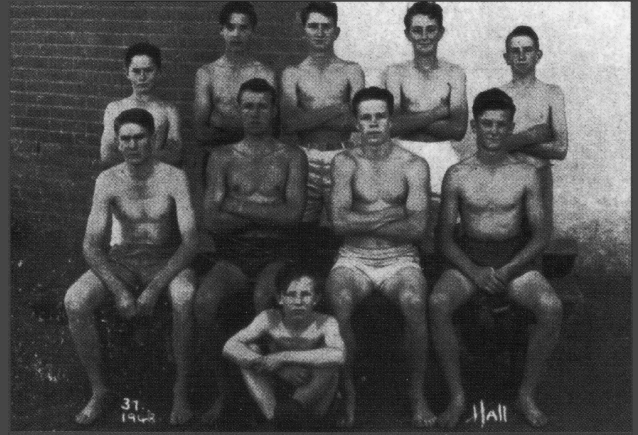
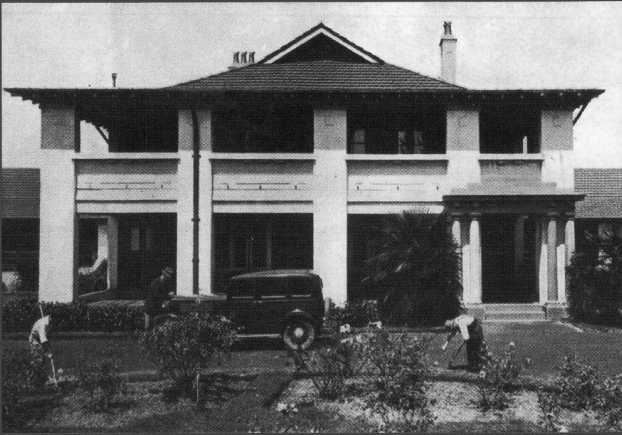


“Bedbugs, Daygos and Slabs”



A Century of Memories



HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

1907–2007

By Alan Pollock



“BEDBUGS, DAYGOS AND SLABS”

A CENTURY OF MEMORIES

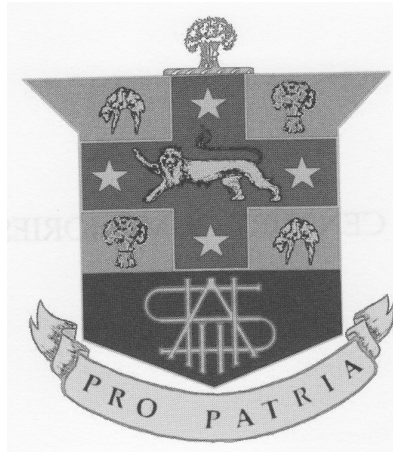
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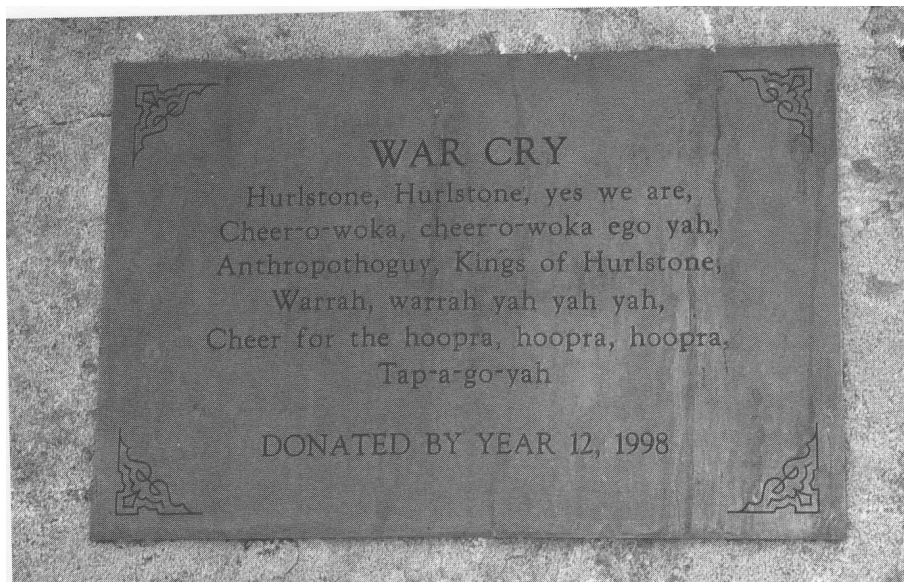
Alan Pollock

Dedication:

To All Hurlstonians; past, present and future.



