engisch, Noel Webb and I spent quite a bit of time together that year, listening to classical music and drinking beer.

From time to time a music club was mentioned in the 'Launcestonian' and for several years was confined to classical music. In 1956, an interest in jazz music was introduced when Bruce Crawford gave a series of lectures on the subject, discussing the development from its beginnings in New Orleans to its present day forms and diversities. Other clubs included a billiards, table tennis and chess club, with competitions arranged on a regular basis. These clubs became very popular during the poliomyelitis outbreak in the third term of 1949, as sports such as cricket, rowing and tennis were temporarily suspended. Also in 1949, an aero club was formed, which had keen young modellers building gliders, rubber duration models as well as power models.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1949, No 64

## Second Hockey Team



*Front row: Unknown, Bill Godfrey-Smith, Mr Paul Northcote, David Henty (captain), Robert Jessup, John Goy.*

*Back row: John Penwill, John Pickup, Philip Shackle, Danny Chong, Bob Engisch, Richard Stark and William Ellis.*

### Camera Club

During the 1940s and 1950s, there was a very active camera club. In 1950,<sup>74</sup> two members of staff were professional photographers, adding a new dimension to the club. Mr Bryce hailed from Scotland and Mr Coutanche had been the head of a Kodak store in London. That year saw a trip to Mt Barrow, and the school purchased an enlarger and chemicals in bulk – halving the cost of developing. Mr Bryce was very keen on extra-curricular activities, especially for the boarders, and in 1951 established an angling club with fifteen members who enjoyed talks from local fly fisherman and old boy, Don Gilmour, who spoke on the life of trout and showed the boys some modern casting reels and rods. This was followed later in the year by a talk from Jack Mears, who gave a demonstration of the rudiments of rod-making.

By 1956, the membership had swelled to about forty students, an interest in colour photography had developed and the dark room had been vastly improved, along with the acquisition of a new lens for the enlarger, which was donated by RA Ferrall. That year, members of the club made a trip to the Cataract Gorge.<sup>75</sup> The club was becoming a popular pastime for both boarders and dayboys. Both 'Jika' Travers and Don Selth encouraged the formation and continuation of school clubs including the camera club.

Paul Edwards recalls arriving at school one morning in the early 1950s to find the noticeboard outside his class room awash with black and white photographs of nude women. This was the work of Mr Alexander Bryce. By recess the word had got out and Headmaster Vernon Jones had quickly removed them, to the dismay of pubescent young boys.

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<sup>74</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1950, No 65

<sup>75</sup> 'Launcestonian', 1956



## Chapter 6

### *Academia*

#### **Educational Structure 1940-65 and Rhodes Scholars**

*Paul AC Richards*

In 1940, at the 90<sup>th</sup> annual speech night of the school, Headmaster Norman H Roff, in presenting his report, spoke on the need to change the academic curriculum. He went on to say:

*The question of curriculum follows naturally a consideration of examinations. In the hide-bound world of external examinations, I am afraid we are tending to lose sight of our ultimate aims in secondary education. Originally secondary education was a stepping stone from primary to university work.*

*A recent census has shown that over a period of some years in Tasmania only eight per cent of the pupils attending secondary schools pass on to a university. Nor is this low percentage typical of Tasmania. It is about the same in other parts of Australia. It is obvious then that while catering for this minority of eight per cent, we must organise a curriculum primarily for the other ninety-two per cent. This means that we must no longer consider ourselves as a stepping stone. We must offer a course of instruction which is an end in itself and yet one which by its variety and method of presentation will provide something on which the majority of boys can build when they leave school.*

*After careful consideration, I have decided that a change is necessary in the curriculum of the primary and immediate post-primary department of the school. The main feature of the change which I propose to introduce next year is the division of the curriculum into two distinct parts, in which not only the subjects will differ but also the method of presentation. The first part consists of five subjects which must be taken by all boys. They are mathematics, English (grammar and composition), general science, Latin, and French. Promotion will depend on the standard attained in these subjects, and no alternative will be possible until after two or three years. The second part consists of six subjects: English literature, history, geography, art, carpentry and musical appreciation, of which some three or four must be chosen by the boy himself. There will be a definite effort to depart from the usual classroom routine in these subjects, and it is our object to help the boy to work at whatever subject interests him. As I do not wish to raise any false hopes in the minds of any boys, it is only fair to mention that adequate provision will be made for those boys who do not respond to this method. If sufficient candidates offer, I hope to create a special form for boys who do not want to sit for the intermediate examination, and for those who have obtained their intermediate certificate and do not want to sit for the leaving examination. In this form, the subjects offered will be those needed for commercial or agricultural careers, with a study of international and social relations and economics. This type of course has already been tried with great success at several public schools in Australia, and I would recommend parents to give it their earnest consideration.*

This then was the precursor to the system adopted more formally in the 1950s of establishing two streams of students, academic and commercial.

The years 1939-1945 were difficult for the school as young, enthusiastic and well-seasoned teachers, along with the headmaster, enlisted with the armed forces to fight in World War II. Teachers were scarce and the school had to rely on bringing past masters of the school out of retirement and older teachers available and up to the task. Although some were still very proficient teachers, others were not and academic standards were at times wanting. The acting

headmaster, Harold Vernon Jones, did the best he could following Roff's enlistment in 1941, but it was not until after the war that a full complement of sound teaching returned to the school.

In 1953, 'Jika' Travers felt that the matriculation syllabus was too hard and that secondary education should be expanded to six years.

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>76</sup>

*Matriculation syllabus too hard - SECONDARY EDUCATION MAY TAKE SIX YEARS - The headmaster of Launceston Church Grammar School (Mr BH Travers) warned last night that there was a strong possibility of secondary education being lengthened from five to six years.*

*Speaking at the school's speech night, Mr. Travers said there had recently been considerable discussion on the mainland and in Tasmania about matriculation and the standard of students entering the university. The extension would mean that boys would leave the school a year later and enter the university more mature. "In both ways, this is a desirable step. But it is even more desirable when one considers the present matriculation syllabus, which is far too large for one year's academic work," said Mr. Travers. By increasing secondary education to six years, it was hoped there would be more time for, but no increase in, (the) present syllabus. "The effect, of course, would be a higher standard," the headmaster said. In his report, Mr. Travers stated that for the successful education of children it was becoming more essential that the community realise that teaching was an important profession. He said life for a boy now was far more complicated and hectic than it was thirty years ago. "The effect of modern innovations on the social life of growing boys was not yet fully apparent. Thus, it was now the duty of schools to struggle strongly against this material onslaught and demand for youth time for leisure and thought and to create situations in which a boy was afforded the chance to think independently and critically. It was not the school's task to give boys material education to equip them for their callings; rather it was the school's obligation to teach boys the values of love, truth, loyalty, honesty and service – to teach them Christian ideals," said Mr. Travers. The Chief Justice (Sir John Morris) (the guest speaker) said schools should strive to produce better human beings, rather than stress the importance of improving the academic standards of pupils. He said Mr Travers' report contained the highest ambitions to which a school could aspire. Schools could have the answer by lengthening the period of secondary education and that there was a trend towards extending the matriculation period from five to six years.*

*"At least it is a very good thing that something is being done to have the scheme kept alive," said Sir John. Boys must be given time to think, he said, and the extra year would do this.*

The two-year matriculation program was introduced in 1960, extending secondary education to six years.

In 1955, Bruce H. Crawford was awarded a Secondary School Gowrie Scholarship for Tasmania. This was the third year in succession that this award had gone to a Grammar boy, the other two winners being John L. Garrott in 1953 and Philip AV Roff in 1954. Later, Crawford was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, completing a post-graduate Master of Laws degree at Harvard University. John Penwill in his matriculation year gained credits in Greek, Latin, English and ancient history, and was awarded the RL Dunbabin scholarship,<sup>77</sup> the first

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<sup>76</sup> *Examiner*, 15 December 1954, p. 7

<sup>77</sup> The Dunbabin scholarship was endowed by a bequest from Professor RL Dunbabin, a member of teaching staff at the University of Tasmania from 1901 to 1939, to assist students with travel to conduct research overseas.

award on record for classics, as well as the Gilchrist Watt prize for Latin.<sup>78</sup> In 1964, Stuart Lawrence also won the Gilchrist Watt prize for Latin. Integral to scholarship, there were several university entrance scholarships awarded in the 1940s – RB Jones and MD Grounds, 1950s – WH Oldham, RA Palfreyman, DJ Rose, MJ Fisher, PAV Roff. RA Cook, SA Fitzgerald, RD Scott, CM Gutjahr and WG Parkin, 1960s – IJ Barton, RJD Gee, PJ Newson, R. Stoessiger and RL Askeland.

At the beginning of each year, students were designated a classroom and the majority of subjects were taught in this classroom, except for science subjects, which were taught in the laboratories. Teachers moved from one classroom to another, unlike university campuses, which saw the student cohort always on the move from classroom to classroom.

This proved very satisfactory for both the students and teachers.

### **Rhodes Scholars**

*The Rhodes Scholarship – named for the British mining magnate and South African politician, Cecil John Rhodes – is an international postgraduate award for students to study at the University of Oxford. The award is widely considered to be one of the world’s most prestigious scholarships. Established in 1902, it was the first large-scale programme of international scholarships, inspiring the creation of a great many other awards in other countries. Only two years later in 1904, Leonard Neil Morrison was the first Grammar alumnus to receive this prestigious award.*

The school has produced a large number of students who have gone on to be awarded the Rhodes Scholarship. Many prizes given by the school hold criteria similar to the Rhodes Scholarship. The following alumni have been selected as Rhodes scholars:

- Leonard Neil Morrison (1904)
- John Orr (1905)
- Arthur Herbert Clerke (1907)
- William John Howard (1912)
- Laurence Rupert McIntyre (1933)
- Ralph Lindsay Harry (1938)
- Roland Cecil Gates (1946)
- Oliver Spencer Heyward (1949)
- Dennis John Rose (1958)
- Roger Dennis Scott (1961)
- Philip Anthony Vere Roff (1960)
- Allan Robert Taylor (1963)
- Richard John Gee (1967)
- Benjamin Jervis Goold (1993)
- Francisco Fernando Ascui (1996)
- Elizabeth Murray (2010)
- James Haw (2016)

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<sup>78</sup> The Gilchrist Watt scholarship is one of the earliest awards established at the University of Tasmania. Catherine Agnes Watt made arrangements for the scholarship through a bequest in 1919. It is available to a full-time student commencing an arts degree, who undertakes a major in Latin, ancient Greek or ancient civilisations.

From the late 1930s to the mid-1960s, the period covered in this book, former Launceston Church Grammar School students were credited with eight Rhodes Scholarships, out of seventeen awarded to former scholars of the school since their inception.

*Photographer: David Brill*



### **Ralph Lindsay Harry 1938**

In 1953, the *Examiner* reported:<sup>79</sup>

*Consulate Post to Launceston Career Diplomat*

*Mr Ralph Lindsay Harry, whose appointment as Australian Consul-General in Geneva was announced yesterday, is a son of M. and Mr. AH Harry, Haig Street, Mowbray. Harry at present is assistant secretary-in-charge of the geographical regions division in the Department of External Affairs.*

*The Minister for External Affairs (Mr Casey), announcing this yesterday, said Mr Harry held the rank of counsellor.*

*A 1938 Rhodes scholar, he was educated at the Launceston Grammar School, where his father was also a former English and classics master.*

*He has been with the Australian Department of External Affairs since 1940, two years after obtaining his degree in law at Hobart University. He joined the army during the war as a private and received his commission while serving in New Guinea. Since the war, he has worked as secretary to the Australian High Commissioner in Ottawa and with Dr Evatt on UN work and Pacific Pact plans in New York. Last year, he attended a UN meeting in Paris as an Australian official.*

### **Roland Cecil Gates 1946**

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>80</sup>

*Two Rhodes scholars Ronald Cecil Gates, a former pupil of the Launceston Church Grammar School, and Charles Harcourt Miller have been selected as Rhodes scholars for Tasmania. The appointments, which are the first since 1940, were announced by the Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee, which met on Monday. Eleven candidates offered themselves for appointment. Mr Gates was a pupil of the East Launceston State School and the Launceston Church Grammar School. He entered the Commonwealth Public Service in 1941 and commenced studies for the Degree of Bachelor of Commerce as a part-time student. He lived at Christ College during the following two years. In 1941, he obtained distinction in all three subjects for which he enrolled. During 1942, he was reserved as a university student, but abandoned his reservation and enlisted in the A.I.F. on June 2. He served in the Northern Territory. From 1942 to 1944, he continued his studies and passed five university subjects. At the beginning of 1945, he was released to resume his university course. He has just completed a very successful year with three passes with high distinction, completing the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Commerce. Mr Gates' activities have included membership of the National Fitness Council. Within the university, he was secretary of the University Labour Club and president of the University Housing Society.*

*This year, in view of the cessation during the war, the Rhodes trustees have offered two extraordinary scholarships for Tasmania. These are open to persons who have completed at least one year's war service. Preference will be given to candidates who have served in the armed forces.*

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<sup>79</sup> *Examiner*, 25 July 1953, p. 7

<sup>80</sup> *Examiner*, 5 December 1945, p. 5

## Oliver Spencer Heyward 1949

Oliver Spencer Heyward (16 March 1926 - 15 December 2003) was an Australian Anglican bishop. He was the sixth Bishop of Bendigo from 1975 to 1991 and the assistant to the primate of the Anglican Church of Australia from 1991 to 1995.

In 1949, the Rhodes Scholarship was awarded to Oliver S. Heyward. The *Examiner* reported:<sup>81</sup>

*1949 RHODES SCHOLAR R. OLIVER SPENCER HEYWARD, a former pupil of the Launceston Grammar School, and son of M. and Mrs HGR Heyward, Rowella, has been selected as Rhodes scholar for 1949. The decision was announced after a meeting of the Rhodes Scholarship Committee yesterday morning, at which the Governor (Sir Hugh Binney) presided.*

*This year, Mr Heyward completed the degree of Bachelor of Arts with first-class honours in English. He has been a student of the university since 1946. After matriculating from the Grammar School in December 1943, he served as a medical orderly in the RAAF for two years. At the university, Mr Heyward has been president of the Student Christian Movement, secretary of the music club, and a member of the editorial staff of the University Union newspaper and has taken an active part in the acting and producing of plays. He has played hockey for the university, and took part in football, tennis and rowing at the Grammar School. He was also a prefect at the Grammar School, and a leading member of the debating team. At Oxford, M. Heyward proposes to study theology to fit himself for entry into the ministry of the Anglican church.*

At Oxford, he took up study at Oriel College, Oxford. He was ordained after studying at Ripon College in Cuddesdon in 1954, and began his ministry as a curate at St Peter's in Brighton, England. Returning to Tasmania, he held incumbencies in Sorell and Richmond. After this, he was precentor at St David's Cathedral in Hobart, then warden of Christ College, University of Tasmania until his ordination to the episcopate in St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne on 1 February 1975.

Headmaster Mr Jones also reported to Synod on the awarding of the 1949 Rhodes Scholarship to one of the school's old boys, Mr Oliver Heyward. Mr Heyward, the report stated, was the first Tasmanian Rhodes scholar to study for holy orders. He had entered Oriel College at Oxford, and hoped to become a school chaplain.<sup>82</sup>

## Dennis John Rose 1958

Carmel Meiklejohn's book, *Without fear or favour : the life of Dennis John Rose AM QC*, published in 2016, is testament to the Launceston Church Grammar School's impeccable record of Rhodes scholars.



Dennis Rose AM QC (1936-2008) was a broadly experienced government lawyer who ultimately became Australia's first Chief General Counsel. In that role, he was both confidant and advisor to Prime Ministers, Cabinet and Attorneys-General. His life in the law is quite inspirational in these pages that have been crafted with great expertise and

obviously extensive research by author Carmel Meiklejohn. It is the story of a particular time that covers some momentous developments in our national story, told through the prisms of

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<sup>81</sup> *Examiner*, 16 December 1948, p. 3

<sup>82</sup> *Examiner*, 22 September 1949, p. 5

both the public and personal lives of one man. The practice of government law is an often anonymous practice but, in this case, shedding that anonymity is important. Lifting the veil reveals the impact that this practice has on many aspects of the lives of contemporary Australians. That Dennis was held in such bipartisan high regard is testament to his wisdom, his clarity of thinking, his dedication to the law and his great respect for the Australian Constitution.

In a tribute to Dennis, Peter M. Roach from the Law Faculty at the University of Tasmania had this to say:

### **A National Legal Luminary: A Tribute<sup>83</sup>**

By Peter M. Roach: Law Faculty LL.B. (Hons), B.A. Tas.

*In the five years from 1953 to 1957, he excelled as a student. His study program was so intense that, before examinations in Contracts and in Torts, he had mastered in each subject over 2000 decisions – all achieved by a hands-on analysis of those decisions as reported in the law reports. That mastery was achieved without the aid of case-book summaries, setting out only selected portions of the judgements.*

*Two full-time years were followed by three years in articles of clerkship. Ever ready to set new standards, he, and Launcestonian Bill Chamberlin, were the first articulated clerks to ever successfully refuse to pay a premium for the privilege of clerkship within the profession.*

*His course comprised thirteen full-time compulsory law subjects and four subjects freely chosen from other faculties. Having graduated as the outstanding law student, he was one of five admitted as practitioners of the Supreme Court of Tasmania in February 1958. A year later only one remained in the state.*

*Graduating with first class honours in law was not his only distinction. He was an accomplished musician and later qualified A.Mus.A. As Rhodes scholar, he went on to study at Oxford University, graduating B.A. Oxon.*

### **Philip Anthony Vere Roff 1960**

Philip Anthony Vere Roff became Principal of Scotch College in Melbourne in 1975. He came to Scotch immediately before the most turbulent period in its history, following the union which saw most Presbyterians join the Uniting Church. As some Presbyterians remained with their church, the issue of the ownership of Scotch became important, and resulted in lengthy legal proceedings which lasted most of Roff's reign as principal.

Though short, Roff's seven-year tenure was characterised by an expanding voice for staff in the day-to-day management of the school, the establishment of a foundation office at the school – based on Healey's concept, under the direction of a development officer – and the widening of the house system to provide greater depth in pastoral care. As well, the science building was opened in 1976, the current junior school house system was introduced in 1978, and work started on the Glen Centre, which opened in 1982.

But there was a deepening dispute over the ownership of the school. In 1980, the decision was made to incorporate the school, and a new council was appointed. On 12 August 1981, Scotch announced Roff's resignation.

### **Allan Robert Taylor (1963)**

Discrete, calm and wise – the markings of a perfect intelligence.

From the *Australian*, 13 July 2007, by Ric Smith:

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.utas.edu.au/law-alumni/features/special-features/in-memory-of-dennis-rose-ac-qc>

*Allan Taylor Diplomat and director-general of ASIS. Born Wynyard, Tasmania, 23 August 1941. Died Canberra, 19 June 2006, aged 65.*

*In his service at the highest levels of the Australian intelligence community, in some of the country's most important diplomatic assignments, as a trusted adviser to Coalition and Labor ministers, and as a superb sportsman, Allan Taylor was the straightest of straight shooters.*

*Taylor, the son of a bank officer, spent his early childhood in various Tasmanian towns and boarded at Church Grammar School in Launceston. He completed a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in modern history, at the University of Tasmania, and was Tasmania's Rhodes scholar in 1963.*

*At Oxford, Taylor studied history, completing an MA in 1965. His studies led him to an interest in diplomacy and thus to the then Department of External Affairs, which he joined in 1966. Among the lasting friends he made at Oxford was an American Rhodes scholar, David Boren, who went on to become chairman of the US Senate's intelligence committee. This led to Taylor spending six months post-retirement teaching intelligence and international relations at the University of Oklahoma, where Boren was president.*

*Taylor's early postings were to Rawalpindi, Bangkok and, after a period in the department's executive branch in Canberra, to Jakarta, where he served as the embassy's political counsellor. This was a period during which Indonesia invaded East Timor.*

*In the mid-1980s, after a further period in Canberra, he served as high commissioner to Nigeria and then briefly as deputy high commissioner in Wellington.*

*In 1989, he was appointed as high commissioner to Papua New Guinea. In managing Australia's interests there as the Bougainville crisis broke in mid-1990, his sympathetic but detached approach and his calmness under pressure made him ideal for the job.*

*Taylor returned to Jakarta as ambassador in 1993. His four years there included an extraordinary level of activity in the relationship, including the conclusion in 1995 of the Australia-Indonesia security treaty. As ambassador, he was held in the highest regard in both capitals. Paul Keating, and his many ministers who visited Jakarta, listened carefully to him, as did John Howard when he made his first official visit to Jakarta in 1996. Among Indonesians, the respect he had built as a more junior diplomat twenty years earlier continued to serve him well. A good listener, he had a broad understanding of the challenges for Indonesia but was never distracted from the pursuit of Australia's best interests. In 1998, after a period as head of the international division in the Prime Minister's Department, he was appointed director-general of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service. This was a position for which his discretion and understated style, his firm attachment to empirical judgments rather than opinion, his wisdom and unflappability suited him ideally.*

*Commanding the widest respect and loyalty within the organisation, he was able to lead it through a testing period that David Irvine, who succeeded him on his retirement in 2003, has described as one of rejuvenation, modernisation and management change.*

*With East Timor, terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq dominating the national security agenda, Taylor ensured that ASIS pursued a genuinely whole-of-government approach.*

*He also saw through the passage of the Intelligence Services Act, which redressed ASIS's fifty years of unlegislated existence, and became the first director-general to give evidence before a parliamentary committee. Along the way he won the highest respect among his international counterparts.*



*After retiring from the public service, Taylor served as chairman of the Australia Indonesia Institute and a member of the board of the Australian Archives. He remained widely read, with a particular love of history and biography.*

*He was a superb sportsman. In hockey, he represented Tasmania while still at university. As a cricketer, he played for the ACT, scoring a fine century against northern NSW in 1966 and playing against Doug Walters in the final of a single-wicket competition in Canberra in the same year. He declined an offer to captain a NSW country XI, in order to go to Rhodesia to marry Carol, whom he had met at Oxford. An avid golfer, he had a single-figure handicap at Royal Canberra.*

*The qualities Taylor brought to his sport were those that characterised his work as a public servant. He had a remarkable capacity for concentration – he got the basics right, he kept it simple, his technique was near perfect, he eschewed needless risk and he was nervelessly calm. He respected teammates and opponents alike. In his frequent victories, he was never triumphal.*

*His family was his bedrock. He took enormous pride in Carol, his wife of forty years. He was always more prepared to talk about the fine things she did for the communities they lived in, in Australia and overseas, than about his own career. He was justly proud, too, of his sons and their families.*

*Taylor was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1995, and awarded a Centenary Medal in 2000. The statements made following his death in 2006 by the Prime Minister, Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and former Labor leader Kim Beazley reflected both the depth and the bipartisan nature of the respect in which he was held. Tributes to him have also flowed from overseas. A modest and self-effacing man, he would have been surprised by the fuss.*

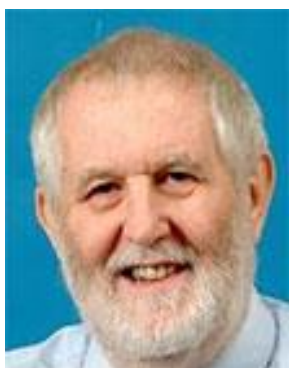
*He is survived by Carol, their three sons, seven grandchildren and his brother.*

### **2014 Melbourne LCGS Reunion**



*Philip Roff (1955), Barbara Roff, Bruce Cutts (1955), Mark Roberts (1954)*

## Roger Dennis Scott 1962 – Rhodes and Grammar



My time at the University of Tasmania was followed by the Rhodes in 1961. We all knew that 'Jika' had been a Rhodes scholar but we were more impressed that he had coached the national rugby union side, won three sporting blues and played a major part in the Eighth Army. I still have a pewter mug called the Rex Gregg Trophy which was awarded on notionally similar grounds to the criteria which applied then to the Rhodes Scholarship. (They don't apply in practice anymore, where sport is of minimal concern as a criterion compared to philanthropic engagement and community service).

Until I went to UTAS I had no idea whether I would be competitive academically, as Grammar was clearly such a backwater. Nor did I know very personally any of the Grammar Rhodes scholars in my era apart from the late Allan Taylor. The Roffs were ultra-special as fellow-students because of their association with a war-hero ex-headmaster and both boys then went outside Tasmania after finishing school. Dennis Rose was the oldest of the four of us, a distant and daunting figure when at school and more human and fascinating when we overlapped briefly at Christ College. He practised playing the oboe in the toilet block because of the superior acoustics.

Allan had a prodigious talent as a cricketer and I occasionally got to play in the same team. He was also competent at other sports. Our odd connections were two-fold – his father was transferred to manage the bank at Westbury, so we had location in common, and his work in international relations overlapped with my own academic interests. Briefly we were very near neighbours in Canberra, sharing a back fence in Weetangera, but his work at ASIO then took him away from commonplace discussions.

I applied for the Rhodes on two occasions. The first time I had competition from Graeme Peck and 'Blossom' Hetherington, both significantly older than me at Grammar, as well as from the eventual winner, the late Sergio Guidici. Serge and Graeme were doing engineering together and Graeme had an outstanding academic record but Serge's appointment represented an important breakthrough for what I thought of then as 'new Australians'. He came back to a distinguished career at the Hydro Electric Commission. Blossom went on to a cosmopolitan career as a classical scholar and poet – still going strong in Tasmania.

I left Grammar wanting to be a school teacher modelled upon 'Jika' or Victor Benney. The cheapest (attractive for a fairly impecunious bus operator/driver) and the one option most of my friends pursued in the arts faculty was a State Education Department studentship. You were paid a basic wage if your academic program included two teaching areas and you were bonded to serve wherever the Department sent you to work for every year that you were paid to study. Two-year training was quite common, offered at the Teachers College, then in Charles Street. My parents and the school (probably Jika) wanted me not to cut off a speedy return back to Grammar and there was a proposal for a lesser bonded scholarship arrangement to encourage me to come back there instead of risking being sent to King Island.

My parents, bless their souls, wanted me to take a Commonwealth Scholarship instead, which paid my fees and offered a small living allowance for the academic year. I worked as an agricultural labourer in the long vacations. This arrangement left me free to take an increasingly eccentric collection of subjects, where the only condition on the scholarship was continuing success in passing the exams. The level of that success dictated a pattern of a three-year major in each of ancient civilisation, political science and public administration. I dropped modern history after one year as the grading was being toughened by a new professor, and I dropped geography when I realised at tertiary level it was genuinely a science.

The highly imperial focus on the history I had learnt at Grammar stood me in good stead when I ended up – thanks to the Orr Case – being permitted to leave undergraduate philosophy-

politics-economics (PPE) at Oxford, and study for my doctorate in Kampala and later teach at the Queen's University of Belfast.

One minor postscript: The first black people I met were fellow students in Oxford and then whole populations in Uganda. My history books explained this cogently in terms of the unsuccessful extinction of the black race in Tasmania. My wife looked at a selection of class photos recently and asked the name of the aboriginal boy in one of them. I remembered then that his nickname was 'Darkie'.

### **A Note from the Authors**

Emeritus Professor Roger Scott holds a BA with first class honours in political science and ancient history and a Diploma of Public Administration from the University of Tasmania. His academic career began in 1961, when he was appointed Rhodes scholar to the University of Oxford. The fieldwork for his doctoral thesis on the development of trade unions in Uganda was completed while he was a Rockefeller Brothers Fund Teaching Fellow at the University of East Africa, Kampala. From 1965-1977, he held teaching appointments at the University of Sydney, the Queen's University of Belfast, and the Canberra College of Advanced Education.<sup>84</sup>

Over his long career, he has provided advice to overseas governments across a range of topics, starting with minimum wages in Uganda and including issues of public sector reform in Kazakhstan and Nepal and courses on development administration for students from Africa, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific.

In 1977, he was appointed JD Story Professor of Public Administration at the University of Queensland. He was responsible for introducing the master of public policy course. He served as President of the Academic Board from 1986-1987.

In 1987, he became Principal of the Canberra College of Advanced Education, then became Foundation Vice-Chancellor when the CCAE became the University of Canberra. From 1990-1994 he served as Director General of Education.

In 1994, Professor Scott was appointed Visiting Professor, Graduate School of Management, Griffith University and later that year became Dean of Arts, Queensland University of Technology and subsequently Professor of Public Management, Faculty of Business, QUT.

Since his retirement from full-time employment in 2001, he has held sessional and then honorary appointments at the University of Queensland in the School of Political Science and International Studies.

Between 2009 and 2013 he was project director on an oral history project 'Queensland Speaks' in the Centre for the Government of Queensland within the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics.

He has been a member or chair of several quality assessment panels of the Queensland Office of Higher Education and a member of similar bodies in the federal sphere and in several states during the College of Advanced Education era. He also served on several government committees of enquiry into education, including management education – the Ralph Committee, aboriginal education – the Yunipingu Committee and university management – the Linke Committee).

### **Richard John Gee 1967**

In 1954, John won the Frances L. Stubs Scholarship at little Grammar, an accomplishment in academic prowess he was to maintain throughout his schooling at Launceston Church Grammar School.<sup>85</sup> John lived at Perth, just outside Launceston, and travelled by bus to preparatory school, little Grammar, in High Street each day. Later, at the big school at Mowbray Heights

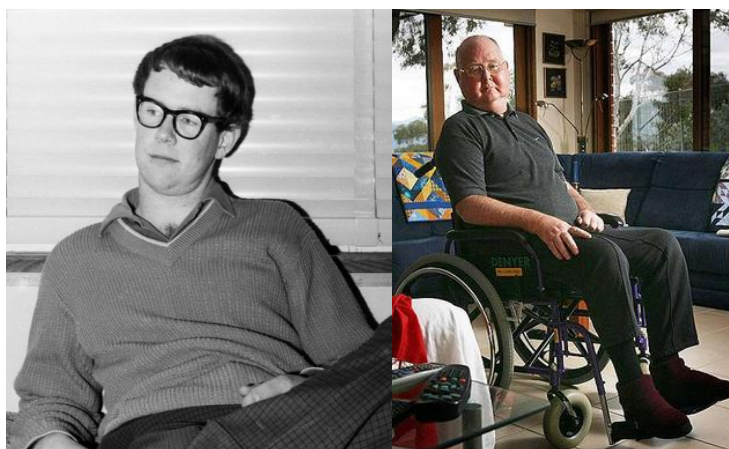
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<sup>84</sup> <<http://www.tjryanfoundation.org.au/cms/page.asp?ID=18>>

<sup>85</sup> *Examiner*, 11 December 1954, p. 6

he boarded. John was at the school with Paul Richards and later shared the classroom with Paul and Rafe Champion and matriculated at the school.

John was academically strong and his sporting prowess lay in his ability as a proficient rower. He was a member of Hawkes house.



In 2007, the inaugural John Gee Symposium Lecture at the Australian National University was established. Dr John Gee AO served with distinction as an Australian diplomat in a number of countries. However, his greatest contribution was in the field of disarmament, where he had a particular interest in chemical weapons. After a period as a commissioner on the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq, following the first Gulf War, he became Deputy Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague, serving there until 2003. In recognition of his achievements, Dr Gee was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in January 2007. Gee leaves behind a legacy and a memory of a great Australian.

In 2007, Patrick Walters wrote an article in the *Australian* on John, following John's death from a brain tumour.<sup>86</sup>

*Reticent chemical weapons crusader who changed the world*

*John Gee, Arms control diplomat. Born Launceston, Tasmania, December 16, 1944. Died Canberra, January 29, 2007, aged 62.*

*John Gee will be remembered for the fundamental contribution he made to international efforts to ban chemical weapons and in helping spearhead Australia's diplomatic efforts to curb the spread of weapons of mass destruction.*

*Gee's powerful intellect and formidable scientific expertise were matched with a quiet determination and a cheerful demeanour, qualities that served him well in his professional quest to help rid the world of chemical weapons. He played an influential role in the twelve-year international negotiation that resulted in the 1992 UN Chemical Weapons Convention that covers 181 countries and ninety-eight per cent of the world's population.*

*The convention's unprecedented scope in banning the development, production and use of chemical weapons, and the stringency of its verification regime, owed much to Gee, who later served as deputy director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the body responsible for implementing the convention, from 1997 to 2003.*

*The convention was the first multilateral disarmament accord that provided for the elimination of a category of WMD. By 2007 only eight countries remained non-signatories, including North Korea, Syria and Egypt.*

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<sup>86</sup> *Australian*, 12 March 2007

*Upon hearing of Gee's death, a Russian arms control specialist from the OPCW wrote: "Today almost one-third of the world's chemical weapons and two-thirds of the production capacity have been destroyed. Much of the credit for these truly historic achievements should go to John. Few can claim such a legacy."*

*Just before his death from brain cancer the Australian Government belatedly recognised Gee's contribution to global arms control with his appointment as a member of the Order of Australia. Gee's citation noted his service to international relations, notably disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.*

*In a message to Gee's family after his death, John Howard paid tribute to Gee's "huge contribution" as a diplomatic and international public servant to the cause of disarmament and arms control.*

*A fifth-generation Tasmanian, Gee was a brilliant student. He graduated with first-class honours in science from the University of Tasmania and won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford in 1967. There he completed a doctorate in inorganic chemistry.*

*Powerfully built, the reticent, sandy-haired Gee was an accomplished oarsman, winning a rowing blue at Oxford. The cox of Gee's Oxford crew in the losing 1970 eight against Cambridge was another Tasmanian Rhodes scholar, Ashton Calvert. Gee joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1971 and served in Cairo, Moscow, New Delhi and Bangkok. In Moscow, he fostered his deep love of Russian literature and met the Norwegian who would become his wife, Liv Aasgaard.*

*With the Hawke Labor Government taking a strong interest in disarmament, Gee played an important role in the establishment in 1985 of the Australia Group, a group of countries seeking to curb the spread of chemical and biological weapons. From 1990-92, he served as DFAT's special adviser on disarmament, helping finalise negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention and working on the elimination of Iraq's WMD arsenal.*

*In 1991, Gee was appointed by the UN secretary-general to the newly created UN Special Commission that was charged with overseeing the disarmament of Iraq. As co-ordinator of UNSCOM's chemical and biological weapons working group, he drew up the master plan for on-site inspections of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons plans and supervised the painstaking measures that led to their eventual destruction.*

*From 1993 to 1997 he served as director of the verification division of the OPCW provisional technical secretariat that drew up the procedures necessary to verify compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the recruitment and training of 200 new weapons inspectors.*

*"Behind the quiet, self-confidence and invariable good humour was an intensely private, reticent and reflective man, a listener rather than a speaker," Wilson, a friend and colleague noted.*

*He added that Gee had not aspired to high rank in the Australian public service. Instead, he much preferred to be in the thick of things, truly wanting to make a difference.*

*A Russian colleague from OPCW wrote that Gee had had to withstand many political pressures as deputy director-general, firmly defending the equal treatment of all member countries although this earned him some powerful enemies. "Private and reserved, he was at the same time open, easy to talk to, democratic, accessible, objective and most of all, fair. This was probably the secret of his success. He was truly the first among equals."*

*Gee's strong affinity for Russian language, literature and music stayed with him throughout his life and greatly enriched his dealings with his Russian*

*interlocutors. A favourite pilgrimage was to the grave of Boris Pasternak in the village of Peredelkino outside Moscow.*

*Gee is survived by his wife, Liv, and his three children, Rebecca, Nicholas and Cristina.*

The *Sydney Morning Herald* recorded his passing with this article:<sup>87</sup>

*A servant for a safer, saner world: John Gee, 1944-2007*<sup>88</sup>

*Very few Australians have made as big an impact on the world as did John Gee, who played a pivotal role in the successful conclusion of the convention to ban nuclear weapons and in setting up the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical weapons.*

*When Gee was made a member of the Order of Australia (AM) last month, the former foreign affairs minister Gareth Evans wrote: "You have made a magnificent contribution to the cause of a saner and safer world."*

*The AM citation read: "For service to international relations, notably disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction."*

*Gee died a few days after the award was announced. He was 62. The Prime Minister, John Howard, wrote to the family: "John made a huge contribution – as a diplomat, adviser and international public servant – to the cause of disarmament and arms control."*

*Kyle Wilson, a friend and colleague, said at the funeral service: "Today almost one-third of the world's chemical weapons and two-thirds of its production capacity have been destroyed. Much of the credit for these truly historic accomplishments should go to John. Few can claim such a legacy. This legacy will remain as a tribute to John's life."*

*John Gee was a modest public servant who loved his privacy. He was a reticent and reflective man, a doer, but a listener rather than a speaker.*

*He escaped much public attention until last August, when Rod Barton asked his fellow weapons inspector's permission to make public the information that he had given to the Australian Government – that the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was seriously flawed – and that his warning had been suppressed.*

*Gee said he would do better than that. He himself would make the information public. "It's about time the truth was spoken," he said. He did so, with quiet, transparent honesty.*

*It couldn't have been easy. Apart from his natural inclination to privacy, Gee had a brain tumour. It was killing him. The cancer, and the drugs used to fight it, were not only changing his appearance but making it difficult for him to focus.*

*Nonetheless, Gee told the Herald that he had resigned from the Iraq Survey Group in 2004 because he thought the search for the weapons was corrupt and there were none to find. He claimed the Federal Government had suppressed his resignation letter in which he detailed interference by the CIA and the Bush Administration in reports about the hunt for the weapons – which were the rationale for the invasion – to avoid finding that Iraq did not possess them. He had passed these beliefs to the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alexander Downer. Downer later admitted he had received the warning, although he denied suppressing it.*

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<sup>87</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 2007

<sup>88</sup> Photo: Andrew Taylor, *Sydney Morning Herald*

## Chapter 7

### *Sporting Prowess*

#### **Cricket, Football, Tennis, Rowing, Athletics, Swimming and Hockey**

*Healthy mind, healthy body*

It has been said that Headmaster Rev AH Champion, 1872-1885, introduced sport as part of the curriculum for physical exercise but to also teach persistence, honour, respect and gentlemanly behaviour.



*Photographer: David Brill*

During the years leading up to the 1940s at Grammar, but particularly the 1930s, sporting prowess was, to say the least, when measuring performance by State Premierships, very middle of the road.

The only premierships won during this decade were in cricket in 1935, football in 1932, rowing Head of the River in 1932 and 1938, with tennis faring the best with wins in 1931, 1934, 1935 and 1936. However things were to change in the 1940s. Basil Rait, in his book *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1946* published in 1971, gives the school's unrivalled record of gaining seventy-six point five per cent of all Northern Tasmanian titles and fifty-one point three per cent of all Tasmanian titles in cricket, football, rowing, tennis and athletics from their inception.

The gymnasium was the centre of several major activities and it is interesting to note that cold showers were not only confined to the boarding house but a Board minute, 24 February 1936, recorded that three more cold showers be installed in the school gymnasium for the use of dayboys at a cost of £48.

From 1942 to 1945 the school, in all of its sporting activities, won seventeen of the twenty contested northern premierships along with six state titles. The school was expanding rapidly and by 1945, at the end of the World War II, there were 185 dayboys and 136 boarders and over eighty boys in the preparatory school at the High Street campus. It was onward and upward and as the 1940s progressed so did the enrolments and sporting achievements. By 1952, the preparatory school, 'little Grammar', had reached its maximum capacity of 145 enrolments, providing a regular passage of students into Grade 6 at the Mowbray campus, 'big Grammar'.

During this period, there were some long serving coaches to the major sports at Grammar. They included: cricket – CWB Martin and TD Room; football – FA Marriott, JF Martin and PJ Jones; rowing – AWM Brewer, Dr LH Wilson and ES Charlton; athletics – JA Williams and MW Donoghue, tennis – JC Parish and GR Vernon; hockey – LC Hampton; and swimming – RJ Wilson.

However, in 1932 Headmaster FR Adams said:

*Games are an important and integral part of the life of the school. They are not merely an excellent way of releasing surplus physical energy, they are of proved value in the training of character. That all sport is competitive is a mistaken notion. Cooperation or teamwork is, and should be, just as essential as competition in any worthy game.*

*Certain it is that the spirit which gloats breathlessly over school games or international contests and sees signs of decadence, or robustness according as a team loses or wins, is alien to the public-school traditions of games. In the last resort it is the spirit in which the game is played that matters most.*

In 1946, the *Examiner* summarised the sporting prowess of Grammar, listing its domination of cricket, football, rowing, tennis and athletics.

*PROUD RECORD IN SPORT - Has Won Many State Titles. Grammar has a proud record in public school sport. It has produced some fine athletes who, during their school life, won many northern and state titles, and later carried the colours of the various branches of sport to success.*

*After losing the first cricket match known to have been played with another school, the school went on from success to success in this field and won state premierships in 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1922, 1924, 1925, 1927, 1935, 1943, 1944 and 1945. Many old boys have played for the state, and three – JH Savigny, NW Davis and GW Martin – are among the seven northern batsmen who have scored 1000 runs in a season.*

*Since the Head of the River boat race began in 1916, Grammar has won twelve of the twenty-six races conducted. The junior crew has won nine of the twelve races it has contested. The first record of a crew is 1888. The school has had some fine rowing coaches. In football, the school has a record of 24 state premierships and one tie. The first match of which there is a record was in 1872, and in 1891 the first game against a Hobart team took place. The game in which Grammar tied with St Virgil's was played in 1914.*

*Football Record – One of the school football team's best records was established in 1906, when the eighteen coached by Mr Len Findlay, who had charge of teams from 1905 to 1936 with two small breaks, had only one behind scored against it by Tasmanian schools. Many footballers who made their presence felt in senior ranks came from the premiership sides of 1891, 1893, 1894, 1897, 1900, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1914 (tie) 1916, 1917, 1918, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1932.*

*Sixteen state tennis titles have been won since the sport was first introduced in 1918. One Davis Cup player came from the school, G. Holmes, who played for Canada. Grammar boys have always had a big hand in field athletics*



*competitions, winning eighteen of the twenty-five northern public schools' sports meetings. Juniors have won eight of the fifteen contests. Of the more recent champion runners produced, the late Ken Hutton, winner of the Stawell Gift, was perhaps the best. Hutton lost his life on war service.*<sup>89</sup>

## **Cricket**

### **Northern Schools Premierships:**

Continious.

### **State Premierships:**

1940, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1961, 1966.

Cricket, which was introduced to the school by the first headmaster, Henry Plow Kane, has always been a strongly contested sport within the school house system from 1924 to present day, and in the north as well as state school boy premierships. Many Launceston Church Grammar students have gone on to represent local cricket clubs, their home state and in the Australian cricket team, as well as playing internationally in county cricket in the UK.

There are certain decades where the First XI cricket team dominated in both northern and state premierships. The 1940s saw six state premierships and the 1950s saw the school taking seven out of a possible ten state premierships, and it was this decade that saw some formidable players under the coaching of Tom Room and 'Jika' Travers. In the early 1960s, three state premierships came the way of the school but that was the end of their run for the decade. More detailed accounts of this twenty-five years of cricket, 1940-1965, at Grammar can be read in the book, *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School*.<sup>90</sup>

## **Football**

### **Northern Schools Premierships:**

1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1959, 1960, 1963, 1965.

### **State Premierships:**

1950, 1956. 1958, 1963, 1965.

There has always been great competition in football matches, vying for northern premierships between the school and Scotch College and St Patricks College. In state premiership games, there has been keen competition between the school and each of the southern premiers – Friends School, Hutchins or St Virgils – during 1940-1965. After-1932, the school did not hold a state premiership again until the mid-1940s.

## **Tennis**

### **Northern Schools Premierships:**

1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1958, 1959, 1960.

### **State Premierships:**

1944, 1952, 1955.

The inauguration of tennis state premierships occurred in 1916. Annual competition was keenly contested between both northern and southern independent private schools culminating in a state premiership.

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<sup>89</sup> *Examiner*, Saturday 8 June 1946, p. 9

<sup>90</sup> Richards PAC: *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School*, 2016.

The war years and the late 1930s saw an interruption to these competitions due to the outbreak of polio in 1937 and World War II in 1939. Following these events the first state premierships was fought and won in 1944 against St Virgil's, four rubbers to two. However, the following year St Virgil's came back with a five to one rubber win over Grammar.<sup>91</sup>

## Rowing

### Head of the River:

1944, 1946, 1947, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1963.

Rowing is perhaps one of the strongest sports at the school in both house and interschool competitions. Since the inauguration of the state senior Head-of-the River race in 1916 until 1946, Launceston Church Grammar School registered twelve wins, seven being on the Tamar River.<sup>92</sup> Since that time, a further six wins were recorded to 1965. Perhaps one of the most memorable occasions in the private school rowing calendar was the dinner, held in the Grammar School boarding house in 1919, celebrating not the win but the race itself.

