

NEWSLETTER



Volume 6 No. 6

December 2003/January 2004

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Message from the President

Our function on 1 November, the reunion for people who attended the Chermshire State School in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s was very successful. We had about 60 visitors – the building could not have held any more. There was much talking, laughing and squeals of recognition as people renewed old friendships. The photographic displays brought back many memories and the afternoon tea in the Drill



A group of Chermshire State School ex-students from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s at the reunion held on the 1st November 2003. They are standing on the front veranda of the restored original two rooms built in 1900. The Society holds reunions from time to time to keep in touch. One current activity is writing the history of the school, which closed in 1996.

Hall gave the opportunity for more “Do you remembers”. Thank you to the Milne Bay Research Centre and Memorial Library for the use of their building for the day.

We have been extremely fortunate to receive two grants recently. The State Government Gambling Community Benefit Fund enabled us to purchase air conditioning units for the two rooms and we felt the benefit of the one in the Fitzgerald Room during our reunion function. Unfortunately the other unit was vandalised before we could get protective steel cages fitted but repairs have been done.

The grant from Jupiter’s Casino Community Benefit Fund is also appreciated. We are all thrilled with the new kitchen, especially those members who make the afternoon teas at our meetings. Several other items are on order – fridge, microwave, computer desk, printer and scanner, urn, and photocopier. These will help our Society to function as a reputable historical research centre. Glenys, Carol and Pat have been very generous with their time, checking details, organising builders and equipment and making sure that we fulfill the conditions of the grant.

I would like to wish all our members and families a very happy Christmas and New Year. I hope you enjoy the holiday season and that you return to us safely in the New Year.

Our Website is Operational. Look for it on www.sites.ourbrisbane.com/HistoryChermside
We have this website for one year free, courtesy of Brisbane City Council. The aim is to raise money for the Society from online donations. Any suggestions for improvements would be welcome.

Vandalism. The two air conditioners had only been installed for a few days when one unit was damaged to the tune of \$500. Repairs are in hand and security cages have been installed at a cost of \$470. Graffiti is a continuing problem but we are gradually winning.

Reunion of Old Chermies. Over 60 people visited the old school to chat and view the displays, to chat, to drink a Devonshire Tea in the Drill Hall, to chat, to have their photo taken, to chat, to buy souvenirs, to chat, to give the Society information and to CHAT. At times the noise in the old school reached levels not heard for 100 years. It's true. They talked more than any bunch of kids. One old Chermie came from Melbourne for the event. Some hadn't seen each other for 50 years. The takings for the day amounted to a little over \$500. That will pay for the repairs to the air conditioner.

G.O.L.D. Growing Old Living Dangerously. This group, sponsored by the BCC, hired the Society's meeting room on Monday 3rd and again on 10th November for three hours each day. On the first day they studied Photography and on the second Bonsai cultivation. This is only the second time the room has been hired and we badly need the money to cover our costs. ***So if you know of any reliable group who want to hire a room, maybe you could put them in touch with us.***

Plane Crash at Chermside. The search continues for the story. We know when it happened. Members saw some of it. One old Chermie actually directed, and rode on, the fire brigade to the crash site.

Reading "The Battle of Brisbane" by Peter A Thompson and Robert Macklin recently I came across the following story. The first US soldier killed in the South Pacific in WWII died in a Brisbane hospital.

On the 23rd December 1941 twenty two year old Lieutenant Milton Kaslow arrived in Brisbane on the ship *Republic* in the Pensacola Convoy. This convoy was originally headed for the Philippines

but was diverted to Australia when the Japanese headed south. It was the first convoy of US military to arrive in Australia.

Just after arrival he was a passenger in a left hand driven command car which overtook another vehicle on a dimly lit road. The driver cut back in too sharply and the wheels went on to the soft shoulders of the road causing the car to roll into a ditch.

The driver was unhurt but Lieutenant Kaslow suffered a fractured skull. He died of a brain haemorrhage and was buried with full US military honours in Lutwyche Cemetery.