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>93</sup>

*"DINNER AT GRAMMAR SCHOOL. Occasion was taken after the Head of the River race on Saturday to gather together the oarsmen of the five schools represented in the race this year. A company of nearly seventy sat down to dinner at the Grammar School. In addition to the five crews, the following were present – Mr WH Clemes (Leslie House School), Mr Mitchell Tovell (Scotch College), Mr R. Bullow (Hutchins School), Mr Westbrook and Mr Reid (Friends' High School), Mr FB Kackleon, Mr FJ Deane, Mr CGF Hopkins, and the masters and prefects of the Grammar School, together with most of the boarders. The dinner was held to celebrate the race rather than the victory of the Grammar School, and the note throughout the evening was one of good comradeship and school friendship. After the toast of the King, the chairman (Mr Shaun) asked the company to drink to the health and the safe return of all old boys of all the schools represented who were at the front or were serving in the army or the navy. It was, he said, appropriate that before the toast list peculiar to the occasion was entered on, all present should remember those especially who had sat in the boats of the five schools in days gone by, and who were now fighting for the Empire, whilst those who remained "played the games they used to play together." He hardly dared to mention names, because of the inevitable omissions, and at the moment he could recollect only a few Grammar School names – Jack Wilkinson, Peter Brewer, Maurice Whitaker and others. There were many other members of crews of other schools. Some were gone, some lived and fought. To all who survived they wished a safe return.*

*The Rev CG Wilkinson proposed the toast, "The five crews – winners and losers." He said he thought the race had been a very good one, and what struck him most was the absence of anything whatever in the nature of bickering. The race had been rowed in the tidiest of fashions. (Cheers.) The toast was honoured with enthusiasm, and in modest speeches the five strokes replied. All had a word of praise to say for the other crews. And all testified to their enjoyment of the race.*

*Thanks were offered to Mr and Mrs Shapa for the entertainment of the crew, and the Hobart strokes expressed their gratitude to the TRC and the NRC for the very generous way they had been treated at the boatsheds, for the loan of boats, and for great kindness shown them. They promised that the kindness would be returned*

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<sup>91</sup> *Mercury*, 18 December 1945, p. 19

<sup>92</sup> *Examiner*, 15 April 1946, p. 7

<sup>93</sup> *Examiner*, 2 April 1917, p. 3

*when the Launceston crews visited Hobart next year. Mr Clemes proposed the toast of the coaches, which was briefly acknowledged by Messrs Gravenall (Grammar School) and Mr Westbrook (Friends' High School). The concluding toast was "Associated Schools Sport," proposed by Mr Tovell and acknowledged by Mr Reid, honorary secretary of the Southern Tasmanian Association. During the evening the Eton boating song was sung by Grammar school boys and Mr Gravenall sang a Cambridge University rowing song known as 'Row, You're Hurrying'. The proceedings were cut rather short by the necessity for catching the mail train, but all felt that the gathering had provided a pleasant ending to a most enjoyable event. After the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne' and hearty cheers for the Grammar School, the visiting crews hurried off to the train, whilst the Grammar School and Scotch College crews became the guests of Mr FB Jackson at the National Theatre, where the screening of the result of the race during the interval elicited loud cheers.*

In 1944, Grammar was too strong for Hutchins in both the senior and junior crews, winning by five lengths in the senior race over the one mile course.<sup>94</sup> It was their first state win since 1939. They went on to take the Head of the River in 1945 and 1946.

### School Crew 1944



The Board of Trustees minute 22 Decemeber 1926 reported that a boatshed was being erected at a cost of £320 and the April minutes noted that it had been completed.<sup>95</sup> The rowing sheds on Stephenson's Bend were made possible from funds collected by Rev Bethune and others, and by the generosity of Miss Bennett.

In the 1929 floods, only three years later, the shed was almost lost. John Henry was told by his father, Peter Henry, who was a boarder at the school at that time, that during the flood he was with some boys watching the flooded river from the school. The boatshed was partly submerged. They saw a large barge come drifting down the river. It was heading for the

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<sup>94</sup> *Advocate*, 17 April 1944, p. 4

<sup>95</sup> Board Minute, 4 April 1927

boatshed and it was obvious what was going to happen. At the last moment, the bow snagged something under the surface and the barge swung round and drifted harmlessly past.

The school has produced some magnificent crews since it first entered the Head of the River contests in 1888, and has won more island titles than any other school in the state. The 1944 combination coached by Dr LH Wilson was no exception, and F. McGhie stroked the crew to a five-length win over a very smart Hutchins four on the Derwent.<sup>96</sup>

A memorable year for Grammar was 1947, and all school crews were outstanding at the Tasmanian schools Head of the River regatta on the Derwent course. The school won the senior and junior races and also their old boys crew was successful.<sup>97</sup>

The Head of the River came into contention in 1952 in response to the question of ‘parochial attitude on aid to schools’, discussed by members of the Legislative Council. Before the council was a proposal by Rev JW Bethune and other members of the general public for aid to non-state schools. This was Bethune’s response:<sup>98</sup>

*“Democrat” and others quote the Head of the River race as a symbol of class distinction or snobbery. This is not so. The race is a competition among what should be correctly termed public schools. These schools are limited in numbers in view of parents desiring their boys to have the type of education provided and being prepared to make a sacrifice to pay for them. The state secondary schools have no such limitation and are being increased in number. In Victoria the Head of the River is confined to the seven great public schools; other grammar schools are not included. Surely schools have a right to arrange their competitions without being accused of snobbery. The state high schools have their own competitions and should be content with them. It would be very surprising in the ‘old world’ if every other university wished to alter the tradition of the ‘two blues’ and claim the right to compete in the historic Oxford-Cambridge.*

The year 1963 was stellar for rowing. John Henry, an accomplished cox for the school eight, remembers the win in the Bourke Cup.

The Tasmanian Rowing Association introduced the Bourke Cup in 1887<sup>99</sup> and it has been contested now for 130 years. The race was known as the Bourke Challenge Cup for a trophy donated by a Launceston businessman, Mr Thomas Bourke and had to be won three times before becoming the property of the successful school.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> ‘Launcestonian’, June 1944, No 53, p. 13

<sup>97</sup> *Examiner*, 31 March 1947, p. 2

<sup>98</sup> *Mercury*, 14 November 1952, p. 4

<sup>99</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 27 October 1917, p. 4

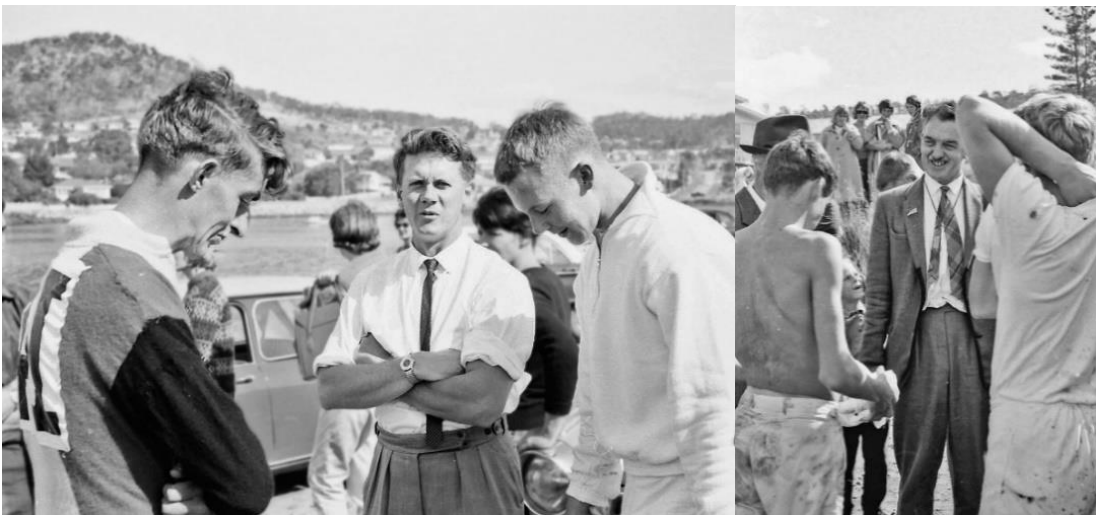
<sup>100</sup> ‘Launcestonian’, June 1954, p. 17

### The Bourke Cup 1963



*Coach Eric 'Rags' Charlton (centre) with Mrs Molly Campbell Smith behind him and Mrs Hiliary Henry on the far right after winning the schoolboys fours state championship.*

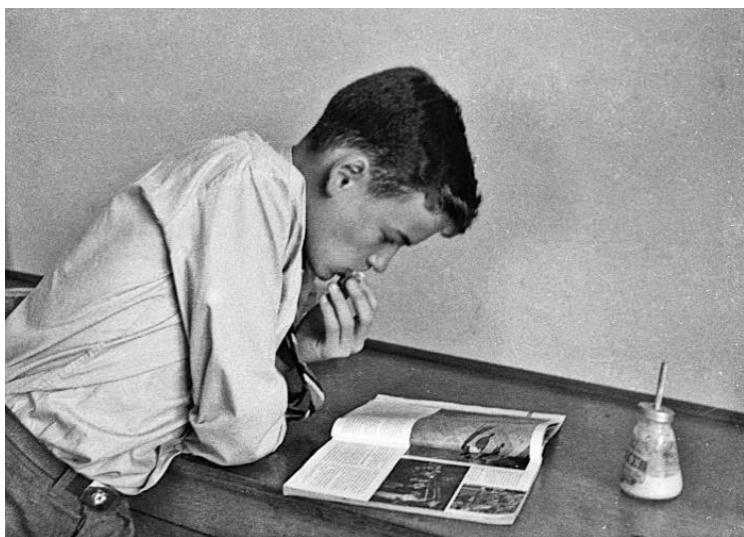
### 1963 Head of the River



*Dr Bertel Sundstrup (centre)  
Source: Richard Stark collection*

*'Rags' Charlton (centre)*

## John Henry on Rowing at Grammar



When I arrived in Form 7 in 1958, I was found to be bereft of the skills that made a cricketer, so I was sent down to the boatshed. Lacking the build to manage an oar, I became a coxswain. It proved to be habit forming. I am still doing it nearly sixty years later, which does give me an opportunity to look at school rowing in the late 1950s and early 1960s from the perspective of six decades later.

In those days, the boatshed was the one the school has today but it stood right at the bottom of the bank, where the northern outlet now is, and there were no annexes to it such as showers, workshops or changing room. The dayboys got changed inside the front door and the boarders in the boarding house. The boats were all wooden fours, with hulls of thin wooden skin and an internal keel, except for the 'Launcestonian' – a clinker built four that had been covered with a sleeve of primitive fibreglass. The fibreglass had lifted and the boat leaked so badly that by the end of a short row, the stern end of the stern tank was submerged. Our best boat, the *William Rainbird*, we referred to as a racer – and the other boats as regulation fours – because the hull was narrow, for speed. Only the firsts were skilful enough to get it to balance. The oars were wooden and heavy with blades that were symmetrical and, by today's standards, narrow, therefore harder to control in the water so that 'catching a crab' was not uncommon.

There was no amplification system in the boats. In an eight, the coxswain wore a megaphone. The seats had metal wheels that ran on metal rails and at inopportune times, such as the middle of a race, a seat could either stick or come off its rails. There was one coach's boat – a heavy fibreglass affair. There is a British Anzani outboard motor – that fell off the coach's boat – buried in the mud at the bottom of the river near Stephenson's Bend. On one occasion the firsts rowed home from a mile downstream, leaving Rags behind in the coach's boat because he couldn't restart the motor. He was lucky enough to hitch a tow behind a passing island freighter. Normally the island freighters travelled at a good speed, slowing down for no one and throwing an almighty wash that would have broken the back of an eight or four, if the crew didn't stop rowing and turn side on to the swell the freighters created.

The school competed with six or seven fours in the annual Head of the River regatta, in which Hutchins, Friends and St Virgil's from the south and Scotch, Grammar and St Patrick's from the north took part. The Barrington course and the present Tasman Bridge didn't then exist. The Head of the River alternated between the north and the south. In the south, it was rowed on the Lindisfarne course and in the north over the 2000 metres from beyond the downstream end of the wharf to near the yacht club. No one liked to be in the lanes that had to row through the current, which was that day flowing in or out of the North Esk River a few hundred metres before the finish line.

The river landmarks in the period of this book were largely similar to what are there now, except that the wharves in the Port of Launceston were then a fully working commercial dock. The dock was dredged and the mud was brought down in a barge to a pumping station upstream from Stephenson's Bend. From there it was pumped through a large pipe into the marsh that extended inland from Stephenson's Bend in all directions. The marsh was divided into paddock-sized ponds by a pattern of dykes. Part of the school under fourteen cross-country

course ran along the dykes closest to the boatshed. Some of the area that was filled in is now sports playing fields.

The name of Tamar Island, a few miles downstream from Grammar, has been sanitised. We knew it as 'Pig Island'. No one was tempted to land on it because its sole inhabitant was reputed to be a rather territorially minded bull. However, during a weekend social row, the crew of a four established that if the tide was right, the island could be circumnavigated. In those days, the rudder was right at the stern attached by hinges and no deeper than the hull of the boat, rather than being part of a deep fin beneath the hull not far behind where the coxswain sits. All the same, they had a bit of difficulty getting the boat over the partly submerged post and wire fence that extended from the island to the mainland. The exploit remained unreported.

In the years covered by this book, in both school and club rowing, when races took place there were no such things as stake boats at the start or buoys to mark the lanes. When crews arrived at the start, the starter – from the shore or in a moored boat – got the bows of the competitors into line by calling, "Move up Scotch," "Hold it there Grammar," and so forth. In a strong breeze or current this process could be stressful for all concerned, and there was an element of luck in whether a crew got a good or bad start. The starting signal was a shot fired from a shotgun pointed in the air. We didn't know or ask whether the ammunition was blank.

At full tide the Tamar River is magnificent. I remember taking part in a start in the late 1950s where opposite the wharves sixteen crews were lined up across the river pointing downstream and sent off together. One year in the early 1960s, the Kings Cup was rowed in Launceston. In those days the Kings Cup, like Intervarsity, was rowed over a straight three-mile course. The Launceston course was rowed from downstream of Grammar and finished in front of the Grammar boatshed. For a week or so leading up to the race the six state crews – the 'gods' of rowing – boated from the space around the Grammar shed and we mingled with them.

In 1959, eights were introduced into independent school rowing in Tasmania. Each of the six schools boated an eight, its best crew, while its remaining crews continued to row in fours. At that time Friends, coached by John Verney, were strong in rowing, but so was Grammar. Also at about that time, I believe the headmaster, Don Selth, declared that the school firsts teams should be coached by school staff rather than outside coaches. The rowing master, Eric 'Rags' Charlton became the coach of the eight. In the period 1961 to 1964 in the Head of the River, the Grammar eight had three second placings and one win. The winning 1963 eight still has an occasional reunion row.

In 1963, the school took delivery of a new eight, built by Sargent and Burton in Sydney, which was christened *Old Launcestonian II*. On our first outing in it, unaccompanied by a coach's boat, Rags told us not to do any fast work and just to familiarise ourselves. It was a beautiful boat and felt so good that on the way back while still out of sight of the boatshed, we decided to do a racing start. In the middle of it, the stroke caught a crab. The oar handle caught him in the midriff and lifted him off his seat onto the gunwale of the boat. I will never forget the look of surprise on his face as he toppled out of the boat.

Directly after the new boat had been christened, we competed in a Saturday club regatta and won our race. The next day, we did something that as far as we knew no school crew had done before, an eighteen kilometre row down the river to Windermere, where Rags lived. As we arrived, we stopped paddling and were gliding in for a landing with oars in the air when we felt a grinding sensation through the boat. The boat came to a stop and started to fill with water. A rock beneath the surface had sawn a four and a half metre gash in the hull alongside the keel. We were due to compete in the Head of the River a week or two later. The boat was trucked back to Launceston and carried into the Assembly Hall. Mr Sargent flew down from Sydney and repaired it. And that was the year we won the Head of the River in *Old Launcestonian II*.

In the early sixties there were club regattas in which the school sometimes entered crews. We rowed in a regatta at Oatlands on Lake Dulverton and at Devonport on the Mersey. We used to compete in the prestigious biennial race for fours in Launceston, the Bourke Cup, the

corresponding race in Hobart in alternate years being the Clarke Shield. The stern half of the eight won the Clarke Shield in 1962, but didn't realise they had won until it was announced because they hadn't realised that the start line wasn't perpendicular to the course and the finish line was correspondingly angled. As the coxswain, I vividly remember the occasion. It was a cold day in May with light drizzle. I was duly thrown into the Derwent, and the water was freezing. The custom of the coxswain being thrown in by the winning crew was still being followed with great enthusiasm and only in later years was it identified as a safety risk and banned.

The rowlock or 'gate' that an oar rests in during a row has a hinged latch that is dropped over the top of the oar, once it is in the gate is tightened so as to prevent the oar jumping out of the gate under the stress of rowing. In 1963, the stern half of the eight competed in the annual race for the Courtney Shield, a four and a half-mile event that started near Royal Park, went down the river, did a 180 degree turn round the pylon opposite the Grammar boat shed, went back up the river and into the North Esk, and finished where the North Esk Rowing Club's shed then stood, just upstream from the Tamar Street Bridge. Spinning a four through 180 degrees in the middle of a race subjects many parts of the boat to stresses it is not designed for. As we went around the pylon, the latch on the gate of our man in the two seat, Maurice Hill, flew open. If you stop in the middle of a race to fiddle with your equipment it will cost you the race. It is a measure of the skill and balance of that crew, and Maurice Hill in particular, that we rowed the rest of that race without mishap with that gate open and won.

Grammar has always boated from a shelving river bank, where you carry the boat into the water, put in the oars and then get into it. The 1961 Head of the River was in Hobart and we boated from Buckingham Rowing Club. The clubhouse extended out from the shore and crews embarked from a pontoon. That was a new experience for us. The eight came second in the race and arrived at the pontoon a bit despondent. However, we were greeted as we arrived by a crowd of our supporters and other onlookers on the pontoon, all of them sympathetic and commiserating. We remained in the boat, taking out all the oars and handing them up, and unstrapping our feet. No one on the pontoon thought to put a hand or foot on one of the riggers to steady the boat. Suddenly it overbalanced and tipped away from the pontoon and decanted us all into the river.

Rowing was never without incidents and this contribution to the book has only recounted the ones within the writer's personal knowledge during the period 1958 to 1964. However, anyone who rowed at Grammar while Eric 'Rags' Charlton was the rowing master will remember the pep talk he always gave to the whole rowing team on the eve of the Head of the River. He always ended with, "Remember! Never, never, never save anything up for the finish. Row every stroke as if it were your last. When you are halfway you may think you are going to die. You may want to die, but you won't."

In conclusion, I was the cox of an eight a few years ago in a regatta on Albert Park Lake in Melbourne. We had backed into our station at the start, where each boat's stern was held by a marshall on a pontoon while we waited for the starter's gun. Other crews were still backing into place. It suddenly occurred to me to offer my crew Rags' advice. I was part way through it when I heard a voice behind me quietly saying the words with me. When I looked around, I found that our stern was being held by David Taylor. He had rowed at Grammar.



## Athletics

### Northern Schools Premierships:

1940-1948, and in consecutive years 1950-1964, except 1956 when they were washed out.

### State Premierships:

1948, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1957.

### Athletics Captains 1940-1965

1940	PR Lord
1941	PR Lord
1942	T Gibson
1943	JCH Morris
1944	PM Hood
1945	PJ Shepherd
1946	PJ Shepherd
1947	NJ Heywood
1948	NC Counsel
1949	RK Hood
1950	RK Hood
1951	JT Scott
1952	ARB Gunther
1953	ARB Gunther
1954	RJ Holyman
1955	BR Smith
1956	BR Smith
1957	BR Smith
1958	HR Edgell
1959	HR Edgell
1960	RA Armstrong
1961	A. Beecroft
1962	FR Nott
1963	CI Taylor
1964	JR Bain
1965	RS Orr



*Brian Smith, 1957, Open 100 yards (10.1 seconds)*

The year 1951 was special as it saw the genius of two great athletes as well as the emergence of future champion athletes at the school.

The *Examiner* reported:

*Eight Records Broken at Grammar Sports*

*EIGHT RECORDS* were broken at the 75th Launceston Church Grammar School athletics meeting on Saturday. The athletic cup was won by Savigny house by half a point.

The sports, held at the school oval, were keenly contested and the placings in the final event of the programme – the mile championship – determined the house to hold the athletic cup. Prior to the running of the mile, Savigny had 210 points as against 205 by Gillett-Wilkinson. In a bold bid to gain the cup, Gillett-Wilkinson strongly contested the mile. Its representatives filled first and third place, while Savigny gained second place. Savigny's second runner filled fifth place and the one point he gained secured the cup. Records broken were the 100, 220, 440 and high jump in the open events, 80 yards hurdles in the under 15, high jump and 70 yards hurdles in the under 14 group and the high jump under 13. Champions were: open, D. Lean (GW); under 16, J. Edis (GW); under 15, B. Eldridge (S); under 14, G. Gregory (GW); under 13, J. Swan (H); under 12, D. Mc Causland (GW); under 11, M. Keam (S); under 10, H. Edgell (H).

Final points for the athletic cup were: Savigny, 216; Gillett-Wilkinson, 216; and Hawkes, 186. In the junior competition for the Bethune Shield, Savigny and Hawkes, with 81 points, tied for first and Gillett-Wilkinson, with 78, was third. The starter was Mr. Les Arnold.”<sup>101</sup>

On that day, Arnold Gunther ran the 100 yards open championship event in evens at the school athletic meeting on the school oval. Running into a very slight cross-breeze, Gunther outclassed the remainder of the field and won by nearly four yards. He ran the distance in 10 seconds flat. He not only smashed the school record of 10.15, but also the northern combined schools' record of 10.30 and the Tasmanian schools' record of 10.20. Two watches were used to time the race and both clocked 10 seconds.



In October 1953, Arnold Gunther, caused a sensation at the Northern Tasmanian public schools' sports meeting at York Park in Launceston, by equalling the British Empire Games' record for 100 yards. He covered the distance in 9.6 seconds, one-tenth of a second outside the Australian record.

The time was six tenths better than the record he set for the event the previous year.

In 1954, Arnold Gunther and David Lean were selected to represent Tasmania at the Australian amateur track and field games championships in Sydney.

The *Examiner* reported:

*“Gunther and Lean, who are pupils of the Launceston Church Grammar School, are members of the Old Launcestonians' Amateur Athletic Club. Their selection was announced after a meeting of the Tasmanian Amateur Athletic Association Council at Hobart last night. Gunther will run in the 100 yards and Lean in the 120 yards hurdles and the 220 yards low hurdles.”*<sup>102</sup>

Arnold Gunther was captain of athletics at Grammar in 1952 and 1953.

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<sup>101</sup> *Examiner*, 15 October 1951, p. 4

<sup>102</sup> *Examiner*, Wednesday 13 January 1954, p. 18

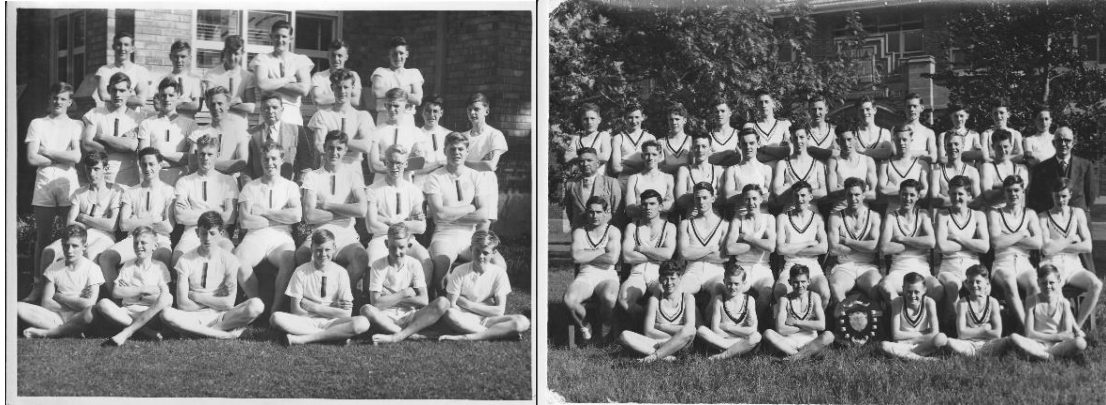


THESE THREE Northern Tasmanian athletes will compete in the Australian championships in Perth (W.A.) on Saturday and Monday. They are pictured before leaving Launceston yesterday. All are members of Old Launcestonians Athletic Club. Alan Beecroft (left) will be one of the youngest competitors in the championships. He is 16, and still attends Launceston Grammar School. Henry Edgell (left) and Brian Smith (centre) will compete in senior events, and Beecroft in junior races. Two other Tasmanian athletes will compete.

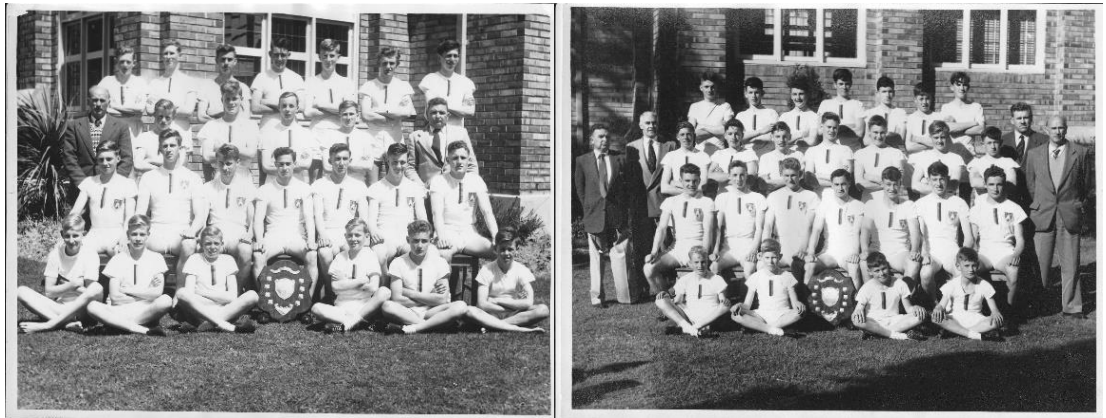
100 Yards	15.2	15.4	15.5
220 Yards	34.2	34.5	34.8
440 Yards	1:12.0	1:12.5	1:13.0

1959 State Team OLA Henry Edgell, Brian Smith and Alan Beecroft

**Athletics team 1953 and 1954**



**Athletics team 1956 and 1957**



Brian Smith recalls the period from 1940 to 1965, the pinnacle of athletics at Grammar. During this time the school won every northern athletics meeting and five state meetings. In 1949, there was no interschool athletics due to the polio scare.

Between 1951 and 1962, Grammar teams won thirteen state open 100 yards, losing only in 1954 when the favourite, Kerry Kilby, pulled a hamstring! In that period, every open 220 yards were won as well as nine open 440 yards relays.

The school was blessed with extremely talented sprinters: Peter Shepherd, Robin Hood, Arnold Gunther (10.0 seconds), Robin Holyman, Brian Smith (10.1 seconds), Henry Edgell (10.1 seconds), Tony Jarvis and Alan Beecroft (9.9 seconds – breaking Gunther’s record), all of whom were coached by Max ‘Steve’ Donoghue! Gunther, Smith, Edgell and Beecroft went on to represent Tasmania at the Australian athletics championships. Add to this list our exceptional hurdlers: David Lean, Robin Holyman, Tony Jarvis, Alan Beecroft and Alistair Kerrison, all of whom won at the state sports events at both open and under age, and in most cases broke existing records.

An interesting story concerned the under sixteen hurdles at the state sports event at York Park. Robin Holyman finished second but protested to the officials that the distances between the hurdles were incorrect. There was a remeasurement, the error was corrected and a rerun took place, which Robin won by a clear margin.

It was during this period of the 1950s that three athletes won four events each at the state sports events: 1953 – David Lean, 440 yards, 880 yards, 120 yards hurdles and the 440 yards relay; 1955 and 1957 – Brian Smith, 100 yards, 220 yards, long jump and 440 yards relay; and 1960 – Alan Beecroft, 100 yards, 220 yards, 120 yards hurdles and the 440 yards relay.

Although outside this time frame it is also worth mentioning that Robbie Henry won five events at the 1969 state sports event: 100 yards, 220 yards, 440 yards, 120 yards hurdles and the 440 yards relay.

Triple jump was introduced in 1963 and was dominated by Rodney Orr, John Hamilton and Rochford Devenish-Meares. All were coached by Mr Bob Wilson who had considerable expertise in this event.

Our athletes were extremely fortunate to be coached by some talented staff members. Max Donoghue coached the sprinters from 1948 until his retirement in the late 1960s. He was ably assisted by Brian Smith. Mr GF Connell coached the hurdlers and had great success with David Lean and Robin Holyman. After David Lean left school and received a scholarship to Michigan State University, he was coached by correspondence from Mr Connell. Mr BH ‘Jika’ Travers coached the distance runners and the hurdlers, and spent considerable time with the 440 yard athletes. Mr Don Selth, when he followed Mr Travers as headmaster, coached the middle distance runners and hurdlers. He had represented South Australia as a hurdler.

Bob Wilson who had a field games background, was an extremely successful triple jump coach as well as coaching the shot putters with Mr GRE Vernon. In the early 1950s, Mr B. Hurstgood was in charge of the high jumpers and Mr AJ McGaw coached our long jumpers.

A quick note on the Old Launcestonians Athletics’ Club, which came into being in 1954. The club had very few members but what it lacked in numbers, it more than made up for in quality. The club was really a vehicle for Arnold Gunther and David Lean who had dominated schoolboy athletics in the early 1950s. Both Arnold and David represented Tasmania in the Australian championships during the season and brought credit to themselves, the state, the club and the school. At the state titles, David Lean won the 120 yards hurdles and the 220 yards hurdles, while Arnold Gunther won both the junior and senior 100 yards championship.

On the first day of the Australian titles, Arnold reached the final of the 100 yards championship after running second in his heat and David came second in his heat of the 120 yards hurdles. But it was on the second day that history was made. David Lean who, as well as being a good hurdler of no mean ability, entered the 440 yards hurdles simply for the experience. He had never before competed over hurdles at this distance. He surprised everybody, not at least himself, by winning this race and becoming the first Tasmanian for many years to win an Australian championship.

As is well known David Lean went on to represent Australia in this event at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne. David was also a surprise selection in the 4x440 yard relay and went on to win an Olympic silver medal.

Arnold Gunther turned professional and won the Burnie Gift, the most prestigious professional gift in Tasmania.

The athletics club was resurrected in 1959 and again it only survived for one year. Bill Beecroft, Allan's father, was the president and Brian Smith the captain and he, together with Henry Edgell and Allan Beecroft, represented the state at the Australian championships in Perth later in the season.

At the northern titles in 1959, Brian Smith equalled the record in the open 100 yards, John Parish set a record in the two mile walk, Henry Edgell set a record in the junior 100 yards and Rob Armstrong set a record in the junior javelin. In sub-junior, Bruce Armstrong set a record in the javelin. The club was the aggregate winner in both the junior and sub-junior events.

## Cross Country

The first public schools' cross-country competition was held in May 1937. On that occasion, Grammar took out the first six places on a course that ran over a distance of three miles. The *Examiner* reported:<sup>103</sup>

*The Church of England Grammar School and St. Patrick's College competed, Scotch College having withdrawn. The distance was about three miles. Grammar filled the first six places. It is intended to hold the competition every year. Result: 1. HS Bennett (GS); LK Hutton (GS); B Edwards (GS); P Woodforde (GS); J Martin (GS); H Evans (GS); Haydon (St. Pats). The winner's time was 21min. 58sec.*

Source: Richard Stark circa 1960s.



However, an annual cross-country race was introduced at Grammar in 1930. The race was run over about three miles with sixty-one competitors from all houses competing for the Stewart Cup. The winner was LR McIntyre, who held an enviable record in mile and half mile races. The Stewart Cup, which is presented to the house whose first six runners gain the best points, in its inaugural year went to Gillett house.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *Examiner*, 11 May 1937, p. 9

<sup>104</sup> *Examiner*, 19 September 1930, p. 3

In 1950, the race was then inclusive of the very muddy Tamar River flats. The *Examiner* reported a thrilling finish:<sup>105</sup>

*CROSS-COUNTRY RACE IN BRILLIANT FINISH COVERING the four miles in 24 minutes 45 seconds, M. Curtis, of Gillett-Wilkinson house, won the Launceston Church Grammar School's annual interhouse cross-country race in brilliant style yesterday. The course was made more difficult by many fences and water traps. The competition was won by the day-boy house, Gillett-Wilkinson, with the boarder houses, Hawkes and Savigny, filling second and third places. In all, three races were staged-under 13, under 15 and open.*

*In the main event, the open championship, about 60 boys faced the starter. The course, which included parts of the school grounds, the river flats in front of the school, and back streets in close proximity, contained many hazards. Because of the recent wet weather, a big portion of the river flats was under water, and the competitors slid and struggled. In the under 15 event, which was staged over a gruelling 2¾ miles course, P. Lean (Gillett-Wilkinson) crossed the line first, with BD Scott and J. Edis, housemates, in the minor placings. Lean ran the distance in 20 minutes 30 seconds and had a comfortable victory. More than 70 boys took part in the race. Final house points were (those with the smallest number winning): Gillett-Wilkinson, 824; Hawkes, 1067; Savigny, 1368.*

## Hockey

Hockey contests commenced in 1958.

### **Northern Schools Premierships:**

1958 continuous to 1970.

### **State Premierships:**

1964, 1966 (a draw).

## Swimming

Swimming contests commenced in 1959.

### **Northern Schools Premierships:**

1959- 1965 continuously.

### **State Premierships:**

1962.

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<sup>105</sup> *Examiner*, 26 July 1950, p. 18

## Chapter 8

### *The Chapel and Chaplaincy 1940-1965*

#### **The Chapel, the Centre of Godliness**

*“A chapel like this, in a school like this,” said the bishop, “should build up a character in the boys that should help them all through life. May this chapel be all that God will have it be and we pray it may be.”*

*Dr R. Snowdon Hay, 9 December 1934*

**The chapel was the centre of Godliness, tradition and a repository of chaplaincy provided to the Launceston Church Grammar School.**



*Source: Private collection PAC Richards 2016*

In May 1932, it was announced that excavation work had been commenced in the grounds of the Launceston Church Grammar School at Mowbray Heights for the erection of a school chapel. The need for a chapel had been suggested in August 1927. By June 1931, a school chapel and anonymous fund had been established. This fund contained £3000 in cash, real estate valued at £2000, £2000 invested and general funds of £1000. In July that year, the board of trustees had asked their secretary to discuss with Alexander North the availability of the school architect, Mr E Heyward, and it was resolved to ask Heyward to prepare a sketch of the proposed chapel. The design was to be the usual school chapel design like Charterhouse and Eton but, of course, on a smaller scale with an expenditure of £6000 (five bays only), with probably £3500 to be expended to start the project. In August a letter was received from North with some designs tabled<sup>106</sup>, and in October a chapel committee was established. A design submitted by Heyward was unanimously approved along with the ground plans to be completed, also by Heyward.<sup>107</sup> Tenders were then invited from only two building contractors, J & T Gunn and Hinman Wright & Manser.<sup>108</sup> J & T Gunn were appointed contractors for the building.

The building was scheduled to be completed by December 1932 and was adjacent to the school premises, justifying the claim to the name of the Church of England Grammar School. The building was designed along traditional lines similar to chapels in England, where they practically always assumed the shape of a large, well-lighted gothic hall with a heavily timbered roof.

The *Advocate* reported:<sup>109</sup>

*The walling of the chapel will be of brick, with structural features in artificial stone. The interior will be left unplastered and, being very lofty, the open timbered ceiling will give a fine effect. The tracery windows will eventually be filled with stained glass which, it is hoped, will convey a definite story. The east and west windows, like other features mentioned will be traditional and will afford stained glass artists an opportunity to make a display of their art. The roof will be tiled, and the whole work will be chosen to harmonise reasonably with the existing buildings.*

*This work, it is hoped, will appeal to all old scholars and relatives of those who have attended this school in the past in the matter of embellishments and furnishings to perpetuate the memories of those who have passed on. The portion of the chapel to be completed now will have a length of 105 feet with a width of 30 feet.*

*When the chapel is opened, a pipe organ, which is now on loan to St George's Church, will be installed.*

In May 1933, there was a decision to collect the organ from St George's and install it in the chapel at a cost of £270, and in August of that year the chapel seating final design was settled and tenders were called for its installation.<sup>110</sup> The organ, which had been the first of its kind brought to Launceston, had been acquired from St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in August 1923. Originally installed in St John's Church of England, it had been used there until sold to St Andrew's in 1861.

In the Board minutes 21 June 1934, it was noted, "The contract for the seats was let to FW Roden and were made so the carving could be added later and some temporary ends may be replaced later when funds permit." It was also noted at the 21 June meeting that the bishop advised that a font was necessary before consecration. The cost was estimated at £75. However,

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<sup>106</sup> Board Minute, 2 Aug 1931

<sup>107</sup> Board Minute, 5 Oct 1931

<sup>108</sup> Board Minute, 25 April 1932

<sup>109</sup> *Advocate*, 18 May 1932, p. 4

<sup>110</sup> Board Minutes 29 May and 7 August 1933

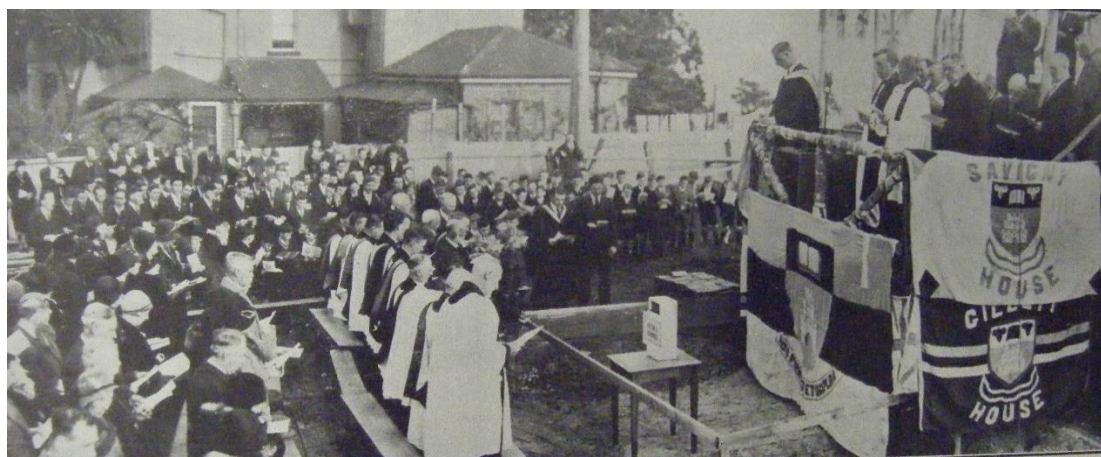


the chapel account was at this stage £767 in debt and it was suggested that the school borrow the old font from St John's Church. This did not come to pass as Mr GW Morgan promised to donate the font in the memory of his brother.<sup>111</sup>

In 1932, the Rev E. Yvno Evans, the curate at St. John's Church, was appointed chaplain at the Launceston Church Grammar School. The appointment was made with the approval of the Bishop of Tasmania and the Board of the school.

Prior to coming to Launceston, Mr Evans was a missionary at Groote Eylandt, Gulf of Carpentaria, as a representative of the Church Missionary Society. Subsequently he prepared for holy orders at Ridley College in Melbourne and attained a Th.L. degree with honours at the Australian College of Theology<sup>112</sup>.

### Laying of Foundation Stone 30 July 1932<sup>113</sup>



The opening hymn by scholars, clergy, and public at the impressive function at the Launceston Church Grammar School on Saturday afternoon, when the Bishop of Tasmania (Dr. R. Snowden Hay) placed the foundation-stone of the new school chapel in position. A large number of parents, friends, and old boys were present.

The foundation stone was laid on 30 July 1932 by the Lord Bishop of Tasmania, Dr R. Snowden Hay and bears the following inscription:

*To the Glory of God and in the memory of Henry Reed Esq., died 1899. This and other buildings of the school commemorates ninety-six old boys who died in the Great War, 1914-18. Mos Patrius et Disciplina*

There was much reporting on the chapel and the following excerpts from the *Examiner* newspaper in 1932, discussed much of its architecture and furnishing:

*LAUNCESTON GRAMMAR: Chapel to be Erected.*

*LAUNCESTON, Tuesday. A commencement has been made at the grounds of the Launceston Church Grammar School, Mowbray Heights, with the excavations prior to erection of a chapel. This building, which it is hoped will be ready at the end of the year, is adjacent to the school premises...*

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<sup>111</sup> Board Minute, November 1934

<sup>112</sup> *Mercury*, Saturday 18 June 1932, p, 7

<sup>113</sup> *Weekly Courier*, 4 August 1933

In July 1932, *The Examiner* reported:<sup>114</sup>



*Grammar School Chapel. The illustration reproduced on this page is a preliminary sketch taken from the architect's original design for the Launceston Church Grammar School chapel. Some variations have been made since the actual working drawings were completed, and the traceried windows will be much richer in design in the completed work, but the drawing is sufficient to give an idea of the appearance of the finished building. An effort is being made to show throughout the work individual characteristics. Thus, the carving in the furniture will be inspired largely by Tasmanian flora, and the school motto and coat of arms will be used frequently at suitable spots. Again, the names of the principals of the school in years gone by will appear incised on shields displayed on the exterior of the building. Place will also be found, of course, for the school's memorials of the*

*doings of its sons of the past. The building will be built entirely of local brickwork chosen as to colour, with details and salient points in cast stonework, whilst the interior will have what is probably the largest open timber roof in Tasmania, heavily moulded, to be finished in years to come with carved shields and angel heads, etc.*

*The organ, which is in itself a reminder of past days, will be suitably cased with ornamental woodwork and placed in an organ recess. As indicated above, the church furniture should be very interesting to those who like good craftsmanship. Messrs Gordon Cumming and Cunningham are at work on the carving of both pulpit and lectern, which have been presented by friends. These are being prepared from the architect's detailed drawings, and it is hoped that later on the seats, bishop's and priest's chairs, and the altar will be contributed in like manner, all to be carried out in the same way so that the whole of the work throughout will correspond in feeling. On July 30, a most interesting dedication ceremony will take place. The commemoration tablet will be placed in position. It will bear the following words: "To the glory of God and in memory of Henry Reed, Esq. This and the other buildings of school commemorate old boys who died in the Great War, 1914-1918." This linking up of the school as a whole with such glorious record of service for the Empire should continue the interest that this effort undoubtedly deserves, and it is correctly anticipated that on the date mentioned there will be a great assemblage of past and present boys and their friends and relatives, as well as the outside public, who are invited to attend. The architect for the building is Mr. Frank Heyward, F.I.A.A., F.R.I.A., F.T.I.A., whilst the contractors who are very ably carrying out the work are Messrs J. & T. Gunn Pty. Ltd. The cast stonework is the work of Mr H. Partridge, who also executed the decorated commemoration tablet. Messrs Inglis and Hewitt are executing some of the joinery for the furniture.*

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<sup>114</sup> *Examiner*, 16 July 1932, p. 9



The chapel was dedicated by the Bishop of Tasmania Dr R. Snowdon Hay on 9 December 1934. He was assisted by Revs WT Greenwood, LM Haslope, JW Bethune, W Gregson and EN Gidley. It was an impressive service with the Bishop remarking, “It is an eloquent testimony of the devotion of the headmaster, the old boys, and many friends of the school.”

The service was attended by about 500 persons. “If there are sermons in stones,” said the Bishop, pointing to the stone plaques given by old English public schools, “then I am sure there is inspiration here.”

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>115</sup>

*...The bishop in his sermon, following the dedication, spoke from the 25<sup>th</sup> verse of the eighth chapter of Exodus: “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.” The day, he said, was a memorable one in the history of the old school. To many of those present there would be the memory of the old school in Elizabeth-street. Those who had regretted the change from the old school could not but rejoice at what they now saw. The present school, with well-built buildings and well laid-out grounds, was on a site that was possibly unsurpassed in Australia. The school as it stood in its new situation, was a splendid testimony to the devotion of the board, the old boys, the former headmaster, and many friends.*

*...The chapel had been erected as a memorial to the late Mr Henry Reed, and to the 96 old boys, perhaps more, who did not count their lives too great a sacrifice in the Great War. The church, the bishop continued, could now rejoice that the school was now provided, in the chapel, with what was considered essential to the life of such a school. The sight of the beautiful chapel would be a constant reminder to the masters, boys, and visitors to the school of the presence of God. The building was not only a memorial to God, but a trysting place for God and His boys. Each one of His boys would find there the courage and grace to help him play his part as a Son of God. The bishop recalled that in its early days the church took upon itself the function of education, and so completely did it carry this function out that the people realised it was the especial duty of the church. “We must not forget,” said Dr Hay, “that Christianity gave England a great educational system.” He expressed the opinion that the chapel would help the boys to emulate the spirit of the old public schools of England, which were so honoured.*

*...He said the church schools set out to give not only secular education, but definite instruction in the faith of our fathers. The strongest affections, excepting*

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<sup>115</sup>*Examiner*, 10 December 1934, p. 6

*those of the home, were those of the old school, and if the school could make the chapel the centre of its life, it would have won a victory. "A chapel like this, in a school like this," said the bishop, "should build up a character in the boys that should help them through life. May this chapel be all that God will have it be and that we pray it may be.*

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>116</sup>

*Thorough preparations were made for the musical side of the dedication service at the Launceston Church Grammar School's new chapel on Sunday afternoon. Mr. H. Hirst was organist for the service.<sup>117</sup> Mr AR Gee played the Hallelujah Chorus at the conclusion. A choir consisting of about a dozen boys, and Messrs AH Harry, BE Ward, AL McIntyre and LT McIntyre, was trained by Mr LT McIntyre for the occasion. After the evening confirmation service, the choir led in the singing of Christmas carols. At the evening service Mr Ward sang a solo.*

In a Board minute in 1935<sup>118</sup>: Mr Hirst objected, as school organist, to other organists playing at the school without his permission. This was left for the chairman to discuss with the headmaster.

### **The chapel organ (Mr Hirst organist)<sup>119</sup>**



One of the unique features of the building was the incorporation of stones from other great and historic schools of the Empire within the northern wall of the chapel. These stones bore the gifting school's name carved in relief. The stones came from Winchester College, Eton College, Shrewsbury School, Westminster School, Charterhouse School, Rugby, Harrow, St Pauls, Merchant Taylors' School and Westminster Abbey.

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<sup>116</sup> *Examiner*, 11 December 1934, p. 6

<sup>117</sup> It was noted at the annual speech night of 1933 that Mr Hirst was appointed the first school organist.

<sup>118</sup> Board Minute, 7 November 1935

<sup>119</sup> 'Launcestonian' No 34, December 1933

In February 1934 the *Mercury* reported: <sup>120</sup>

*UNIQUE FURNISHINGS. Grammar School Chapel. Links With England*

*Thanks to the activities of Major WT Conder, the general manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and to the generosity of old boys and friends of the school, the imposing new chapel at the Launceston Grammar School contains some unique and almost priceless furnishings. The chapel building is now completed, though the interior decorations are still to be completed. The pulpit was used for the first time last Sunday when the Bishop of Bendigo (Rt Rev DD Baker) preached at the evening service.*

*The headmaster (Mr FR Adams) received advice during the week that a stone from St Mary's Church, in Launceston (England) was now on its way to Tasmania, and on arrival would be placed in the interior of the chapel along with the stones which had been received from eight great English public schools. Last year these eight stones were forwarded to the Grammar School from England, and have been beautifully carved by Mr L Cummins of Launceston, the name of the school from which they came and the date of the foundation of each school standing out in relief.*

*TRAGIC HISTORY*

*The stone from Launceston in England which is now on its way, has a rather tragic history behind it. The church from which it comes is unique in that the walls are built of carved granite blocks similar to the block which is being forwarded. The stone was carved more than 400 years ago. The church was commenced in 1511, and was not completed until 1524. All the stones were originally carved for the building of a guest hall at the mansion at Trecarrell, which was the home of Henry Trecarrell. Before the work was commenced, however, Trecarrell's infant son was found drowned, and the mother, overcome with grief, died a few hours later. Sorrow-stricken Trecarrell was almost demented at this double tragedy and he abandoned all thought of building the great hall and devoted his wealth to the building of a beautiful church as a memorial to his dead wife and child. The stone was despatched by the Town Clerk at Launceston, England on behalf of St Mary's*



*Parochial Church Council and, the letter informing Mr Adams of its despatch, concludes, "It will form another link between Launceston in England and her daughter city."*

*In Tasmania the stones which have already been placed in*

*position include one from one of the oldest public schools in England, Winchester, which was founded in 1387. Others are Eton (1440), Shrewsbury (1552), Westminster (1560), the Merchant Taylors' (or Blue Coat) School (1561), Rugby (1567), Harlow (1571) and Charterhouse (1611). Other emblems of historical interest which will later be placed in the chapel include a piece of wood from St Paul's School (Eng.), mosaics from Jerusalem, which will be assembled in the form of a cross, a communion service from Rugby School and the bell which was formerly used at the Launceston Gaol. This was first used in 1843 and was constructed by convicts, having the broad arrow clearly marked.*

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<sup>120</sup> *Mercury*, 23 February 1934, p. 7

### **A note on William Gordon Cumming (1894-1972) by his great nephew Dr Dan Huon**

He was known to all as Gordon Cumming. He was a Launceston-born wood carver, artist, artisan and craftsman and was educated at the new Launceston Technical College (founded 1888) and had extensive experience as an apprentice woodcarver and then employee with the Launceston-based furniture maker W. Coogan and Sons, which had built a fine reputation for high quality workmanship. [See *Mercury* newspaper article, 22 October 1914, page 8 on W Coogan and Sons.] Gordon's training was influenced by the strong British and European arts and crafts movement (1880s to 1920s) which advocated quality in work and honoured craftsmanship and had a broad reach across architecture, furniture, wood carving, painting, jewellery and other art-related crafts. Post 1919, Gordon was to have close relationships with church architects like Alfred North who substantially altered St John's Anglican Church in St John St. Launceston.

The Great War intervened after five years at work. Gordon, aged 21, wrote on his military attestation papers that his profession was woodcarver, employed at W Coogan and Sons. He joined the Australian Imperial Force with the great wave of patriotic enlistments in August 1915, driven by newspaper reports of gas warfare, unrestricted sinking of passenger ships and other reported German atrocities. He arrived in France in May 1916 as a member of the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance (a medical evacuation and field hospital unit), which belonged to the 4<sup>th</sup> Division AIF, freshly formed in Egypt. Three hard years followed in makeshift operating tents and other quarters receiving battered men brought direct from the firing line. Often they endured bombardments. As a medical orderly operating with Sydney surgeon Major Piero Fiaschi (later Lt Col Fiaschi) Gordon helped thousands of injured young men pass through their operating theatre. From May 1918, Gordon was chosen by Lt Col Fiaschi to be part of his mobile surgical team of five based at No. 3 Australian General Hospital, Abbeville on the Somme River. From there they drove to Casualty Clearing Stations which had phoned for urgent help with casualties. Gordon kept a war diary which occasionally reveals his wonderful sense of humour. His diary entry for 26 December 1916: "Dressed turkey, undressed ourselves, into bed. Slept for hours and hours. Was awakened by Norman Scott just back from Blighty. Had a long yarn, still lying in dugout. Night duty not busy. Read carving book."

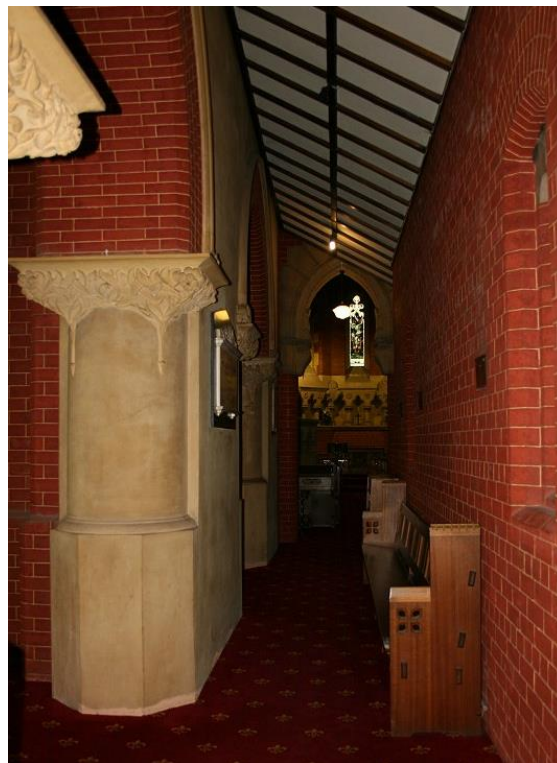
Gordon Cumming explored church and cathedral carving when on infrequent leave in France, Britain and Italy, and when possible reading books he had bought on wood carving. He arrived home in Tasmania in mid-1919 and returned to work at Coogans, with some part-time teaching at the Launceston Technical College from 1922. Coogans Invermay factory fared badly, first swamped by the devastating floods in April 1929, then burnt by a destructive fire in July 1929. This catastrophe, with the onset of the great Depression, ended Gordon Cumming's employment there. A resourceful man, he built a workshop adjacent to his home 'Gezaincourt', and properly equipped it with workbenches, a machine fretsaw, and a lathe, and from there taught woodwork classes for nearly forty years to Launceston High School boys and to adults, who learned how to use and sharpen tools and to make furniture such as stools and folding chairs. He also obtained occasional contracts for woodcarving. From the 1930s, he carved ornamental pieces for several Launceston churches, notably Trinity and St John's Anglican churches in Launceston and Launceston school chapels. His work included making and carving fonts and font covers, rood screens, lecterns, altars and pews, which continued up to his death in 1972. Gordon Cumming also made plaster moulds at his home and cast concrete garden ornaments and animals (frogs, elephants), including a coat of arms for the now demolished Launceston Police Station. In 1937-38, with the architectural revision of St John's Church by Alfred North, Gordon made decorative capitals on the columns within St John's in situ with special wet cement using Tasmanian flowers and animals as motifs.

From evidence of Gordon's style, I suspect that the concrete lettering 'AD 1938' and Launceston Fire Station (Paterson St) and the 1938 crematorium at the cemetery contain

Gordon Cumming's handiwork, and the lettering on the top of the Launceston Technical College also.



Gordon Cumming's carved altar in seasoned Tasmanian hardwood for St Paul's Anglican Church, Derby, to commemorate the Briseis tin mine flood disaster in April 1929. Now in the Derby Arts and Crafts Museum, N.E. Tasmania (photograph courtesy of Barbara Hooper, 2013).



This photo illustrates Gordon Cumming's ornate motifs (at the top of the corner piece) made in situ with wet cement. All the capitals in St John's church have this work with animal and vegetation designs made by Gordon circa 1937-38. There is a black and white photo, possibly an *Examiner* photo, of Gordon Cumming at work with the wet cement on one of the columns in the small 'museum' section on the north side of St John's.

This photo taken from a series of photographs of St John's Church interior, but the photographer says you can contact them for permission) found it on a website (typed in St John's Church Launceston), called '432 photos up close and inside'. The photographer says you can contact him for permission.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PB1190

Embarkation at Melbourne 18 November 1915 aboard HMAT Wiltshire A18. The kit bags record the names of 6413 Gordon Cumming (wood carver) 3rd Field Ambulance AAMC and 6414 Ces Warner (telephone mechanic) both from Invermay, Launceston. Gordon is second from the left. In Egypt, they were posted to the 13 Field Ambulance, a part of the 4<sup>th</sup> AIF Division. [AWM PB1190]

The famous wood carver Ellen Nora Payne nee Field made carvings which are in the dining room and the chapel. In the book *Ellen Nora Payne – Woodcarver of Tasmania*, by Russell Atkinson, 1975 there is set out a full description of her works at Grammar, with illustrations of two of them.<sup>121</sup> Also in the book *Blue, Black and White* by Alison Alexander 1996, mention is made of five carvings donated to the school by Mrs Payne.<sup>122</sup> The honour board she prepared was the gift of Headmaster Rev JW Bethune.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Russell Atkinson, *Ellen Nora Payne – Woodcarver of Tasmania*, 1975, pp. 64-68, 70, 80, 82, 83

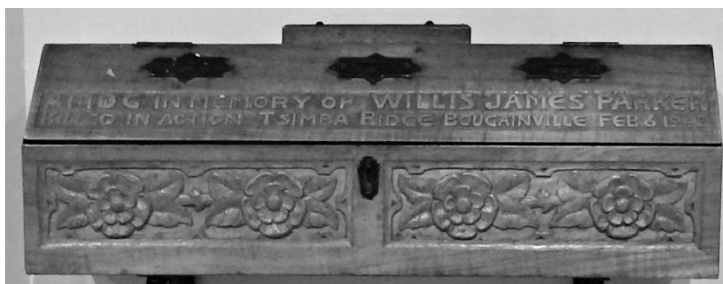
<sup>122</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*, 1996, pp. 84, 92 and 98

<sup>123</sup> Basil W Rait, *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1946*, p. 108



## Five Carvings by Ellen Nora Payne

### The Alms Box



### The Headmasters Chair and the Sports Cupboard



*Left: The Lindsay McRae Field Chair – Presented in his memory to the L.C.G.S.*

*Right: The sports cupboard – presented to the L.C.G.S by seventeen members of the Field family in 1924.*

In 1924, seventeen members of the Field family, all old boys of the school, resolved to present the school with a sports cupboard in memory of their school days. They asked their kinswoman, Mrs Nellie Payne (nee Field), to design and carve it. The result was a very handsome piece of furniture which stood – in the 1970s but not today – in the same room as the Max Field chair.

The design is masterly. The cupboard stands nearly six foot tall and across the top of it are carved Newbolt's lines:

O strength divine of Roman days,  
O Spirit of the Age of Faith,  
Go with our sons in all their ways  
When we long since are dust and wraith

The top of each of the two doors bears a richly carved panel, on the left a ringtail possum and on the right a flying squirrel, each ringed in an intricate peppermint gum pattern. Below each panel is a carved medallion and motto and inside the right-hand door are carved in high relief the names of all seventeen members of the Field family with the dates of their enrolment in the school, from 1860 to 1920.

The list of the Field family old boys, as Mrs Payne carved them into the enduring blackwood, is quite impressive:

1860 John Charles, 1866 Thomas William, 1867 William Lindsay, 1878 George Westfield, 1879 Richard Charles, 1889 Norman Charles, 1897 Colin, 1897 Harry A. Lindsay, 1904 Kenneth Lindsay, 1905 Hugh Stanley, 1909 Lindsay McCrae, 1911 Thomas Ayton, 1913 Richard Randel, 1913 Errol Kentish, 1919 Charles R. Sadler, 1920 Brian Archer and 1920 Norman Tulloch Sadler.

### The Honour Board – School Chapel



A plaque in memory of Sholto Blyth, a boy who died at the school.  
Photographed by John Brett, LCGS, DV Gunn archives

Mrs Payne was an outstanding artist and the school is very fortunate in having five of her carvings, which also include an Alms Box and a plaque in memory of Sholto Blyth, a boy who died at the school.

#### GENEROUS GIFTS

*Generous gifts of valuable furnishings have also been made by Tasmanians. The chapel itself was erected with money given by an anonymous donor. The tilt communion table, magnificently carved in Tasmanian hardwood, is the gift of a former headmaster (Mr H Gillett), the lectern was given by Mr WR Rolph in memory of his son the late Trevor Rolph an old boy of the school and the bishop's chair by Mr FH Cleaver. Another former headmaster (Rev JW Bethune CBE) has donated two stained glass windows to be erected on each side of the chancel. It is understood that famous Australian public schools will donate the pillars for the communion stalls.*

*The communion service was held in the chapel for the first time last Sunday, Rev PW Stephenson officiating, whilst in the evening the Bishop of Bendigo preached, this being the first time that the pulpit has been used. The western wall is occupied with the giant honour roll containing the names of the 500 old boys who enlisted in the Great War, the names of the 100 who never returned being in the centre in white lettering.*

*No weddings or christenings have yet been held in the chapel which has not been dedicated though it is believed that several old boys are anxious to be married in the buildings whilst others are anxious for their children to be christened there. The chapel will undoubtedly be a strong link between the Old Launcestonians and their old school, and many old boys will see it for the first time when they meet on old boys' day on Saturday week. The chapel is the most interesting and unique building of its kind in Australia.*

*The fine building was much admired by the large attendance of parents and other visitors, some of whom, together with a number of the scholars, were accommodated in a marquee outside the chapel, with some of the scholars. The service began when the bishop approached the west door of the chapel, and just outside the chapel a petition, signed by the secretary of the School Board (Mr AL Green), was delivered to the bishop by the headmaster Mr FR Adams. After the delivery of the petition the bishop and assisting clergy entered the chapel, followed by the headmaster and the captain of the school LR Wilson.*

*In his sermon the Bishop Dr R Snowdon Hay said that the launching out with the new school was a big undertaking, but, thanks to a generous benefactor and the energy of the headmaster, old boys and others, their hearts could now be filled with joy at what they beheld.*

*Mr Adams thanked the bishop for officiating at the service. At the conclusion of the service several baptisms were carried out, and last night a confirmation service was held in the chapel, following which the scholars rendered a number of Christmas carols.<sup>124</sup>*

From the school journal:

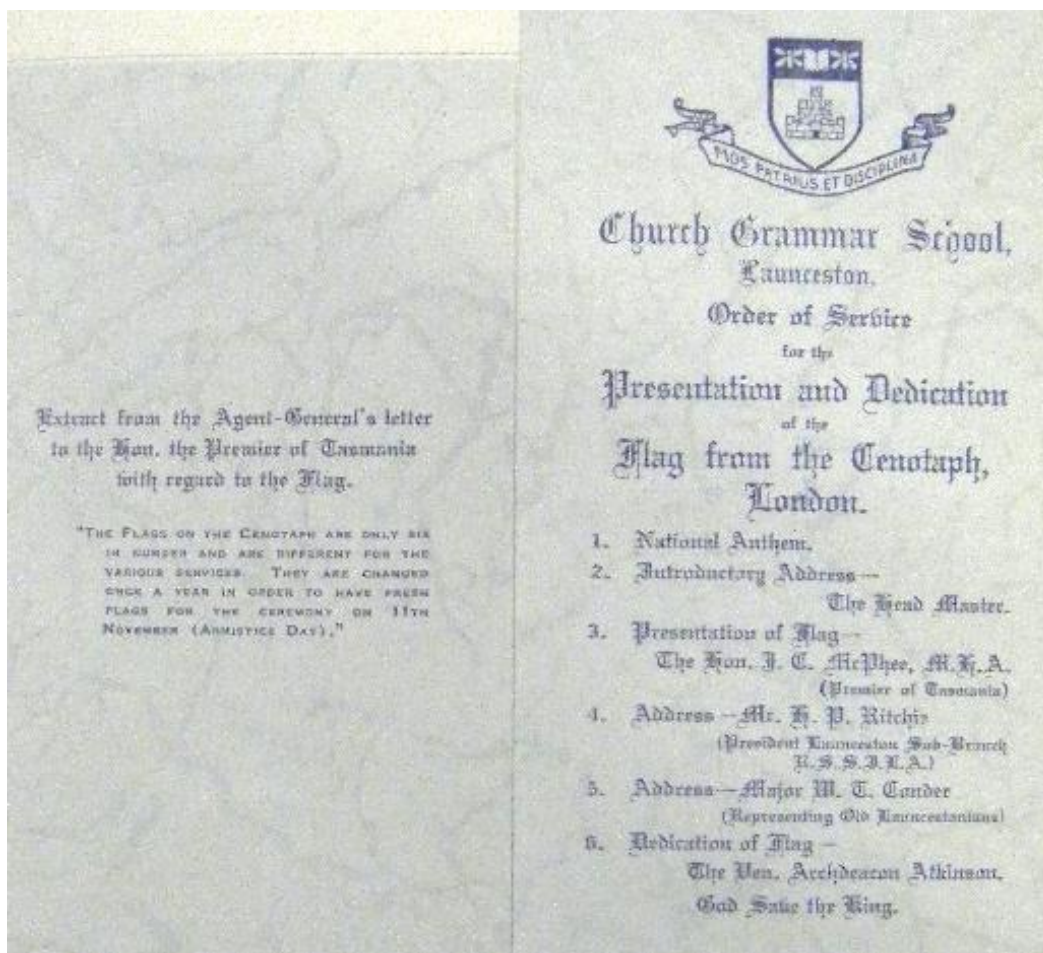
*After the dedication service Rev JW Bethune performed the first christening ceremonies. Those baptised were Peter Vernon Jones, second son of Mr and Mrs HV Jone, Anthony Harris, third son of Mr and Mrs Clem Harris and Michael Ferrall, second son of Mr and Mrs RA Ferrall. At the evening service on the Dedication Day services seventeen pupils were confirmed by the bishop at the first confirmation service to be held in the school chapel.<sup>125</sup>*

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<sup>124</sup> *Examiner*, 10 December 1934 p. 6

<sup>125</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1934

Earlier that year in the June edition of the 'Launcestonian',<sup>126</sup> strong words were expressed by the author LHW in an article 'Our Chapel' and I quote: "The boy who fails to find the building a source of pride both to himself and to the school is indeed lacking in the spirit of which we associate with those bred in public schools."



### Other relics

*Procured by the then headmaster, FR Adams, was a Union Jack flag flown on the Cenotaph in London from 11 November 1930 to 11 November 1931. The flag is the gift of the Imperial War Museum to the school, and there are only six of these flags distributed each year. Once a year, on November 11, six flags which have been flown on the Cenotaph for the previous year are removed and new flags placed in position for the Armistice service. The old flags are handed over to the curator of the Imperial War Museum, who in turn hands them on to institutions which he deems worthy of the honour of possessing one. Of the six flags flown on the London Cenotaph each year one represents each of the nation's various services. Of these flags, because of the school's splendid war record the school was allotted a flag, soiled but valuable. The flag and mountings were placed in the school dining room with all the other school trophies, the honour roll, and other articles having a sentimental value for the school. Subsequently, the flag was moved to the school chapel, where it remains."<sup>127</sup>*

### The Chapel Organ

<sup>126</sup> 'Launcestonian', June 1934

<sup>127</sup> *Examiner*, 15 April 1932, p. 9

The chapel organ, which was installed in the 1930s, served the school for thirty-three years. This organ was the second pipe organ brought to Tasmania for church use. It was built by John Gray of London in 1826 and erected in St John's Church of England Launceston, the same year.

The organ remained in St John's until 1862 when it was replaced by a larger instrument. During this period, an unenclosed chest was added (it is thought by Gray and Davison) carrying an eight foot treble clarabella and a four foot flute (full compass).

In 1862, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Launceston purchased the organ for £145 and there it served for the next sixty years.

In 1922, the organ was purchased by the Launceston Church Grammar School at a cost of £85, to be installed in the school chapel, soon to be built. In the meantime, it was erected in St George's Church of England at Invermay. The Grammar School chapel was not completed until 1933. When the organ was moved to the chapel it was rebuilt, a pedal board was added and an electric blower provided. The pedal organ consisted of an extended rank of forty-two pipes, giving a sixteen foot bourdon and an eight foot bass flute. Tubular pneumatic action was used for this section, whilst tracker action was retained in the rest of the organ. The work was done by Hill, Norman and Beard of Melbourne. At this time, the compass of the organ was reduced from GGG to CC. In 1965, this much-travelled organ was again on the move, this time to St John's Church at Franklin, having been bought for £375 as a memorial to Mr and Mrs AJ Clark. The organ was installed in the church by Mr Brian Clark, organist of the church, and the opening recital was given by Mr JW Nicholls FRCO, ARCM, the organist of St David's Cathedral at Hobart on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1965.<sup>128</sup>

### St Johns Church at Franklin



Interesting features of this organ are the hand-whittled stickers, no doubt made laboriously for little recompense by an apprentice, and two early examples of fan type combination pedals. The original front, with its gilded dummy pipes, hangs (since 1862) as an adornment on the west wall of St John's Church, Launceston. At the time of the last move an attempt was made, to no avail, to restore this front to the organ, so regrettably a modern case had to be built.

The organ is freestanding and still speaks with its original classical charm and brilliance, the latter being achieved by a comparatively powerful fifteenth and a fiery cornet of three ranks.

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<sup>128</sup> Clarke and Johnson's *Pipe Organs of Tasmania (Revised)*, Hobart Guild of Organists 1981, pp. 79-80

## The 1926 Gray Organ at St John's in Franklin, Tasmania



A new 'Walker' organ was installed in 1966 and serves the chapel to the present day.

The organists, since the installation of the organ in the chapel, between 1933-1965 have been:

1933-36 M Hirst

1937-39 E Heyward

1940-41 S Joscelyne and JM Joscelyne

1942- 65 AT Sorell

In 1982, the Friends of the Chapel Committee was launched following a jubilee service held on 30 July in the chapel. Mr J Hughes accepted the position of chairman.

When the chapel was dedicated in 1934, the western end was left incomplete, lacking two bays. With Broadland House School amalgamating with Grammar, the need for more accommodation became acute and several people indicated their enthusiasm and pledged their support for a project to complete the final two bays.

In 1990, the Friends of the Chapel Committee decided to assist the school by undertaking advanced planning for completion of the chapel by 1996, the sesquicentenary year. This was conveyed to the Board of Management of the school which passed the following motion:

*The Board approves the desire of the Friends of the Chapel Committee to proceed with initial design exploration of completing the chapel according to the original Heyward plan with a view to submitting proposals to the Board, and that all costs should be borne by the Friends of the Chapel Committee and that the Board supports the broad time frame for chapel completion as outlined by the headmaster.*

Heyward's original drawings were located, allowing the Friends of the Chapel Committee to proceed. This plan was favoured for its architectural excellence, aesthetic quality and its visual unity. It also allowed the future seating of 320-330 people. An architect was chosen, Mr Robert Morris-Nunn, who was appointed the architect for the chapel extension in July 1991. Although

progress was slow, the Heyward plan enabled the pure excellence of the neo-Gothic architecture to be maintained intact without any intrusion or addition such as a mezzanine floor area. With Morris-Nunn's plan, the visual unity and balance of the collegiate seating remains intact and unaltered. This of course allows excellent vision of the whole length of the chapel, from the entrance door to the altar.

So, one asks how significant or important was the chapel to the school's heritage? Firstly, it has been classified by the National Trust, secondly it is noted for its perfection of design and quality of materials and craftsmanship, and finally for its rarity as its seating arrangement is unique and no other with collegiate seating exists in Australia – it is the only neo-Gothic chapel in Tasmania.



*One of the major features of the exterior walls are shields bearing the names of past headmasters from the foundation of the school in 1846.*

Prior to the school's sesquicentenary celebrations in 1996, the extra two bays were completed by Hinman Wright and Manser extending the chapel with a sixth bay and narthex. Mr Rynne Tanton from the School of Arts at the university was given the commission to make all the moulds for the two new bays, which included spires and the rose window. The moulds were taken from the original five-bay chapel and the rose window mould from St John's Church in Ross, Tasmania. The then chairman, Bruce Wall of the Friends of the Chapel Committee, had recommended the rose window in the western wall, which presented great opportunity for beautification and balance. The narthex had the quality of calm and beauty, fully respectful of the honour board and honour rolls, and achieved all that was desired of it in providing an entry space relatively free from intrusion of weather.

## St John's Anglican Church, Ross, Tasmania 1838



*Left: St John's Church at Ross. Right: Grammar chapel.*

John Parish, sculptor – the son of Jack Parish, a past master of the school – was engaged to provide the steel frames around the moulds to hold all in place for the pour of the white concrete and putty sand mix, simulating sandstone, and manoeuvring it into position during construction. The bricks were matched from a building demolished in Cameron Street which were of a similar era, circa 1930s.



## Taking the moulds and manoeuvring finished structures into place



*Composite during construction*

In accepting the rose window commission, it was first necessary to test the methodology of an RTV rubber test mould of one of the medallions on the south eastern wall, which commemorated previous headmasters of the school. The brief was to make a flexible mould of a medallion such that no damage was done to the original and that the mould would be suitable to be used for taking multiple concrete castings. This proved successful and the task of taking moulds using this technique was used for all spires, finials, door and window arches and caps as well as the rose window which was moulded from St John's Church in Ross.

The photographs of construction were kindly supplied by Rynne Tanton who, along with John Parish, successfully cast all the necessary components to complete the chapel.

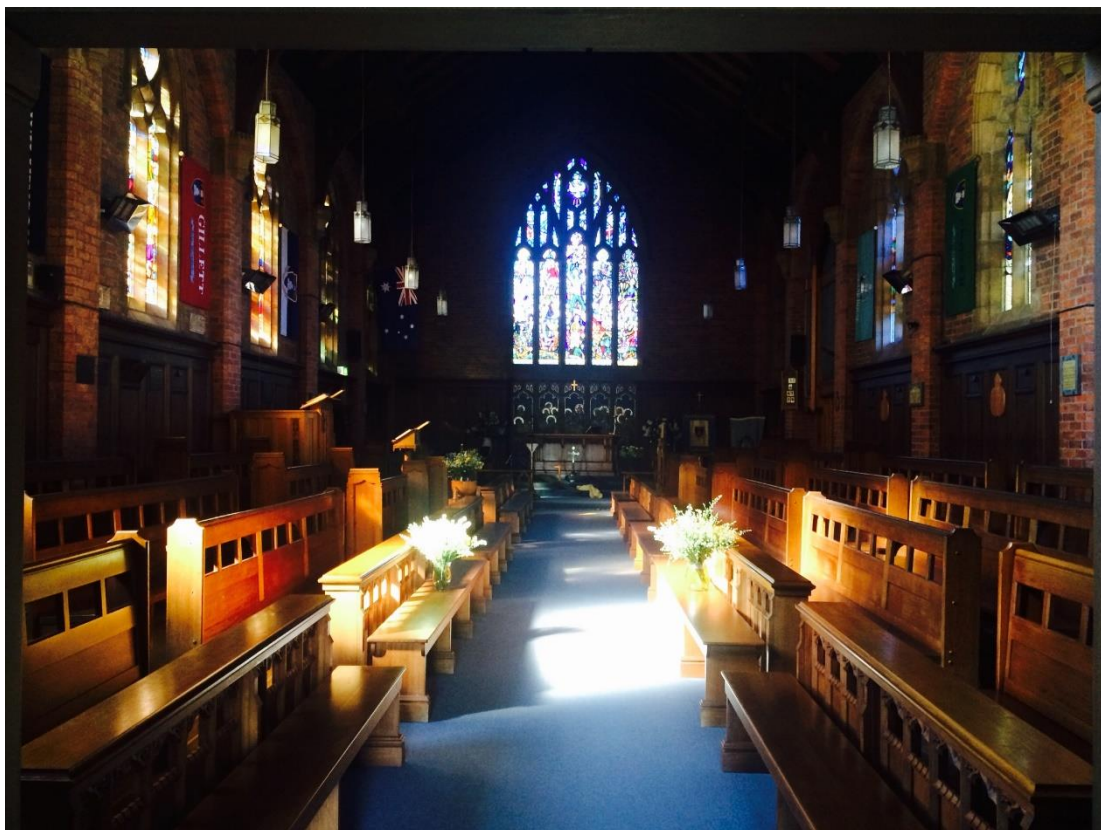
### **Lifting the rose window into position**



*Hinman Wright and Manser workers flank John Parish.  
Source: Private collection of Rynne Tanton*

## Chaplaincy 1940-1965

**Rev Canon FH Lansdell, Rev LS Dudley, Rev SC Brammall, Rev GM Browne, Rev GF Parker, Rev RS Mortimer-Tanner, Rev GA Harrison and Rev H Pickup**



*Photography: David Brill*

The chaplaincy has always been an integral foundation of the school and has played a major role in the Christian education of all students. Divinity has always been taught in the school and during the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s was taught by the school chaplains.

In 1932, Rev F Wynne Evans was appointed. In 1934, he was succeeded by the Rev Canon FH Lansdell, who remained chaplain until the mid-1940s. Alison Alexander in *Blue, Black and White*, 1996, page 151 records that Rev 'Razz' Lansdale "did a sterling job as chaplain throughout the war, taking daily assembly services, Holy Communion on Fridays, special services on occasions like the invasion of France in 1944, divinity classes throughout the school and preparing about twenty-five boys for confirmation each year." The chapel has always been widely used and has always been a major focus of school life for students at Grammar.

In 1944, the first national broadcast of the Church of England in Tasmania was heard from the chapel of the Launceston Church Grammar School. The hymns were specially selected for the theme of the service, 'courage,' and were sung by the choir and school.

The five lessons were read by each of five of the school prefects. The first hymn, Heiner's *Father, Hear the Prayer We Offer*, showed to good advantage the rich harmony of which the boys were capable. *Who Would True Valour See* and *Oft In Danger, Oft In Woe* were also sung in full harmony, the latter having a descant sung by the trebles of the choir in two of the verses.

The service concluded with the singing of *O Valiant Hearts (The Supreme Sacrifice)*. The broadcast was so successful that it was repeated in 1945 on the theme of 'love'.

In his address, the chaplain, Canon FH Lansdell, spoke of the heroic deeds of the battlefield as a typical kind of courage. "Our real source of courage is our faith in God," he said. "Moral courage tests us and finds out the kind of person we really are." Mr AT Sorell, organist and choirmaster of Holy Trinity Church Launceston, and chapel organist, was at the organ. The choir was conducted by a member of the school staff, Mr LT McIntyre.<sup>129</sup>

In 1946, Rev LS Dudley, in liaison with Canon Lansdale, took divinity lessons and chapel services and was appointed chaplain but left that same year on the appointment of Rev SC Brammall. In 1951, Dudley was appointed an archdeacon<sup>130</sup> and in 1953 he was appointed warden of Christ College, Hobart. Previously in 1945, he had been appointed rector of St Paul's Parish,<sup>131</sup> Launceston.<sup>132</sup>

In 1947, Rev SC Brammall joined the staff of the school as a full-time chaplain and master.<sup>133</sup> This was announced at the school speech night in December 1946 by the headmaster, Mr HV Jones, who expressed thanks to Rev LS Dudley and Canon FH Lansdell for taking classes in divinity and conducting Sunday services.<sup>134</sup> He taught secular subjects as well as divinity, revived the school scout troop and started drama classes. Brammall then moved on to Hobart and a succession of chaplains succeeded him. In 1951, Rev GM Browne was appointed as the school chaplain. However, it was Rev GF Parker who stood out and was described as inspirational, discussing subjects such as ethical matters in a very enlightened way.

In 1952, the Rev GF Parker was appointed school chaplain and instituted by Archdeacon LS Dudley at a ceremony held in the school's historic chapel. The ceremony was attended by members of the school.<sup>135</sup> The Rev LN Sutton (St John's Church) attended. Rev Parker was welcomed and presented by the headmaster, Mr HV Jones. The former chaplain of the school, Rev S Browne, had left for Victoria and the Rev M Hughes had been acting in his place. Rev Parker was formerly chaplain of Trinity Grammar School in Summer Hill NSW. He left there to further his studies at Oxford University, and conducted a parish in England for twelve months prior to his appointment.

However in 1953, the Bishop of Tasmania, the Rt Rev GF Cranswick installed the Rev RS Mortimer-Tanner as chaplain of the school. Rev Mortimer-Tanner came to Launceston from a parish in North Ipswich Queensland.<sup>136</sup> The service in the school chapel was attended by senior boys, staff, the bishop's three nominees on the School Board, Archdeacon HB Atkinson, Messrs R Bain and BP Gordon, a member of the Board and president of the Old Launcestonians, Mr DV Gunn, and visiting clergy. Clergy included Archdeacon LS Dudley, Canon FH Lansdell, the Revs KA Kay, R Warburton and LN Sutton. The headmaster, Mr BH Travers, was also present. The bishop, in his capacity as visitor, made an inspection of the school after the ceremony.

The Travers years saw some innovations in the school's religious life: combined services with Broadland House each year at St John's, a harvest festival in the chapel and on the school's birthday the ceremony of Beating the Bounds – where a procession went around the school and the various different school activities were blessed – and radio hymn singing sessions recorded in the chapel. Travers was an ardent punctilious church-goer, but found during his tenure that

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<sup>129</sup> *Mercury*, 21 August 1944, p. 4

<sup>130</sup> *Examiner*, 28 November 1951, p. 16

<sup>131</sup> *Advocate*, 9 July 1945, p. 2

<sup>132</sup> *Examiner*, 17 July 1953, p. 4

<sup>133</sup> *Advocate*, 14 December 1946, p. 2

<sup>134</sup> *Examiner*, 14 December 1946, p. 2

<sup>135</sup> *Examiner*, 28 June 1952, p. 4

<sup>136</sup> *Examiner*, 10 March 1953, p. 3

an active religious policy was difficult to implement because chaplains came and went, and it was often hard work to find replacements.

In the closing months of 1957, Rev Guy Airy Harrison was appointed chaplain of the school. I am indebted to Angela, one of his three children – Angela, Mary and Peter – for preparing this biographical summary of his life. He is remembered most affectionately by the boys at Grammar where he was chaplain from 1957 until 1963.

## **Rev Guy Airy Harrison 1907-1990**

### **Daughter Angela recalls**

Guy Airy Harrison was born 16<sup>th</sup> November 1907 at Addlestone, Surrey, to Alfred Frank Harrison and Carril, nee Airy, granddaughter of Sir George Biddell Airy, Astronomer Royal to Queen Victoria. Two years later the family moved to Weybridge, three miles away. His sister was born in 1911. In 1915, the family were staying in rooms at Crowthorne while his father was serving in the Royal Defence Corps. In 1916, they again moved when his father was stationed at Loughborough. In 1917, the family eventually settled down at Epsom where Guy attended Epsom College (prep school) as a dayboy. In 1921, he attended senior school as a boarder. His final year at Epsom was a great one for him, memories of which he held dear for the rest of his life. In 1926, he started at Clare College in Cambridge, studying for his Bachelor of Arts which he attained with honours in 1929. He then ‘helped’ his father and studied accountancy, which he did not enjoy. In 1930, he joined the St James and Pall Mall Electric Lighting Company, which he did not enjoy either. In 1931, he started teaching at Woodlands School in Deganwy North Wales, where he spent four years of enjoyment and felt he had found his niche. 1933 saw him sit for his Master of Arts (MA Cantab) and in 1935 he moved on to Carn Brae at Saundridge Park, Bromley in Kent, a boys’ prep school.

In 1936, his mother died and in 1937 Guy moved to Crowthorne and arranged a partnership with another master at Stockton House School in Fleet, Hampshire. There he met Joan Linscott who was a housemistress. In 1939, his father died and Stockton House wound up due to the approaching war. He had one term at Lime House School in Wetheral, Carlisle and in 1940 moved back to Carn Brae School which had moved to Cranleigh, Surrey and on 19<sup>th</sup> December married Joan Linscott at St Nicholas Church, Cranleigh.

In 1941, Guy left Carn Brae, joined the RAF (after the Army turned him down) and was stationed at Medmenham, Buckinghamshire, in the Aerial Intelligence unit. This work included US personnel and two men in particular Guy remembered were actors Rex Harrison and Stewart Grainger. Grainger’s real name was James Stewart, he changed it because there was already an actor by that name. During these years, among other staff Guy became friendly with Constance Babington-Smith who wrote the book *Evidence in Camera*. I can remember Dad showing me as a young girl many of the photographs in this book, as he explained what he did. He got rid of them when we moved to Australia. I don’t think he was supposed to have them but they certainly brought to life the stories of the Dam Busters and many of the flyers whom he knew. In 1942, their first child Angela was born in Sidcup, where Joan had been staying with her parents, and when he found a suitable house, we moved to a bungalow not far from the base which was close to Marlow.

When the war ended and Guy was demobbed, he left the RAF as a Flight Lieutenant and moved back to Carn Brae at Bromley. Joan took on once again the duties of running the junior boarding house and the family lived in a flat in the large old house, which just happened to be next door to a house called ‘Roxburgh’ in which Guy’s father had once lived. The house we lived in was named ‘Loxwood’ and had very large grounds with tennis courts and stables right at the back of the property, which backed on to the Sundridge Golf Course, much to Guy’s joy. The stables had been converted into flats for other staff members. Carn Brae was right next door and most of the dividing fence had been removed for easier access between campuses. Behind Carn Brae were several Nissen huts that were used as classrooms and for art and woodworking, and these led on to the sports ground which backed on to the golf course.

In 1947, their second child Mary was born. Around this time Guy had decided to enter the church and began studying for his ordination. Over the next two years during the long vacations, he went to Wycliffe Hall in Oxford for tutorials and in 1949 he was made a deacon. The following year Guy was ordained a priest at Rochester Cathedral. In 1951, the family moved to Bath, Somerset where Guy had been appointed curate to St Mark's Church. There was also another church and a chapel in the parish. The family was housed in a terrace house, two-up two-down style, in King Edward Road at the bottom of the hill.

In 1952, their third child Peter was born. Later that year the family moved again, this time to the Parish of Ipsden with North Stoke and Mongewell where Guy had been appointed vicar. The family lived in a 400-year old Queen Anne house with a mulberry tree in the huge garden, said to have been as old as the house. Five happy but trying years were spent there during which time Joan became quite ill and on doctor's advice Guy looked around for a posting where the climate would help to improve Joan's health. After applying for a school job on Guernsey and in Canada, Guy was accepted for a position in Tasmania, and in 1957 the family left everything behind and sailed into the unknown for Australia, having passed all the appropriate tests and viewed films which led us to think we were moving to a wild west movie scene.

First appointed to the parish of Woodbridge and Channel, the family settled into the old rectory and a whole new lifestyle. At the end of 1957, Guy was appointed by the bishop as chaplain of the Launceston Church Grammar School and in February 1958, we moved once more into a brick house on the corner of Button and Valentine Streets, opposite the school.

By 1963, problems were emerging at the school among the staff and Guy once again reluctantly decided to move on, this time to Canberra, where he took up the position of chaplain of the two Grammar schools and did some teaching. Once more he was in his element and had several happy years.

The year 1975 saw enforced retirement for Guy, so he and Joan (the children having moved on) moved to Ashburton, Melbourne where they bought a house with his sister Marjorie, who had settled there and had set up a typing agency from home, with which they helped. Guy also helped out in the local parish. In 1975, Marjorie had had enough and went her own way, while Guy and Joan moved to St John's Park, Mooroolbark near the Dandenong Ranges into a retirement village and a small cottage. Here Guy was also able to assist with the church of St Francis and they lived a happy fourteen years, taking holidays around Australia and abroad and maintaining many friendships and interests, including with the Foas with whom Guy had had the earlier partnership at Stockton House. Both becoming gradually and increasingly frail, Joan had a nasty fall and had to have an operation on her spine. Guy couldn't look after her properly so a two-bedroom unit attached to Broughton Hall in Camberwell was offered to them, which they accepted. They settled in well and had several happy years there and helped at St Mark's Church Camberwell and in the chapel. Guy's sister had a unit a short tram ride away and she attended St Mark's as well and assisted in the office. Guy's health gradually deteriorated, his arthritis slowed him down and his hearing became poor. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1990, he suffered a heart attack, as his father had done, and passed away aged 83 at St Vincent's Hospital in the early hours of 3<sup>rd</sup> February with Joan and Marjorie beside him.

### **Son Mark recalls**

Guy had many friends across the world. He was a keen sportsman playing rugby, cricket, tennis and golf, ice-skating and horse-riding, and had a remarkably retentive memory for sporting statistics, in fact, for any statistics. He loved to smoke a pipe, having smoked all his life and he only gave it up near the end of his life. Another habit of his was to jingle the keys and coins in his trouser pockets. One of the nicknames given to him by the boys was 'Jingles' and the other was 'Charlie' as in Chaplin. Short in stature – he blamed it on his premature birth and maintained that he was wrapped in cottonwool and put in a sugar basin when born – and rather stocky, he never had a good head of hair – balding at around forty-five years of age. He loved travel probably because of his upbringing where the family frequently went cruising while his mother was able.



*Back row L-R: A Beecroft, C Tutting, unknown, J Bain, unknown, J.Parkin, M.Salier.  
Front row L-R: unknown, J. Coulson, unknown, Padre G Harrison, John Cashion.*

His gift for languages would have helped as he spoke French fluently and excelled at Latin and Hebrew. These were also subjects he taught along with maths and of course Scripture or religious instruction. He was never any good with his hands and barely knew one end of a screwdriver from the other. His thumb usually collected a good hammering! His enormous sense of humour was inherited from both parents, although he maintained his mother's was greater than his father's. He could remember and retell any joke he heard, and was an excellent public speaker, probably because of his good memory. He enjoyed playing bridge and other indoor games such as billiards and carpet bowls. He was a tidy, meticulous person who liked to dress well and according to the occasion. He was a stickler for good manners. His desk was always tidy and his handwriting small, clear and neat. He maintained records of all his sermons, as to when and where he delivered them, so as not to repeat them at the same place too soon.

In later life this saved him a great deal of time and energy, as they only needed occasional updating. He also enjoyed writing and produced several small books to raise money for various projects but his *Credo* was published officially while living in Launceston. He enjoyed music, especially Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, and had quite a good voice – his Gregorian chants in services were appreciated. He spent many hours writing poems for special occasions and not many hosts and hostesses would have missed out on one. These have been collected by the family and put into a book. A nice meal and a good bottle of wine always went down well and as Joan was an excellent cook, he never had anything but a good meal. The old English tradition of a hearty cooked breakfast kept him going to the end.

He was the kind of person who always won an argument no matter what and became quite irritated if proven wrong. He had a fantastic memory especially for names and sporting results and would have made an excellent commentator. He was good friends with Headmaster Jifa Travers, especially due to them both being Rugby tragics, as well as Tom Room, George Crawford and Ray Ferrall. He very much enjoyed his teaching years and the friendships he made with many of his students and their parents lasted for years.

## Daughter Mary recalls

He took everything in his stride, welcomed new opportunities from big things like emigrating at the age of fifty with a wife and three children, to teaching himself to write italic script so he could teach it to the junior school in Canberra.

He was slow to anger, although he certainly could get very impatient with anything from bad grammar to illogical or stupid behaviour. He loved good food and fine wine, blended his own sherry and enjoyed his pipe. Indeed he fiddled with a succession of the latter, just as much as he did with the change in his pocket or the switch on his hearing aid!

He was passionate about golf and cricket and to a lesser extent rugby and Australian rules football. His cough, always in the background, gave his voice a touch of roughness. He totally lacked practicality when it came to making or mending anything. He enjoyed chatting with strangers and was delighted when he found coincidences with his life and theirs. His



conviviality extended from gathering with friends for dinner, deliciously cooked on a shoestring by Jo, to having endless successions of prefects and members of the choir to our house for tea and carpet bowls.

I remember with feeling his prophetic saying at Christmas dinner in 1969 that that would be the last Christmas dinner we would all share, and holding me down and comforting me when at age nine I had to have warts removed from my palms with a red-hot electric needle. And he encouraged me to go to art school rather than university when he heard the Sydney Technical College was opening a Canberra campus.

A risk-taker, with an immense faith but never holier-than-thou, he was someone who knew disappointments in his own life but was ever an optimist who made mistakes and was never afraid to learn from them. A first-class brain but not an intellectual snob, enjoying anything from playing chess to listening to Gilbert and Sullivan, from collecting golf courses to writing doggerel. He had an Edwardian upbringing and was often surprised to find a lot of that would not wash in the 1950s and 1960s. He acknowledged he had learnt much from living in Australia and how much he loved it and loved life.



The only controversial time associated with the chapel was during Rev Guy Harrison's tenure. It was the late 1950s, Raymond Ferrall had been appointed chairman of the School Board in 1950 and had always encouraged old boys to use the chapel for marriages, baptisms and Sunday services. It was a strongly held view that this would strengthen the old boys' bond with their old school, and it did. However, like a bolt of lightning and completely out of left field, Bishop Cranswick sent forth an edict prohibiting the use of the chapel for old boys' marriages or baptisms. This, of course, did not sit well with the old boys and on investigation it appeared that the local clergy had been pressing the bishop because there had been a continual fall off in their own congregations, which continues to this day.



Rev Guy Harrison said the bishop's view was that these rites should be held in the parishes where the parents lived. Now, although Guy personally did not necessarily agree with this, he was bound to carry out the bishop's wishes. Ray Ferrall quickly reminded the chaplain that it was the school who paid his salary, not Bishop Cranswick. Nevertheless, within a very short time the old boys triumphed, and the board and the old boys had a splendid and lasting relationship with the subsequent diocesan prelate in Bishop Robert Davies.