History of Chermside State School. We are gathering information for this long term project. One item for which we need help is the drawing of several mud maps of the school buildings over the years. So far we have material on the 1900 site and on the 1970s/1980s periods. Another time site under way is the 1920s/1930s.

John Hopkins will put the map information on the computer and print out the finished maps.

We also need members to try and remember their school days or their children's or their parent's school days and record the information so we can add it to the growing data base.

Scanner for the Computer. Soon this function will be operational in the Archives Room (Youatt Rm) and we will be able to scan photographs on to disks. We would appreciate it if members could lend us photos or direct us where we can find photos suitable for scanning into the Society's archives.

Back of Envelope Projects. This has been a great success as many members responded to the idea and have supplied the Society with a great deal of historical material. However this is only the start as we have still much more research to undertake.

WWI Memorial Gates at Marchant Park. Have you been around there lately? The BCC is currently beautifying the area with new plantings being made in the island flower bed around the Obelisk to George Marchant's donation. Also a long hedge has been planted in the entrance road off Murphy Road. It should look really good in a few years time. Maybe the Society has started a trend?

Cont. the story of CHERMY as told by Colin Tune who attended CSS from 1955 to 1962.

In Grade Seven my 'tower of truth' was Miss Morrish. She lived near the present Psychiatric section of the Prince Charles Hospital. A mate and I often went to the bush, which bordered her family home just to be "near" her. She was a champion netballer (then called Womens' Basketball) who represented Queensland.

In one of Queensland's few commercial air disasters, in 1961 a Fokker Friendship plunged into the sea off Farr Beach near Mackay killing all aboard. The team was on that flight but Jill Morrish had 'missed the plane'.

She also had connections with our church and I played football with her brother, however this was not an issue at home as I was interested in schoolwork, being challenged by the Mathematics and fascinated by the Social Studies. Jill was a fine teacher, whose approaches and presentations were interesting.

In the latter grades, students completed Exercise Books, where a sample of work had to be presented in 'copper plate' quality. Also Copy Books were arduously scribed with liquid ink from a well in the desk using a pen nib, which blotted if pressed anything but very lightly. I was a disgraceful writer and an untidy presenter. Even in this decade, education in schools was an advantage to girls, who are generally passive visual and auditory learners with a more artistic neater natural flair. Boys are generally kinaesthetic 'touching' mobile active learners.

I represented the school in Rugby League and Cricket. Our standard of cricket skill was superior to any level of school sport existing today. Matches were fierce affairs played with passion and intensity. Rugby League was structured in weight divisions, not age. Teams commenced at four stone seven pounds, continuing in half stone steps to six stone then a top weight of six stone ten pound. At the commencement of each season, an official 'weigh in' was conducted. There was no coach. Every Friday, we made our way by bus or bike to Stafford's Gibson Park. Organising ourselves, we played our game then returned to school, all completely unsupervised. The "Footy" was tough, "no quarter" was asked for or given. No one ever seemed to be injured.

In the school, at any one time a dozen children wore plaster splints over a 'broken arm'. Just about all boys fractured a limb or suffered multiple suture wounds during their childhood. We fell over, fell out of trees, fell off bicycles and sustained injuries tackling and wrestling. The ambulance called to school was a common occurrence.

The annual ANZAC service was held on the nearest school day to the 25th April. Hundreds attended, sitting and standing in reverend silence. A huge wreath was laid and the Ode recited. Present were a couple of Boer War veterans, our grandfathers were World War I diggers and our fathers went to World War II. Strong men, conservatively dressed, in stoic silence they stood in the crowd, proudly wearing the small lapel badges of returned servicemen.

The band played the National Anthem, God Save the Queens (sic). Joe beat the bass drum loudly and crisply to each syllable of every word. We, side drummers played a nonstop roll, commencing softly on the edge of the pig skin then in the second part, moving to the centre. The snares vibrated with a dramatic chatter, the fifes penetrated a flute like melody line. Standing playing the roll, rigidly at attention, eyes fixed proudly forward, looking at the men some with their arms across their hearts, even in my tender primary years, I broke into 'goose bumps'.