However, this question had been raised as early as April 1951 by RA Ferrall. At the Board of Trustees May meeting that year, Archdeacon Atkinson reported that the restrictions on baptisms in the chapel by the bishop had been removed.<sup>137</sup>

### Choristers 1961



L-R: John Gee, Jim Rule, Paul Rapley, D. Sproule  
Source: Frank Henderson collection

The year 1962, saw the appointment as assistant chaplain of Rev Harold Pickup, who was formerly rector of Stanley. He was appointed chaplain in the following year after Rev GA Harrison left to take up the position on the staff of the Canberra Grammar schools. This was a year where revolutionary changes were occurring in society. Methods, ideas and standards were changing rapidly. The Launceston Church Grammar School was founded on training 'Christian gentlemen', with the ideology to train character on the foundation of the Christian faith and to prepare boys for their life's work.

These changes were expressed by the Hutchins School Chaplain Rev FF Ingoldsby in his chaplain's notes, July 1963.<sup>138</sup>

*During the last year or two, the desirability (and in the case of some state schools, the legality) of teaching dogmatic religion has been questioned in England, America and Australia. Students also in two Australian church schools have expressed the opinion that 'Scripture' or divinity should not be a compulsory subject. Others have placed a high value on the subject, but this does not make*

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<sup>137</sup> Board Minute, 15 May 1951

<sup>138</sup> The Hutchins School Magazine, Jubilee Issue 1913-1963, No 109, July 1963 – Chaplain's notes

*headline news. There are several good reasons why religious instruction, as well as religious knowledge, should be given.*

*First: Every child, every man, needs to know Christ as his Saviour and the Holy Scriptures which "are able to make us wise unto Salvation."*

*Second: To live, study or work in the modern world, we have an ever-increasing need of spiritual resources and time must be kept for so equipping ourselves.*

*Third: All school pupils should be aware of, and understand, the place of Christianity in our heritage, of its place and significance in the present century as well as a knowledge of the basic beliefs of the non-Christian world. One of the greatest mistakes we could make is to imagine that our highly prized democratic way of life will automatically continue apart from insistence upon the Christian concept of man. People are infinitely more important than programmes and each soul (however awkward or queer he may seem to us) precious in the sight of God. The decline in democracies is one of the inevitable results of the loss of interest in the Bible. Bad manners, dishonest business practices, the increase in gambling are others. Every boy or girl should be encouraged and given the opportunity to follow the Biblical command: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." May Hutchins always have, as its first object, the desire to "train character on the foundation of the Christian faith."*

The Rev Harold Pickup was recruited by Don Selth and had a roller-coaster ride at Grammar, dismissed by Headmaster Hutchings in the 1970s. In her book *Blue Black and White*, 1996, Alison Alexander describes him as argumentative. Selth remarked that he did not mind people being argumentative with him, as long as they accepted his decision in the end! Apart from his chaplaincy, Pickup also taught English and coached athletics and was remembered by some boys as 'fairly fearsome' and somewhat sarcastic, but with an excellent way of explaining what religion was all about and a stimulator of conversation.

## **Rev Harold Pickup**

Harold Pickup was born on May 8, 1917 in the Rosendale Valley, Lancashire to Robinson and Elizabeth (nee Berry) Pickup. He had a brother, Ross and a sister, Alice. He went to Rawtenstall Grammar School where he met his future wife Gwendoline Fenton. Harold received his BA at Oxford University and Gwendoline obtained a BSc (Hons) from University of Leeds. He was a good athlete and represented both Oxford and Cambridge in running.

In World War II, Harold, a member of the Royal Navy Reserve, joined the Royal Navy and rose to the rank of lieutenant. He served in many theatres in small ships. He was seconded to the Royal Indian Navy. This service in India had a profound effect on him for the rest of his life.

After returning to England in 1943, he married Gwen and worked in the admiralty until the end of the war. After the war, he became a curate in Lancashire and was going to attend the Manchester Theological College but instead he was sponsored to Cambridge University for an MA. Throughout this period, Gwen supported the family as a teacher until the birth of their first child, John in 1947.

On graduation, Harold became a curate in Middleton. After the birth of the second child, Richard, in 1949, Harold was appointed vicar of St Marys Gravesend in the diocese of Rochester. Gwen joined Harold in parish duties and ran Mother's Union as well as other activities. Harold had a friendship with the Bishop of Rochester which explains the move to Kent in the South. In 1954, their daughter Elizabeth was born.

In 1957, they decided to migrate to Tasmania, taking advantage of the migration scheme available at the time. Harold was appointed rector of Stanley, where he looked after five

churches. He ran the Cubs and was also a ranger for the mutton bird hatchery on the Nut. Gwen worked as a biology teacher at Smithton High School but still helped with parish duties such as Mother's Union and Brownies.

In 1960, Harold was offered St John's Parish in Launceston but decided instead to join Launceston Church Grammar School as chaplain and English teacher. Gwen moved to Broadland House as a biology teacher. Later she taught at Launceston Matriculation College.

In 1966, Gwen's mother's business in England was sold and she received a substantial inheritance which enabled them to buy a house in Haig Street and a shack, that is, a hut at Weymouth. Gwen loved Weymouth, and after many years and much resistance from Harold, Gwen built a more comfortable shack. Harold invested the remnants of the inheritance which, combined with his frugality, enabled him to become quite wealthy.

In the early 1970s, Harold was dismissed from the Grammar School. The reasons were unclear but it was probably a cost-saving measure by replacing senior teachers with cheaper junior ones. After a period of uncomfortable unemployment, Harold was employed by the Department of Education at Queechy High School until his retirement.

He was a member of the Launceston Players and performed the role of Thomas a' Beckett in Murder in the Cathedral.

During the period of the early 1970s, Harold was fortunate in investing in very high interest loans. In early 1980s, he switched Gwen's and his investments to the stock market and particularly the four big banks – mentioned as these investments started to dominate his interest and his life.

Gwen contracted lung cancer in 1996 and died in January 1997. In 2009, Harold was diagnosed with dementia. He stopped exercising completely – he had ridden a bicycle until his eighties – and ate little other than TimTams and other biscuits. Communication with him became increasingly difficult until his passing at the age of 97 in May 2014.

## **LCGS Chaplaincy 1960s**

*In late 1962, I was summoned to the Headmaster Don Selth to be informed that my father Harold Pickup had been accepted for a job as English teacher and assistant chaplain to Chaplain Guy Harrison. He later became chaplain when Guy moved with his family to Canberra.*

*I am probably the least competent person to provide an article on chaplaincy but with a little help from my school colleagues I shall try.*

*Dr John Pickup*

On chapel days, we congregated outside the chapel before going to our appointed pews while the school prefects, staff and headmaster in academic gowns paraded in for the service followed by the choir and chaplain. The sermon was given by the chaplain or occasionally, the headmaster or members of the staff. Trevor Sorell, the boarding housemaster, was the organist and was occasionally replaced by Doug Brownrigg, who would play popular music after the staff had left. I have it on good authority that some of the choir, notably Gary Self and Bradley 'Meathead' Jeffrey felt encouraged to become choir members after they found out where the communion wine was kept, which enabled them to have a little sip or two.

Guy Harrison's wife with her two lovely daughters Mary and Angela and son Mark always sat on the left by the door. Grammar was an all boys school in those days and two young ladies provided a drop of fresh air to many of us who had been cooped up in the boarding house for a whole term. They were probably uncomfortable being the only girls there and were always the first to leave after the service. We used the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

I had to attend religious knowledge class in which my father taught. His lessons were based on *The Screwtape Letters* by CS Lewis. Within a few minutes, he had cuffed a pupil on the ear as was the tradition in those days to establish authority, following the mould of 'Basher' Clarkson, the geography teacher. Robert Harrison recalls that he had been given an assessment N when the norm was A to D. When he enquired about it, he was told N meant 'Not quite with it'.

The chapel served old scholars for weddings and funerals. The most memorable funeral I attended was that of fellow school athlete and cadet under officer, Geoff Locke, who had joined the regular army and as an officer was tragically killed in Vietnam. The service was memorable for such an occasion and the gun carriage just fitted into the aisle. He was buried with full military orders and crowds of mourners lined Invermay Road to view the magnificent gun carriage on which the flag draped coffin was placed. It was followed by a large number of vehicles which appeared to stretch for a kilometre or two.

Since the 1960s, the boarded up west end of the chapel has been completed and now is a beautiful example of a school chapel.

In 1956, the chapel notes in the 'Launcestonian' listed old boys of the school who had been admitted to holy orders in the church. They are listed in order of when they entered the school:

- 1890 The Ven HB Atkinson, Archdeacon Emeritus
- 1892 The Rev JW Bethune, retired
- 1913 The Rev HW Baker, Chaplain of King's School NSW
- 1916 The Rt Rev CEB Muschamp, Bishop of Kalgoorlie
- 1917 The Rev Canon IJB Mc Donald, Rector of St Mary's, Moonah.
- 1917 The Rev LE Dando, Rector of St Luke's, Campbell Town
- 1920 The Rev E Garston-Smith, in England
- 1921 The Rev TB McCall, Australian Board of Missions, Sydney
- 1923 The Rev ML Hughes, Rector of St Oswald's, Trevallyn
- 1923 The Rev VM Julian, Rector of Cooma, NSW
- 1923 The Rev VH Julien, Rector of Hamilton, Victoria
- 1934 The Rev TE Doyle, Rector of Cressy, Tasmania.
- 1932 The Rev JM Moroney, Cambridge University, England
- 1935 The Rev OS Heyward, in England
- 1941 The Rev H Hadrill, Rector of Avoca and Fingal, Tasmania

Ministers in other churches:

- 1891 The Rev CC Dugan, Methodist Minister, deceased
- 1910 The Rev O Jones, Presbyterian Minister, Fingal
- 1919 The Rev CR Thompson, Baptist Minister, Newstead
- 192? The Rev ES Manzoney, Methodist Minister, Margaret St, Launceston

Old boys of the old high school

- 1891 The Rev AM Wilson, retired
- 1905 The Rt Rev AR James, formerly Bishop of St. Arnaud, Victoria (a diocese which in 1977 was amalgamated with the Diocese of Bendigo)
- 1906 The Rev E. Biggs, retired

1908 The Rev VHC Gill, Rector of Kingston, Tasmania

In 1956, on Palm Sunday, the Headmaster Basil H Travers was made a Diocesan lay-reader by the Archdeacon of Launceston, Rev LN Sutton in St John's Church.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> 'Launcestonian', May 1956, No 6

## CHAPTER 9

### *Boxing, Cadets and Bells*

#### Boxing



#### The Ratten Belt

Boxing was always a major sport at the school until it was discontinued in the early 1950s. It was contested with vigour by the boys. The annual boxing championships were clean and heroic contests and drew large crowds on championship night.



In 1925, Dr Victor Ratten,<sup>140</sup> a Hobart surgeon, donated the senior competition prize known as the Ratten Belt, the condition being that the belt must be won three times by the same boy before it became his property. His son John Richard Ratten attended the school and was a keen boxer. In 1926, the headmaster, Rev JW Bethune, also donated a belt for the open championship, which was known as the Bethune Championship Belt.<sup>141</sup>

The 1940s and early 1950s saw great competition within the school house boxing championships. However, the sport was discontinued at the school in the headmastership of BH 'Jika' Travers. It was disbanded after discussion that the boxing ring in the school gym was set up on a solid wooden floor surface in the gymnasium and was considered too dangerous.

The school had taught boxing for several years and it was a feature of the early advertisement of the school to attract young men to its ranks. The majority of physical education instructors had military backgrounds and a major proportion were recruited from the UK.

In 1926, the *Advocate* reported:<sup>142</sup>

*Launceston Church Grammar School (Founded 1846)*

*Parents wishing to enter their boys as boarders for 1927 should make early application .... Prospectus and scale of fees obtainable on application from the*

<sup>140</sup> *Mercury*, 3 June 1925, p 7. Dr Victor Richard Ratten was son of the Rev GW Ratten of Melbourne and was born in that city in 1878 and educated at Port Faire College. He graduated at the Harvey Medical College Chicago in 1907 and when war broke out in 1914, he enlisted and went abroad in the *Geelong* in 1914 as a regimental medical officer to the 12th Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade. On his return he entered into private practice in Hobart, and in 1917, when a difference arose between the British medical association and the government over public hospital procedure, he was appointed surgeon-superintendent of the Hobart Public Hospital, a position he held in 1925 when the prize Ratten Belt was presented to the school.

<sup>141</sup> *Examiner*, 27 April 1926, p. 8

<sup>142</sup> *Advocate*, 13 November 1926, p. 6

*headmaster. Carpentry, shorthand, typewriting, boxing, dancing and music arranged for as extras.*

*The school has twenty-five acres of playing fields, a well-equipped school hospital and gymnasium. A carpenter's shop is now being erected and will be available at the beginning of 1927. Inspection of buildings and grounds invited.*

*JW Bethune, MA (Cantab)*

*Headmaster*

In June, only a few months prior to Sergeant Brown's appointment to the school in October 1926, the boxing championships were held at the school. The boxing instructor was AJ Alexander and the championships were to be decided on June 14, 15, and 16. Preliminary rounds were contested on the first two dates. The finals were decided on June 16, in the school gymnasium, commencing at 7:30pm. Parents and friends of the school were invited to attend and were assured of a clean and enjoyable evening's sport. The contests were decided on a strictly points basis and this was done in order to encourage the boys to adopt the science of boxing, as opposed to the 'rough-hand' methods often witnessed in so-called 'boxing' competitions. It was at this time that the headmaster, Rev JW Bethune donated the Bethune Championship Belt. Parents and others interested, were asked to donate trophies for the minor competitions.<sup>143</sup>

In June 1926, the *Examiner* reported:<sup>144</sup>

*School Boxing Grammar School Championships, Von Bibra Wins Senior Bout. The boxing championships of the Launceston Church Grammar School were decided at the school gymnasium last night. There was a very large attendance of pupils, parents and old scholars. including the Mayor (Alderman AA Evans). The young athletes gave a very interesting display of boxing, free from any of the deteriorating elements of some pugilistic encounters. Before the boxing commenced the headmaster Rev JW Bethune presented the sports day prizes to the successful competitors. The championship winners were: Senior, E. Pickett; senior runner-up, J. Fulton; under 15, N. Bovill; under 13, J. Thompson; under 11, L. Parker. Trophies were presented also to N. Bovill (swimming champion), G. Tyson (under 15 swimming champion), and H. Edgell, who was the school cricket team's outstanding bowler last season, and secured the best average. When making the presentations, Mr Bethune extended a welcome to those present and thanked those who had given the sports trophies. The first boxing bout (each contest was of three rounds duration) was the sub-junior championship, in which Ramsay (5.4) defeated Parker (5.61). The winner is a wonderfully improved boxer and gave a really good performance. Parker put up a plucky fight. The senior B championship was to have been decided between Ransome and Pedder, but the latter was unable to take part on account of an injury. The smart footwork of Ratten (7.6) enabled him to win the intermediate championship from Green (7.18). In addition to being the heavier of the two, Green had the advantage of height, but his opponent was much smarter. The senior contest between Von Bibra (9.6) and Archer 1 (10.5) was the most interesting of the evening. The two boys were matched and kept up a steady exchange of blows. Von Bibra, who secured the victory, was the more finished boxer.*

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<sup>143</sup> *Examiner*, 27 April 1926, p. 8

<sup>144</sup> *Examiner*, 18 June 1926, p. 8



Sergeant Brown joined the staff in October and made an enormous impression on the school having great knowledge and skill in the art of boxing. It was said that boxing was a great character builder and would help with discipline, self-defence and confidence in young men. Rev Bethune was a great believer in these attributes of boxing and encouraged the sport at Grammar during his tenure. Vernon Jones continued in the same vein, reminding the boys of “tradition, tradition, tradition” at every possible moment. Though with social change looming in the early 1950s, Headmaster Basil H ‘Jica’ Travers discontinued the practice, although boxing continued in physical education classes until at least 1956/7.

In 1926, the *Examiner* reported:<sup>145</sup>

*Church Grammar School Mowbray Heights, Launceston. The School Sergeant Sergeant Frank Brown, who is to take up his duties as school sergeant at the Church Grammar School, Mowbray, Launceston, at the beginning of October, has had a wide experience in public school and military academics as instructor of boxing, physical culture, gymnastics, swimming, life saving and Swedish drill. He holds excellent testimonials from the Woolwich Lancer Depot, where he was an instructor previous to 1912, and from the Polytechnic, London, to which he was appointed instructor in 1912. He served in this capacity till 1919, except during the war period, when he offered his services to his country. His name had been recorded for valuable services during the war as an Instructor of Physical Training both at Aldershot and at Sandhurst. Since coming to Australia, Sergeant Brown has been engaged as school sergeant at the Armidale School (NSW), where his work has been highly commended by the Headmaster Rev Canon Archdall, MA. He holds the following credentials, Army Gymnastic Staff Certificate, Royal Life Saving Society's Certificates, Boxing Certificate from Jimmy Wilde (Flyweight Champion of the World), under whom he acted as an instructor at the Royal Military College Sandhurst.*

In 1926, the *Examiner* reported:<sup>146</sup>

*Boxing. Grammar Championships. The Mayor (Alderman AA Evans) will be present at the annual boxing gala night on Thursday at the Grammar School. The programme will commence at 7:30pm, and will include five finals, and presentation of the St. Hill Cup and sports day prizes, and the presentation of boxing trophies. These trophies include the championship belt presented by Dr Ratten, special badges from Rev JW Bethune, silver cup from Mr Richardson, and medals from Messrs Abbott, Affleck, Bryan, Castley, Evans, Featherstone, McKenzie and Rolph. The officials will be ringside: Judges Rev Bethune and Mr HV Jones. Referee Mr W Alexander and timekeeper Mr M Stump. One of the senior boys, Pedder, will act as chief steward. The three remaining semi-finals were contested yesterday, and results are as follow: Championship – Archer defeated Pickett, the fight being stopped in the third round. The winner was 19lbs heavier than his opponent, and it was his extra weight that allowed him to gain the upper hand. Pickett is the more finished boxer of the two, but he found it impossible to combat the extra weight and slogging tactics of his opponent. This was the harder fight in the competition. The winner meets Von Bibra in the final. Senior B Pedder defeated McIntyre after a clean and interesting contest, in which an extra round was necessary to decide the winner. Pedder is very quick in his footwork, and this in the end told in his favour. The winner meets Ransome in the*

<sup>145</sup> *Examine*, r 29 September 1926, p. 7

<sup>146</sup> *Examiner*, 15 June 1926, p. 6



*final. Intermediate – Green defeated Gollan on points, the winner possessing a good defence and an excellent left. Gollan was game but must learn to hit straighter. The winner meets Ratten in the final.*

There were great write ups in the press and this one is an example, which comes from 1929 after Sergeant Robinson had joined the staff that year<sup>147</sup>.

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>148</sup>

*Boxing Boys' Championships Keen Bouts At Grammar School. Schoolboys ranging in weight from six stone to over ten stone provided a number of interesting bouts in the Grammar School gymnasium on Saturday night in deciding the titles in the six classes represented. A ring was roped off in the middle of the gymnasium, and a number of parents and friends of the scholars, and old boys of the school, gathered round the ringside and gave the combatants plenty of encouragement. The principal bout of the evening was for the Ratten Belt. R. Gleadow was last year's holder but had since left the school and did not defend his title. The finalists this year, CJ Sankey and LV Wilson, provided a good exhibition, Sankey gaining the verdict. The judges were RT Buckley and O Ingles, and Sergeant A Robinson, the school instructor, was the referee. The results were as follows: Paperweights – B Archer and R Wayne were the finalists in the paperweight class, for boys of six stone, and a very evenly contested bout was won by Wayne. Archer made the pace at the beginning of the second and third rounds, but he dropped his guard in doing so, and Wayne had the opportunity of landing several effective blows. Bantamweights – In the final of the bantamweight TS Ritchie and L McKinnon were opposed. Ritchie put up a more solid defence than his opponent, and in the second round drew blood with a well-directed right to the nose. McKinnon fought back gamely but could not withstand Ritchie's whirlwind tactics in the third round and fell into several clinches. Ritchie then boxed for the remainder of the bout, and was declared tile winner. Featherweights – ML Foote commenced his bout with HG Sadler in the featherweight class with a sharp burst of in-fighting, but Sadler kept his chin well covered with his right glove and did not leave his opponent many openings. Foote several times beat Sadler to the ropes with a two-fisted rush, but in the last round Sadler fought back at his tiring opponent. Foot had piled up the points in the opening rounds, however, and gained the verdict. Middleweights – The middleweight final between JD Ramsay and RG Sadler commenced at a great pace, Sadler beating Ramsay to the ropes three times in the first round. Guards went down and the boxers milled at a great pace. Ramsay drew blood with a swing to the nose and there were several clinches. Both boys were very tired in the last round and just pushed each other about the ring. Sadler had, however, piled up too many points in the opening stages of the bout, and was declared the winner of a thrilling encounter. Welterweights – J Cameron utilised his longer reach with good effect in his match with RB Milsom in the welterweight final. Cameron punished Milsom severely in the first two rounds, but Milsom landed a couple of good rights in the last round. Cameron was declared the winner. Heavyweights – The finalists for the heavyweight title were CT Sankey and LI Wilson. Sankey boxed with a crouch, whilst Wilson, the taller of the two, stood upright. Sankey made the pace in the first round and aimed several lefts. These were effectively countered by Wilson, however, Sankey landed several hooks to the body in the second round, and chased his opponent to the ropes with both fists. A successive right and left to the nose by Sankey had Wilson in trouble but the latter drew blood on his opponent. With a jab to the nose, Sankey milled in, determined to pile up a good break, but*

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<sup>147</sup> Board Minute, January 1929

<sup>148</sup> *Examiner*, 21 September 1931, p. 2

*Wilson got in a neat left when Sankey momentarily dropped his guard. Sankey was loudly cheered when the judges declared the bout in his favour. Mr D Trood moved a vote of thanks to Sergeant Robinson for the way he had coached the boys and staged the bouts, and he also thanked all those who had attended. Commander Foote, president of the Parents' Association, and Sergeant Robinson briefly replied.*

In 1943, at the annual cadet camp, boxing was also on the agenda and it can be seen that Grammar fared very well as attested in this report in the *Examiner*.<sup>149</sup>

*Boxing bouts at cadet camp training at the senior cadet camp near Sheffield continued according to syllabus throughout Tuesday in fine, warm weather. For the recreational periods two interesting events were decided, the first being a cross-country and road race, over approximately two miles, teams were entered from all detachments. The result was an easy win for Devonport High School, with Launceston High School second. In the evening, a boxing tournament was held in the open, under the supervision of Lieut LJ Dawes and Staff Sgt Robinson of Tas. Force P and RT staff. Contests were fought under the light of trolley lamps, suspended above the corners of the rope ring. Camp fires in the background lit up the scene. The bouts, which were by elimination, resulted in a win for L Cpl Youl, of the Launceston Church Grammar School, with Cdt Campbell, Launceston High, runnerup. An exhibition bout was given by Cdt Lt Gunton (Launceston High) and Cdt Lt Smith (Dev High). An exciting evening concluded with cheers for good sportsmanship from the hundreds of assembled cadets.*

Boxing was always high on the agenda with the school championships being held annually in September. They always attracted a good attendance from students, staff and parents. In 1948, the Ratten Belt was won by J Burn and other weight winners were announced in the *Examiner* newspaper.<sup>150</sup>

*School Boxing Tournament. The annual boxing tournament held at the Launceston Church Grammar School was concluded yesterday. The winner of the heavyweight section, J Burn, won the Ratten belt. Details: Gnatweight, 6st 7lb or under, P Holyman; midgetweight, over 6.7, P Stephens; bantamweight, 8.1 and under, M Macleod; lightweight, 9.4 and under, G Lean; middleweight, 9.5 to 11.0, C Busby; heavyweight, over 11.0, J Burn.*

In 1949, the Ratten Belt for the heavyweight boxing championship was won by W Craig who defeated BA Findlay. That year there were ninety-one entries in the competition. Results in other divisions included: Gnatweight semi-final – G Peck d P Keam. Final – Peck d Armitage. Midgetweight semi-finals – Radford d Bell, G Ridge d Willoughby (wo). Final – Ridge d Radford. Bantamweight semi-finals – AR Gunther d Clements, I Stephens d Cresswell. Final – Gunther d Stephens. Featherweight semi-finals – D Croome d Holloway, Lovell d R Archer. Final – Croome d Lovell. Lightweight final – PE Rae d DR Stephens.<sup>151</sup>

The art of boxing was also part of the preparatory school, little Grammar, in High Street and in 1954 two classmates Roger Halliwell and Christopher Cohen slugged it out in the school boxing championships.

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<sup>149</sup> *Examiner*, 30 April 1943, p. 4

<sup>150</sup> *Examiner*, 30 September 1948, p.10

<sup>151</sup> *Examiner*, 17 September 1949, p. 8

The *Mercury*<sup>152</sup> reported:

*Good standard in school boxing*

*Finalists in the Launceston Church Grammar School boxing championship were of a high standard, the referee (Mr AJ McGaw) said.*

*The finals were judged by Messrs C Hampton and M Donoghue. Forty-five boys competed in the championships. Elimination bouts were held during the week.*

*Last night's results were:*

*Preparatory school: R Halliwell d C. Cohen, on points; gnatweight, R Sankey d R Seymour, pts; mosquito, P Anderson d P Lawrence, pts; fly, J Parish d B Powell; bantam, R Cutts d W Woolcock, tko; feather, div 1, C Coy d I Cutts, wo; div 2, RT Banham d J Costello, pts; div 3, GP Thomas d J Bracken, pts; special bout, W Moore d R Wyly, pts.*

This I believe was the last boxing competition held at either the preparatory school or the senior school at Mowbray.

The finals of the annual boxing championships at the school were decided in the school gymnasium annually, the preliminary contests having always being held earlier in the week. There was always good attendance of parents and friends, and the standard of the bouts which were always an improvement on those of previous years reflecting great credit on the school instructor, Sergeant A 'Nutty' Robinson. The bouts consisted of three two-minute rounds and were contested in weight divisions.

The 'Launcestonian'<sup>153</sup> also recorded the last boxing competition at the school in 1954. No subsequent Launcestonians had any mention of boxing:

*Quite a large number of boys enrolled for boxing lessons in the second term under the instruction of Mr McGaw. Due to the fact that the only time in the week available for boxing lessons was Thursday afternoon, when the cadets were on parade ... most of the pupils were juniors. However, they lack nothing in enthusiasm and this year, some of the prep schoolboys have been staying back to take lessons .... The finals of the boxing tournament were held on Friday, 13th August, in the gym, the result being as follows:*

*Prep School Championship – Halliwell d Cohen*

*Gnat Weight – Sankey drew with Seymour*

*Mosquito Weight – Anderson d F Lawrence*

*Fly Weight – Parish d Powell, tko*

*Bantam Weight – Cutts d Woolcock, tko*

*Featherweight Division I – Coy d I Cutts*

*Featherweight Division II – Banham d Costello*

*Featherweight Division III – Thomas d Bracken*

*The evening was rounded off by an unofficial bout between Wyly and Moore which caused quite a lot of amusement.*

In 1957, the school welcomed Mr McLeod who succeeded Mr Rowland as master of the junior school. McLeod was a keen sportsman and had gained his boxing blue at his old school, Nelson College in Auckland, New Zealand. During this time, over four years, he had won seven weight divisions and a cup for the most scientific boxer. His skills were never progressed at Grammar.<sup>154</sup>

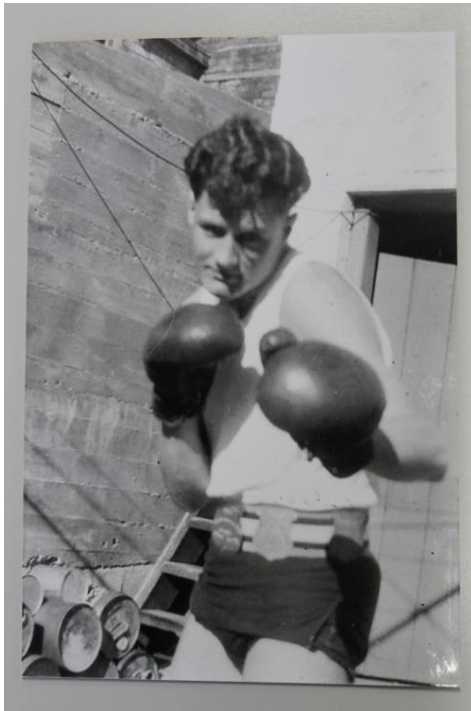
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<sup>152</sup> *Mercury*, 14 August 1954, p 31

<sup>153</sup> 'Launcestonian', 1954

<sup>154</sup> 'Launcestonian', June 1957, p. 7

David Youngman, the winner of the Ratten Belt in 1950, wrote a letter to the school in July 2017,<sup>155</sup> which was published in the alumni newsletter under the title 'A Letter from David Youngman'.



*Old boy David Youngman (Class of 1950) wearing the Ratten Belt, poised outside in the yard at the Orient Hotel.*

### **David Youngman**

I was at school from 1942-1950, and fought for the heavy weight title in 1950 – the final against David Pearn (Class of 1952), a boarder from Ulverstone, when I won the Ratten Belt (shown in the photo, which was taken in the yard of our pub, the Orient Hotel, Wellington Street, Launceston, now the Pizza Pub).

We qualified through other bouts in the old school gymnasium to contest the title over three by three-minute rounds in a roped-off ring on bare-board flooring, which was in hindsight quite dangerous, as per the regulations for ring boxing then, as now. If you were knocked down and your head hit the flooring, it could have very serious consequences, as you can imagine.

It may be of interest when I did my national service in Brighton in 1952, there were over 300 national servicemen there. I was fortunate to win the title there in their Boxing Championships and the three and a half mile cross country as well. Oh, to be eighteen again!

Most of my boxing was learnt from books and a gymnasium we rigged up at home at the Orient Hotel, with a punching bag, speed-ball and skipping rope.

Thank you for your interest; it has revived for me a few memories of long ago.

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<sup>155</sup> Alumni e-Newsletter, July 2017

## Cadets

The first record of the Grammar School cadet corps was made in 1885 for the school magazine, the 'Paidophone'. It refers to a corps in 1885 of forty to fifty members which disbanded after six months. It expressed the opinion that the training the boys were getting would help to resist Her Majesty's enemies should trouble occur at that time. The only impact of war on the school had been the attendance of the first headmaster, Henry Plow Kane, at meetings in Launceston to discuss aid for the widows of British soldiers killed in the Crimean War.<sup>156</sup>

Another corps was raised in 1906, and it participated in the school's sixtieth anniversary celebrations.<sup>157</sup> Events were to prove that old boys of the school would be called upon to defend the Empire in three wars, and the cadet corps was thus an important phase of schoolboy activity.



It was at this time that it was suggested at a meeting of teachers and others interested in the formation of cadet corps under the new Commonwealth scheme of organisations that Colonel McKenzie suggested the necessity that the cadets of each company, or school, should have a distinctive badge that would be attached to the collar of the tunic, so as to give that esprit de corps that was so essential.<sup>158</sup>

In 1915, a military cadets association was formed in Launceston inclusive of private and state schools.

Several headmasters with military service were quite influential in the development of the school cadet corps in more ways than one. In Sir Raymond Ferrall's autobiography, *90 Years On: A Tasmanian Story*, he describes the passion of Bethune, the demise of Adams and the popularity of Roff.

When Ray Ferrall joined the School Board in 1934, it was presided over by Colonel George Harrap along with Board member General William Martin. Both these doughty old soldiers were of a parade ground era in bygone days and, like Harrap, Martin was a man with tremendous sense of responsibility towards his old school.

When John Walter Bethune resigned his headmastership in 1928, his successor Frederick Reginald Adams, took office in 1929. The two men were the direct antithesis of each other, Bethune, the first old boy headmaster, had been an AIF chaplain, understood men and boys as no others could, and in his ten years of office doubled the numbers at the school. Adams too had served in World War I, but unlike Bethune the fierce patriot, his role was that of a pacifist, though both men had a deep sense of religion. The school had a strong martial background and an unsurpassed war record. Bethune had built up the cadet corps to splendid heights. Because of his personal beliefs, Adams' attitude was one of complete pacifism and he sought to reduce the school's proud corps to a state of negligibility.

There was discussion by the Board of Trustees about the re-formation of the cadet corps and at a meeting 13 June 1932, Colonel Harrap offered to donate the chevrons and badges for the new uniforms if a corps was formed. It was also noted that cadet uniforms would cost £3 each.

In October 1933, a Board minute<sup>159</sup> noted: "PB Hopwood read letter from WT Conder that Platoon might consist of twenty. It was arranged that GC Harrap should see if it could be attached to the artillery and the Secretary was instructed to see if the Board could ascertain from JC Harris (Master of Hutchins) why the Hutchins School cadet corps ceased."

This did not sit well with the majority of old boys who had fought in World War I. Ferrall, who was quite young and new to the School's Board management could see that there was disaster

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<sup>156</sup> *Mercury*, 6 June 1946, p. 2

<sup>157</sup> *Advocate*, 15 June 1946, p.7

<sup>158</sup> *Examiner*, 18 June 1906, p. 5

<sup>159</sup> Board Minute, 16 October 1933

on the horizon, with the school headmaster and its old boys battling against each other on the question of the demise of the school's cadet corps.

Ferrall further explained that Colonel Harrap had the unenviable task of telling Adams that he had to go. Harrap did his best to avoid the unpleasant duty, suggesting that a letter would be more appropriate. His colleagues disagreed and with great reluctance the elderly chairman conveyed the decision to Adams, who subsequently resigned. Adams was a likeable fellow and was also popular with the boys at the school. However, he just did not fit into the Grammar mould and it was desirable to get the matter settled quickly before it turned into a nasty situation.

In 1934, there was a push by the Old Launcestonians to re-establish the school cadet corps. In the past cadet training had been of inestimable value to the boys themselves and to the school. The old boys were not concerned how the corps was formed but were mainly interested in the principle involved and the effect the creation of the corps would have on the boys who, in a few years, would be citizens occupying responsible positions.

The *Examiner* reported:<sup>160</sup>

*... In many schools today it is complained that it is not so easy as in earlier years to make the school and school activities the main things in a boy's life. There are so many outside distractions that, at an age when he should be all for his school, a boy too often has a greater interest outside. Anything which will help to focus his attention on his school, and to increase his school spirit, is to be commended. The school cadet corps, it has been found, helps very materially in this regard; but great as is the benefit to the boy himself when he possesses a true school spirit, that is only one of the reasons why we support the movement. There are two other factors which appeal to us. On the one hand, there is the moral improvement to be found in a boy when he learns, through membership of a cadet corps, the benefit of discipline; and on the other there is the physical benefit which comes to him from the military exercises in which he takes part. One of the difficulties in bringing up a boy is to demonstrate to him that the discipline to which he is subjected is something which is imposed for his ultimate benefit, and is not a ruse adopted by his elders to give them peace and quiet. It seems to us the school and the community has everything to gain and nothing to lose by fostering the scheme outlined by the Old Launcestonians.*

However, just prior to this, in 1934, the school cadet corps saw a revival and reformation of the Grammar School cadet corps which was facilitated by the interest of Major GWB Clare, MM, an old boy attached to the military barracks in Launceston as commanding officer of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery. The first commanding officer of the newly formed cadet corps was Lieutenant RE Ward, and the instructors were Warrant Officers Bashford and Welch.

The *Advocate* reported:<sup>161</sup>

*Cadet Corps at Launceston Grammar School.*

*LAUNCESTON, Tuesday. Old scholars of the Launceston Church Grammar School will be interested to know that, following the suggestion made some time ago, the Board of management has decided to form a cadet corps at the school. Negotiations are proceeding with the military authorities, and it is expected that in the near future an announcement as to the type of uniform to be worn will be made.*

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<sup>160</sup> *Examiner*, 8 March 1934, p. 6

<sup>161</sup> *Advocate*, 8 August 1934, p. 2

It is interesting to note that the uniform adopted for the corps consisted of a navy jacket with red collar, bearing the school badge, and with school colour patches. The breeches were khaki, black boots and leggings with a glengarry cap, trimmed with blue and white braid. Basil Rait in his book *1846-1946 The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School*, 1946, said that fifty boys enrolled and the first official appearance of the corps was on the visit of the new Governor of Tasmania, Sir Ernest Clark in May 1934.<sup>162</sup>

This was his first visit to the Launceston Church Grammar School, and the Governor, Sir Ernest Clark, made a thorough inspection of the buildings after which he addressed the scholars, and presented the prefects and monitors with their badges.

In 1935, the *Mercury* reported:<sup>163</sup>

*The headmaster, Mr FB Adams presented His Excellency with a prefect's badge, which the Governor pinned to the lapel of his coat. The school cadet corps, which is attached to the 16th Field Battery, was on parade in uniform for the first time. "It is a smartly turned-out corps," said the Governor, "and a credit to the school." His Excellency planted a tree in the school grounds.*

*... He inspected the cadet corps, accompanied by Colonel GE Harrap, Captain EE von Bibra (Mayor of Launceston) and the headmaster. There were nearly fifty boys in uniform. ... The school badge is embossed on the buttons of the jacket, and is also on the red collar and the blue cap. The school colours (blue, black and white) are on each shoulder. Mr BE Ward had charge of the corps.*

On his departure, the Governor eulogised the appearance of the cadet corps and reminded its members that although it might be irksome sometimes, it was a good thing for boys to get into uniform and be disciplined. He went on to say:

*You are inheritors of great traditions. This old school has had a wonderful history, and you are the ones who are carrying on the traditions laid down by your forebears. A precious heritage has been left in your keeping. Twenty or thirty years from now some of you may be governing this rather wonderful school. You will be called upon to play your part in the life of the community. Tasmania is a most loyal and devoted part of the Empire. It played its part nobly in the war, and in the anxious years after. I hope you boys will preserve your liberty, for no one knows what a great possession liberty is till one is in danger of losing it.*

He then asked the headmaster, through the School Board, to grant the boys a half-holiday.

Replacing Adams in 1936 was Norman Hollingdale Roff, who was cast more in the mould of Bethune. In later years, Roff lost his life whilst leading a charge of Australians against the Japanese in Timor in World War II. In Roff's first annual speech night he spoke highly of the cadet corps:

*... The cadet corps has progressed with its training this year and was inspected twice during the year – once by the State Commandant (Col EM Williams), and once by the director of senior cadet training (Col J Alderson). Both officers commented very favourably on the smart turn-out and bearing of the cadets. The senior NCOs have been given more opportunities for instructional work, and it is our aim to carry out the bulk of the training and instruction through our own NCOs. The experience gained by handling and instructing small squads of cadets should be valuable to any boy. I am sorry to have to say that our cadet corps is not as large as it should be. It is a recognised school institution, and quite apart from its value to the nation, it is a very important asset to the school. By hiring*

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<sup>162</sup> Basil W Rait, *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School*, 1946, p. 198

<sup>163</sup> *Mercury*, 15 May 1935, p. 7

*uniforms to the boys, we have made membership of the cadet corps less of a financial burden to parents.*

John Morris remembered the corps and describes the uniform in the early 1940s having changed to khaki and remarked that cadets were not compulsory. Cadets went to a number of camps and officer camps, which at that time were extended to Air Force Cadets and Naval Cadets, and a Scout troop was started. Those who were not in a cadet unit when the war had begun were in another non-military type of work, like community service.

In 1940, on the occasion of the Launceston Regatta, the LCGS cadet corps provided the guard of honour for the Governor Sir Ernest Clark and Lady Clark when his Excellency officially opened the regatta.<sup>164</sup>

When it came to competition the LCGS cadet corps was up there with the best in the Empire as is attested in this report in 1947:<sup>165</sup>

*Tas. Cadets Score*

*Six out of the first eight places in Australia have been gained in competition by Tasmanian cadets. They were competing in the Empire competitions for the King George V trophy and the Imperial Challenge Shield. A total of 79 Australian cadet troops took part.*

*Among the Australians, the first award went to the Hobart High School, whose troop won the Governor-General's trophy. Others were: Launceston Church Grammar School, 2; Launceston High School, 3; St. Patrick's College, Launceston, 6; Launceston Technical College, 7; Hutchins School, Hobart, 8.*

*... In the Australian competition, four cadets qualified for the title of Empire marksmen. Three came from Tasmania. They were AB Russell (Launceston Church Grammar School), H Whybrow (Launceston High), and JR Ward (Hutchins School). Twelve, including nine from Tasmania, earned the classification of first-class shots. These included: A Hardy, D Stephens (Launceston Church Grammar), DB Rose (Launceston High) and BF Ingles (Launceston Technical School).*

The interhouse shooting competition in the 1940s was held on the school's twenty-five yard range. The TB McLeod Trophy for the best shot was keenly contested as was the interhouse platoon drill competition. The trophy was a cup won by the school in the early 1940s for a similar competition.<sup>166</sup> In 1945, the cadet corps increased in numbers from eighty-seven to 108 making up three platoons.

### **Peter Mercer has some vivid memories of cadets in the mid to late 1940s**

After our small nation of 7.5 million had experienced two devastating world wars, military training while still at school was considered important, particularly in the late 1940s as the threat of world communist domination was rearing its ugly head. Most public schools had their cadet corps and some, like Launceston Grammar, dated back to the 19th century. Grammar's cadet corps was founded in 1885. Military training was also considered good for the mind and body promoting discipline and comradeship. So, when you reached the age of thirteen, it was compulsory to join the school military cadet corps. Every Thursday after school there was the weekly parade which lasted an hour and a half. This was obligatory to attend unless you had a really good excuse. Although I liked cadets better than sport, I did not really appreciate the benefits of the training. I still found it all rather aimless and a bit of a drag. I did my duty and regularly attended the parades although I had absolutely no ambition to become a soldier. It was one of the last jobs or professions that I would have liked to take on. The thought of having to go to fight and possibly get killed or even worse, to have to kill someone else, filled me with

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<sup>164</sup> *Examiner*, 24 January 1940, p. 6

<sup>165</sup> *Examiner*, 7 February 1947, p. 1

<sup>166</sup> 'Launcestonian', No 61 (New series), December 1948



horror. Moreover, I did not enjoy being regimented, given orders I had to instantly obey and being generally bossed around by my superiors.

At the beginning of each school year cadets were measured for size and issued with a kit comprising tan boots, khaki webbing gaiters and a webbing belt, which had to be kept a sparkling white with Blanco and the polished brass clasps ever shiny. Brown trousers, button up to the neck tunic, greatcoat and slouch hat completed the uniform. These were issued with a kit bag that was kept at home and handed in with the equipment at the end of each year. Every Thursday I would dress up in my military uniform and hop on the trams for school. In winter, the uniform was comfortably warm but unpleasantly hot in summer. After the last class for the day we would go around to the little armoury at the back of the boarding houses to be issued with a .303 rifle dating back to the Boer War and assemble in platoons on the main oval in front of the gymnasium. After the parade, the rifles would be returned to the armoury.

The commanding officers during my time were Captain Churcher, Captain AAK Gifford, also the physical education master, and Lieutenant Colonel LP Le Marchand from the Army reserve. At first MAP Mattingley was second in command with the rank of lieutenant and when he left AT (Trevor) 'Tadpole' Sorell succeeded him. He was first given the rank of lieutenant and then later captain.

There were four platoons. Each was commanded by a cadet lieutenant or under officer. He was a senior boy, who had been promoted through the ranks because of his leadership qualities. Each platoon also had a cadet sergeant and a corporal for each section. The WO was the formidable Sergeant Major Dwyer, who came out regularly from the Launceston Army Barracks to drill us and try and make soldiers out of us. With boys like me to train he definitely had a challenge!

We would first be paraded and drilled by getting into line with the order "Eyes left!" "Attention!" "Present arms!" "Slope arms!" and "Quick march!" "Eft right, 'eft right", then around the oval and the school drives to the rhythm of the school cadet drum band. I had great trouble in keeping in step and often I would have 'Sar' Major Dwyer breathing down my neck saying, "Get into step there Mercer, 'eft right, 'eft right, 'eft right." At the end of the march it would be "Platoon halt!" "Order arms!" "At ease!" "Stand easy!" For punishment, it was once or twice running around the main oval with your rifle raised above your head. It was most unenjoyable. By the time you had completed your sentence, the pain to your shoulders was excruciating.

As a cadet corps private, rifle practice was the thing of which I was most terrified and eventually I ran out of excuses not to go to the rifle range. Some of the .303 rifles in firing order were reduced to .22 calibre and down amongst the gorse and blackberries on the bank below the school was a miniature .22 rifle range. When I knew I had to go there to do rifle practice it was like facing the end of the world for me. I was absolutely terrified. Days before I had sleepless nights in fear of it and trying to work out a way to dodge it. But, the fateful day arrived and trembling I went down the bank with the other boys, positioned my gun and fired. The noise was scary but not as bad as I had imagined and I wasn't such a bad shot. That was one high mountain I had climbed over one and survived. But a month or so later, we had to go out to the army rifle range at Ravenswood to have target practice with .303s. Again, I was very apprehensive for I was well aware that they made a much louder report than .22s. I was also told that they kicked violently and if you did not hold them in the right position they could dislocate your shoulder. This increased my apprehension. Again, I went along in fear and trembling with the tension mounting as the day wore on. Nearly all day we had to wait for our section to get the opportunity and there was absolutely no getting out of it. I knew among all things that I would never make a soldier. I was too much of an out and out coward. Trembling, I lay myself in position next to my comrades and on the order to fire, pulled the trigger. No ear protection was provided in those days and the bang was deafening. My head was ringing and the kick shook me so much that I fired off the rest of the magazine in a state of shock. In the process, I destroyed one of the marker boards that showed you how accurate you were and was

reprimanded for this. But, like every mountain to climb, the act of facing up to it and doing it made it soon become a molehill. It was not at all pleasant but I had survived and I could face up to it and do it again. Slowly I learnt that dodging seemingly unpleasant and scary things only made matters worse. Gradually I realised that facing them head on and conquering them was the only way to get through life. I proved it on that day. Once I had fired my first .303 I had no further fear of it, although I did not enjoy it.

In 1949 and 1950 I went rather reluctantly to the annual northern schools' cadet camp at Brighton. This was held during the September holidays. While my father was alive I had escaped this fear, because I was terrified of the bullies and the terrible things I had heard that boys did to each other at camp. But when my half-brother, Stewart, a World War II veteran, came home to look after us following the death of my father, he thought that it would be character building for me to go. Unknown to me at the time, the bullies were warned off molesting me in any way under pain of severe punishment. Being the cowards that they usually are, they relented. So, I was under protection and I had an interesting, trouble-free ten days.

We all set off in our uniforms with our kit bags from the old Launceston railway station at Inveresk in a Tasmanian Government Railways steam train in old-fashioned 'dog box' carriages. On this type of carriage there were no connecting internal corridors. Each compartment opened from the outside and was self-contained. So, once you were in the carriage compartment, that was it. You stayed there until the next stop. If you needed to have a pee in the interim, too bad, you had to hold on. But this compartment configuration did not stop some dare devil boys from St Patrick's College from swinging along the outside of the train from compartment to compartment, making heroes of themselves to us all. I was not so convinced. I was terrified they would slip and kill themselves.

Although the boarders would not have found the spartan conditions much different from those they were used to at school, the accommodation at the Brighton Camp was in long unlined huts with rows of stretchers on each side equipped with straw palliasses, a pillow and a pair of dark grey woollen blankets. Pillowcases and sheets were not provided so we slept in the blankets on the bare pillow. Not very hygienic. How many other bodies had slept in them since they were last laundered did not bear thinking about. The days were mostly sunny but cool and the nights cold and frosty. The blankets fortunately were adequate to keep us warm although our noses got a trifle icy.

In the mess hall we sat down to good basic food on enamel and tin plates with our own forks and pannikins supplied from our kits. After our meal, we washed our utensils and put them back in our kit bag for the next meal. Some meals were good and others not so good. One day the lunch was not the best and most of us tipped half of it out into the slop bins. For the evening meal, we were dished up a stew, which probably tasted OK but looked just like the stuff in the slop bins we had discarded for lunch. Most of us went hungry that night.

To preserve our uniforms, we were each issued with light khaki cotton fatigues or battle dress, popularly referred to as 'giggle suits.' How they came to be called that I never found out. Each day there were various instruction programs organised by military personnel. One was instruction in the use of Bren machine gun. Then a day or so later we were given the opportunity to fire them at the rifle range at Pontville. To get there we were route marched from the camp along the main highway. When our platoon arrived at the bridge at Pontville we were all told to get out of step while crossing what was then a wooden structure to avoid damage. It was an interesting practical lesson in physics we learnt that day.

Another day we were engaged in a mock battle on a hill behind the camp and our cadet sergeant led us ineptly into the crossfire of both sides. If it had been the real thing, we would have all been killed. As it turned out the inhalation of the smoke from the blanks and smoke bombs did not assist our lungs. Other camp activities were documentary films on combat and the need to maintain good hygiene and health while in the war zone.

Back at school in Launceston, every Anzac Day we would assemble on the main oval for a parade in remembrance of the fallen in both world wars. The parade of 25<sup>th</sup> April 1951 was one I will never forget. It was an unusually warm sunny morning and the cadet CO, Lieut Colonel P le Marchand, had invited Major General Wordsworth to give the address to the boys. He had hardly started when a cadet gave a gasp and fainted in the ranks. Once one had collapsed that was it. More cadets followed in rapid succession. It was a surreal feeling, like being under enemy fire with bodies falling and lying on the ground and others swaying in an effort to keep on their feet. Fainting, like vomiting, is very infectious. You wonder why you are still on your feet when others have fallen and then you start to feel you are going to faint yourself. I did feel I was going to follow them but I managed to hold on, albeit rather unsteadily. About five minutes into his speech General Wordsworth gave up. The CO hastily dismissed the survivors of the corps and efforts were then made to resuscitate the casualties.<sup>167</sup>

In 1949, colours were presented to the school by Lt-Col Burford Sampson. The *Examiner* reported:<sup>168</sup>

*COLOURS PRESENTED AT GRAMMAR. ONE OF the most impressive cadet corps parades held in Launceston was seen at the Grammar School yesterday when Lt-Col Burford Sampson presented colours to the Corps.*

*CONSISTING of the Australian colours and the Union Jack, they were presented to the school corps by the old boys' association in memory of the late Captain NH Roff, a former headmaster of the school who lost his life in the fighting on Timor. Nearly 140 officers and other ranks took part in the ceremony, which was watched by a large attendance of parents and friends. Before the presentation of the colours a special Anzac Day service was conducted by the school chaplain (Rev SC Brammall) on the school oval. The official party consisted of the headmaster (Mr H Vernon Jones), Col Burford Sampson, Col GAD Youl, former OC of the 2/40 Battalion, under whom Captain Roff served early in the war; Lieut Keogh, OC 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Australian Cadet Corps (Northern Tasmania); Mr John Gunn, president of the Launceston sub-branch of the RSL; Lieut RJ Bain, and Rev SC Brammall. The colours were received by Cadet Lieutenants W Craig and R Carter. Col Sampson, who made the presentation, said the colours were an expression of gratitude made by the old boys of the school in memory of Captain Roff, who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the fighting against the Japanese. "Tradition is a great and wonderful thing, and the tradition of our race and our school is a proud heritage which we must strive to retain at all times," said Col Sampson.*

Later in the year, the interhouse cadet contest was won by Gillett-Wilkinson. The results were reported in the *Examiner*:<sup>169</sup>

*Gillett-Wilkinson house won the Launceston Grammar School's annual interhouse cadet contest yesterday. The house detachment scored 170½ points. Savigny was second with 161 and Hawkes third, scoring 159 points. Adjudicators were W/O AJ Taylor, brigade sergeant-major for Tasmania, and Lieut RF Keogh, commander of the 34<sup>th</sup> Cadet Battalion. Both judges were pleased with the standard of drill, which they said was higher than ever before. Marching and general execution of arms drill were very good. The band was also praised. The competition was based on the Hoad trophy drill. The Grammar detachment won this trophy at Brighton earlier in the year for the first time. School cadets also won the northern Earl Roberts shooting trophy. The OC of the corps, Capt AAK*

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<sup>167</sup> From Peter Mercer's, *A Brush from the Past*, Hobart, 2017, pp. 64-71

<sup>168</sup> *Examiner*, 26 April 1949, p. 2

<sup>169</sup> *Examiner*, 4 November 1949, p. 8

*Gifford, was farewelled by the headmaster, Mr HV Jones. Capt Gifford said he thought the cadets had the right spirit towards their training.*

In the early and mid 1950s the cadet corps flourished and featured a school cadet band. Remembering that cadets at Grammar was compulsory, Alexander<sup>170</sup> describes this as “sounding like dying cats, screaming ghosts and bellowing cattle, as buglers ardently tried to make themselves perfect.” However, in retrospect it did improve their marching.

The major feature of each year was the annual Brighton camp in southern Tasmania but cadets found the discipline extremely tough where successive commanding officers taught that obedience always brought success, and emphasised drill, smartness, shooting and esprit de corps.

In 1953, a field exercise was reported in *The Examiner*:<sup>171</sup>

*More than 150 Launceston Church Grammar School pupils spent yesterday away from their desks ‘shooting’ one another in the hills behind Rocherlea.*

*... The boys were taking part in a field exercise in which they carried .303 rifles and blank ammunition. Intended to give the boys a basic idea of field craft, the exercise was voted a complete success. The officer commanding the detachment Captain AT Sorell said it had given cadet officers and NCOs an opportunity of exercising command in the field. The exercise had also taught the rank and file troops the all-importance of complete obedience under such conditions, he added. The detachment was split into two recruit platoons, which learnt elementary field craft, and two senior platoons, members of which took part in attacking exercises. A distinguished visitor to the ‘battle’ area during the day was the Commander, Tasmania Command Brigadier Hurley. Brigadier Hurley inspected the platoons shortly before they left to commence the afternoon exercise. He took a keen interest in all the boys and questioned many of them as to where they came from, what sports they played and how long they had been in the cadet force. Of school cadet training, Brigadier Hurley commented: “I’m all for it.” This opinion seemed to be shared by all of the boys on the exercise who, during the lunch hour, were eagerly discussing battle tactics and the ‘shooting’ prowess of their platoon. Also in the field yesterday, though operating apart from the cadets, were Boy Scouts and Cubs attached to the school.*

Under the eye of ‘Jika’ Travers, the cadet corps saw major improvement. For five consecutive years a Grammar cadet won the Bisdee Trophy for the best potential under-officer in Tasmania and the corps frequently won the Commander’s Cup for the most efficient drill squad. There was also a branch of the Air Training Corps of which the annual camp was held at Fort Direction. It was an eight-hour train journey south with busing into the camp. Subsequent years the annual camp was held at Brighton.

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<sup>170</sup> A. Alexander, *Blue Black and White: History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*

<sup>171</sup> *Examiner*, 2 May 1953, p. 3

## LCGS Cadet Drum Band – Brighton Camp – 1949



In 1953, the *Examiner* reported:<sup>172</sup>

*Field Exercise for Cadets November 1954*<sup>173</sup>

In 1954, the school cadet corps won the Commander's Cup, awarded to the cadet unit with the best drill squad in Tasmania.<sup>174</sup>



<sup>172</sup> *Examiner*, 2 May 1953, p. 3

<sup>173</sup> *Examiner*, 26 November 1954, p. 5

<sup>174</sup> *Examiner*, 2 November 1954, p. 5



*Owen Carington Smith took this photograph of Garnet Gourlay on a field day in December 1959, which epitomises the cold war period when cadets was a disguise for quasi-full army training, Owen comments that cadets were a big part of school and compulsory.*

By the early to mid 1960s it was not compulsory to join cadets and they were eventually phased out of the school.

## 1962



## Bells

Bells are one of the oldest percussion instruments and managed to spread across Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the rest of the world with incredible speed and popularity. Their unique ability to produce strong sounds that can reach vast distances was used by numerous cultures and ancient civilisations as a mean of communication and later as a musical instrument.

Popularisation of bells in western culture started in the 5th century AD in Italy where Benedictine monks in the Campana region learnt how to cast iron and create bells that were shaped much differently than the modern church bells. The knowledge of bell-making travelled across European churches during the next few centuries, eventually reaching all corners of Europe. One of the most important moments in the popularisation of church bells happened in 8th century, when an English saint by the name of Bede first introduced the tradition of ringing bells at funerals. Only one century later, bells became integrated into rites and rituals of all churches across the lands that were once under the rule of the western Roman Empire. The other regions of Europe that were under the rule of the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Europe) were slow in adopting bells. Instead, they were used to the sound of the *semantrons* (narrow hand-held wooden slats that were hit up and down with hammers which produced loud rhythmic sound).

By the 17th century, people started seeing that bells could be used as sophisticated musical instruments. Brothers Francois and Pierre Hemony of Belgium and the Netherlands were the first who managed to achieve this, creating bells that can produce five distinct tones.

Today, bells are used all around the world, in both religious ceremonies, music and various cultural events.

### The School Bell

The school bell that rang out denoting class changes, recess, lunch and the end of the school day during 1940-1965 was a bell installed in 1932 that had graced the World War I submarine *J1*, decommissioned and dismantled at Williams Town Docks, Victoria in 1924 and sunk outside Port Phillip Heads in 1926.

The Examiner reported:<sup>175</sup>

*EVENTFUL DAYS Story of a Bell Now at Grammar School. The bell which was used at the Launceston Grammar School to signal the end of each lesson was recently rendered useless. Now, through the agency of Major WT Conder, of Melbourne, a bell of historic interest and nautical design has been procured, and will be used for the first time on September 24, during the annual Grammar School athletic sports. Captain Cyril Benson, RN, DSO, formerly second naval member of the Naval Board, and captain-superintendent of training, Flinders Island Depot, recently forwarded to Major Conder a bell which used to grace HMA submarine J1. "I trust that this bell, the fierce adventures through which it has phased, the courage, loyalty, and devotion which it has witnessed, and of which it is a symbol, may prove a continuing source of inspiration to the boys of the school," says Major Conder in a covering letter to the headmaster of the Grammar School (Mr FR Adams). ...On the bell is a rather quaint inscription: 'Ha! Ha! Ha! He! He! He! I can see you, but you can't see me.' – The submarine J1 was the first of seven built under the Emergency War Programme. She was of a larger type than any which had, up till that time, been built for the Royal Navy, and was then the fastest diesel-driven vessel in the world. Her displacement was: surface, 1260 tons; submerged, 1820 tons; and she had a speed of 19 knots on the surface, and 9.5 knots submerged. The vessel was laid down at Portsmouth dockyards in April, 1915, launched in the following November, and completed in*

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<sup>175</sup> Examiner, 17 September 1932, p. 9

*April. 1916. War History of J1. The J1 first saw service in the North Sea, and on November 5, 1916, while on patrol off Horn's Reef, in the area where the battle of Jutland had been fought some months earlier, sighted four German dreadnought battleships steaming in line. She fired four torpedoes hitting the Grosser Kurfurst (21,800 tons) and her sister ship, the Kronprinz (25,800 tons). Though both ships were seriously damaged, they managed to reach harbour, but were out of action for some months. This was the only occasion in the war on which two battleships were torpedoed in one attack, and it is interesting to note that of the five hits made on the German dreadnoughts by submarines during the war Commander Laurence (who was in charge of the J1) was responsible for three. He was awarded the bar to the DSO for this exploit. It may also be remarked that the German Commander-in-Chief (Admiral von Scheer) was censured by the Kaiser after this incident for hazarding his ships. Later in the war the J1 was employed on patrol work in the Atlantic, south of Ireland. She and all her sister ships came through the war safely except the J6, which was sunk off the Irish coast. Presented to Australia In March, 1919. The J1 was, together with the five other J boats, presented by the British Government to Australia. She arrived in Australia in July 1919 under the command of Lieutenant RA Trevor, RN, being employed in the submarine flotilla commanded by Captain EC Boyle, VC, RN. This flotilla was originally based at Osborne House, Geelong, the first site of the Royal Australian Naval College. The vessels composing it were, on the score of economy, gradually paid off, and were finally scrapped. The J1 was dismantled at Williamstown in 1924, and in 1926 sunk outside Port Phillip Heads. The historic bell which rang out the changes of watches in those eventful days of the Great War, will now ring out the change of classes for another generation.*

The Examiner reported:<sup>176177</sup>

*ATHLETICS GRAMMAR SCHOOL SPORTS The annual athletic sports of the Launceston Church Grammar School will be held at the school oval this afternoon, commencing at 2 o'clock. During the interval the bell from the submarine J1 will be officially rung for the first time by Mr Angus McKenzie, RN Bell Officially Run.g During an interval at the Grammar School sports on Saturday afternoon the bell from the submarine J1 was officially rung for the first time by Mr Angus McKenzie, RN. Mr McKenzie was introduced by the headmaster (Mr FR Adams), who said that the school had again to thank Major WT Conder for obtaining the bell. Before ringing the bell Mr McKenzie said that he had served on board a 'mystery' ship, submarine hunting, during the war, and he could testify to the courage of the men serving on the underwater craft. The inscription, on the bell, which was read out before the official ringing, also demonstrated the courage of the submarine sailor. The bell was rung at 4 o'clock, and Mr McKenzie sounded "eight bells," which is the sailor's 4 o'clock.*

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<sup>176</sup> Examiner, 24 September 1932, p. 3

<sup>177</sup> Examiner, 26 September 1932, p. 6



*The Mercury* reported:<sup>178</sup>

*“...Mr Adams, in introducing Mr McKenzie, said that the donation of the bell to the school had been made possible by the kind efforts of Major WT Conder, another old boy of the school, and it was but another effort on the part of the old boys to preserve association with their school. It was fitting that Mr McKenzie should perform the ceremony that afternoon, as he had been engaged during the war on a mystery ship chasing enemy submarines. Another reason why it was fitting that Mr McKenzie should have been asked to unveil the bell was because he was an old boy of the school, as was his father before him, and he had a son a scholar at the school*

There was major concern in 2016 when enquires about this bell found that it had disappeared.



*Searching: Launceston Church Grammar School old boys Barry Larter, Rob Dowling, Peter Herbert, John Heazlewood and Ian Millen, with archive research assistant Kim Nielsen-Creeley, show where the school’s bell hung.*

*The Examiner* reported:<sup>179</sup>

*The search for the long-lost Launceston Church Grammar School bell is ramping up as a group of determined old boys come together to solve the mystery. The tale of the school bell started long ago when Captain Cyril Benson from the Flinders Naval Base donated the item to the school.*

*The bell hung in the school for decades and was rung to signal the end of classes, inscribed with the words ‘Ha! Ha! Ha! He! He! He! I can see you, but you can’t see me’ and ‘J1’, from the J-class submarine it came from.*

*After years of use, the bell mysteriously went missing during construction works many years ago and has not been seen since. Old boy Barry Larter said the bell was a very important and symbolic part of the school and its return would mean a lot to those who once heard it ring. “Everyone remembers the bell. It’s part of the significant history of the school,” Mr Larter said.*

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<sup>178</sup> *Mercury*, 26 September 1932, p. 5

<sup>179</sup> *Examiner*, 21 August 2016

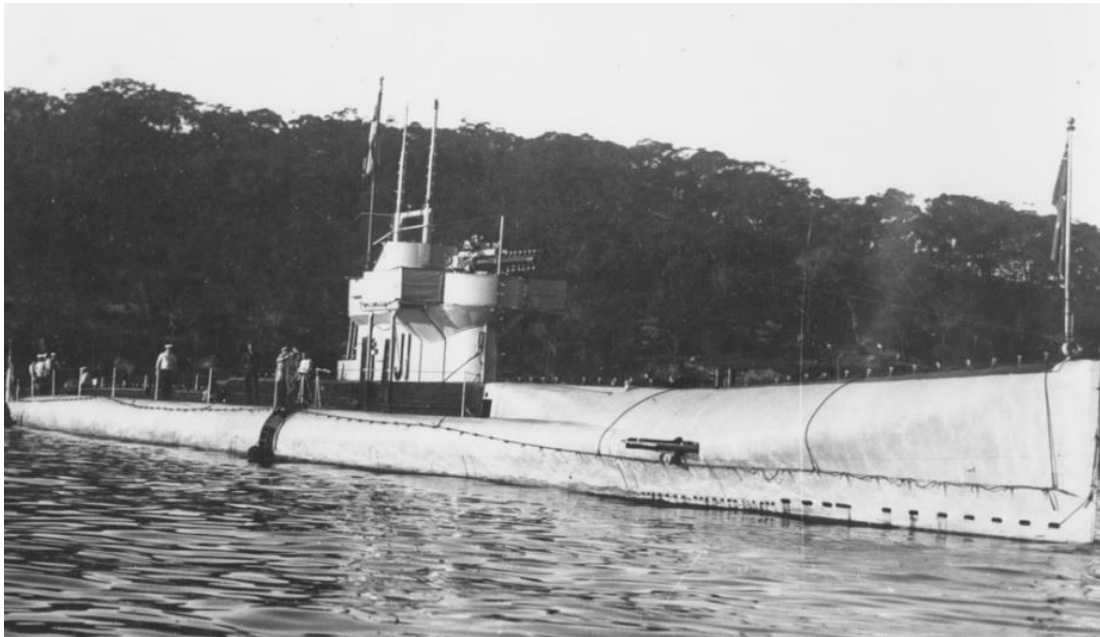
*Of interest a bell was found but it is questioned over its origin. The distinguishing marks of the J1 bell and inscription was not verified on first inspection. The school had this bell sent off for closer inspection.*



The school bell? One of the things I took very little notice, especially what the bell looked like. It was just there warning you of the change of periods and to get back in haste to your classroom at the conclusion of morning recess or the lunch hour. The Assistant Archivist Kim Neilson-Creely sent me a photo of the bell. It certainly looked the size for a submarine bell. However, there were, no specific markings, only having the inscription 'Presented to LCGS by JS Hudson 1932' and was clearly not the *J1* bell described in the 'Launcestonian' or any of the newspaper reports at that time. From memory there was also a bell for sporting activities at the southern end of the verandah of the old timber gymnasium near the tuck shop and, if so, it may well be that one which was donated by JS Hudson as mentioned in the 1932 Headmaster's annual report.

The *J1* Bell has not resurfaced. Many old boys have been asked about this bell but memories are vague and confusion reigns on this particular bell. On request Kim was asked to write a report on the *J1* bell coming to the conclusion that it is still a mystery.

### **J1 in Sydney Harbour 1920**



From the official record <sup>180</sup>

*On 26 February 1924 J1 was sold to the Melbourne Salvage Syndicate. The hull was sunk three miles off Barwon Heads on 26 May 1926. J1's ship's bell, along with the bells of her sister submarines, was declared for disposal per Commonwealth Naval Order 51 of 1932. J1's bell was quite unique as in addition to having the name of the submarine and its commissioning year engraved on it, 'J.1 Portsmouth 1916', around its rim was the following inscription:*

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<sup>180</sup> <<http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-j1>>

*'Ha! Ha! Ha!, He! He! He! I can see you, but you can't see me!'*

*Deleted as repetitive.*

### **The Chapel Bell**

It is said that the chapel bell, which was formerly used at the Launceston Gaol, was first used in 1843 and was constructed by convicts, having the broad arrow clearly marked.



The present bell in the tower is not the original convict bell but one donated to the school.

The *Mercury* in 1933 reported:<sup>181</sup>

*NORTHERN NOTES – Gaol Bell for Church*

*A bronze bell bearing the date 1843, that did service for many years at the old Launceston Gaol, has been purchased at auction by a public-spirited citizen, who intends to present it to the Launceston Church Grammar School for use in the new chapel. When the question was raised whether churchgoers would relish the idea of entering the chapel to the strains of a bell which had been associated with a prison, it was suggested that there was no difference between ringing it for a*

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<sup>181</sup> *Mercury*, 24 August 1933, p. 5

*service for worshippers in church and worshippers in gaol. Another question asked at the sale was whether the bell had been used on the Emden, whereupon the auctioneer retorted that it had been used for the "Hemdin" (hemmed in).*

Of interest is Ernest Whitfield's description of the treadmill at the old Launceston gaol in an article written in 1907 in the *Examiner*<sup>182</sup>. Is this the bell that was auctioned, and installed in the Grammar School chapel?

*The large gaol wall, one of the most conspicuous objects in the city, was started in 1831, and was a long-time building. Mr James French, the proprietor of a well-known family in this city, who had arrived from New South Wales in 1835, and was possessed of the only pair of horses here at the time, undertook the contract to cart the stone from the Cataract Hill at 1/- per load. At the same time that the gaol was being built a military barracks for officers was erected and occupied part of the block where the superintendent of police has his present office. In 1835 a 'mill' was erected on this same block, not a mill in the usual acceptation of the word, but a treadmill; the motive power was human beings who had offended against the laws of the land. We are told it was built to accommodate eighteen men, and was not minded so much when there were only a few on, but when it came to the full complement it got rather too lively, and as the men said, "You had to stop it pretty sharp if you did not want your leg broken or your shins barked." The punishment was supposed to be of eighteen minutes' duration, but it was not always so. The element of chance came in here, as in almost everything. A bell rang every minute, and was the signal for the end man to get off the machine, and for the seventeen remaining to move along and make room for another, so that the man who happened to be at the right hand only did a minute on the mill, the second two minutes, and so on until the last of the primary eighteen was reached, and he did his full time. An old hand has well described the treadmill as "a never-ending staircase; you go up it step by step all day long and never reach the chamber door." One of my earliest recollections is being taken to this mill by my father, and there I saw this large wheel, much after the style of a huge waterwheel, with a number of men on it. What fixes it most upon my memory is the fact that while there one of the men fell off in a faint, and my father, being a medical man, attended to him. This would be about 1851. This mill was done away with in 1854, and the room used as a stable for the mounted police.*

The *Examiner* provides a little more history associated with this bell:<sup>183</sup>

*Historic Bell. Behind the purchase of a bell at a city mart this week lies an interesting history, connecting the bell with the early days of Launceston. The bell was originally hung in the prisoner's chapel, which stood on the site of the present State High School. According to history it was tolled in the convict days when a public execution was about to take place, and also prior to the services conducted in the church for the prisoners. It was last rung officially by Mr CL Willes in 1918, when he was superintendent of the gaol, before a church service, after which the chapel was closed and finally demolished early in 1919. The chapel was built in the thirties of the last century. The bell carries the date 1843. It was purchased for the Launceston Church Grammar School, and is to be used in the new school chapel. It is interesting to note that the bell dates back to three years before the foundation of the Grammar School in 1846.*

The Board minutes of October 1933 state:

*Chapel Bell: The Mattingley boys, sons of PFC Mattingley, having given the bell for the chapel (note of its history in margin) and Mr J Hudson having promised*

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<sup>182</sup> *Examiner*, 22 September 1917, p. 3

<sup>183</sup> *Examiner*, 24 August 1933, p. 6

*to put same up, the secretary was instructed to write conveying the thanks of the Board for each of the donors.*

And the *Examiner* of December 1932 reported:

*The Mattingley boys were outstanding students. In the leaving examination 1931 four candidates were successful in obtaining the certificate: R Wall (5 credits, 6 passes) and the Mattingley boys – MAP Mattingley (4 credits, 3 passes): BS Mattingley (7 passes).<sup>184</sup>*

The 'Launcestonian' of December 1934 notes:

*Early services in the chapel that year were taken by the Bishop of Bendigo during a visit to the school and by old boys of the school and on the first occasion the Mattingley brothers, who were at the school only a few years earlier conducted the service in the absence of the headmaster.<sup>185</sup>*

It is of interest that the Hutchins School was also presented with a bell in 1938 with convict origins, which was first used at Horton College after the closure of Port Arthur.

*HISTORIC BELL: Presented To The Hutchins School.<sup>186</sup>*

*At the Hutchins School, Hobart, yesterday, Dr WL Crowther handed over to the school a large bell, formerly located at Horton College, Ross. Dr Crowther related the history of the bell, which was cast in England in 1837, and sent out to be used in the church at Port Arthur. When Port Arthur was closed as a penal settlement, the bell passed into the possession of Horton College. During the depression at the end of last century, Horton College was closed, and the bell eventually became the property of Dr Crowther. During the school holidays, the bell was hung in the school porch.*

*The headmaster (Mr JRO Harris) on behalf of the school, and the Rev MJ May, on behalf of the Board, thanked Dr Crowther for his gift. At the close of assembly, Dr Crowther officially opened the new term by ringing the bell for the first time in its new home.*

In 1936, the Moonah State School was presented with a bell with convict origins.<sup>187</sup>

*HISTORIC BELL: Placed in Belfry at Moonah School*

*A large number of parents and pupils attended the Moonah State School on Saturday when a belfry was opened, and a fair held. The President (Mr Heywood) stated that the school possessed an historic bell and a small band of parents had erected the belfry. Mr CR Baker stated that the bell, well over 100 years old, had been in a building demolished by the Electrolytic Zinc Co., by whom it was presented to the school. Previously it called to convicts, now to children for education. The belfry was the result or the combined efforts of the Electrolytic Zinc Co. and the Parents' Association.*

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<sup>184</sup> *Examiner*, 17 December 1932, p. 16

<sup>185</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1934, p. 82

<sup>186</sup> *Mercury*, 27 July 1938, p. 3

<sup>187</sup> *Mercury*, 10 November 1936, p. 9

There are several stories of the origin of school bells as gifts to schools, in particular those associated with our convict past. This story appeared in the *Mercury* in 1931.<sup>188</sup>

*CENTURY-OLD BELL: Early Link With Tasmania Re-erected at Sorell School*

*A very old bell erected at the Sorell State School this week forms an interesting link with early Tasmanian history.*

*Among the free settlers who came to Van Diemen's Land with Governor David Collins in 1804 was one named John Birchall, who, after living a short time at New Town, settled near Sorell, where he made one of the first farms in a now very prosperous farming district. Sometime afterwards John Birchall's son, James, one of the earliest Tasmanian-born, bought Cornhill, that fine farm midway between Sorell and Cherry Tree, where, with the aid of many assigned servants, he successfully carried on his agricultural pursuits. The farm was so large and the labourers so many that Mr Birchall, like many other farmers of that time found it necessary to provide a large bell to summon his men to and from work. Just a century ago he commissioned a Hobart Town foundry to cast a bell suitable for his purpose, and after a long sea journey round South Arm to the Sorell jetty (for there were no causeways, nor many roads for that matter in those far-off days), the bell was erected on Cornhill where it did service for many years.*

*Leaving Cornhill when Mr Birchall sold out, the bell next assembled convict labourers at Belmont, on the Forcett Road, where it remained until the penal system changed, and assigned servants no longer were lent to landowners to develop their farms. At Willis Park the old bell had, as useful, if less ostentatious, duty, and called all the Birchall boys home to dinner when it was ready.*

*When the family disposed of Willis Park the bell, then in the possession of James Birchall's son Charles, was taken to Orielton, but was not used there, and when Mr Charles Birchall retired from the farm it was taken as a cherished heirloom to his house in Sorell, where, for many years it has lain mute, and as far as the public were concerned, entirely forgotten.*

*ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD.*

*Sixty odd years ago – in the late sixties of last century – Mr Charles Birchall attended the Sorell School, when the late Mr Mathew McPhee was the schoolmaster, and, in giving to his old school a bell that has been in his family for 100 years, Mr Birchall feels that such a relic should be an inspiration to the children of today.*

*Messrs AW Newitt, B Phillips, and AH Quinn erected the bell on Tuesday afternoon, and on Wednesday morning the donor, Mr C Birchall, rang the bell for its new purpose for the first time.*

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<sup>188</sup> *Mercury*, 8 August 1931, p. 8

## The Boarding House Bell

### Dawn to dusk

The boarding house bell was situated externally in a small quad between Hawkes and Savigny dormitories in the boarding house complex. The ringing of the bell was the responsibility of one of the boarders designated with the task from early morning wake up to meal time schedules. In the 1940s Bertram 'Snow' Thomas was given this responsibility and during both Alf Champion and Paul AC Richards' time in the 1950s, Ted Tyrell had this responsibility.



The origins of the bell are a little obscure.

In 1946, the *Examiner* reported on the history of the school through a play 'The Story of a Bell' in celebration of the school's centenary 1846-1946.<sup>189</sup>

*THE STORY OF A BELL* "For an unbroken century I have called to the classroom pupils of the Launceston Church Grammar School, a longer continuous service than any other school bell in Australia," said the 'voice' of the bell in the radio play, *The Story of a Bell*, broadcast from 7EX, the 'Examiner' station, last evening. Written and produced by Mr Arthur Evans from historical facts collated by Mr Bernard Gordon, the play was a tribute to the Grammar School, which this week celebrates the 100th anniversary of its foundation. An actual recording of the bell that has been used by the school for 100 years was used during the programme. The 'voice' of the bell told the history of the school, commencing with the laying of the foundation stone by Lieut-Col Bloomfield, commander of the regiment at Launceston. An imaginary account of the ceremony was given, with a description of the first headmaster, Rev H Plow Kane, followed by an imaginary account of the first roll call, which was answered by twenty-four pupils. Outstanding events in the school's history were recalled by the 'bell', and the long line of headmasters enumerated. A cast which included present scholars enacted

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<sup>189</sup> *Examiner*, 11 June 1946, p. 4

scenes from school life, *School Day Pictures*. Human interest was supplied by references to such things as peculiarities of certain masters, and by pictures which any school day, past or present, might provide. An interview which might have taken place when William Hartnoll was enrolled at the school was presented. The 'bell' told how Tom Palmer Archer, now the school's oldest living old boy, was caned one day by the late Rev FW Quilter. A fight among the boys was enacted, and conversation among boys concerning the masters was heard. One incident concerned the vain endeavours by boys in a Latin class to decline the word 'mensa' in the plural for Rev AH Champion, MA. The 'bell' kept note of the school's development, the celebration of the school's jubilee, the amalgamation with the old Launceston High School, the transfer of the school to Mowbray Heights and the building of the school chapel. The school's history in sport was recounted, and also the record of old boys in three wars. Names prominent in the history of Tasmania were mentioned, and masters who are remembered by several generations recalled. For many incidents recordings or voices from the school playing fields provided effective backgrounds. Those who took part in the presentation were Messrs RA Ferrall, John Gunn, AT Sorell, DS Gill, HJ Moses and F Fry. Present scholars who assisted were Robin Delves, Tony English, Ronald Gibson, Richard Hawson, Ian Robertson, David Smith, Trevor Treweek, Michael Wardlaw and David Wilson.





## The Old Gymnasium Bell



In the headmaster's annual report of 1932 he made mention of two bells donated to the school.

*...During the year the school has been supplied with two bells, one for the sports pavilion (the gift of JS Hudson, Esq), the other for ringing the hours in the school block. This came to us through the very kind efforts of Major WT Conder. The bell has historic associations, and we are sincerely thankful to the Major for securing it for us.<sup>190</sup>*

The reference to the school sports pavilion was to the original old wooden gymnasium facing the main school oval.

Peter Mercer recalls that on the southern end of the old gymnasium there was a bell. This is believed to be one of the bells donated by Mr JS Hudson in 1932. This bell was rung during sporting occasions and may have also been used for boxing competitions held in the gymnasium until the early to mid 1950s. Mr JS Hudson was well known for his charitable work for many years, making it a practice on his birthday to donate 400 loaves of bread for distribution to the City Mission, Girls' Home, and the Salvation Army Girls' Home.

Brian Smith also remembers this bell which hung near the old tuck shop at one end of the old wooden gymnasium and used for football matches.

Mr Hudson also took a keen interest in state and public schools sports and was a frequent donor of trophies. School bells were presented in 1932, and in 1938 three trophies were presented to leading junior athletes at the Launceston Church Grammar. The presentations were made by Mr Hudson himself at the morning assembly of the school. Silver cup to FW Thompson, champion swimmer and diver of the school under 15 in 1937. Silver cup to B Wardlaw, champion boxer in the 7th class in 1937. Gold medal to G Vernon for the most improved footballer under fourteen years in 1937.<sup>191</sup> Mr Hudson attended every interstate schoolboy football carnival from 1923 until his death in 1949.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> *Examiner*, 17 December 1932, p. 16

<sup>191</sup> *Examiner*, 13 April 1938, p. 7

<sup>192</sup> *Examiner*, Tuesday 28 June 1949, p. 2

## Other Bells

Over 17 decades in the life of Launceston Church Grammar School there have been many bells used in the school, whether it be the change of classes, calling pupils to morning chapel or waking boarders each morning to prepare for another school day. Each has played a major role in life at Grammar.

Some of those bells' histories and provenance remain untold. They include:

- The Elizabeth Street school bell/s 1846-1923. It is not known whether this bell or these bells were removed and installed at Mowbray Heights in 1924.
- The little Grammar school bell from Adelaide Street 1930-1935. It is not known whether this was the original bell used by Miss Barnes.
- The little Grammar school bell from 8 High Street 1935-1970. It is not known whether this was the Adelaide Street bell installed at 8 High Street in 1935.
- The boarding house bell
- The JS Hudson Bell circa 1932
- The original chapel bell circa 1843
- The present chapel bell
- The Mt Arthur hut bell circa 1962

### The Mt Arthur hut bell circa 1962



*L-R: Bruce Taylor and Paul Harris. The shape of this bell and its size looks very much like that of the J1 bell.*

*Source: Richard Stark collection*

## The School Museum

In the headmaster's 1931 speech night address, he singled out the rapid growth of the school museum and other extra-curricular activities.

*...These activities were the 'Launcestonian', museum, lifesaving, boxing, carpentry, scouting, Christian Union library, debating society and camera club. The museum was growing rapidly and the debating society had held live debates, the lifesaving club was a new venture, and the medals and certificates presented gave an idea of the work done. The Christian Union had been carried on under the leadership of one of the prefects.*<sup>193</sup>

The museum was mentioned in the 'Launcestonian' in the May issue of 1930 when the headmaster announced the formation of a school museum. In June that year, a committee was established and included MAP Mattingley, AA Ferris, BJ Mattingley and AL McIntyre. MAP Mattingley was appointed curator. The school carpenter was asked to prepare suitable display cases and an appeal was made to all friends for items that would be of value to the school. The list included mementoes of the early days of colonial Tasmania and the school, natural history and mineralogical specimens, native weapons for an ethnological section and old or foreign coins. By December that year, the first display case had been completed.<sup>194</sup> Donations flowed from all sources and included birds' eggs, coins and ethnological items.

### School Museum 1931



In 1931, through the efforts of Major Conder, the school received from Sir Douglas Mawson and Captain McKenzie, who had recently returned from Antarctica, a fine collection of relics. Included was the actual flag flown on their ship *Discovery*, bearing witness by its tattered condition to the storms encountered. A number of geological specimens came from Heard Island – a facsimile of the plate erected in MacRobertson Land to attest the annexation of such land as lies between 128 degrees east and 60 degrees east of Greenwich and 64 degrees south and the South Pole, and a penguin. R and D Gregg donated a piece of anthracite coal from their

<sup>193</sup> *Mercury*, 18 December 1931, p, 7

<sup>194</sup> 'Launcestonian', No 27, December 1930, pp 18-19

own estate in the Midlands, Miss Theaston contributed a specimen of 'vegetable ivory', LD Cameron a shell from the German raider *Seaadler* and part of a Turkish rifle used at Gallipoli, and R Holyman for some Huon Pine oil.<sup>195</sup>

By September that year, the museum had been so successful it had outgrown its accommodation and more display cases were constructed. At the annual garden fete held in November, the museum was well patronised by visitors who admired the growing collection, and items of curiosity continued to be donated to the school from friends, old boys and parents.

In 1934, there was also mention of the museum and its increasing collections in the annual speech night.

*...The headmaster referred to other school activities, including the library, the dramatic society, the Crusaders' Union and the museum. A few days before his ill-fated journey on Miss Hobart, the Rev HE Warren presented the museum with a set of aboriginal weapons and other articles from Caledon Bay.*<sup>196</sup>

By 1944, the school museum was housed in the school tower block on the first level.<sup>197</sup> Today this area is occupied by the headmaster's office. Gifts that year were recorded from TD Room: a young crocodile and coconuts, and ED Churcher: curios from New Guinea and New Hebrides.

There was none more passionate about the museum and its collection than Peter Mercer (Class of 1952). Other keen collectors of that period were David Barratt (Class of 1951) and Peter Bessant (Class of 1953). Mercer was "an incorrigible collector and passionate museologist,"<sup>198</sup> even as a child of seven starting his own private museum from the shells and objects he collected at Low Head during the summer holidays in early 1942.

Peter disliked participating in organised sport but was passionate about and collected anything from natural history or the history line, as well as starting his own library at the age of eight. In every free afternoon after school in 1951 and 1952, he went to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery to be amongst the collection and the curators and assistant curators, all great mentors.

Peter became the curator of the LCGS museum and with the help of a committee he whipped it into shape, catalogued items and cleared off the dust. There was a particular drama, he recalls in his book, when he went to Matron with a spearhead embedded in the palm of his hand. A boy had picked up the Pacific Island spear tipped with a stingray spine, Peter told him to put it down and then found it thrust into his protective hand. After passing out in sick bay from delayed shock, it was off to the Launceston General Hospital to have it extracted and then have a tetanus shot. It seems that the cut and thrust of schoolboy antics extended to the LCGS museum, but this did not deter Peter.

He later became a dairy farmer with his half-brother Stewart (Class of 1930), who came home to care for Peter and his sister Pamela when their father died suddenly in 1949. They moved to East Ridgley on the northwest coast in 1954 and after a brief period of recess, the Aldie Museum became the Pet Falls Museum, which he developed over the years in a cottage on the farm. The northwest and west coasts were then museum-free zones. "Farming gave me the latitude to develop the museum at the same time." From his private museum he founded the Pioneer Village Museum at Burnie and created its showpiece, 'Federation Street'. This is now the Burnie Regional Museum and he still takes a very active interest in its development. His

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<sup>195</sup> 'Launcestonian', May 1931, No. 28

<sup>196</sup> *Mercury*, 15 December 1934, p. 9

<sup>197</sup> 'Launcestonian', No 53, June 1944, p.17

<sup>198</sup> Peter Mercer, *The Power of Purpose – The Story of the Burnie Regional Museum 1942-2014*, Hobart 2016, p. 7

hobby eventually became his occupation when he moved to Hobart in 1976 to become curator and later senior curator of history at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.<sup>199</sup>

In 1950, there was a revival of the museum, with school liaison between the Queen Victoria Museum and the state and public schools in Launceston. The museum director, Mr NJB Plomley stated there was no intention of providing conducted tours of the museum but that the school curriculum would be followed and where the museum could help with exhibits for pupils to study, the displays would be sent to the schools. Pupils could also visit the museum for lectures which would be illustrated by specimens from various collections. After 1936, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart maintained a programme of schools liaison work with education officers seconded from the Education Department. In Launceston classes began in 1939, chiefly with nature study. The new scheme saw an expansion of the original ideas to give a general cover of study for any of the museum's collections. Its revival followed a lapse of three years, during which time there was no school liaison work in the north.<sup>200</sup>

In 1946, as part of the school centenary celebrations, a very interesting display was mounted and in 1947 the museum was opened to visitors to the school fete. It was on this occasion that visitors saw a fragment of the only German bomber that bombed Buckingham Palace, sent by Gordon Cawthorne in London, and a very handsome cabinet of birds' eggs donated by GP Smith.<sup>201</sup>

The master in charge of the museum in 1951 was RA James. The committee that year, who were all very enthusiastic, were PG Mercer, DR Barratt, M Taylor and A Finney. Items kept appearing and it is worth noting that L 'Screw' Hampton, a member of the teaching staff, kindly presented a Burmese sword and Major Conder, a stalwart, sent along a shrapnel shell that had been fired by a Turkish battery situated in the village of Anfarta overlooking Salt Lake at Suvia Bay during the landing in August 1915.

In 1955, there was mention in the 'Launcestonian'<sup>202</sup> of the museum with the master-in-charge RA James and the curator RPH Boag and his assistant W Hardman. The list of memorabilia had expanded with weaponry including two French duelling pistols, a Japanese machine gun and a collection of bullets along with birds' eggs, shell collections and stuffed animals.

By the mid 1950s, the museum was gathering dust and eventually was disbanded when the tower room was converted into the headmaster's suite during PAB Welch's headmastership 1994-2000. Today little remains of the collection.

The old museum was an eclectic collection of oddities with little reference to the school and with due respect should not be repeated. It would be wonderful to see the school museum reinstated with historical material connected to the school gathered together to form a well interpreted professionally mounted exhibition on the history of the school. In more recent times the Hutchins School did this very successfully, inspiring students and old boys alike. Perhaps we may see such a museum at the school in the future.

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<sup>199</sup> Alumni Newsletter, August 2016

<sup>200</sup> *Examiner*, 4 January 1950, p. 3

<sup>201</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1947

<sup>202</sup> 'Launcestonian', December 1955, No 5

## Chapter 10

### *Corporal Punishment, Bullying and Prefectship*

Corporal punishment has always been part of the culture and tradition of all boys' schools, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. Launceston Church Grammar was no exception and the 'birch' or 'cane' was wielded as a means of instilling discipline until society saw a need to admonish the practice, especially as it applied to young boys. Both little Grammar and big Grammar saw all headmasters and headmistresses carry such weaponry in their offices during the scope of this book, which covers 1940 to 1965.

Physical punishment and occasional 'floggings' were all part of the fabric of school life. Corporal punishment was not just regarded as a necessary evil in the school but as an actual benefit to the students, as it was thought to be character forming. No pupil could hope to gain the respect of their peers until they had been given 'six of the best'.

I keep lapsing into *Tomkinson's Schooldays* by Michael Palin and Terry Jones – the book and later the television series *Ripping Yarns*, inspired by *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.<sup>203</sup> The great public school tradition of nailing boys to the school wall and how it was a privilege as boys wanted to be nailed to the school wall! And oh yes, Tomkinson meeting the school bully... "They call me the school bully, you miserable little tick!" The notion that boys were sent to the school where the school bully had won the public school's cup for bullying was an essential path to the road to manliness and where there was a major focus on physical education. *Ripping Yarns* expressed this in a comedic way with a hint of truthfulness based on the writings in *Boy's Own Paper*.<sup>204</sup> Other influencing papers were *Chums*<sup>205</sup> and *Magnet*.<sup>206</sup>

The series *Ripping Yarns* was first aired in 1976 and was repeated on BBC4 commencing with 'Tomkinson's Schooldays' on 3 April 2014.<sup>207</sup> This broadcast included a laugh track. The first episode was preceded by a documentary, Alexander Armstrong's *Real Ripping Yarns*, which examined the assumptions and outlook of the original boys' magazines of which *Ripping Yarns* were a parody. Both Palin and Jones contributed to the programme.

I think it took up to the 1970s for Grammar to drop corporal punishment.

Those who remember Miss Stubs at little Grammar will recall that she was not averse to producing a cane but more often than not would produce a wooden ruler and apply it to the hand or knuckles. The only other little Grammar headteacher was Rev Maddox who kept a suite of canes in his office.

Several senior teachers wielded a mean, whippy cane to students who misbehaved and required disciplinary actions. Trevor 'Tadpole' Sorell was well known for this in his position as master of the boarding house for most of this period. Others such as Jack Parish and MAP Mattingley, who also stood out amongst the senior teaching staff for practising the art successfully.

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<sup>203</sup> Palin, Michael; Terry Jones (1980). *Ripping Yarns*. London: Eyre Methuen. ISBN 0-413-46250-1.

<sup>204</sup> *Boy's Own Paper* began in 1879 and ran until 1967. The annuals were published every year until 1940, and somewhat irregularly after that. Dates below refer to the years of the paper republished in the annual; I am not sure whether the annual was always published in the same year or not.

<sup>205</sup> *Chums* was a boys' weekly newspaper started in 1892 by Cassell & Company and later from 1927 published by Amalgamated Press. The publisher gathered the weekly paper into monthly and annual editions. The serial ceased publication in 1941. It was modelled on *Boy's Own Paper*.