In Grade Eight my 'lover of learning' was Mr James, who had just arrived in Brisbane from Far North Queensland. He was loud. I liked him and we 'got along' fine. He used to drift off the topic at hand and tell fascinating stories of his home in the tropics. My parents sent me to Cairns on a train with the Young Australia League for ten days that year, 1962, and I saw with my eyes many of the word images that he had painted.

As part of the examination process, the Headmaster visited our room each term to inspect students' books. Each would be brought out and placed on the desk open as we sat rigidly upright. "Haupty" would then saunter around the room peering randomly. My bookwork was always a struggle and I was envious of the skinny, smart girls with flat chests, dowdy long plaits and heavy tartan skirts, who consistently produced spectacular offerings.

Our books were, Exercise, Social Studies, Copy, Technical Drawing, Art, Science, Composition

and of course Day Pads in English and Mathematics.

Occasionally, the teacher gave Health Lessons, which were always focused around oral hygiene. Any other subject would have been considered 'rude'.

Once a week we travelled by tram to Woolloowin State School for Manual Training, the girls accompanied but they were taught Domestic Science. The Grade Eights walked to the middle of Gympie Road to the tram stop, flagged a passing tram and rattled stop start along Gympie Road through Kedron to Woolloowin State School, which is in Lutwyche. Trams were open on both sides and the rain and wind blew in. We had great fun.

In Manual Training, sheet metal work, carpentry and technical drawing were taught. A small table that I made still resides in my Mother's study. I loved using the tools and enjoyed learning their correct use and proper maintenance. I told my parents this but they said that I was not "good with my hands" and that I was smart and therefore would pursue a profession, not a trade.

For a couple of years in the summer, we again travelled once a week to Woolloowin for Swimming. One of the great status symbols of a school was whether it possessed a pool. There was an anti-tinea bath to paddle through first, then into the dressing rooms from which we would emerge literally in a minute ready for the plunge. Being children of the beach and the coast and the creek, all of us could swim so we learned life saving, rescue carries and water gymnastics. It was great fun and we were heartbroken on any occasion that a swimming day was wet and subsequently cancelled. Once again, all travel on the trams was completely unsupervised.

At the end of Grade Eight in 1962, I sat for the last Scholarship Examination in Queensland. The institution of Scholarship had been in place since high schools were first introduced. The idea was that if you passed you were allowed to enter secondary

From my primary education, I took a legion of facts and concepts, which I use to this day and have shared with the countless students that I have taught over the years. I received a broad

education in a happy, supportive, respectful, sober, simple environment.

I was a Chermy boy. I knew every shop, under every service station, everyplace to find fools gold, every place where a kid could disappear into the bush. I knew every street because I had at least one mate living there. I knew the boundaries where Chermy kids did not play. I "owned" Chermside. "Chermy" was mine.

I was a Chermy boy, free and strong, creative and bronzed, functional in cricket and football, 'cowboys and indians', playing war, cubby making, trolley driving, cycling across impossible terrain, exploring, making spear guns and throwing sticks.

I was a Chermy boy with a cheeky grin moulded around bright brown eyes, a pair of dimples, three thousand two hundred and forty-four freckles, randomly sized, a sun worn nose and two 'tombstone' front teeth dominating a gap toothed grin. Wearing a quadrant mauve and blue baggy woolen cap, cotton royal blue shirt with a stripe of mauve across the breast pocket, heavy grey cotton shorts with a button up fly and a waist somewhere just under the armpits and leather upper, black rubber-soled shoes.

I was a Chermy boy.



The above photo shows what CSS looked like in the beginning. What was the white rail fence in the foreground for? Remember the cupola on the roof? Our lattice did not last long. Note the high windows – later lowered.