<sup>206</sup> *The Magnet* was a UK weekly boys' story paper published by Amalgamated Press. It ran from 1908 to 1940, publishing a total of 1683 issues. Each issue contained a long school story about the boys of Greyfriars School, a fictional public school located somewhere in Kent, and were written under the pen-name of Frank Richards.

<sup>207</sup> Harvey, Gary. 'BBC 4 Rediscovered *Ripping Yarns*', Retrieved 3 April 2011

Headmasters Roff and Jones were known for their disciplinary methods, but it was 'Jika' Travers who is best remembered for caning a whole class of boys in the late 1950s. Both Alf Champion and Paul Richards were members of that particular class and remember this vividly, and Jika turning up with three canes in his hand.

There were many other instances of these disciplinary measures, with an array of cuts delivered from one blow to what was commonly referred to as 'six of the best'. It was not uncommon in the boarding house to see several boys lined up outside Trevor Sorell's office in the late afternoon awaiting punishment.

In 1933 at the annual speech night, Headmaster Adams spoke of corporal punishment. The *Mercury* reported:

*The Strong Right Arm.*<sup>208</sup>

*The cane still has its place in all public schools, though it is not administered as freely as in the 'good old days'. Mr FR Adams, headmaster of the Launceston Church Grammar School, last night let his boys know under what excellent conditions they attend school. He talked of the famous Dr Busby of Westminster School, who wore his hat in the presence of King Charles II, lest the boys should think there was a greater man in the world than their headmaster, and of Dr John Keate, headmaster of Eton, who in 1830 gave eighty boys in one night a taste of his "strong right arm," keeping up the merciless flogging until the early hours.*

In 1937, during a visit from a Dr Norwood, who was attending the Education Fellowship Conference in Hobart and was a past headmaster of Marlborough College and Harrow in England, reference was made to corporal punishment in the public school system in the UK:<sup>209</sup>

*Corporal punishment was gradually fading into the background, and in England was going right out of the schools. Teachers were becoming more responsible and understanding, and the children were becoming more responsive.*

However, that was not the case at Grammar. The controversy about the use of the cane in our private schools bears upon a matter of departmental administration and concerning differences of opinion which have long existed, especially amongst teachers, and between them and parents and scholars.

The old-time conception of good method is preserved in a familiar jingle:

Spare the rod and spoil the child,  
Solomon said, in accents mild:  
Whether boy, or whether maid,  
Whack 'em and wallop 'em, Solomon said.

Most old boys can vividly recall expressing their thoughts openly and feeling none the worse for the experience when the philosophy of our mythical Solomon was a prominent feature of their school curriculum.

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<sup>208</sup> *Mercury*, 20 December 1933, p. 5

<sup>209</sup> *Advocate*, 30 August 1937, p. 2

Over a century ago these words are a reminder of opinions expressed on corporal punishment:<sup>210</sup>

*... Some of them make no secret of their opinion that modern educational authorities are all wrong in theory and practice by limiting the use of the cane. Others, 'A Mother' to wit, remembering the unpopularity of corporal punishment in their school days, and its tendency to provoke resentment and breed bad temper rather than create feelings of respect and friendliness, as between the two parties to the operation, regard the stick as a weapon the use of which should be if not altogether prohibited, at any rate be applied only when gross misbehaviour and breaches of school discipline call for corrective action. Most Tasmanian teachers of the present day probably agree with and act up to this version of what may be referred to as the legitimate use of the cane, for as the result of attention to their own experience – the greatest of all teachers – they have doubtless found that the instillation of knowledge and the cultivation of the moral virtues may be more easily and effectively accomplished by calm reason and good humour than by effort to secure absorption by impetuous and irritating applications of physical force.*

*... The teacher must of course be allowed, subject to such restrictions as the departmental authorities may, with their opportunities for gauging the effects of courses of educational policy, be held to be in the best position to determine, to decide when corporal punishment may, if at all, be desirable. According to the authorities quoted, "it ought to be rare, for repetition dulls its moral effect" whereas "free obedience leads to moral independence, and to secure it is a real education of the will, because it means leading the pupil to exercise self-control instead of coercing him."*

In 1926, the head teacher of Natone State School was convicted over the caning of a young school girl.<sup>211</sup>

*GIRL PUPIL, CANED "Punishment Too Severe," says PM  
CONVICTION AGAINST SCHOOL MASTER,*

*THE Burnie courthouse was again crowded on Saturday morning, when the hearing of the charge against Alfred T Langnmaid, head teacher of the Natone State school, of assaulting Eileen Beswick, aged eleven and a half years, by excessively beating her with a cane, was concluded. The Police Magistrate (Mr TN Stops) found the defendant guilty, recorded a conviction against him and ordered him to pay the costs of the action.*

However, in the 1950s nearly thirty years later, one teacher advocated corporal punishment for girls.<sup>212</sup>

*Cane girls too, says teacher: Letters to the Editor. As one right on the job I do not agree with the regulation which forbids corporal punishment for girls in school. This is one of the most stupid and one-sided rules ever gazetted. Now, more than ever, big girls are as difficult to handle as big boys. There is no difference. Many boys are demons, but too many girls are hussies. It is hardly fair that the girls should be able to shelter behind the old gag that they belong to the weaker sex. This regulation should be amended – punish all or none. EQUAL PUNISHMENT.*

In the 1930s, much thought was being given to corporal punishment in Tasmanian schools.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 1905, p. 4

<sup>211</sup> *Advocate*, 19 July 1926, p. 4

<sup>212</sup> *Brisbane Telegraph*, 26 June 1953, p. 4

<sup>213</sup> *Mercury*, 10 August 1934, p. 6



*DAY BY DAY PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS. Place and Function in Education*  
*CONSIDERABLE attention is being focussed on the use of the cane in schools, and many people bring forward opinions on both sides. It is worth noting that educationists universally have given increasing thought to this matter, and a good deal of literature concerning it is available. In the final analysis it must be decided whether punishment, whatever form it may assume, is intended to be merely disciplinary or an aid to acquiring education. That it can scarcely serve in the latter function is not likely to be doubted, for the gaining of education implies concentration of the mind, and one can hardly think concentration on a subject if induced by physical suffering rather the reverse. Of course, fifty or seventy years ago no schoolmaster was such unless accompanied by strap or cane, intended, more often than not, to stimulate mental energies. It may, however, be argued fairly that the matter offered to a mind is such that suffering alone will make it acceptable, it is at least possible that either the matter itself or its presentation is ill-chosen. So, in the end punishment must be regarded as disciplinary only, and to be used in such cases where other methods fail. That punishment must remain as a possible and last appeal seems reasonable. After that comes simply the question of the individuals and motives concerned, and it is here that any wild leaping at conclusions must fail. Teachers, on the whole, appear to be possessed of many rare qualities of patience and many fine ideals, and though here and there a black sheep is found, the standard generally is such as to command admiration.*

In 1937, the Minister for Education in Tasmania issued this statement:<sup>214</sup>

*Corporal Punishment*

*The following instructions have been issued by the Minister for Education to Tasmanian State schools:*

- 1. Corporal punishment to girls is forbidden.*
- 2. In schools of Classes I and II, corporal punishment as set out in the regulation, may be administered only by the head teacher or by one of two senior assistants nominated by the head teacher.*
- 3. In schools of Class III, corporal punishment, as set out in the regulation, may be administered only by the head teacher or by the senior assistant.*
- 4. In schools of Classes IV, V, VI and VII, corporal punishment, as set out in the regulation, may be administered only by the head teacher.*
- 5. No assistant is to punish pupils of his own class.*

In 1942, the Tasmanian Minister for Education Mr Cosgrove said it was almost time corporal punishment was eliminated.<sup>215</sup>

In 1950, there was much said about boys receiving corporal punishment. The *Weekly Times* in Melbourne reported:<sup>216</sup>

*SHOULD BAD BOYS BE WHACKED?*

*In recent years, the question of whether or not recalcitrant school children, boys especially, should receive corporal punishment for misdemeanours has been given a good deal of publicity, and conflicting views have been expressed by psychologists and teachers.*

*ETON uses the birch. An old Etonian says, "It makes a frightening whistling sound as it swishes through the air, but it doesn't hurt nearly as much as the cane." Here are some comments by headmasters of English public schools where parents pay sixty guineas or more a term for the education of their sons. The*

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<sup>214</sup> *Advocate*, 27 November 1937, p. 4

<sup>215</sup> *Advocate*, 18 July 1942, p. 4

<sup>216</sup> *Weekly Times*, 29 November 1950, p. 52

headmaster of Merchant Taylor School says: “The question of all punishments must be left to schoolmasters to decide. They are the experts. It is their job and not one for politicians. The cane is rarely used at Merchant Taylor, but the boy who really deserves it knows he will get it and he does get it.” The headmaster of Rugby says: “There is no birching here nowadays. The birch was the traditional corrective in the days of Tom Brown and for long afterwards. As the boy was beaten, the birch itself suffered damage, and a bill was submitted to parents at the end of the term: ‘To extra tuition, 7/6’.” The headmaster of King’s School, Canterbury, says: “I think I have caned only one boy in a year. Yet I am not in favour of the compulsory abolition of corporal punishment. As a means of discipline with the ordinary boy it is completely useless, but it remains true that when everything else has been tried the only thing that will have effect on a bone-idle boy is a good hiding. I think that most school masters will agree that this is the one shot they should have in reserve in the locker.” Now, what about the state schools? The British Ministry of Education lays down a general rule that physical punishment can be delivered only with the permission of the headmaster or headmistress. Details of all punishments must be recorded in a book open to inspection. Local authorities frequently add their own special regulations. In London’s schools, for instance, it is expressly forbidden to deliver “cruel or excessive punishment,” which is defined as including a box on the ear. The rules say corporal punishment “shall not in any case be inflicted save for grave moral offences until other methods have been tried.” Caning is permitted only on the hand or on what is quaintly described as “that portion of the trunk as is not liable to be injured.” – CLEATOR MOOR.

Outside the school system but in association with young boys, the Ashley Boys Home at Deloraine, in a report after accusations of floggings at the home, stated:<sup>217</sup>

*It was true, however, that the boys were caned, continued Mr Thompson, the maximum corporal punishment being six strokes across the buttocks where they were less likely to cause injury than across the hands. This punishment was administered with an ordinary cane, only after an investigation by the superintendent, and in the presence of another officer to give added protection against excessive punishment. Such punishments were given only as a last resort. During the last two years, canings had been given to only thirty-eight boys, the majority of whom were fourteen to seventeen-years-old. Younger boys had received canings only after the third or fourth occasion of their absconding. Used as a deterrent in the majority of cases, canings are given for absconding, smoking in bed and gross immorality, and in the circumstances, I can find no fault at all with this form of punishment being used as a deterrent against these misdemeanours, because discipline in the home must be maintained.*

However, there is no doubt that former private school boys cherish feelings of attachment towards their old schools. If a boy is not proud of his school, there is something radically wrong either with the boy or with the school.

In his book *Cheeky: Confessions of a Ferret Salesman*,<sup>218</sup> Robert Cheek is scathing of his treatment and constant caning by ‘Jika’ Travers in the 1950s.

*I started brilliantly at Grammar and was dux of the junior school, but it went downhill from there. The constant travelling, being too tired for homework, rebellion against tough discipline and putting sport first, took their toll. My school memories are mostly of Saturday morning detentions when Dad had to run me in from Evandale in the De Soto – six stinging cuts with the cane on the backside*

<sup>217</sup> *Examiner*, 31 October 1951, p. 4

<sup>218</sup> R Cheek. *Cheeky: Confessions of a Ferret Salesman*. 2006

*from Jika and teachers I loathed. The canings were brutal and frequent. Exasperated by my almost permanent detentions, Jika gave me the choice of a thrashing instead.*

*Thinking of my dad, I went for the cane each time – my backside looked like a zebra crossing. Initially, I kept my school jacket on to deflect the blows and wore layers of white Y-front underpants. He soon woke up to this and made me strip to my singlet.*

It was not until October 1999 that the cane was banned in private and public schools in Tasmania.

The *Examiner* reported:

*... The majority of northern private schools yesterday welcomed the State Government's legislation to ban the use of corporal punishment. Most of the state's private schools have not used corporal punishment for at least five years.*

*... Denison Greens MHA, Peg Putt, who introduced the legislation, said:*

*"In this day and age we shouldn't be using fear and pain to achieve discipline in any schools, and I reject ...(the) argument that the Bible sanctions this, because if you actually look to the Bible you can find sections which are in support of banning corporal punishment."*

*Marist Regional College principal, Father Bill Ryder, said that corporal punishment hadn't been used at Marist for at least five years, and as far as he was aware it was not common practice in any Catholic schools in Tasmania.*

*St Patrick's College principal, Brother Clem Barrett, confirmed this and said it had not been approved by his school for about twenty years.*

*Launceston Church Grammar School deputy principal, Malcolm Powys, has been at the school for only eighteen months, but said he would be very surprised if it had been used in the past six years.*

*In addition, the Tasmanian Council of State School Parents and Friends Association Inc. President Peter Heazlewood applauded the move.<sup>219</sup>*

## **Bullying**

*They call me school bully, you miserable little tick*

A greeting to a cowering first former as he experiences his first day at school delivered by the school bully who had won the school's bullying cup twice! All part of the exaggerated, fictitious story of 'Tomkinson's Schooldays' from *Ripping Yarns*, written by Michael Palin and Terry Jones, who experimented with comedy and drama based on *Boy's Own Paper* of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Bullying exists in many ways and, whether it was physical or psychological, it existed and flared from time to time at Launceston Church Grammar School. If there was continuous and noticeable bullying between two young scrappers then it was resolved in a supervised boxing match in the old school gymnasium to settle differences.

Bullying from children attending other schools was also rife, especially between Brooks High School and the young Grammar school boys, both on the tram and then the trolley bus to Mowbray Heights. But more often than not, name calling by the ardent lads who rode to school on their bicycles along Invermay Road, was the gauntlet you ran every day of the school week – "mummy's boy," "blue bottle." This was intimidating but never seemed to end in an incident. One old boy attending Grammar in the early 1950s, when riding his bicycle to school, was sometimes pushed by Brooks students so the bicycle became caught in tram lines.

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<sup>219</sup> *Examiner*, 2 October 1999.

Decade after decade there was much said about bullying and in 1937 it was said that no bullying occurred in modern secondary schools, and the only type of boy who came in for a bit of ragging nowadays was the ‘mother’s darling’ or the snob.<sup>220</sup> It was well recognised that children attending private schools were privileged and that alone was good enough reason to pick on Grammar boys in their school uniform and blue caps. We were always very aware of our own behaviour in the city after school, as there were hordes of old boys in the business community of Launceston who would report us to the school if we did not have our suit coats buttoned and our caps on. In Hobart the question was asked “How would you treat the school bully?” Dr EG Malherbe was asked this in an address on child delinquencies at the Hobart Town Hall. He replied that the first thing to find out was why he was a bully and that often the cause could be found and removed in the home. But the bully usually was cured by the rule-of-the-thumb method, by giving him some of his own treatment. In a good school these things usually righted themselves.<sup>221</sup>

There have been several reported stories of bullying on school buses. In 1951, some schoolboys on the Dunorlan school bus had shown a grave lack of good manners, so the Deloraine Council was informed. Something of a reign of terror was described. Cr Wadley said he was distressed at the tales that had been told. One boy on the bus had been kicked in the mouth and his parents had refused to send him to school until they had some assurance that bullies would be kept in check.<sup>222</sup>

I, the author, remember only two school bullies in my junior school days. One was a feisty little fellow who would take on anyone in a fist fight and the other was much bigger and decidedly intimidating. Both were tough and fearless unlike the rest of my classmates. One day in Grade 5, my last year at little Grammar, I plucked up enough courage to challenge the young feisty one in the toilet block by punching him on the nose. There was no retaliation and he never bothered me again. However, in about Form 8, I experienced a class bully who did not resort to violence or name calling but attacked me psychologically by tearing up a painting that I had just completed and he thought it was funny. The painting I remember was of a waterfall and I had captured the colours and perspective exceptionally well. It was perhaps the best watercolour I had painted that term. I have never forgiven that bully, he was a big lad, one of the classes bright students and younger brother of a sixth former who was popular, clever and a stand out athlete. The only memory to remains with me was that he was so smug!

In 1977, Eton College maintained a strong case for maintaining fagging, which had been a 300-year-old tradition at the school.<sup>223</sup> This was in view that every other private school in Great Britain has ceased the practice, but then Eton has always been a bit apart from the pack, what with those fabled playing fields and all.

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<sup>220</sup> *Newcastle Sun*, 4 March 1937, p. 10

<sup>221</sup> *Mercury*, 1 September 1937, p. 11

<sup>222</sup> *Advocate*, 14 August 1951, p. 3

<sup>223</sup> *Nashua Telegraph*, 4 March 1977

## School Prefectship

### Prefects 1947



*Back row (L-R): NJ Heyward, N Counsel, RW Kay*

*Front row: RB Jones (senior prefect), HV Jones (Headmaster), JL Corrick*

Very little is written about the investiture of prefects at the Launceston Church Grammar School. We all remember the announcement at school assembly and the presentation of the prefects' badge but little was said about the tradition of prefectship.

In 1932, the then headmaster, Mr RF Adams, during the presentation made these remarks:

*The custom of appointing prefects was an ancient one. In 1300, at the grammar school of St. Albans, the statutes said: "The master forbids on pain of excommunication the bachelors (that is, prefects) to rage in school or make a noise." At Eton and Westminster, in the 16th century, there were 'repostors' (prefects) to attend amongst other things to the cleanliness of the boys, while the Saffron Walden Grammar School had "prepostors for all kept boys, unwashed faces, fowle clothes and sic other." Archdeacon Atkinson, who presented the badges, said that, when he was at the mandated territory, Gnaru, he enquired why it was that in that particular place, amid complicated problems of empire, everything worked so smoothly. He was informed that it was because the system was in use of delegating authority to subordinates, much as in the prefect system of schools.*

*On that day the following boys received badges: captain of the school, CJ Sankey; vice-captain, JP Wood. Prefects: ESP Clark, DL Dugan, BJ Mattingley, GAE Reading, IH Wall. Monitors: LH Wilson (senior), CA Harrison (second), WR*

*Curtis, HE Gee, RL Harry, FR Musson, EM Parker, JM Roberts, WR Williams.  
House monitors: EE Chriton, JR Furmage, RA Green, RM Hardy, HJ  
Shrosbree.*<sup>224</sup>

It has always been considered an honour, but is prefectship only for the privileged? In some cases the process of selection was not based on merit as many a school prefect was chosen because of his parents' influences on the school or through a long ancestral association. Of course, there were true leaders of men amongst those who were chosen.

When BH 'Jika' Travers was headmaster, prefectship was an appointment made by the headmaster. I assume that housemasters would have been consulted but I do not think they put forward nominations. The School Board or its chair would also have been advised before any announcement was made. On all occasions, the staff were informed after the decision was made. In Traver's time, often a Form 6 student was asked to come back for a second year and become senior prefect. Both Rob Dowling and Brian Smith were instances of this and I think that Tim Barrenger was invited back as head prefect.

There was a three-tiered system of prefects: school prefects, half prefects and house prefects. The last group, were usually appointed later in the year and this was discussed by housemasters and the senior prefect.

Later, when the school appointed more senior staff – deputy headmaster, head of campus, head of studies – they were approached. Don Selth appointed Ron Horner as deputy head. Bob Hutchings appointed Trevor Sorell as executive assistant.

When Brian Smith was a housemaster, he was consulted on most appointments except that of school captain. Bob Hutchings came from Caulfield Grammar School where the Form 11 and Form 12 students voted for the school captain, Form 12 votes were more heavily weighted and some bad decisions were made.

Most prefects were considered good blokes and a popular choice but some were hard taskmasters, taking their position with great seriousness especially in the boarding house where they reigned over the masses twenty-four hours a day.

At Launceston Church Grammar, prefects were elected by the headmaster after due consultation with colleagues. They were announced in the first assembly of the school year. In our last two years, both Paul Richards and Rafe Champion sat with expectation on one of those stackable blue iron mesh chairs in the assembly hall, waiting to hear their names called but it was just wishful thinking on their part. Some of the major attributes for selection appeared to be popularity, sporting and academic achievement. On occasions a generational-associated boy who had a strong pastoral family or a well-known family connection in Launceston, was selected as a house prefect. This happened only occasionally. However, the overall selection of prefects whilst Paul Richards and Rafe Champion were at Grammar were fair and very well accepted by the student body. These selections never seemed to bother the multitudes who just got on with the daily routine of school life.

In 2006 in his father's obituary, Don Selth's son Philip wrote that his father prepared notes for the school prefects at Canberra Girls Grammar School, when his father was headmaster there. These notes were on the subjects of 'prefectship' and 'the ingredients of leadership', and had set out his thoughts about how the senior girls might achieve and maintain the high standards he expected of them. There is no doubt that these thoughts were hatched at LCGS during his headmastership, 1958-1971.

*The tone of the whole school depends on the attitude and behaviour of the prefects.  
In a twenty-four point note he carefully laid out a guide to the prefects as to how  
they should set a good example, both on and off duty, both insSchool and outside.  
It was "the responsibility of prefects to see that they never placed teachers in the*

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<sup>224</sup> *Examiner*, 14 May 1932, p. 13

*embarrassing position of feeling the need to punish them.” They were but one. “Lean on the combined strength and judgment of all the prefects. Work as a member of a team under the captain of the school.” Their privileges as a prefect were given to help them do their duty better, not for their “own glorification or ease. Be friendly without being familiar.” The prefects should not seek popularity or go looking for wrong doers as if they were a policeman. But they were not to look the other way if something was wrong. Nor were they to “hurry to condemn anyone as useless. Think ill of her and you make her worse.” A word of praise or encouragement from a prefect went a long way with most girls. High spirits should not be penalised unless harm would result.*

*Leadership was “impossible without the two attributes of honesty and courage.” Leadership was “the art of influencing and directing others to a goal in a manner that gains their obedience, confidence, respect and loyal co-operation.” In addition to honesty and courage, there needed to be loyalty; a sense of responsibility; the use of initiative; self-control and decisiveness.<sup>225</sup>*

Other headmasters had similar thoughts of prefectship and Harold Vernon Jones and Basil ‘Jika’ Travers both were very credible in their selection of prefects based on leadership, integrity, honesty and other attributes developed by those selected during their education at Launceston Church Grammar School.

To this day the school still takes great pride in its student leadership body, with opportunities for leadership that enable students to contribute to the life of the school and in this process, develop skills that they will be able to build on in the future. The prefect body consists of school captains, school vice-captains and school prefects. Other student leaders include house leaders, school whips, captains of sports teams and co-curricular activities, peer mentors, asthma peer leaders, activities leaders, school magazine editors and members of the student representative council.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> <<http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/selth-donald-victor-14660>>

<sup>226</sup> <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Launceston\\_Church\\_Grammar\\_School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Launceston_Church_Grammar_School)>

# Chapter 11

## *School Badges and Caps, Mount Arthur Hut and the Drama Club*

### School Badges and Caps

Over the years the major elements of the school badge have changed very little but there have been some subtle changes reflecting its use over time. Badges were struck for head prefect, house prefects, colours, cadets as well as a school badge.



Badges were struck also for lapel and sports recognition indicating colours awarded for the major sports, and later as a white cloth pocket on the school blazer.

Basil Rait in his book *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1946*, 1946, said that the number of school badges in vogue throughout the school's history is almost legion. Every headmaster in years gone by apparently felt that to be remembered it was incumbent upon him to strike a new badge, either for ordinary use or for some form of proficiency.

The school cap cloth badge has changed little over the years. However, the colour of the cap did differ so as to distinguish prefects who were given a white cap, as well as those proficient in sports who received a duck blue cap for gaining a sporting blue. A special badge was struck for sporting colours. In the early 1950s, house prefects had the duck blue cap,

The principle of awarding colours for extra proficiency in sport was initiated by Rev WH Savigny (1872-1885), who it is thought brought the custom with him from his old school. In 1919 the winner of colours was entitled to wear a large silk colour badge on his blazer, whilst a special metal badge to be worn in the coat lapel was introduced as well. Triple colour badges were struck in 1920, which was a small metal badge surrounded by a laurel wreath.



In 1922, a metal prefect's badge was introduced, being a small white school badge surrounded by the words inscribed on a blue metal bar: *Palman qui meruit ferat* – Let him carry the palm who has merited it.



### School Cadet's Badge



### School Badge (Unknown)



*School badge incorporating Bishops Mitre (donated by Christopher Green 2017)*

### School Cap



*The embroidered badge replaced the metal badge in 1950.*

### School Cap (Sun Protection 1990s)



Grammar cap introduced in 1994 was quickly replaced. This was the first baseball style cap used as part of the school uniform and introduced as a result of the increased awareness of skin cancer made hat wearing an issue. This cap was owned by one of the Fairfax girls – Kirsten (1996) or Yelena (1998).

*Source: LCGS Archives - Donated by Fairfax family*

### Prefects Cap



White prefect's cap worn by Douglas R Goodwin, a prefect in 1940. These were introduced in 1914 and remained until abolished in 1968 when the prefects refused to wear them. White flannel cap with a blue and black stripe running from front to back. Small white peak, white button on top. Made expressly for Cox and Webb Pty Ltd of 80 Brisbane St. Size 7. Has DR Goodwin written in ink on maker's label. Was made by Philip Joseph but this has been crossed out.

*Source: LCGS Archives- Owned by Douglas Goodwin*

## Cadet Under Officers Cap



Standard issue khaki CUO cap. Has brown leather strap across peak. Grammar cadet badge on front. Inside has plastic lining. Maker's label printed on lining 'Fayrefield deluxe', and 'Made in Australia especially for Dept. of Army 1972' and then the broad arrow under that. Buttons on strap have map of Australia divided into states under a crown.

*Source-LCGS Archives: Donated by John Dent 2008 and worn by John Dent (Alumni 1975) as a Cadet Under Officer in school cadet corps.*

## Early School Cadet Cap



Cadet cap from school cadet corps established in 1896. The corps were artillery cadets and aligned with the Launceston Volunteer Artillery and the cadets were required to order and pay for their own uniforms. With the introduction of the Commonwealth's compulsory military training scheme in 1909 the corps became infantry and the pill box cap was replaced by slouch hats. As artillery cadets, the front of the cap had a grenade on it.

Woollen-covered pill box style cap. The whole is covered in navy wool but has a red button on top and a red woollen band 40mm wide around the cap. Oval shaped, 180 mm long, 145 mm wide and 60 mm high. Is lined in cotton. Brass grenade on front indicating artillery.

*Source: LCGS Archives: Owned by Dudley Ransom, donated by daughter in 2008.*

## Orienteering Cap



Cap introduced for orienteers in 2011. It is a standard off the shelf design modified by having the school badge woven on to peak. Note the small O top left of castle, subtly placed signifying orienteering and the need to find checkpoints. Navy blue synthetic cap with white mesh inserts on left and right sides. School badge embroidered in blue, white and gold. Has adjustable strap at back.

*Source: LCGS Archives- Donated by John Maclaine 2011.*

## Softball Cap



The white caps used for softball first appeared in photos in 1990. They were not popular with the girls and lasted only a couple of seasons or so before the girls started wearing the cricket caps which became accepted practice for all first teams until the practice was stopped in 2011. White foam baseball style cap. Has Grammar badge embroidered onto the front in pale blue with black castle and motto in yellow. Plastic strap at back to allow adjustment for headsize.

*Source: LCGS Archives - Ex school collection.*

### Old Launcestonians Cap

Old Launcestonian's cap. Introduced as a merchandising line in 2009, they were also worn by



members of the OLA when manning barbecues and the like at school functions. Black cotton baseball style cap with OLA logo embroidered on front. Has adjustable strap at back.

Source: LCGS Archives: OLA donation 2009

### Sporting Colours Badges



The principle of awarding colours for extra proficiency in sport was initiated by Rev WH Savigny (1872-1885). Savigny had received his early education in England, where it was the custom in his old school to award colours. The method of awarding them, of course, has changed over the years. The colours badge was for use on coat lapels. In Basil Rait's book,<sup>227</sup> he says:

*It took the form of the school metal badge with the castle in a silver background. Whilst there are in existence two or three similar badges, the exception to the general rule being variations in the colours, gold predominating in some and blue in others. While in one type, the word and figures 'Estd. 1846' appear just underneath the castle.*

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<sup>227</sup> B Rait, *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1946*, 1946, p. 197

### School Colours Blazer Badge

In 1945, a change was made in the colours system of the school. The award of half-colours was



abolished and instead colour pockets were awarded. In June 1945, the 'Launcestonian' reported that any boy who represents the school in two roster matches at either football, cricket or tennis, who is in the open events at athletics or who is a member of the senior crew is entitled to his colour pocket. Boys who obtain eight points in open events at athletics, who were regular members of the football, cricket or tennis teams the previous year, or who are in the senior crew, are entitled to a blue cap, if approved by the headmaster.<sup>228</sup>

### School Sporting Blue



### Blue's Badge circa 1971



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<sup>228</sup> 'Launcestonian,' No 55 (New Series), June 1945, p. 3

The DV Gunn Archives record: Blues badges issued for outstanding sporting success and achievement. This badge first appears in the 'Launcestonian' photos in 1972 and this seems to be the first year they were given. The badge is reputed to have been designed by DR Lord in 1971. The badge remained as is until the school motto was changed in 1984, when the badge was changed accordingly. Oval brass badge. In centre is brass school castle on blue background surrounded by white border to top half with 'Mos Patrius Et Disciplina' in brass. Bottom half of badge border is left as brass. Makers mark on reverse 'KG Luke Melbourne'. Badge has simple pin and catch on back. Worn as a lapel badge.

### First XI Cricket Cap



Source: LCGS Archives

### School Cricket Cap 1968



Cap worn by First cricket from the early 1960s until the 1982 cap was made, replacing the castle with the whole school badge. This cap belonged to long serving First XI coach John Bailey and was worn by him from 1968-1971, including as captain in 1971.

Source: LCGS Archives. Donated by John Bailey (1971) in 2010.

**Head of the River Cap and Rowing Blue 1900s**



**Old Launcestonians' Badges**

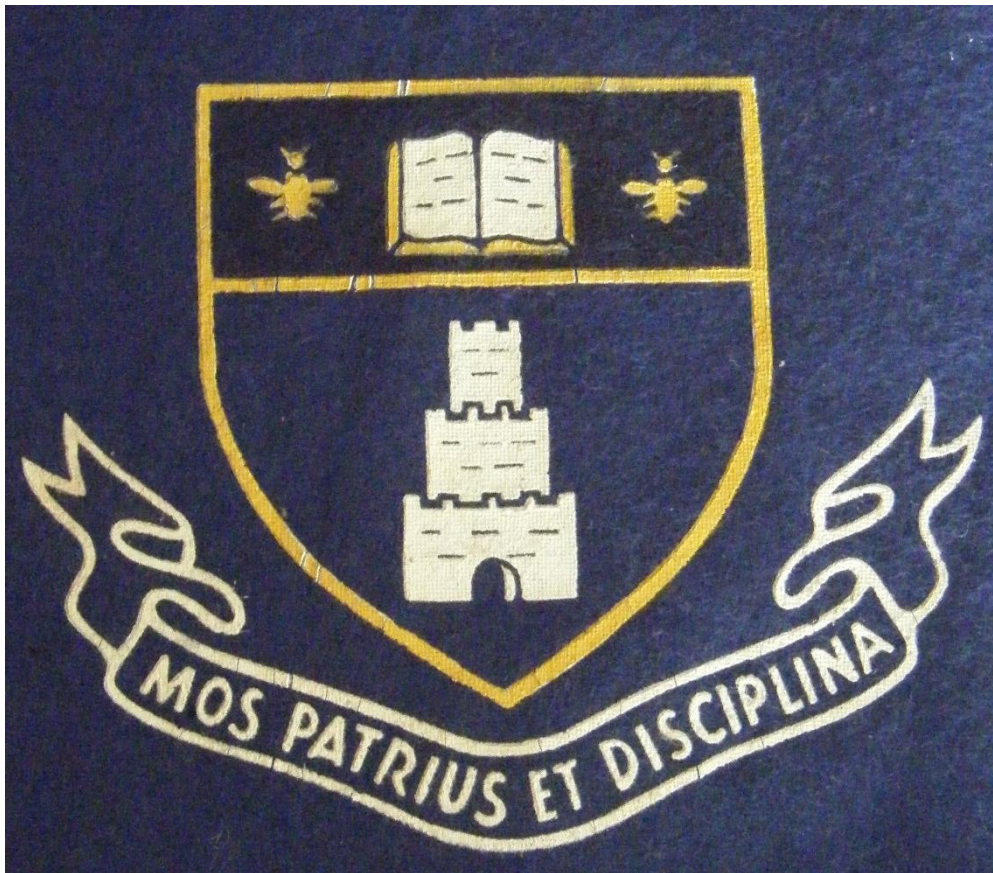


**School Pennant**





## The School Motto and Songs



On numerous occasions the question is asked: “What exactly is the meaning of the school crest and motto?” To explain a Latin motto is difficult, but the following is probably not very wide of the mark: ‘Mos patrius et disciplina’ may be translated as ‘The custom and training’ (or alternatively: ‘The principles and practices of our forefathers’).

In the badge surmounting the motto the open bible indicates that the school is a church school and founded on church principles; the bees on each side signify the need of constant and earnest endeavour in all parts of school life, and the castle not only serves as a reminder of the castle in the older city of Launceston in Cornwall, England but also stands for endurance.

In the school’s centenary year 1946 there was a call for a new school song. Mr AH Harry, a long-term member of the school teaching staff and affectionately known as ‘Yak’ Harry, supplied the words and melody for a new school song entitled, *Grammar Best of All*. Also, Mr CR Morris, father of the 1943 school captain, John CH Morris, wrote a new and spirited tune to the words of *Mos Patrius*, composed by Rev JW Bethune some years earlier.

### Grammar Best of All

Mos patrius our motto is, et disciplina too,  
What Grammar boys have done before we still will try to do.  
Our symbol is the busy bee, our strength the castle wall,  
With this the cry to stir our blood, *Grammar, best of all!*

In triumph and defeat our flag has braved a hundred years,  
Rejoicing in our hopes fulfilled and conquering our fears.  
The blue and black and white shall wave, whatever may befall,  
And, win or lose, its message still, *Grammar, best of all!*  
The record of our gallant dead we look upon with pride,

Remembering how old Grammar boys fell fighting side by side,  
When king and country needed them they answered to the call,  
With this the watchword in their hearts, *Grammar, best of all!*

Though dim may be the destiny for which our lives are cast  
We boldly face the future years with memories of the past.  
So stick we closely to our books, or chase the flying ball,  
We still will sing *Mos Patrius – Grammar, best of all!*

### **Mos Patrius**

We follow in our fathers' steps,  
We tread where they have trod,  
The paths of honour, justice, truth,  
Of faith in man and God.  
With unstained honour they have gone,  
And we are here to carry on!

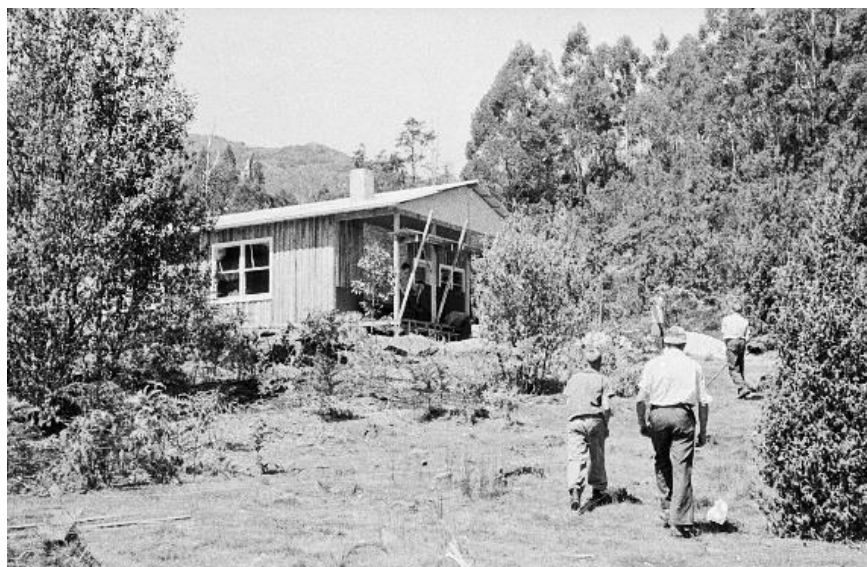
For many years as sportsmen true,  
Their fighting ever clean,  
They kept the old flag flying, lads,  
In every contest keen.  
With unstained honour they have gone,  
And we are here to carry on.

Tho' lessons were not always learnt,  
When called upon to work  
And further any noble cause  
No man has seen them shirk.  
With unstained honour they have gone,  
And we are here to carry on

Thus, in our fathers' steps we tread,  
Proud of their far flung fame,  
And prouder ever prouder yet  
Are we to bear their name.  
With unstained honour they have gone,  
And we are here to carry on!

## Mount Arthur Hut

*In the late 1950s the bushland retreat and outdoor education program at Timbertop, Geelong Grammar became a talking point. There is no doubt that Timbertop influenced the Board to approve of an area of bushland on which a building could be erected. A subcommittee was formed and a site was chosen on the slopes of Mt Arthur and a suitable spot was leased from the Tasmanian Board Mills. A large building was erected in 1957 by the school's maintenance staff and the Mt Arthur Hut soon became an important feature in Grammar's outdoor education.*



*Source: Richard Stark collection*

Rafe (Alf) Champion remembers being in the first group that went up to the hut on the slopes of Mt Arthur. Stark and Penwell were there as well. A highlight was playing cricket on a small piece of level ground, bowling underarm on a ten-yard pitch. The batsman scored one just by blocking the ball, a boundary was when it rolled down the hill on one side. No big hitting was allowed or the ball would be lost.



*Source: Frank Henderson collection*

## Drama Club

*From the mid-19th century, the school entertained the general public and parents with stage productions or skits held either at the school or in public halls in Launceston. The preparatory school favoured Windmill Hill from the 1950s to 1970s. Windmill Hill War Memorial Hall was built circa 1950-1953 so the prep school performed at the Mechanics Institute until the hall was built and the senior school the Mechanics Institute or Albert Hall and National Theatre.*

In 1947, form concerts were enthusiastically received and well attended by parents and friends from VIa down to IVb who, under the capable direction of the school chaplain Rev SC Brammall, put on several well-acted short plays. In 1948, the dramatic society was formed.<sup>229</sup> A major feature of this year were the form concerts which showed a welcome tendency towards serious stage work by the boys. The dramatic society looked forward to their Saturday night performances, usually in the junior common room, to help train the school's future actors as well as to entertain the boarders. The continued enthusiasm and zeal of Rev Brammall saw the dramatic society flourish with a mid-year production at the National Theatre of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was supported by Broadland House School who provided actresses for the female characters.

The dramatic society moved away from variety concert performances, and with Headmaster H Vernon Jones' encouragement mounted serious public productions.

A very active year and a memorable one was 1949 for the production in June of *The Merchant of Venice* in the National Theatre. It was an ambitious enterprise, but fully justified. The cultural side of the life of a public school is most important, and the production of a Shakespearean play, with all the imperfections of such a production, did much to help on the cultural ideal. Further, as there were so few opportunities of seeing Shakespeare played at that time, the school felt they were doing a service to the cause of education in the community. Although school actors and actresses lacked experience, they had advantages over many other amateurs where Shakespeare was concerned, as the plays formed a part of their school studies. On this occasion, the players got a good deal out of their lines, besides acquitting themselves well with their acting. An afternoon performance was attended by over a thousand pupils from the secondary schools.

The 'Launcestonian' reported:<sup>230</sup>



*Once again the school was assisted by Broadland House. The long role of Portia was remarkably well sustained by Diana Smith, whose bearing and diction fitted her for such a part. She brought out the beauty of her lines, showing an appreciation of the poetry. Ann Curtis made a vivacious Nerissa, entering with Gratiano into all the fun of her part, yet with restrained dignity. As Jessica, Valerie Groves played her smaller part well, and displayed distinct talent. The ladies-in-waiting were Helen Dean and Pat Lade, the former singing the song.*

*Michael Wardlaw excelled in his interpretation of Shylock, the principal figure of the play. He was a Jew to the finger tips, and in spite of his hard and bitter nature drew at times some*

<sup>229</sup> 'Launcestonian', No 61 (New Series), June 1948

<sup>230</sup> 'Launcestonian,' No. 64 (New Series), December 1949

*sympathy from the audience. Antonio was played in such a way by Warren Craig that the sombre, dignified nature of the merchant was well brought out. His words were clearly heard. His friend Bassanio, played by Ronald Gibson, spoke his lines well in spite of a little monotony, and to be word-perfect in such a long part was no mean achievement. The merchant's other friends, Salarino, Salanio, Lorenzo and Gratiano were all well-played by Peter V Jones, Lyn Archer, Michael Curtis and Peter Cranswick. As Lorenzo, Curtis had a difficult part, and a little nervousness made it more difficult still. Cranswick was splendid as Gratiano, the light-hearted. His diction, actions and expression brought out to the full the character of the one who acts as a foil to the serious Antonio and Bassanio. Aided so ably by Nerissa, he drew forth much well-merited applause. A great deal depends on Gratiano, and Cranswick rose to the occasion. Chris Binks made a stately Duke of Morocco and spoke his lines well, while Tony English, as the Duke of Aragon, made quite a successful debut, although not quite sure of himself. Robin Carter was an imposing Duke of Venice in the court scene, and was attended by David Permezel and Don Kay. Alan Grundy played the amusing part of Launcelot Gobbo exceptionally well; and was ably supported by Ian Trethewey as Old Gobbo. The smaller parts were all well done – Peter Rae (Salerio), John Rowell (Tubal), Frank Medwin (Balthazar), Robin Archer (Stephano) and Des Stephens (Leonardo), all entered fully into the spirit of the play. Robin Hood and Ramsay Palfreyman were Morocco's attendants.*

*In the evening, the production was helped considerably by selections from the Merchant of Venice Suite (Frederick Rosse) and The Faithful Shepherd (Handel, arranged by Beecham), played by an orchestra, with Edward Wesley as conductor. This certainly made a great difference and we are indebted to all concerned. The stage settings were simple, but very effective. Graeme Nixon acted as stage manager, while MAP Mattingley again undertook the business management, and the production was by Charles Brammall.*

*As usual, other friends of the school and of the drama were most helpful: Mr and Mrs Ken Dulfer-Hyams, Messrs V Hodgman, D Caddy, F Dowse, G Downie and Keith Jarvis. We must also mention Foot and Playsted, Findlay's Pty Ltd and 7EX. The Rotary Project for the Northern Home for Boys benefited to the extent of £70. Expenses were higher than last year, owing to the hiring of costumes from Melbourne.*

### **The Merchant of Venice**

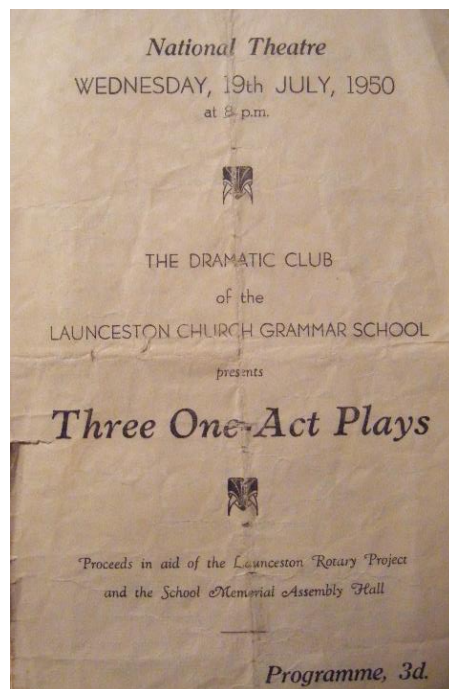


*L-R: Salarina (PV Jones), Lorenzo (M Curtis), Gratiano (P Cranswick), Salanio (L Archer).*

Early in the third term of 1949 a splendid evening of drama was given in the gymnasium, under the direction of Mr. Connell. A great deal of painstaking work on his part, and the unbounded enthusiasm of some forty boys from VA to IVB, provided much fun and not a little good acting on the part of promising young players. It would be impossible to pick out special boys or special plays.

Unfortunately the poliomyelitis restrictions cut out the attendance of visitors, and the headmaster, praising all concerned at the end of the show, expressed the hope that use might be made of the entertainment next year, when outsiders would be able to enjoy it.

In July 1950, the dramatic society presented three one act plays at the National Theatre: '*Higgins, the Highwayman of Cranford*' produced by GF 'Kinky' Connell. '*The Rehearsal*' produced by EA 'Rags' Charlton and '*The Poetasters of Ispahan*' produced by Rev Charles Brammall.



In 1952, the drama club was praised by the adjudicators of the Youth Drama Festival in Launceston.

The *Examiner* reported 4, 6 and 11 August:<sup>231, 232, 233</sup>

*The set, acting and timing of the Launceston Church Grammar School dramatic group won praise in The Doubtful Misfortune of Li Sing (Neil Tuson). Voices were clear, and they soon gained the confidence of the audience, Mr Sutherland said. Players were John Archer, Michael Fitzgerald, BI Watson, T Payton, Michael Seeley, Robin Wyly, Brian Eldridge, Christopher Rowe and Tony Amos, and the producer, (the schoolteacher) V Benney.*

*CAPACITY HOUSE FOR DRAMA FESTIVAL TWENTY-FIVE young Launceston actors played to a full house at the Launceston Public Library Hall last night, the third night of the Youth Drama Festival. The adjudicator (Mr Walter Sutherland) said it was possible to give a general comment on the plays because enough had*

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<sup>231</sup> *Examiner*, 4 August 1952, p. 6

<sup>232</sup> *Examiner*, 6 August 1952, p. 4

<sup>233</sup> *Examiner*, 11 August 1952, p. 1

been presented to show a trend. He felt that, generally speaking, producers had not been firm enough with their casts.

*Prizes for Drama Presented: PRODUCERS of the winning groups receive the awards at the conclusion of the Youth Drama Festival in Launceston on Saturday night. Making the presentations is Mrs ML Moore (left), wife of the chairman of the National Youth Council of Tasmania. Mrs Olive E Harris (Paterson St. Methodist group) receives the Examiner and Express trophy for seniors and Mr V Benney (Launceston Church Grammar School dramatic group) receives the 7EX cup for juniors.*

The mid 1950s, under 'Jika' Travers, saw support of the arts and introduction of clubs. This was supported and was encouraged by Don Selth from 1958. Judo and camera clubs were short-lived but drama was more successful with annual plays inclusive of Agatha Christie, *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh, more modern plays, *Twelfth Night* and several Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

In 1954, the 'Launcestonian' noted that a full length three-act play '*I Have Been Here Before*' by JB Priestley was performed. Mr Hirstgood was the master in charge and the cast included Rodney Morice, Ian McGaw, Anthony Finney, Robert Donoghue, Roderick Thirkell-Johnston and Wilfred Crane.

### Antigone



L-R: unknown, unknown, Richard Stark, unknown, unknown.

Source: Richard Stark

### David Henty recalls

At 'little Grammar' preparatory school in High Street acting and drama was part of the senior curriculum and there was a performance in the Windmill Hall Memorial Hall for our adoring parents to watch annually. I can remember some boy doing the fence painting skit from *Tom Sawyer*. The fence was a brand-new prop built for the occasion and completely inappropriate for the skit. There was another skit, clearly from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* where I, as Puck, had to cross the stage somersaulting, a task I physically failed to do.

When I moved to the 'big school' at Mowbray for Grade 6 onwards, school dramatics played a very low-key role. It was not until a Mr Wilson appeared on the scene as a teacher that the after-school hours drama club began to really function. I remember a one-act play acted by boys from the school, that was entered in the Deloraine Schools Drama Festival. From that I

was awarded Runner Up Best Male Actor and the prize was given to me in the school assembly. This was not the norm, which was made perfectly clear by the headmaster.

The major production for my senior years was *The Government Inspector* by Nikoli Gogol. Tim Whyte was also in it. We combined with Broadland House for this performance. We toured it to a Burnie or Wynyard little theatre. During the performance part of the set began to fall down, which caused us to lose the plot with stifled giggles at that time. Afterwards Headmaster Don Selth came backstage, and in front of some of the parents, verbally chastised us for our on-stage loss of control. I was about sixteen years old at the time.

Although the theatre clearly had traumatic beginnings for me, I was determined to battle on!

### **David Henty being made up in the play *The Government Inspector***



The completion of the School War Memorial Assembly Hall in memory of those old boys who fell in the course of battle in World War II made a huge difference not only to the school but to the drama club as the stage and its dressing and rehearsal rooms were an invaluable addition. These facilities contributed to some memorable performances after 1954. The majority of school plays were a joint production with Broadland House.

The school maintenance staff were always on hand to help with stage props and the sets were designed by the school staff.

Richard Stark always had his camera ready and he captured scenes from *Antigone* and young thespians having their makeup applied before the annual school production.



*David Henty*



*David Saunders and Mr Arnold Neil*

*Source: Photographer - Owen Carington Smith*



## Scout Troop

*In 1939, the investiture occurred of the Grammar School scout troop known as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Launceston Grammar School troop. The troop was mainly made up of boarders, which added another extracurricular activity to the school.*

The *Mercury* reported:

### *INVESTITURE OF SCOUT TROOP Grammar School Unit*

*The investiture of a new scout troop, known as the 3rd Launceston (Grammar School) troop was carried out by the Governor (Sir Ernest Clark), Chief Scout in Tasmania, at the Launceston Church Grammar School on Saturday.*

*The troop, which was formed this year by Scoutmaster AB Morton, has 33 members. Associated with the governor in the investiture were State Commissioner Mr F Marriott MHA, the District Commissioner in Northern Tasmania Mr W Haterry, the headmaster Mr NH Roff, Chairman of the School Board Dr Hogg, Mr I Madden MHA representing the 10th Launceston troop, and Messrs CF Monds and AVJ Manther.*

*Mr Marriott, introducing the governor, reminded the scouts that they were now members of a great brotherhood, and they had taken the pledge to maintain some high ideals. He hoped that the chief scout would be able to attend other investitures.*

*His Excellency said that scouting fulfilled something which every boy had – curiosity – and he advised the boys to learn all they could while they were young. They should learn to be of service to others and should not let their ambitions be too small. He reminded the leaders of their responsibilities. He handed to Scoutmaster Morton his provisional warrant as scoutmaster,*

*The scoutmaster of the troop then arrayed Patrol-Leaders Barnett, Wardlaw, Haywood, Farmer, and Gardiner with scarves, lanyards, colours, badges, and hats.*

*Mr. Roff said that the formation of the troop was the beginning of an entirely new activity at the school, and the school hoped to make a bigger contribution in time to the great worldwide scout movement.*

*Also present were representatives of the YMCA: Chalmers, St Paul's, Paterson St, and St John's troops.<sup>234</sup>*

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<sup>234</sup> *Mercury*, Monday 20 March 1939, p. 9

## About the Authors

### Paul A.C. Richards AM

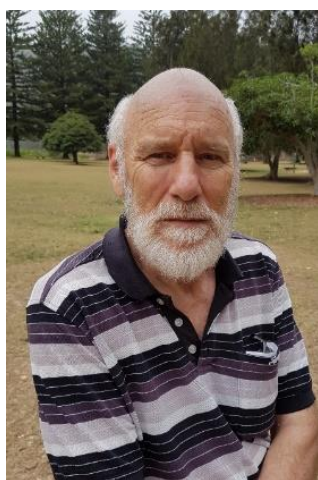


Paul, born in Sydney in 1945, moved with his family to Launceston at a young age and attended the Launceston Church Grammar School from 1950-1962. He studied radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and radiological sciences at RMIT, Melbourne and Johns Hopkins University, Maryland in the US as his primary profession. Over the years he completed several post-graduate diplomas in health and agricultural business management and more recently an advanced diploma in visual arts. Paul married Susan Butler in 1969 and they had three children: Adam, Holly (dec) and Joseph.

He officially retired in 2001 after thirty-five years with the Tasmanian Health Department and four years with Charles Sturt University, where he established an undergraduate and masters degree in nuclear medicine. He has always enjoyed writing and since his retirement has written several books – medical, local history, cricket, fly fishing, caverneering and acclimatisation. This book completes his trilogy on the Launceston Church Grammar School since publishing: *Little Grammar 1930-1970: Our Formative Years*, *Launceston Church Grammar in 2015* and *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School in 2016*.

*I do not live in the past, the past lives in me.*

### Rafe Champion

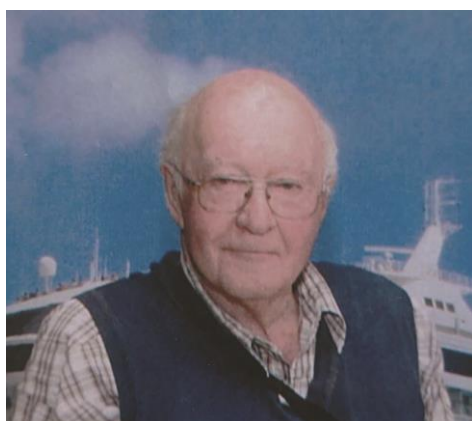


Rafe went to Grammar between 1956 and 1962, travelling from Irishtown, near Smithton in the far northwest. He took an agricultural science degree from Tasmania University in 1966 and, after some post-graduate work at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute in Adelaide, he turned to the social sciences. Most of his professional life was spent in planning, research and policy development in public health in Sydney, with a spell as a wordsmith for architects and engineers.

Writing was a serious hobby. He married Kilmeny Niland, daughter of the writers Ruth Park and Darcy Niland, and he collaborated with Ruth to produce a biography of the boxing icon Les Darcy. Other books include a user guide to the strata titles laws of Australia, introductions to several of books of the philosopher Karl Popper and others on miscellaneous historical, political and cultural topics. Twelve of these are available as Amazon ebooks [https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_1?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=rafe+champion](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=rafe+champion)

Rafe and Kilmeny have four boys: Leo, Hugh, Patrick and Tom.

## Peter Mercer OAM



Peter Greville Mercer, OAM, museologist, historian, author. Born in Launceston on 28 July 1934. Educated at the Launceston Church Grammar School and the University of Tasmania.

Spent twenty-two years until 1976, managing and developing a 200-acre dairying and agricultural farm at Ridgley, behind Burnie. But, his main passion in life was to develop his own museum. Burnie, he thought, being the geographical centre of the northwest coast, was the ideal place to found a regional museum.

He started a museum collection, as a seven-year-old child, in Launceston in 1942 and when he moved to the northwest coast in 1954, it developed at Ridgley as the Pet Falls Museum. It functioned as a popular private museum with a regional standing until May 1970, when the Burnie Municipal Council acquired the collection. From it, he went on to create the Pioneer Village Museum at Burnie – now the Burnie Regional Museum – which had as its principal feature the *Federation Street* exhibition, the first indoor period street replica to be developed in Australia. Peter was the inaugural director from 1970-1975, and from 1973 to 1975 played a leading role in the saving and restoration of Burnie's oldest surviving building, the Burnie Inn (1847). He still is very much involved in the progress and further improvement of the Burnie Regional Museum and as its founder is an honorary consultant.

In 1976, he resigned his position at the Pioneer Village Museum, sold his farm and left Burnie to become curator of history at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in Hobart. He served twenty-three years in that position and retired as senior curator in July 1999. He is the author of several books, three of which were the first to be published on the history of Burnie, and has written and published over 300 papers and articles on Tasmanian history, built heritage and social history over the years. He received the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2000 for services to history and heritage.

Because of his work with the creation of the widely acclaimed Pioneer Village Museum, in 1975 he was elected an Associate of the Museums Association of Australia (AMAA), which at the time was equated with the post-graduate qualification of a diploma of museum studies in the United Kingdom. He was a founding member of the Tasmanian branch of the MAA and was the branch president (1983-1984), vice-president and an executive committee member for a number of years. Over the years he has spent a considerable amount of time and energy advising the many small museums around the state.

He joined the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) in October 1961 and was one of the two convenors of the northwest regional committee. Since then he has served the trust in many different capacities and levels, including the state executive, the state council, the southern regional committee, the penitentiary chapel and criminal courts restoration committee and the *Runnymede* management committee from 1982 to 1997. In 1999, he was given a National Trust honour award and in 2000 he was honoured with the National Trust silver pin award and an honorary life membership.

# Appendices

## *Appendix I – Headmasters*

1846 – 1860	Rev HP Kane, MA (Cantab)
1860 – 1863	Rev FW Quilter, MA (Oxon)
1864 – 1871	Rev WA Brooke, BA (Cantab), MA (Melb)
1872 – 1885	Rev WH Savigny, MA (Oxon)
1885 – 1895	Rev AH Champion, MA (Cantab)
1895 – 1915	Mr H Gillett, MA (Cantab)
1915 – 1917	Rev F Shann, MA (Melb)
1895 – 1918	Rev CG Wilkinson, MA (Cantab)
1919 – 1928	Rev JW Bethune, CBE, MA (Cantab)
1929 – 1935	Mr FR Adams, BA (Melb), DipEd (Manc)
1936 – 1941	Capt. NH Roff, MA, DipEd (Cantab)
1940 – 1952	Mr HV Jones, MBE, BA (Tas)
1953 – 1958	Mr BH Travers, AM, OBE, PSC, MA, B.Litt (Oxon), BA (Syd), FACE, FRSA, FAIM, MID
1959 – 1971	Mr DV Selth, BA (Hons) (Adel), MA (Tas), DipEd Admin (UNE)
1971 – 1978	Mr RP Hutchings, BA (Melb), DipEd (Tas)
1979 – 1980	Mr JB Windeyer, BA (Syd), MA (Oxon)
1981 – 1993	Mr CS Strong, MA (Oxon), DipEd (UNE), MACE
1994 – 2002	Mr PAB Welch, BA, DipEd, Med (Syd), MACE
2003 – 2017	Mr RSJ Norris, MA (Dund), DipEd, GDEA (Melb), FRGS, MACE
2017 – present	Mr Richard Ford, BA (Hons) MBA, Dip Ed

### **Headmasters 1940-1965**



#### **1936-1941**

#### **Captain Norman Hollingdale Roff, MA (Cantab), DipEd**

Captain Roff was an educationalist of vision and a man of tremendous energy, and during his all too brief association with the school he made an distinguished mark on its history.

One of the greatest tragedies for the school was the loss of Captain NH Roff in World War II. He was born in England and educated at the Sir Roger Manwood's School and later at Caius College, Cambridge graduating with a Master of Arts Degree.

During his brief association with the school, he made an indelible mark on the pupils he taught and the school.

In his book *The Story of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1946*, 1946, Basil Rait describes Roff as firm but just, a friend of all the boys and with no favourites, a man of decision and action, youthful

in outlook but mature in knowledge and understanding. Norman Roff will go down as one of the great headmasters of the school, a man whose greatness was not permitted to reach fruition.

In December 1936, The *Examiner* reported on the headmaster's first annual report at the school's speech night, when he outlined his vision for the school and some revolutionary changes in streaming pupils in those subjects which best suited their abilities.<sup>235</sup>

*Not Considered a Fair Test of Pupils' Ability – IMPROVEMENT OF CURRICULUM*

*Scheme of Launceston Church Grammar – School Headmaster*

*ANY examination is an unfair test of a boy's ability according to the headmaster of the Launceston Church Grammar School Mr NH Roff, who in his annual report, presented at the school speech night in the Albert Hall Launceston last night, outlined a scheme which he proposed to inaugurate for fitting boys for all walks of life. There was a tendency to lose sight of the ultimate aims in secondary education he said. It had been shown that in Tasmania only eight per cent of pupils attending secondary schools passed on to a university. It was obvious then, that while catering for the minority of eight per cent, they must organise one curriculum primarily for the other 92 per cent.*

In 1945, a memorial service to the late Captain NH Roff was conducted in the chapel by Canon Lansdell. The *Examiner* reported:<sup>236</sup>

*Memorial Service at Grammar Chapel. Many old boys of the school attended a memorial service at the Launceston Church Grammar School chapel yesterday afternoon to the late headmaster of the school, Captain NH Roff. The school chaplain Canon FH Lansdell paid tribute to Capt Roff who was killed in Timor while serving with the 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Canon Lansdell said that Capt Roff imbued with enthusiasm all those with whom he came into contact and under his guidance the school made excellent progress. Capt Roff was born in England in 1904 and was educated at Sir Roger Manwood's School and Caius College, Cambridge. After taking his degree he taught at Christ's Hospital, Horsham. In 1926 he came to Australia and was on the staff of Guildford Grammar School, Perth until 1932. There he held the posts of senior science master, housemaster, sportsmaster and OC of the cadet corps. He went to Victoria and was on the staff of the Geelong Grammar School for four years. In 1936 he was appointed headmaster of the Launceston Church Grammar School in succession to Mr FR Adams. At once he showed himself an educationist of vision and a man of tremendous energy. He was keenly interested in church matters and was a lay reader for the diocese of Tasmania. For St George's parish Invermay, he was treasurer and minister's warden, a lay representative in synod and a teacher in the Sunday school. He took an active part in dramatic performances of the Launceston Players and was an enthusiastic member of the Launceston Rotary Club. A keen military man from his university days, he offered his services to the AIF as soon as war broke out in 1939. They were accepted in July 1940, when he joined the 2/40<sup>th</sup> Battalion in charge of a company. He was interested in all community movements and fully seized with the importance of modern developments in education. He will be a great loss to the state in general and to the Launceston Church Grammar School in particular, he concluded.*

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<sup>235</sup> *Examiner*, 11 December 1936, p7, c3-6

<sup>236</sup> *Examiner*, 22 October 1945, p. 4



**Acting 1941-1944**

**Headmaster 1945-1952**

**Mr Harold Vernon Jones, BA (Tas)**

*Grammar School MR HV JONES APPOINTED HEADMASTER<sup>237</sup> The Board of the Launceston Church Grammar School yesterday appointed Mr H Vernon Jones to the position of headmaster of the school. Mr Jones has been acting headmaster since July 1940. Besides having a family link with the school dating back nearly 100 years, Mr Jones has a personal association with it which began when he became a pupil there in 1909. He has been a member of the school staff continuously since 1925. The family link is to be found in the fact that his grandfather, Mr Donald Morrison, MA, Edinburgh, conducted his own*

*grammar school in Launceston for some years until 1848 and in the prize lists of this school appear the names of several pupils who later attended the Church Grammar School. "In prize lists of Donald Morrison's school published in The Examiner for December 22, 1847, I have found the names of several Church Grammar School pupils, including those of Richard Green and Alfred Green, whose family has been associated with the Grammar School ever since," said Mr Jones yesterday.*

*Mr Jones, the son of Mrs HR Jones, David St, and the late Mr HR Jones, was born at Carrick, where his father owned the property known as Armidale. He was one of a family of nine, five boys, all of whom attended the Grammar School, and four girls, who attended the Methodist Ladies' College. He went to the school in 1909 as a Clemons scholar, and during his career there he won junior and senior public scholarships, steered the crew for three years, and played in the cricket team for two years. In 1915 he went on to the University of Tasmania with a scholarship, but at the end of the year resigned his scholarship in order to take up farming. Farming, however, did not hold him for long, despite an intense love of the land, and in 1917 he began his teaching career at the Rockhampton Grammar School Queensland, where an elder brother, Dr Hector Jones, had preceded him.*

*After a short period at Rockhampton, he gave up teaching for the time being and moved about the eastern states, gaining experience and knowledge and following a variety of occupations until in 1922 when he resumed teaching this time at the Armidale School. In the following year he returned to the Launceston Grammar School for a short period, then spent another year at Armidale, and finally, in 1925, settled down permanently in Launceston. Mr Jones served under three headmasters: Rev JW Bethune, whose housemaster he was in 1926; Mr FR Adams, and the late Mr NH Roff. When Mr Roff joined the army in 1940, Mr. Jones was appointed acting headmaster, and his confirmation in the headmastership followed the news of Mr Roff's death in action on Timor.*

### **Peter Mercer recalls**

When the former headmaster, Norman H Roff, enlisted to fight in World War II, Harold Vernon Jones reluctantly took on the position of acting headmaster and in that position he used to come and visit us once a week at the Grammar preparatory school. At the end of the war, when it was realised that Captain Roff had been killed in Timor, a new headmaster was needed and Vern Jones, having carried the burden during the war, was appointed to the position, which he held from the end of 1945 to 1952. He became headmaster just before I went to the main school and he left when I left. He was only fifty-five when he resigned and became a farmer. Before he

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<sup>237</sup> *Examiner*, 22 November 1945, p. 4, c. 5

took this action, he was advised by his doctor that if he continued to carry the burden of his position he would not reach a ripe old age.

In my opinion Vern Jones was one of the school's great headmasters. A more sincere and dedicated man than the 'Head', as we called him, would be hard to find. He always went beyond his strength both physically and emotionally. The post-war years must have been very hard and challenging. There were shortages of many things, including good teachers. During my seven years at the Grammar senior school, the enrolments increased enormously, particularly among the boarders who grew to well outnumber the dayboys. Vern Jones' one big failing as a headmaster was that he was too soft-hearted and sensitive. He believed that every boy had almost saintly qualities and he took it very much to heart when they let him down and, boys being boys, they inevitably did. Naturally this happened on many occasions. Had he believed, as I am sure most of the other schoolmasters did, that every boy has the potential to be evil and that his job was to mould them to be good and upright citizens, instead of agonising at their failings, he would have been able to give many more years of outstanding service at Grammar. But every time a boy failed his trust with a misdemeanour he believed that he, himself, had failed. When punishing a boy with the cane he would often say "My son – this is going to hurt me more than it is going to hurt you."

The stress of office and the soul-destroying task of having to punish bad boys who had betrayed his trust, gradually became too much for Vern Jones. In 1950, he had a severe collapse in health amounting to a nervous breakdown and had to take some months off duty. When he returned in 1951, he seemed very much better, but where there are a lot of boys together, 'bad things' inevitably happen. One of the most disturbing things Vern encountered was the discovery of a whisky still set up and operated by some of the boarders. The location was in an obscure corner of the boat sheds, which were facing the Tamar River at the bottom of the school grounds. As details of this 'sordid affair' were uncovered, about fifty boys were found to be involved at various levels. This amounted to one of the largest caning sessions a headmaster ever had to perform and poor old Vern was visibly exhausted after he had finished with the queue waiting on the verandah outside his study. Heads rolled in the case of some of the prefects, house prefects and probationers. There were many demotions and 'de-frockings'. Those who did not participate and did not know anything about it until the news broke – mostly 'day-goes' like me – were filled with awe and admiration at the audacity of the miscreants.



**1953-1958**

**Mr Basil Holmes Travers, AM, OBE, PSC, MA, BLitt (Oxon), BA (Syd), FACE, FRSA, FAIM, MID**

*New Head for Launceston Grammar.*<sup>238</sup>

*LAUNCESTON, Monday. Mr Basil Holmes Travers, a 33-year-old New South Wales Rhodes scholar has been appointed the eleventh headmaster of Australia's oldest public school, the 106-year-old Launceston Church Grammar School. Mr Travers, who is a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Letters of Oxford, got blues for cricket and rugby and a half blue for athletics at Oxford. He played rugby for England for three years. As a 25-year-old major in the AIF, he was awarded an OBE in New Guinea. He is the Australian rugby fifteen coach, and an Australian selector. Mr Travers will take up his duties early next year, replacing Mr H Vernon Jones, who is resigning because of ill-health.*

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<sup>238</sup> Age, 9 September 1952, p. 4



*GRAMMAR'S NEW HEAD IS NOTED SCHOLAR ATHLETE APPOINTMENT of Mr Basil Holmes Travers as new headmaster of the 106-year-old Launceston Church Grammar School was announced yesterday by the chairman of the School Board Mr RA Ferrall:239*

*Mr Ferrall said the board had made the choice after consideration of more than forty applicants from four Australian states and England. For twelve years Mr HV Jones has been headmaster of the school, but ill-health has forced his retirement and Mr Travers will take over from him at the beginning of the new year. Mr Travers has a distinguished scholastic, war and sporting record. He was born in Sydney and educated at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School from 1928 to 1937. At school he won several scholarships and passed the leaving examination with first-class honours in French and second-class honours in English, Latin and history.*

*He was the senior prefect and captain of the school cricket and football teams. At St Paul's College, Sydney University in 1937 and 1938 and again after his war service in 1945, he gained a Bachelor of Arts degree with a high distinction in history. He was first in his year and won the JH Nolan Memorial Prize. He was also awarded the Starkey and Aspinall scholarships. Mr Travers was selected as Rhodes Scholar for New South Wales in 1940 just after he had enlisted in the AIF, in which he had the low army number of NX17.*

*On his discharge from the army he took up his Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford University in January 1946. He graduated a Bachelor of Arts in Modern Greats (philosophy, politics and economics) in 1947 and a Master of Arts in 1951. He graduated a Bachelor of Letters in 1949 after submitting a thesis entitled 'Lachlan Macquarie, Governor of New South Wales, 1810-1822'.*

*Since his return to Australia late in 1949, he has done further research in the life of Governor Macquarie, enlarging his thesis done at Oxford. The enlarged work has been accepted by a Sydney firm for publication. Mr Travers has begun research on the life of James Meehan, Deputy Surveyor General of New South Wales from 1805 to 1826, with a view to writing a biography.*

#### *On Active Service*

*Enlisting in the 2/2 Infantry Battalion in the AIF in November 1939, when he was twenty years of age, he saw service in Palestine, the first Libyan campaign, the Greek campaign and Syria, as well as the Salamaua and Bougainville campaigns in the Pacific. In 1940-41, after a period as a platoon commander and company commander, he was ADC to Major-General IG Mackay (now Lt-Gen Sir Ivan Mackay) who was GOC 6th Division. He was the senior liaison officer with the headquarters of the 3rd Division in 1942, brigade major of the 15th brigade in 1943-44 and GSO2 with two Australian corps in 1945. For his services as a brigade major in New Guinea he was awarded the OBE (military division) and was mentioned in despatches.*

*After leaving Oxford University he was an assistant master at Wellington College, Berkshire (Eng.) for twelve months, and since his return to Australia he has been assistant master at Cranbrook School, Sydney, where he teaches senior boys modern and ancient history, divinity and French. He also coaches cricket and football teams at the school. Mr Travers has a brilliant sporting record, both in Australia and in England. He was a double blue at Oxford, representing the university at rugby football and cricket, and he also secured a half-blue for athletics. He was captain of the Oxford rugby football team in 1947 and 1948.*

*He represented England at rugby football in 1947, 1948 and 1949. Since his return from England, he has captained the New South Wales rugby team in 1950,*

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<sup>239</sup> *Examiner*, 9 September 1952, p. 3

*and for the past two years he has been a NSW and Australian selector in Rugby Union football. He has also been coach of the NSW and Australian Rugby Union fifteens in the past two seasons. He is the author of an instructional book on rugby football, entitled Let's Talk Rugger, published in 1950 in London, and last Christmas he wrote a book, Let's Talk Captaincy, for schoolboy captains of cricket and rugby football teams. Mr Travers is married and has three daughters, aged eight years, four years and twelve months.*

Basil 'Jika' Travers was an achiever and wielded a mighty cane stroke and, with his frame, could play havoc with each stroke. His reputation for caning a whole class in 1958 is legendary. Several of my classmates remember the incident with great precision. Jika arrived at our classroom with several canes in hand. He selected one and thrashed with his full force against one of the hot water heaters. It shattered into several pieces and then he proceeded to call each student to the front of the class in full view of all and each of us received two cuts on the rump. That day Jika had caned about thirty of us, all of whom appeared the following day with two nice zebra stripes on their backside that had turned a dark blue overnight.

He was a very sociable and stood out in a crowd. There were many parents who did not get on with Jika and on occasions this led to students being removed from the school.

### **John Henry recalls**

Jika went on at the end of 1958 to be headmaster of Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore), just as I reached senior school, so I only remember him from when I was a small boy and held him in some awe. At one time, I was an applicant for a scholarship and was interviewed by him. I had produced a reference from a Mr Stephen Hodgman, our next-door neighbour, who knew me well and who was a JP and coroner. I also knew that Mr Hodgman had been a colonel in the army during the war and had on one occasion had to dress down a young Major Travers. Mr Travers asked me who this Mr Hodgman was that had written the reference. I just said he was our next-door neighbour.

I don't think I was the only one who held Jika in some awe. The headmaster and his family lived in the house to the north of the boarding house. The swimming pool was near the chapel. The shortest route to the pool from the headmaster's house was to walk down the asphalt that ran the length of the front of the boarding house. We only ever saw the head in his suit, augmented at assemblies by a gown and mortar board, except for the occasion one warm summer evening when he went down to the swimming pool for a swim. The boarders were hanging about on the asphalt outside the dining hall waiting for the bell to ring for tea. The head, who had the physique of a former rugby player, emerged from his house in just a pair of bathers and strode past us all as if we weren't there, with as much dignity as if he was on his way to address an assembly. He was watched in respectful silence by fifty or more boys.

### **1958-1971**

#### **Mr Donald Victor Selth, BA (Hons) (Adel), MA (Tas), DipEdAdmin (UNE)**



Don is described in Alexander's, *Blue, Black and White*, 1996 page 219, as managing "in the traditional manner." He was "authoritarian and firm" and "did not hesitate to give his own son the cane if he thought it deserved." Don was not a great enthusiast for the cane. He preferred to have students to be disciplined stand outside his office in full view of their peers during recess and lunch, then be sent on their way. Many students would have chosen the temporary, but quick, 'fame' of being given the cane. His "authoritarianism meant that he was not popular with all boys, although many found him more approachable as they moved up the school." The school history

records typical comments from old boys such as "intimidating, but I liked him", "had the

interest of the boys at heart ... very much an individual”, “far less aloof and more approachable than his predecessor ‘Jika’ Travers”, “not as well liked as he deserved – I was very happy with him as headmaster”, and “put a lot of energy into the job and earned respect ... provoked thought and gave praise where due.”<sup>240</sup>

### **John Henry recalls**

Don Selth threw himself into everything he did with great energy. He strove to improve academic standards and was always ready with statistics to demonstrate what had been achieved in that area. That energy extended to sport. He attended interschool sporting events with the same energy. I remember him at an important interschool hockey match near York Park because it was cold, wet and windy and his umbrella kept turning inside out. He was one of the few spectators to brave the weather and be there that day.

The school rowed three fours in the Courtney Shield in 1963, a race that started at Royal Park, went down the Tamar River to round the pylon opposite the Grammar boatshed and then went back upstream to finish in the North Esk just upstream of the Tamar Street Bridge. There aren't many vantage points along the way to see the race from the bank, but Don Selth was at every one of them. I was glad I was seeing the race from the cox's seat and not a passenger in his car as he rocketed through the back streets of Invermay.

He also attended regular meetings of the headmasters of the then six Tasmanian independent schools, which alternated between Hobart and Launceston, so there were many trips to Hobart. In those days, it took three hours to drive to Hobart but it didn't take Don that long and I think he had some speeding tickets to prove it.

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<sup>240</sup> <<http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/selth-donald-victor-14660>>

## *Appendix II – Teaching Staff 1940-1965*

**Officially recorded, referenced from the ‘Launcestonian’ 1940-1965**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Years on Staff</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
H Vernon Jones	1940-1952		Slide
NH Roff MA (Cantab)	1940-1941		
AH Harry BA (Adel)	1940-1948		Yak
VM Lloyd BA (Tas)	1940-1945, 1952		Blinky
JR Hunter (Melb Uni)	1940-1945		
KJ Coldicutt (Melb Uni)	1940-1941		
Dr L Tauman	1940		
HS Evans	1940-1942		Boof
Miss JM Westell (Prep)	1940-1941		
FM McCracken BA (Melb)	1941		
CD Mattingley	1941		
H Fraser MA BCE (Melb)	1941-1947	Mathematics	Hughie, Yog
LT McIntyre BA (Tas)	1942-1948		Boots
RH Isherwood	1943		
GH Huxley MA (Tas)	1943		
Mrs GH Huxley	1943		
JWG Perrin BA BEc Dip Ed (Syd)	1943		Paunch
RA James	1943-1953		Jimmy
ED Robins MA MSc (NZ)	1944-1945		
WT Teniswood MA (Tas) PhD (Edin)	1944-1947		
EH Heywood BA (Tas)	1945-1946, 1948		Tropo
Miss M Rice	1945-1946		
MW Donoghue (Qld Uni)	1945-1965	Physics	Steve
GR Vernon	1945		
AT Sorell	1945-1965	Mathematics	Tadpole
JM Joscelyne	1945-1946		
Mrs Mansfield	1945		
JC Parish BSc (Tas)	1946-1965	Mathematics	Shooter
Miss LH Thraves MA (Liverpool) Dip Ed (Cant)	1947		
MH Moray	1947		

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Years on Staff</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
BN Robson	1947		
AL McIntyre	1947	Art	
WAC Seddon	1947	PE	
Miss L Hortle	1947-1950		
I Lewis (Art & Speech) Dip Ed	1947-1948		
MAP Mattingley MA (Tas) AUA (Adel) A Ed (Qld)	1948-1949, 1955-		
AA Gifford	1948		Toffee
Sheila Atkinson	1948		
Miss Mansfield	1948		
JP Matthews			
Mrs MLee	1949		
Rev SC Brammall BA (Tas) ThL	1948-1949	Divinity	Creeping Jesus
Mrs SC Brammall	1948-1949		
Rev GM Brown ThL	1951		
Miss J Lee	1951		
A Bryce MA (Edin)	1951		
ES Charlton BA (Lond)	1951-1965	English	Rags
GF Connell MA (Melb)	1951-		Kinky
LC Hampton	1951-1965		Screw
MC Porter BA (Syd)	1951		Pansy
Mrs A Stark	1951-1960		
BH Travers OBE MA B Litt (Oxon)	1953-1958		Jika
Rev GF Parker	1952		
VE Benney	1952-1955		
M Burke	1952		
LA Hickman BA (Tas)	1952-1953	French	Uncle Hicky, Slimy
AJ McGaw	1952-1958	PE	Maggots
R Nott	1952-196?	Woodwork	
Mrs J Lee	1952		
Miss AM Brooke	1952-1953		
Rev AS Mortimer-Tanner BA ThL	1953-1954		
Mr M Buile BA (Tas)	1953		
Mr TC Kirkbride MA (Oxon)	1954-1959		Pinhead, Tackhead

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Years on Staff</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
P Berrise	1954		
EW Moyes BA B Comm Dip Ed (Melb)	1954		Johnny
K Metzger BA (Tubingen)	1954-1956		Mud Guts
KC Surridge	1954		
Mrs M Sutton	1954-		
Rev EC Rowland FRHistS FRGS FRAHS	1955-1956		Holy Roly
Mrs SH Smart	1955-1956		
Miss K Beattie	1955-1958		
ET Causley	1955-1959		
R Henkl (Hennquele) MA (Washington)	1955-1958	Art	Rolph
RN Green BA (Melb)	1955		Ferret
GH Johnson ATTI	1955		
JS Paharo	1956		
G Watson BSc Dip Ed ( Tas)	1956-1957		
P Genest B es Lsc Sc (Strasbourg)	1957-1959	French	Frenchy
NM Wilson BA (Adel)	1957-1958		Creepy
WF McLeod BA (NZ)	1957-1958		
BE Hirstgood	1958-1959		
Rev GA Harrison MA (Cantab)	1958-1951	Divinity	Charlie
JS Coulson ABACI Dip Ind Chem	1958-1960	Chemistry	Carter Brown
BMA Everingham BA (Syd)	1958		
DV Selth	1958-1965		
CFE Crickmore	1959-1960	PE	
RJ Wilson	1959-1965	SocialStudies	Crickey
BR Smith	1959-1965		
WE Goodband BA Dip Ed ( Birm)	1959		
Miss B McCormack	1959		
Miss B Lees	1959		
RM Horner BSc (Birm) ARACI	1960-1963		
R Potter MA Dip Ed (Melb)	1960-1961		
PH Northcott MA Cert Ed (Cantab)	1960-1961		
PA Wybrow AM I Mech E AIME (Aust) AMOPE	1960-1961		
LV Berenger BSc (Lond)	1961-1965	Mathematics	Colombo

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Years on Staff</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
E T Causley	1961		Errol
MW Clarkson BA (Birm) Dip Ed	1961-1964	Geography	Basher
BT Dowse BA Dip Ed (Tas)	1961-1965	Modern	
DN Ebsworth	1961-1962		
A Neale BA Dip Ed (Manchester)	1961-1965	French	
GR Vernon BSc (Tas)	1961-1965		
WEJ Waters	1961	Physics	Voltameter
AC Packer ASTC	1962-1965		
HT Stearne TTC	1962-1964		
MW Unwin BA (Exeter) BSc (Lond) Cert Ed	1962		
JT Brassil BA Hons BEc AFAIM MACE	1963-1964		
RF Dawney	1963-1964		
DM McPherson	1964-1965		
NW Powell-Davies MA (Oxon)	1964-1965		
LJ Kirkham FLCM T Dip Mus LCCM	1964-1965		
V Hirsta BEc (Prague)	1965		
HT Stearne WATC	1965		
N Walker BA (Hons) Dip Ed (Birm)	1965		
ARR Winder BA Hons Dip Ed (Birm)	1965		
JA Coulson TTC	1965		
All junior school teachers at Mowbray campus have been included.			
<b>Preparatory School Teachers – 8 High Street</b>			
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Years on Staff</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
Mrs F Nightingale	1940-1946		
Mrs M Lee	1940-1944		
Miss JW Kidd	1942-1945		
Miss D Hickson	1944-1947		
Miss L Stubs	1946-1950, 1953		
Mrs SC Brammall	1947-1948		
Miss M Lewis	1947-		
Mrs BM Cocker	1948		
Miss B Holder	1949-1951		

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Years on Staff</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
Miss R Cumming	1949		
Miss M Cook	1949		
Miss Sheila Atkinson	1949-1965		
Miss I Rodger MA	1951		
Miss P Grey	1951		
Miss D Harrex	1951-1953		
Miss A Archer	1952-1953		
Mrs RG Hall	1952-1954		
Mrs P Ride	1952-1953		
Miss P McKinnon	1953		
Rev AV Maddick BA Th B Dip Ed LTh	1954-1958		
Miss K Gordon	1954-1958		
Mrs Holloway	1954-1965		Gas Bomb
Miss McCormack	1954-1958		
Miss Holden	1954-1958		
Mrs Pennycuick	1954-1958		
Miss B Langley	1958-1958		
Miss N J Cure	1959-1965		
Mrs AP Clayton	1959		
Mrs B Cocker	1959		
Miss M De Groot	1960		
Miss B Pegus	1960-1961		
Miss D Prevost	1960		
Miss S Hardy	1961-1963		
Miss A Sansom	1961		
Mrs A Stark	1961-1965		
Mrs IT C Brassil	1964		
Several teachers, Mrs A Stark, Miss B Mc Cormack, Mrs Lee, Mrs SC Brammall, taught at both the junior school on the Mowbray campus and the preparatory school at 8 High Street, Launceston.			



1960



STAFF

Back Row: Mr. E. Causley, Mr. B. Smith, Mr. W. E. Goodhand, Mr. C. F. E. Crickmore, Miss B. Lees, Miss B. MacCormack, Mrs. A. Stark, Mr. J. Genest, Mr. R. J. Wilson, Mr. T. C. Kirkbride, Mr. N. M. Wilson, Mr. J. Coulston.  
 Front Row: Mr. M. Donoghue, Mr. E. Charlton, Matron K. Collins, Mr. J. C. Parish, The Headmaster, (Mr. D. V. Selth), Mr. A. T. Sorell, Mr. W. MacLeod, Mr. L. Hampton, Mr. G. Harrison.

1946



SCHOOL STAFF, 1946

It has been the School's good fortune to have always had a loyal and efficient staff, which has not only upheld the dignity of the profession, but has faithfully guided the boys in their adherence to the great traditions of the School. The staff in the Centenary year is depicted above.

*Back row L-R: Miss E Rice, MW Donoghue, JM Joscelyne, RA James, AT Sorell, unknown.  
 Front row: J Parish, LT McIntyre, AH Harry, HV Jones headmaster, H Fraser, Dr WV Tenniswood, E Hayward.*

## *Appendix III - Nicknames*

A nickname is a substitute for the proper name of a familiar person, place or thing, for affection or ridicule.<sup>241</sup> In compiling the nicknames of teachers and students, the majority were descriptive of the person.

### **John Henry writes**

One of the things that stay with the people who were at Grammar is the memory of the nicknames. In fact, the nicknames themselves stayed with some of those people. Sir Raymond Ferrall was 'Pic' to his friends throughout his life, and 'Shrimp' Archer was only ever known as Shrimp.

They are also useful in a community such as a school where there may be more than one person with any given Christian name or surname. A nickname, except where used for brothers, is invariably unique to the bearer of it.

Nicknames have been used through time immemorial. The first Algernon was a nobleman in the early Middle Ages who became known as 'Als' Gernon, which meant Will with the whiskers.

Have you thought about how or why people are given nicknames? Is it through boredom or to express some feeling towards a person, such as disrespect or derision, or is it laziness because the nickname is shorter, or for the pleasure of using a witty epithet, wanting to escape from conformity, or because the nickname has a certain ring about it, or it pleases the bearer of the nickname? And who thinks them up?

The last question is the hardest to answer. Someone must. Trevor Sorell in maths class called Michael Batson 'Batso'. That stuck, but no other instance comes to mind. As to the first question, there were nicknames at school that could be explained in various ways but some that defied explanation.

Some were plays on initials, such as 'Egabord' for EGA Clarke or 'Devious' for DV Selth. Some were distortions of surnames such as 'Mud Guts' for Mr Metzger or 'Maggots' for Mr Jasper 'Mac' McGaw, or that started with a sound matching the surname such as 'Baldy' Bain, 'Fatty' Findlay, 'Dog' Denny and 'Jaffa' Jones. Robert Armstrong was nicknamed 'Louis' after the famous jazz trumpet player Louis Armstrong. Frequently the first part of a hyphenated or double-barrelled surname was used as if it was a Christian name, such as 'Campbell' for Bill Campbell-Smith or 'Carington' for Owen Carington Smith, if that can be called a nickname.

Wanting to step outside boundaries could explain why some teachers, in an age where they were addressed as 'Sir', were known among the boys by their Christian names, for example Ron Horner, Bob Wilson and Trevor Sorell. We didn't always know what a master's Christian name was but that didn't stop us from giving them one. So Max Donoghue was 'Steve', Guy Harrison was 'Charlie' and Ern Causley was 'Erroll'. Mr SH Smart became 'Sullivan Harry'.

There were nicknames that were a comment on a person's appearance or character. Jeff Findlay was 'Tubby' or 'Fatty', John Gee was 'Slobby' and Alan Taylor was 'Angel Face'. Robert Armstrong's younger brother Bruce bore a more than passing resemblance to Elvis Presley so he became 'Elvis'. Philip Clemons was perceived as a ladies' man and called 'Stal', short for stallion. There is a mainland Supreme Court judge whose nickname at school was 'Horny'. And there was 'Garbage' Archer. In a similar vein, one teacher whose teaching was judged by his students to be less than up-to-date became known as 'Stone Age' and another who seemed less than au fait with the purpose or operation of a voltameter became known as 'Voltameter'. An incident early in Mr Clarkson's time at the school earned him the nickname 'Basher'. Lionel Hampton was easily diverted into telling stories about his military service with Gurkhas in the Indian Army, hence his nickname 'Screwball', which was shortened to 'Screw'. We are left to

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<sup>241</sup> 'nickname', Oxford English Dictionary (online ed.), retrieved 26 September 2011

guess as to why Gavin Thomas was assigned 'Bot', Robert Winspear 'Bragger' and David Barnett 'Gasser'.

There seemed to be a disproportionate number of nicknames ascribed on the headmaster. Jim Baily would move his head before answering a difficult question, so he was 'Wobblehead'. Robert 'Crinklehead' Wardlaw had worry lines, and there was 'Boxhead' Collins. Mr Kirkbride was initially 'Pinhead' as he had a round bald head, though his nickname evolved into 'Tackhead'. Nicknames did sometimes evolve or change. Trevor was earlier known as 'Tadpole' but that gave way to 'Trevor'. Incidentally in the 'h' in headmaster nicknames was usually silent. It is open to question whether some of the headmaster nicknames were a comment on the appearance or the contents, for example 'Atom Brain' and 'Pea Brain'. There was irony in some of the nicknames. The elderly mild-mannered Mr James who lived with his sister in Joffre Street was called 'Jimmy Jockstrap', and the cultured and courteous Englishman Arnold Neale was called 'Angus McNeill'.

Younger brothers tended to inherit nicknames from elder brothers. Bruce Dennis's younger brother Peter was also called 'Badger'. Both Richard and Frank Henderson were 'Fred'. My father was at school with a Smith who had a permanent squint in one eye and was nicknamed 'Bung Eye', shortened to 'Bung'. His younger brother Harley also got 'Bung', the elder being 'Big Bung' and the younger 'Little Bung'. The given name of the eldest Barnard was Tom, so his younger brother Tim also got 'Tom'.

Most nicknames are explicable but for some there is no obvious explanation, such as Nick Wilson being 'Creepy', or 'Dyke' Foster or 'the Badger' Dennises. Among the explicable are the inevitable such as 'Bluey' Barrenger who had red hair, and 'Kiwi' the scout master Mr Hirstgood who was a New Zealander. Mr Jean Genest who taught French was 'Frenchy' although he was in fact Swiss. On the other hand, there was an originality about some, like the friend of my sister who spoke with a lisp and was dubbed 'Pith'. Her friends knew not to use her nickname in the hearing of her mother.

Nicknames are often close to the bone and not always welcomed by the recipient. I hope I haven't identified anyone in this article with an unwelcome nickname. There were, even in the boarding house, a few nicknames that were used to deride or bully a person and they are not mentioned here. On the whole though, the owner of a nickname bore it happily. In fact, one wonders if some preferred to be known by their nickname rather than their given name. 'Jika' Travers' given name was Basil, and 'Shrimp' Archer, who was known all his life as Shrimp and even introduced himself as Shrimp, was Cecil.

At school there were some boys whose nickname was a girl's name. There was a 'Mabel', a 'Mary' and a 'Suzie'. The nickname was usually acquired well before the person's sexuality became apparent, so by the time the owner's sexual orientation became apparent (if it did), it didn't occur to anyone to connect the two.

Nicknames were invariably short, the ones that started off long usually ending up being shortened. An extreme example is the 'Racing Mongolian Earwig' David Saunders, whose nickname was shortened to 'Racing'.

It is probably fair to say that a person is generally addressed by his nickname by someone who perceives himself to be an equal and is closely enough associated to know the nickname, so addressing a person by his nickname is a kind of inclusivity. An environment where people live together, like a school boarding house or even a school, is a fertile breeding ground for the invention and use of nicknames. And so it was in the period that this book examines.

### **A selection of student nicknames**

Peter Clemons – Clacketty

John Hamilton – Hairdo

Ian Richards – Pancho

Paul Richards – Speedy

Owen Carington Smith – Carington

Ian Lawrence – Doppy

Paul Rapley – Mouse

Gavin Thomas – Bot

Jan Haswell – Scoop

Roger Halliwell – Pattern Pants

Graeme Hetherington – Blossom

Rafe Champion – Alf

Blunston – Abo

Phil Clemons – Stal, Bleary

Peter Mercer – Mousey

Tim Barrenger – Blue

David Saunders – Racing

Cecil Archer – Shrimp

Robert Armstrong – Louis

Frank Henderson – Fred

Robert Winspear – Bragger

Peter Shepherd – Slippery

David Taylor – Mabel

David Barnett – Gasser

Jeff Finlay – Fatty

John Gee – Slobby

John Davis – Fatty

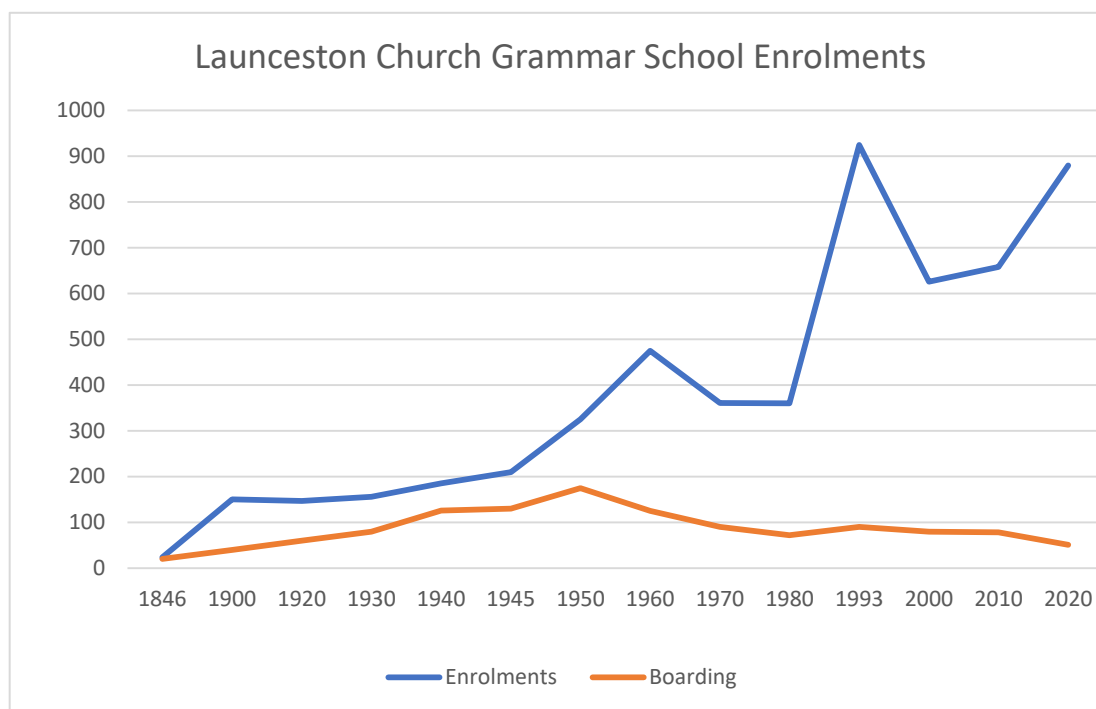
M. Collins – Shorty

Peter Greig – Pig Tin

Barry Larter – Leonard

Anthony (Tony) Pitt – Piglett

## *Appendix IV – School Growth 1846-2020 Coeducation and Amalgamation*



<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrolments</b>	<b>Boarding</b>
1846	24	20
1900	150	40
1920	147	60
1930	156	80
1940	185	126
1945	210	130
1950	325	175
1960	475	125
1970	361	90
1980	360	72
1993	925	90
2000	626	80
2010	658	78
2020	880	51

### Excerpts from *Blue, Black and White*

Alison Alexander in her book, *Blue, Black and White* published in 1996, mentions that under the leadership of a popular and successful headmaster like Harold Vernon Jones, it was only to be expected that Grammar would prosper. From 212 boys in 1946, the number grew to 315 in 1952, added to the 145 in the preparatory school for a total of 460, by far the highest in the school's history.<sup>242</sup>

Enrolments were slow for 1972 and the Grammar Board was faced with some important decisions. Should Grammar merge with another boys' school (presumably Scotch)? Should it become co-educational? It was decided to take a limited number of girls in matriculation classes, and seven girls, mostly from Broadland House and including the daughters of two teachers and the chairman of the Board, enrolled for 1972. (At the same time, Scotch College went entirely co-educational, with Oakburn following the next year.) Mary Hutchings designed a blue and white uniform which, to the girls' pleasure, included no hat, gloves or tie, and had optional trousers for winter wear. The seven girls enjoyed their time at Grammar. At first they "stood out like sore thumbs" and few people spoke to them – "the boys were quite shy, and so were we" - but gradually they were accepted. Some boys did not know how to react to girls and acted childishly – at one stage Megan Walter's books were thrown out the window, but she made some good friends among the boys. The girls played their part in the life of the school. One was a prefect, another on the Launcestonian and Kalori committees, and girls joined the sailing club, the choir and the alpine club.<sup>243</sup>

The decision made by Grammar saw the number of girls attending the school rise continually, and by 1978, the last year of Headmaster Hutchings' regime, girls formed twenty-six per cent of the school. Girls had now become an integral part of the school.

Alexander states that they were a vital to the school's survival, which could be seen from the enrolment figures. Had Grammar not introduced girls, a school of 262 boys would have seen real problems. As it was, the Board remained worried, as were other school boards. Possible amalgamation was discussed between Scotch and Oakburn, and Oakburn and Broadland, and in 1974 Oakburn approached Grammar. Grammar was yet again discussing amalgamation with Broadland, but the Broadland Board rejected it but relinquished to amalgamation in 1982/3. A more successful year was 1978, with enrolment marginally increased.

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Boarding:	Boys	Girls	Total
1972	354	7	361			-	
1973		4				-	
1974	315	28	343		74	4	78
1975	313	47	360		81	9	90
1976	262	60	322		56	14	70
1977			329		56	17	73
1978	270	97	367		60	21	81
1979			349				65
1980			360				72

Source: *Blue Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School*, p. 335

In early 1982, though there were still problems, the situation was encouraging. The master plan was in progress, enrolments were increasing with 400 students for the first time since 1971, and because of this a budget surplus was forecast. Then the bombshell dropped.

<sup>242</sup> Alison Alexander, *Blue Black and White: The History of the Launceston Church Grammar School 1846-1996*, 1996, p. 179

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, p. 233

The Broadland site offered the junior school many facilities not usually enjoyed by a primary school, such as science laboratories, a lecture theatre, an art and craft room and a modern kitchen. And separation had advantages, in that older students at the junior school were given leadership opportunities and were “treated as big kids,” as one wrote in Campbell’s survey. Many new subjects were introduced at Broadland, such as French and German, while music, art, drama, science and computing were strengthened, and the enrolment doubled from 1983 to 1993. During these years the school’s enrolment numbers continued to rise, until it reached 925 in 1993, the school's highest enrolment of all time.

## *Appendix V – Elizabeth Street Chapter*



*Source: Alumni Newsletter, June 2016*

A chapter of the Old Launcestonians initially opened to all boys who had attended school at the buildings once occupied by the school at Elizabeth Street, at what is now the Colonial Motor Inn. The idea of the chapter is variously attributed to Sir Raymond Ferrall, who became its first and only chairman, and to then development manager Stuart Bryce, although Fred Marriott certainly played a role in the organisation of the first meeting. This was held in March 1988 at the Colonial Motor Inn and festivities also included a mayoral reception, tours of the ‘new’ school, and a service at St John’s Church on the Sunday.

From the third one in 1992, these reunions have been held at the Mowbray campus. The dinner was changed to a lunch in 2002 and from 2004 the chapter has met annually rather than biennially.

With numbers steadily diminishing, in 1994 the chapter decided to admit as members any old boy who had attended school prior to 1934. In 1996, the qualification was further changed when it was decided to add two classes at each reunion year. Finally, in 2002 or 2004, the qualification was changed to include all old boys who had left the school at least fifty years ago or more.

At the earlier meetings, widows of past members as well as wives were also invited to attend, but this practice ceased after the 2000 reunion. As an independent group, the Elizabeth Street chapter contributed towards the cost of the 1990 building campaign. The roofed in area between the Warren McDonald building and the science building was named the Elizabeth Street Chapter Mall and was opened in 1992. An honour board located there lists the individual members who contributed.

The chapter meets on an annual basis each Easter, when members attend an Easter Service in the chapel, followed by a tour of the school and lunch in the boarding house dining room. In the tradition of the occasion, the headmaster commences proceedings with a welcome and a roll call, to which those attending answer ‘Sir’ or ‘Present’. Those not already recognised as members and who left fifty years earlier are inducted into the chapter and presented with an Elizabeth Street chapter tie.



## Elizabeth Street Luncheon 2017



*L-R: Paul AC Richards (c62), David Brill (c62,) Roy Frith (c61)  
Source: Roy Frith collection*



*L-R: Rafe Champion, Ian Richards, Paul Richards  
Source: David Brill collection*



*Rafe Champion and Paul AC Richards following the Elizabeth Street chapter luncheon 2017*

## Elizabeth Street Chapter Luncheon Address 27 March 2018

*Paul AC Richards AM*

One question for everyone in the room. Why is it at alumni reunions, you feel younger than everybody else looks? And just think, in fifty years from now this room will be filled with old ladies and men with tattoos!

Headmaster, Old Launcestonians, guests – on behalf of the membership of the Elizabeth Street chapter and wider school community, staff and student body, may I firstly welcome you Headmaster (Mr Richard Ford) to Launceston Church Grammar School and your first meeting with the Elizabeth Street chapter. We hope that with your energy, enthusiasm and focus on education and learning, our school will achieve greater excellence in the future under your leadership.

We are fifty years removed from the blackboard-walled classrooms, fifty years from the ringing of the class bell, fifty years from the seemingly relentless challenge to master our lessons, and fifty years from the warm camaraderie of our classmates, boarding house cold showers and corporal punishment. So welcome to the class of 1968 and their induction into the Elizabeth Street chapter.

The Elizabeth Street chapter was established as an alumni reunion for those students of Grammar who attended the school when it was domiciled in Elizabeth Street, just outside the city centre of Launceston, from 1846 to 1923.

The chapter was established in 1988, the idea attributed to Sir Raymond Ferrall who became its one and only chairman. However, the first meeting held in the Colonial Motor Inn was organised by Fred Marriott. At that time, festivities also included a mayoral reception, tours of the ‘new’ school, and a service at St John’s on the Sunday.

From 1992, dinners were held in the boarding house dining room, but in 2002 this was changed to a luncheon meeting.

With numbers steadily diminishing, in 1994 the chapter decided to admit as members any old boy who had attended school prior to 1934. In 1996, the qualification was further changed when it was decided to add two classes at each reunion year. Finally, in 2004 the qualification was changed to include all old boys out of school for fifty years or more. Today we celebrate the chapter’s thirtieth anniversary.

Also today, after much searching, the 1961 State Premiership First XI cricket team were all located, alive and well. As a member of that team, I am happy that half the team was able to attend today’s luncheon to celebrate the fifty-seventh anniversary of their win over Hutchins. It was the ninth win on the trot from 1953 to 1961, and there are several members of those teams here with us today.

As a tribute to the school’s indelible record of cricket since it was introduced by the first headmaster, Henry Plough Kane in the 1840s, I wrote a book dedicated to the legacy of Jack Savigny, *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School*. Jack was a master batsman, perhaps the greatest the school and Tasmania has ever seen. However, we will never overlook our Baggy Greens, David Boon, George Bailey and James Faulkner and a host of other great cricketers this school has produced.

Headmaster, as a reminder of the school’s great sporting tradition, may I present to you a copy of that very book, *The Savigny Bat: Celebrating Cricket at Launceston Church Grammar School*.

We return each year to honour the school, meet with our classmates and relive and enjoy past memories. How can we forget ‘Shooter’ Parish, Trevor Sorell, ‘Maggots’ McGaw, ‘Steve’ Donoghue, ‘Boots’ Mattingley, ‘Jika’ Travers, Harold Vernon Jones, Don Selth, ‘Screw’ Hampton, ‘Basher’ Clarkson, ‘Rags’ Charlton and Ron Horner or that incredible photograph of Ted Tyrell winning the cross country in 1960. The old gymnasium, the Sir Gordon Rolph

pavilion, the string of aeriols from the boarding house dorms stretched across to the pine trees to give life to crystal sets, the ring of the chapel, school and boarding house bells and cricket lunches in this dining room – saveloys and mashed potato, vivid memories that come flooding back, especially to the older members of our chapter.

However, in view of this we are continuously struck by the development of the school and its growth. Indeed, Grammar has never faded from our hearts. So, here's to the indelible stamp of the Launceston Church Grammar School, a remarkable place that touched us all in profound and life-bettering ways.

Will you join with me in a toast to the school?

The school.

## *Appendix VI – Letters Home*

### *Rafe Champion*

On Sunday after chapel, the boarders returned to the boarding house and wrote letters in the common rooms, under supervision with the same no-talking rules that applied during homework sessions on weeknights. I think we generally enjoyed letter-writing as little as we liked homework!

I put my letters home in the envelope with the threepence and a half penny stamp, grudgingly paid from the miserly pocket money that I was supposed to live on. My letters were hauntingly similar to the letters home by Nigel Molesworth, a boarder at the fictional St Custards prep school. An Englishman Geoffrey Willans, supported by the legendary illustrator Ronald Searle, produced a long-running series about the school and its denizens which appeared in books and periodicals.

Nigel's letters, and mine, were based on a template with details inserted each week, with some variation in the sports section depending on the season.

*This week it was hot/cold/it rained.*

*The film was.....*

*We played St Pats and won by twenty runs. I almost hit a four. When I got a bowl, the ball was lost in the hedge.*

*We played Scotch and it was very wet. We won easily and I kicked a point. The school team beat St Pats and they play Hutchins for the final.*

*The cross country is next week. Went out to practice with Smith and Jones. It was high tide and we almost lost our sandshoes in the bog near the river.*

*My chilblains are bad again and I think I need another pair of socks.*

*Jones got some cake from his aunt. He gave me a slice and I will give him a slice next time you come.*

*Smith ate six serves of sweet corn this morning.*

Fortunately, some boys provided more interesting and informative accounts of their weekly activities and some extracts from these letters are published in this volume. I am sure their parents were grateful for the more rounded view of school life that they provided, compared with the bland and monotonous commentary provided by the likes of Nigel Molesworth and me.

### **Snow Thomas**

Today, to be in possession of his and his brother's schoolboy letters written home from the boarding house at Launceston Church Grammar school between 1942 and 1947, is not only remarkable but paints a social history at the school, its activities and daily life during the war years.

Bertram and Daniel Thomas, twin brothers, enjoyed their time at Grammar which is reflected in their correspondence home from the ages of ten to fifteen years. In his letter in March 1942 at the age of ten, Daniel appears to be quite pleased with himself in receiving three cuts of the cane on his rump and detention, and openly writes to mum and dad about the experience, something one would have thought he may have been ashamed of. The letters are open and honest and give us a great insight to life as a boarder at Grammar in the 1940s.

Until a few years ago, letters written home by boarders to their parents were an integral part of the boarding house ethos. A letter each week was mandatory. Today, the electronic age has superseded the letter with mobile phones and email correspondence, connecting families on a daily basis.

**Letters home to their parents 1942-1945, Bertram Thomas and Daniel Thomas, twins, born 1 May 1931, boarders at Launceston Church Grammar School**

**1. From Bertram, aged 10**

Launceston Church Grammar School, Launceston, Tasmania

22. 2. '42 at five past six in the afternoon

Dear Mother [Jean Thomas],

I have just come back from scout camp at Carolin Islands [*Cora Lynn*], south of St Leonards, "It was fun". In the ..... all the people out of our tent raided another and in the confusion the scout master took my blanket and kept it till the morning.

Would it be convenient for us to come home on Thursday morning or after; if in the morning please ring Mr Lloyd, or will you come up for us. Please ring me at 5.45 on Wednesday or Thursday morning.

From Bertram

**2. From Daniel, aged 10**

Launceston Church Grammar School, Mowbray Heights, Launceston

15<sup>th</sup> March 1942

Dear Mum and Dad [*Harold Thomas*],

News! I had the sock on Monday as well as half an hour's detention; I got 50 lines this morning, and should have done national service yesterday but as the lawn was not untidy enough, I'm leaving it until they get a bit worse. Douglas [*Moon*] got the sock too, but he only got two stripes, I got three.

We had talkies last night with lots of cartoons. Have the kittens arrived yet? Have any of my special rock plants died; the ones outside the sitting room window, that is. We haven't got that letter from Dad yet. This paper that is being sent is for both of us, and please send it back when it is filled in. Does Louie [*housemaid*] seem pleased that we're gone or is she just as grumpy. I haven't worn the under pants yet.

Love from

Daniel

**3. From Daniel, aged 10**

Launceston Church Grammar School, Mowbray Heights, Launceston

March 22<sup>nd</sup> [1942]

Dear Mum and Dad,

Thank you for the gingerbread and your last letter. How is the hen getting on that lays the banana-shaped eggs? And is Mrs R Laying?

Have the kittens arrived yet; I'm not sure whether you told us in the last letter or not, so I'm just asking again to be on the safe side. We've just come back from a weekend scout camp at Cora Lynn Island (I don't know if that's how Cora Lynn is spelt), which isn't an island anymore because the river on one side of the island has been dammed up.

Last night the different tents attacked each other and Bertram's blankets were snavelled by the big tent, but he got them back, my tie disappeared and it hasn't turned up. There was a platypus in the swimming pool and some kookaburra on top of the hill. Mr McCracken said he'd be round Devonport in the holidays so how about inviting him out. Mrs Huxley has been quite a good painter at times because when five of us went to her place on Thursday she showed us

some of her paintings which were as good as Miss Stops's paintings, and one or two better. How about that War Savings stamp booklet? I think I'd better close now.

Love from

Daniel

4. From Daniel Thomas, aged 11

26/7/42

Dear Mum and Dad,

Nothing special has happened since you came up. Yesterday the Scouts had a rubber drive. Our troop did the section between High Street and Elphin Road. Me and four others did a little bit of Lyttleton Street. A bit of Abbott Street, Trotsford Crescent, Monds Street, Rupert Street and Lime Avenue. Altogether our troop collected 2 tons.

Last night we had an interhouse quiz competition. We all had numbers starting from the bottom of prep form to the top of sixth form. I was the one in the school who knew who wrote Don Quixote. Mr Lloyd asked us the question starting from the bottom and our number was the number of points we got for the house. The house with the most points won, Savigny won by 101 points.

Love from

Daniel

5. From Bertram Thomas, aged 11

26/7/42

Dear Mother,

Yesterday we had a match against High School, they beat us by three goals. Last night we had a house quiz competition.

We, Savigny of course won by one hundred and one points.

When we played High School the ground was very slippery. We are going to play High again. On Wednesday we are playing High again, at the Cornwall football grounds.

In the quiz I answered one question, Daniel two and Cawthorne three. Two of Cawthorne's were very easy. They were about radiation and ortho-tharincus paradoxus [*platypus*].

From your

Loving son,

Bertram

6. From Bertram Thomas, aged 11 or 12

[Probably early 1943] Sunday

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night when I was speaking to Janet [*Borthwick; cousin, Land Girl*] the phone cut out, so I said hello, goodbye a few times & hung up. I suppose it was 'Air-Flash' or something. Did you enjoy yourself at 7-Mile Beach [*now Bakers Beach. Probably VDC exercises*].

Is Jinks, horse or mare, crossbred or thoroughbred, old or young, quiet or frisky? Do you or don't you (Dad) ride her?

Mum, what were you saying about Dad taking us camping at Easter?

In the Snake Gully Cup held at Trevallyn yesterday;

Mum's Request .....(Mum).....1 (Cup valued at £5)

Wally's Hope .....(Alf) .....2 no prize  
Mabel's Pride .....(Mabel) .....3 “ “  
Sox .....(Dad) .....4 “ “  
King Pin .....(Bill Smith) ...5 “ “  
Uncle's Chance (Uncle Clarence).6 “ “

From

Bertram

7. From Bertram Thomas, aged 12

[Undated – probably late 1943] Sunday

Dear Mum & Dad,

Thank you for sending up our pocket-money and that letter, are you going to buy a power mower Dad? [*He did – an IHC mower, attached to a Farmall H tractor with PTO.*]

Yesterday we played a match against Trevallyn, to be continued next Saturday; we are still batting with about 5 wickets down for nearly 300 runs.

There have been two good partnerships, one of 90 runs and the other of 91. [*John*] Chester has made a century and 5 runs, and isn't out yet. Johnny Archer, our captain made 6 runs and then played the ball on to the wickets, like I did the Saturday before. In the seconds match we beat St Pats, they made 65, while [*Peter*] Badcock of our team made 59 alone.

Mr. Robins, a new master is a good tennis player, and will probably teach tennis.

Dad, what does “not negotiable” mean? You'll have lots of rabbits when Jack Dick [*rabbiter and farm-hand*] retires after the “big money” (harvest) won't you.

Daniel and I have the worst national service job imaginable. It is filling all the ink wells in the school, 80 or 90, but I have simplified matters by sticking (with glue) a rubber tube (which George Drinkwater) one of the workmen, pinched from the chem lab for me. I've finished it.

Love to all,

Bertram

I don't think Daniel is writing to you.

8. From Bertram Thomas, aged 14(?)

Church Grammar School, Launceston

Sunday [probably February 1944]

Dear Mum & Dad,

I arrived safely after having dinner at Westbury Hotel. I saw Mr Gall [*dentist, Brisbane Street*] in the afternoon and he said that a broken back tooth will need an addition to (probably) and 1 or 2 of the broken front ones will probably die, and he will give me a thermal test in about 6 weeks [*I had damaged my mouth, hitting a clothes-line whilst on horseback in darkness*]. I later got a headache because I had two 3<sup>d</sup> ice-creams at Latrobe, so did not have any tea at all. I met Daniel at the train and got my cases, at the same time tearing my suit trousers, a small tear, about this shape and size [*diagram inserted*]. They are now at Cox & Webb's being invisibly mended at a cost of 2/-, I shall get them back on Tuesday. The trousers arrived on Thursday from Painton's [*Devonport tailor*], and fit beautifully.

At the station we waited ¾ hour for a taxi that promised to come back for us. It didn't, so we tried the public telephone, but it was out of order, and the yellow cab phone had been stolen.

Finally we hailed a yellow cab that was passing, and we were taken out to school in a car that was out of oil.

Please send my bicycle up soon, and remember to take Dick Sykes' to Devonport. Tell me when you're sending it.

This term we are not allowed to pictures, public gatherings or Church, owing to some epidemic, whose name we are not told, is about. I think it is paralysis.

There are lots of new boys this year, among them some Holloway, the son of Tas, from Devonport. He's 6 months younger and 1 foot shorter than me.

Please send me Janet's address.

Yesterday I took my watch to a jeweller to get a new front and glass & 2 hands. He can't give or get a second hand though. It will cost about 30/- in about 10 weeks.

Have you heard how the Moons are getting on at Friends. Don Loane is shaping quite well here, he hasn't been homesick, and is quite happy.

Lots of love,

Bertram

9. From Bertram, aged 12 or 13

[On school letterhead]

[Undated. Possibly 1943, probably February 1944]

Dear Mum, Dad (and Liz),

There are 34 in our (4A) form, and we sleep in Savigny 2 dorm.

Yesterday I played in a cricket match against St Pats. I made 2 runs and then played the ball onto the wicket. Our team made 39 runs, and they 138. The average [age] of our team is about 12 ½ and their's 14.

I don't like the little bit of French that I've had very much.

I hear from Daniel that yesterday when I was playing in a cricket match against St Patrick's College, dear little Willy Bovill came up and asked Mr Hunter some un-intelligible thing. Hunter produced Daniel who was unable to understand it and had not the sense to come and ask me if I knew anything about it, and at night-time Daniel told me about it and I produced the parcel and Daniel looked small. We're taking the parcel to him.

From

Your loving son

Snow

10. From Daniel Thomas, aged 12

13<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1944

Dear Mum & Dad,

How are you all? I have settled down again all right. I can't think of much to say because we have rung each other up once or twice and I seemed to say a lot of things then; anyway I'll tell you about yesterday's shopping.

At 9 o'clock I started off with (a) the intention of looking for Stone Street and Bovills (b) one pound of Mr Hunter's (c) a bi-sulphured and treacle mouth wash (d) & my music case containing some chocolate for refreshments I Trudgian for company. [*Geoffrey Trudgian, Boarder from the West Coast*]. [(b) *Connie Bovill, English widow with three pre-teenage sons*]



Firstly I left one sandal at a bootmakers by the tram stop to be repaired (price 3<sup>d</sup>). This was still at Mowbray. When in town I went to Edments and bought a comb and told the girl she ought to be ashamed of herself for selling such weak combs. I made her change £1. Then I bought some Listerine toothpaste.

Next I went to Coles and bought 3lb apricots from an old chicken of about 60 who beamed when I told her she was a good girl for not giving me rotten ones. Then I went to Jackson's where they hadn't got a key ready so I gave the man some apricots in hope that they would make him hurry.

Also I bought a tennis press (very austere) and sixpence worth of Gourlay's week-end specials (sweets).

I went to the Clover Leaf prepared to tick them off belatedly but I was served too promptly. In the afternoon I trotted up to Lime Ave with Grannie to see Aunt Beth who gave me some pears. My love to Lib and Janet [*Elizabeth Tinning and Janet Borthwick, Land Army girls*] and thank Louie for the cake.

Much love,

Daniel

11. From Daniel, aged 12

[School letterhead]

Sunday March 26<sup>th</sup> 1944

Dear Mum and Dad,

I didn't go to town yesterday so I didn't get the shirt. I suppose I'll ask them to send a bill to you when I do get it. I tried the jodphurs(?) on and they were lovely. I could get my terrific feet in and out of them comfortably.

We went to the carnival at Trevallyn yesterday with Aunt Beth And couldn't get a fruit cake, or any cakes for that matter. We made the mistake of going to the sideshows first and by the time we finished all of them there were no ice creams or any ice-blocks or anything left. By this time Bertram was very cross with me because I kept stopping at all the shops along the street and buying ice-creams or cordial, so at last he rushed ahead to catch trams.

Mrs Tilley and I had a lovely time buying music at Findlays that they don't want to sell. We both fly in and pour a pile of money into the Old Dear's hands and rush out with piles of music with the not-wanted-to-be-solds in the middle. All very hurricane-like, but disconcerting to the old Dears.

Much love,

Daniel

12. From Daniel, aged 13

[School letterhead]

21<sup>st</sup> May 1944

Dear Mum and Dad,

Thank you very much for the cakes and chocolate. They were all very nice. Dad wants me to change Granny's library books for every week. He seemed to like the sports but he or Mr Griffin or somebody left a dreadful smell of tobacco on my right shoulder and everybody suspects me of doing things I shouldn't.

This morning we had a special service in the chapel to which lots of strangers came, but I don't know what the service was for.

At the sports I showed Dad our dancing instructress and he said she wasn't as nice as Anthea Booth (or Wood). Has Dad told you about Bertram's bet at dancing?

It was Betty Bluck's [*Land Army girl*] birthday last Thursday. Did you remember it?

Ever so much love from

Daniel

**13.** From Bertram, aged 13

L. C. G. S.

21. 5. '44

Dear Mum,

When you have read Uncle Sam's [*Sam Martin, godfather*] letter will you send it back, because I still have to write a letter to him, and I cannot remember his address.

There isn't much to tell you except that Dad didn't come out to school, so we could give him no trousers.

As soon as new coupons come in shall I buy a new pair of shoes? And shall we get a dental appointment as soon as possible?

Dad will tell you about the sports.

Love from

Snow oxxxoo

**14.** From Bertram, aged 13

[School letterhead]

28. 5. '44

Dear Mum & Dad,

Today we are going to the Sculthorpes for dinner and tea, church being this morning.

Daniel got a place in the Victoria League Essay and was sent "The Complete Works of Shakespeare". He is reading Hamlet, by the way the whole book contains one thousand three hundred and fifty-two pages.

In the under-13 football match, played against St Pats last Saturday, we were the first to score, it was a point, but after that we did not score again, they beat us by about 10 goals. I very much doubt if all their team was under 13.

Last night we (that is, Grammar boys) went to the pictures at the Majestic. They were "It Ain't Hay" featuring Abbott and Costello, and "It's Good to be a Soldier". The Abbott and Costello was very funny; it was this: Abbott kills a horse by giving it some candy to eat, Abbott and Costello steal a racehorse to replace, the racehorse manages to get into the Saratoga Cup with Abbot riding it. He leads all the way, but stops just before the finish, but he has changed horses with another man, and Tea-Cup wins the race and they win \$10,000 from the tote.

When the new coupons come in shall I buy a new pair of shoes? And what shall we do about a new suit.

Love from

Bertram

**15.** From Bertram, aged 13(?)

[School letterhead]

[Probably winter 1944] Sunday

Dear Mum & Dad,

I hope you have sent our suits & ration cards.

For some reason I was made captain of the football (under 14) team. It was the funniest match I've seen. Everyone was on the ball. We scored one point and they 14 goals 18 points. They had about 21 on the field and we 16. But we'll play them next Saturday out here.

Today I am going with Robin [*Griffin*] to the [*Louis*] von Steigletz [*Steiglitz – sic*].

Shall I bring my bicycle home for the holidays?

Exams start on Thursday.

Yesterday our Seconds beat Technical College first by 4 goals.

St Pats beat our under 12 team. Our firsts practised with Essential Services yesterday.

From your loving son,

Snow

**16.** From Bertram Thomas, aged 13

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> (I think) September 1944

Dear Mum & Dad,

Last night Tony (*Henry*), Douglas, Daniel & I went to a party at the Lovibonds; we were outnumbered 2 to 1, there being 12 girls (Broadland House) and 6 boys (Sammy Hughes, & a Flinders' boy whose name I did not catch). Anyway, we had a good supper which is all I worry about. At the tram stop near the Park, Moon pretended to be a kitten, and two girls who were going to the party said, "Is that kitten following?". Thoroughly fooled.

Daniel won one game, I couldn't because they all required good brains, although I was doing well in one game, but I stopped when I found out there was no prize, and another time I broke my pencil (purposely) and couldn't finish in time.

Also last night form IVB had their concert, it was not very good I think, although in the "Volga Boatman" they towed an elephant on the end of a gigantic rope.

I played in two house football matches this week. In the first, against Hawkes, we lost by about 4 goals. I was rucking and got quite a few knocks, I changed for right wing-back where I was on Peter Sculthorpe, and put it over him.

In the other match against Gillett-Wilkinson, we won by ~~about~~ exactly 6,500%, I rucked all the time, and got more knocks than in the other match. I only kicked the ball thrice because of my right knee was, and still is swollen. [*I saw Dr. "Boggy" Grounds. It continues to give trouble seventy-two years later.*]

I must be in a good mood today, this is the longest letter I've written for some time.

Today it is nice and sunny up here, I hope it is the same at home.

Love from Bertram

**17.** From Bertram Thomas, aged 13.

24/9/44

Dear Mum & Dad,

On Friday I played in a House match against Gillett-Wilkinson, we won, the scores being 12-13 to 0-0.

Yesterday afternoon, I with 25 other boys and 2 masters, Hunter and Robbins went along the Bank and had afternoon tea, then I read about horror-crimes while the others played rounders.

I needed afternoon tea because the food was nasty (nasty meat, half-mashed spud, gritty cabbage, synthetic egg, bread-and-butter custard.

Last night we went to the dance (for boys and girls who take dancing) at Broadland House. I was fairly nervous at the beginning. We did not get back till 11.30.

I don't think I'll see a doctor or even Matron or Mr James about my knee here, but I'll see Dr Stephens in the holidays.

Please send up £1-10 pocket money between me and Daniel. We are both fairly short. I'm lucky to have what I've got, but Mr Evans is a very bad manager and he took 4/6 instead of 7/- off for the photos.

Daniel's letter was exaggerated. He did not follow another boy around town; he only kept in the shade as much as possible.

How is Jinx or Jinks or Jincks [horse]? [Totopoly game – Marmaduke Jinks]

Bertram

P. S. Last night I got a little supper, because the girls who were in charge of supper started waiting on us; I did not like to see the girls waiting but other boys did; so I waited on them and got not very much in between. So you see you have brought me up better than some people do.

**18.** Extracts from a letter written by Daniel, aged 13

24<sup>th</sup> September 1944.

Dear Mum,

I saw Dr Carter on Thursday. He said my eyes had got a little bit worse, and sent me round to Horner's for some drops. They gave me a dropper with them, and as Matron says, droppers are hard to get, I shall save this one carefully for you. While I was waiting for the drops I poked round in Mary Fisher's. There's a lovely silly book there that you might get, though it's rather expensive (10/6) for its size. It's called "Anthony and Anti-maccassar". I think Antimacassar is a train and Anthony a pig who likes it. ... I took a book back to the library for Granny [*elderly grandmother living near Grammar*] and bought Mirzy Dotes ("*mares eat oats*" – *sheet music – a popular song – Daniel was a pupil of music teacher Elsie Tilley*). I haven't been able to read it yet because of my drops.

I walked about eleven miles yesterday; four to Waverley in the afternoon with Pommy [*Gordon Cawthorne*], four back, and about three miles at the dance and other things.

There was a lovely girl at the dance called Pat Viney [*later married Dick Lawrence*]. She lives half-way out to Longford. Do you know her? [*Douglas*] Moon had a lovely time with Wendy Northey – the girl he tried to kiss coming back from Dorothea's party. Dorothea looked very lovely last night. [*Dorothea Lovibond – daughter of family friends*].

We've being [*sic*] an exciting lot of Saturday nights. A fortnight ago, Dorothea's party, then the pictures; yesterday the dancing-class break-up dance; next week, Grammar Dance, [*the*] next week, home.

Thank you for the letter on Saturday, but we've already been measured and weighed for the extras; and our numbers were got off the food ration books. I need most a pair of shoes and shirts.

Love from

XXXXX Daniel XXXXX

**19.** From Bertram, aged 13

[School letterhead]

12. 11. '44

Dear Mum & Dad,

Yesterday the School beat Sitmouth [*Sidmouth – sic*] & the seconds were beaten by Tech. In the afternoon a lot of boys went to MLC fête; I didn't. Ours is on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Today I'm going to Grannie's for dinner.

I don't think I did very well in the scholarship.

When is Daniel coming back?

Could you please send up one or two pairs of socks.

Love

from

Snow

Long letter wasn't it!

20. From Bertram Thomas, aged 13.

[Presumably December 1944] Thursday

Dear Dad, and Mum (if you are there),

[Women's Land Army and camouflage-net-making administration kept her busy],

Are you coming to Speech Night in the car? [*The car was a 1936 Buick; roads were not sealed, new tyres were scarce, and petrol was rationed*]. If you are not, you might send up a 10/- note, not a cheque, as I have not enough money left in the bank for a [*train*] ticket.

I'm glad that there were not enough vacancies for me, I don't want to go. Everyone here says that the intermediate and leaving standards are far lower than here, their leaving being not much higher than our intermediate. I don't believe that it is that bad though. I think Daniel will probably get on better there. [*Daniel transferred to Geelong Grammar in 1945*].

[*Jonathon*] Tyson beat me by 174 marks out of about 15,000 for the year, thus being dux. I think I shall get the maths prize. [Tyson, was a good school-friend despite being a day-boy, he became a surveyor, moved to Queensland].

If you are going to, please send the 10/- as soon as possible as I want it by Friday afternoon's mail at least.

Scully [*Peter Sculthorpe*] does not like the idea of Daniel not coming back next year.

On Saturday afternoon I am going to Aunt Beth's.

There is a new arrangement about [*David*] Rolph coming home now, he is coming from speech night till the 22<sup>nd</sup>. I suppose it will get Mum a bit un-prepared, but I hope she does not mind. How would it be if we caught the Wednesday afternoon train home instead of morning, as it (morning) is crowded and also Rolph would have a better chance to get things together.

I hope to have a nice holiday

Love from

Snow [note use of nick-name]

P. S. Please send the money as soon as possible if you are going to; don't forget about Rolph. [Rolph – boarder – from Manly – Sydney, where he had lived with his mother. Son of dipsomaniac journalist Robbie Rolph].

Scully sends his love to everyone, especially David [*Wilson – a Thomas cousin*] who he is going to send a letter to later, and he is sorry he has not sent one already. Scully is staying at Devonport in the holidays.

**21.** From Bertram, possibly aged 14

L. C. G. S. Launceston

[Not dated. Possibly 1945]

Dear Mum & Dad,

What are the holiday arrangements for me, Mr. Jones gave me a travel thing and said he had 3 to you.

The school is asking for butter for the Grammar School Ball on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

School ends at 3. 45 P.M. on June 28<sup>th</sup> and N. W. Coast boys are to leave on the next day.

I didn't get any travel forms as I don't think there [*sic*] needed.

The exams are going all right, and we had our form concert last night; it was a success. I was in 4 items.

Love,

Bertram

**22.** From Bertram, aged 14

C. G. S.

29/7/45

Dear Mum & Dad,

Yesterday I played in a football match which we lost, I kicked one of our 3 goals.

I am sorry to hear that Uncle Guy [*Parsons*] is worse.

I haven't got my suit coat from Abdy [*"Abdonorum" – Cousin Nancy Martin*] yet, I think I had better write to her again today.

I got the jumper Thursday, and the letter on Saturday, the booklet Friday.

There has been no trouble whatsoever about me not doing my holiday H.W. I did a bit of the essential stuff, and I have lost very few marks.

David Rolph isn't back yet, I'm beginning to wonder if he will.

Is Cousin Lee still at "The Book?" I think she probably would be.

I think it was very bad news about the British elections.

Much Love

Bertram

**23.** From Bertram Thomas, aged just 15

Church Grammar School, Launceston

5/5/46

Dear Mum & Dad,

I performed a miracle yesterday by writing to Daniel [*now at Geelong Grammar School*]. Rosemary and Penelope [first cousins in Melbourne], Uncle Neil, think of it, three letters in a day. Uncle Niel, who gave me 5/-, would like to be sent a photo of me. [*Godfather – in Queensland*] and as I had not one at school, I sent him four photos of the school, and said you would send him one later.

We immediately commenced athletics training the first day back, and I'm still feeling a little stiff.

Important ----- please send up ration book and my music book.

In Daniel's letter, he said he thought he was doing very well in the exams. I hope he comes top.

The Head wants parents to buy grey Donegal tweed sports coats for school boys, so would you please if you can. Also can you get any sand shoes yet? Please try and get me some.

I think I left a singlet at home, please send it up, as I can find only one here at school, and I've only got three, and need more.

This term all school washing except socks goes to Cleanquick, and takes one week to come back. It will mean a higher bill.

There was a photo of Sue Walpole and her husband in the paper, did you see it (the *Examiner*).

Love,

Bertram

P.S. What was it that I said over the phone that I would buy if you sent my coupon card up?

24. From Bertram, aged 15

C. G. S. Launceston

19/5/46

Dear Mum & Dad,

At school here I have a shortage of every-day trousers. I have only three pairs – suit trousers, sports trousers, and the Bovill breeches [*Colonel Bovill's, recently inherited*], which I wear every day, and which are badly in need of visiting the cleaners. At home I have the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand dark grey ones sans seat, and the other pair sans seat, as well as a new sports pair? Could you please give me instructions what to do? I wish you could fix up and send up the dark grey pair. Shall I, when you send up my new sports pants wear my other pair as old trousers, or keep two sports trousers? All this is important.

Yesterday I went to town to get my watch which wasn't ready yet even.

Today I intend to ride out to ST. Leonards.

Love,

Bertram

25. From Bertram Thomas, aged 13

Church Grammar School

17<sup>th</sup> Aug. [*probably 1947*]

Dear Mum & Dad,

I suppose you have heard the worst. Hutchins beat us by 1 point. Last year Saints beat us by a point. The scores were 4-9 to 4-8. Very low scoring.. The ground was the worst our team had played on. That put them at a disadvantage. Webby [*Ian Webb from Devonport*] was one of our best players. Some say the best on the ground. [*David*] Rolph and [*John*] Maddox also kept their ends up. Hutchins got twice as many free kicks as us. Don't think I am making excuses for not winning, but from what I can hear, our team was the better, and deserved to win. Yesterday I played in a 2<sup>nd</sup>s match against High School. We won.

Robin Griffin [*boarder from Deloraine. Farmed and died in Southern Rhodesia*] tells me that Ron Loane has taken on his [*Robin's*] father's herd [*stud Jerseys*]. I think Ron is very lucky. Especially as he has the bulls. Robin says he will be camping at Athlone in the Xmas holidays, and doing the milking. To deliver him from Aunt Lee, [*Leigh Loane, known to us as 'Aunt Leaf'. She was rather deaf*]. I think we should have him at North Down. What do you think?

Next week-end is the boarders week end but I do not think it would be worth coming home for.

Please send up some coupons and money for my blazer. It should be ready soon. It will be 4 coupons, & will cost 65/-. 40/- for the blazer and

25/- for the pocket [*embroidered Grammar badge – crossed oars for rowing colours*]. I do not quite know how you had better send up the money. A cheque might be the thing.

I haven't heard anything about the hunt at St Helens yet, but I presume you are at it. How did Doc [*horse*] go? I'm glad we've found Bill Lloyd-Green [*Doc's rider; Field Service Manager at Edgells*]. I saw in the paper that Barney O'Connor had a new child, and from Dorothea that there is a new Walpole somewhere.

I have decided that I want to do Ag. Science and not engineering. I have Mr Jones on my side I think. I still feel as if I would like to go to D'port High next year. There many reasons for staying here, but I think D'port outweighs them. [*He stayed at Grammar and matriculated*]

Please send me a detailed report of how farm operations are proceeding.

Bertram



## *Appendix VII – Honours List*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Alumni year</b>	
Mr AC Radford OAM	1950	Deceased
Mr AH Purves OAM	1945	Deceased
Mr AT Sorell AM	1944	Deceased
Mr Alan G Cuff MBE	1925	Deceased
The Hon. Sir George Crawford	1928	Deceased
Mr Alastair S Douglas OAM	1960	
Mr Allan R Taylor AM	1959	Deceased
The Hon AM Rundle AO	1957	
Mr Barry M Scott OAM	1950	
Mr Brian H Gordon MBE	1928	Deceased
Mr Brian S Roe OAM	1973	
Mr Cecil M Archer MBE	1926	Deceased
Mr CP Prosser Green OAM	1957	
Professor DA Denton AC MB BS	1940	
Mr Daniel RR Thomas AM	1948	
Mr David Brill AM	1962	
Mr Dennis J Rose AM QC	1952	Deceased
Sir Donald D von Bibra OBE	1922	Deceased
Mr Donald J Halliwell OAM	1957	Deceased
Mr Donald Kay AM	1950	
Mr EA Pickett OAM	1966	Deceased
Sir Eric E von Bibra OBE	unknown	Deceased
The Hon Ewan Crawford AC	1958	
Mr FJ Gunn MBE	1933	Deceased
Mr Geoffrey P Harris OAM	1931	Deceased
Mr Geoffrey W Finney MBE	1937	Deceased
Mr George A Champion OAM	1948	
Sir Gordon CL Clark KBE AO	1913	Deceased
Mr Gordon E Cawthorne MBE	1946	
The Hon Sir Guy Green AC KBE	1954	
Mr Hugh WD Loane OBE	1942	Deceased
Mr Ian Sauer OAM	1975	
Mr John A Seaton MBE	1944	Deceased
Dr John CH Morris AO MBE	1943	Deceased
Col John M Toyne AM	1966	
Mr JR Hughes OBE	1939	Deceased
Mr JW Dent OAM	1975	
Mr Keith M Archer CBE	1923	

Name	Alumni year	
Mr Keith S Meredith OAM	1932	Deceased
Mr Kenneth A Finney MBE	1944	Deceased
Col Kenneth W Merrylees OBE	1913	Deceased
Mr Laurance Daglish OAM	1934	Deceased
Dr LN Gollan AM	1930	Deceased
Mr Maxwell G Cleaver OBE	1930	Deceased
Mr Norman B Andrews OAM	1959	Deceased
Mr Paul AC Richards AM	1963	
Dr Paul H Wood OBE	1923	Deceased
The Hon Peter E Rae AO	1949	
Mr Peter France OAM	1964	
Mr Peter G Mercer OAM	1952	
Mr Peter G Rockliff OAM	1949	
Dr Peter J Sculthorpe AO OBE	1945	Deceased
The Hon Peter V Jones AM	1950	Deceased
Mr Philip A Selth OAM	1967	Deceased
Mr RE Atkins OAM	1954	Deceased
Mr RJ Bain MBE	1924	Deceased
Mr Ralph L Harry AC CBE	1934	Deceased
Sir Raymond A Ferrall KB CBE	1925	Deceased
Mr Robert Grierson LVO	1955	Deceased
Dr Robert H Green AM	1941	Deceased
Dr Robert Wall AO	1931	Deceased
Mr Robin B Jones OAM	1947	Deceased
Mr Robin K Hood AM	1950	Deceased
Mr Ronald M Churcher OAM	1943	
Rev Ronald D Stancombe OAM	1941	Deceased
Dr SA FitzGerald AO	1956	
Mr Thomas Room AM	1925	Deceased
Dr TGH Hogg AM	1958	Deceased
The Hon Warwick L Smith AM	1972	

Several of the above who have been honoured are listed in *Who's Who in Australia*, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, *Tasmanian Dictionary of Biography* and *The Companion to Tasmanian History*.

Lessons learned and friends made at Grammar have carried through the sixty-plus years since I left. Success stories of Grammar alumni are numerous and some are identified in this list of those who have received awards in the Australian Honours or before that the Imperial Honours lists.

There is no doubt in my mind that my time at Launceston Grammar was, so far as I was concerned, inspiring and enlightening, and I developed an invaluable set of life skills. I have the utmost admiration for Launceston Church Grammar School – Mos Patrius Et Disciplina.

**Inside front and back cover photograph**

Barrackers leaning on the main oval fence (southern end) during a quiet spell at a Launceston High v. Grammar football match in the early to mid 1950s. It was not so peaceful towards the end of the match which Grammar won by three points.



*L-R: John Kitto, Unknown, Phil Frith, David Adkins, John Stevenson, Rob Bramich(?), Christopher Green, Donald Grove, David Henty, Alan Beecroft, John Langdon, John Brett, Geoff Pask, Peter Mawdsely, Ross Sankey, Unknown, Unknown, Nicky Luttrell, James Flaskas.*