School Crest



School War Cry

Preface

This book is written for Hurlstone Agricultural High School's Centenary Year, 2007 and is to be released as part of the events which mark that Centenary. The book is not an attempt at academic history but rather aims to provide a social history of the school giving a brief narrative of major events and developments plus sections dealing with personal reminiscences provided mostly by ex-students and staff. Each chapter is divided up into narrative and memories.

The narrative section has largely depended for its information on past Harvesters, the school's magazine; the book "Principals and Principles in Agricultural Education" written by John D Spencer, a past student of this school; Pro Patria Profiles, research into the lives of past students organised by Kevin English and Allan McClelland recorded in the 1990s and the archive section of the school library. For the chapters dealing with the 1960s up to the present I have been fortunate to interview or correspond with Principals Clark, Wilson, Kidd and Norris and subsequently chapters 6 through 9 rely heavily on their own memories of their time in charge of Hurlstone. I thank them for their generous assistance.

Throughout the chapters the most interesting part of the history I feel, are the numerous recollections from past students and staff from the 1910s to the 2000s. These have come to me as letters and emails from Old Boys and Girls and from interviews conducted with past and present staff and students. I thank them for their fascinating memories given so generously. Each of these are referenced in the text.

I would also like to thank Leanne Mead, Robyn Jones and my wife Reyleen who gave so generously of their time and skill to type up the thousands of words of narrative and memory. Thanks also go to Anne McLeod for her invaluable assistance in scanning and organising the hundred or so photographs and images that are so important to this publication. Thanks also to Darren Payne who drafted the plan of the school in the 1950s from an original sketch by Peter Witschi, an old boy from the 1950s. Thanks go to my proofreaders; Andrew Lynch, Anne Young, Reyleen Pollock, Michael Kidd and Anne McLeod, who read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions for improvement. I would be remiss and in trouble if I didn't thank the students in my Year 9 and Year 10 History elective classes in 2004 and 2005 for helping by contacting old Hurlstonians by mail and by doing their own research in the school archives. Particular thanks go to the Centenary book committee especially Michael Kidd and Robyn Simond and to Ashleigh Peters and Lachlan Simond for their history of the Hurlstone Cadet Unit. I am also greatly indebted to John Norris for giving me the responsibility to write this book and providing me with some relief time in which to do so.

For the title "Bedbugs, Daygos and Slabs" I would like to thank Norm Cooper, Hurlstonian from 1949 to 1952. According to his excellent memory, a bedbug was a boarder, a daygo was a day student and a slab was a thick piece of bread which provided much needed sustenance to hungry boarders.

*Alan Pollock
History Department, HAHS
December 2006*

THE SCHOOL ANTHEM.

The School Anthem, reproduced below, was first written in 1912 by an Old Boy, Gerald Digby. Several alterations were made in 1928, and the last stanza added.

Further minor amendments made this year served to dispense with allusions which have lost their significance. The song follows the air of "Marching Through Georgia."

Come, gather round, ye Hurlstone lads,
And sing with might and main;
'Tis here we learn our dairy work,
And how to sow the grain.
'Tis here we learn our orchard work,
To spray, and prune, and drain,
'Neath the eye of the good old boss of Hurlstone.

CHORUS:

Hurrah! Hurrah! For the plough, the harrow and hoe,
Hurrah! Hurrah! For the wheat in a waving row,
And when we're out upon our own,
The good results will show
What we have learned at dear old Hurlstone.
We've soldered in the plumber's shop,
And shaped the sheets of tin;
We've hammered nails and blunted planes—
A craftsman's skill to win;
And often after "ragging," the office we've been in,
So well known to all of us at Hurlstone.

You ought to see our football team,
When they start kicking goals;
They score the tries and tear it in
With all their hearts and souls,
While on the field the other side
Lie "dead" in countless shoals,
When the Blue and Gold play up for Hurlstone.

We've sought the mighty liver fluke,
And learned about its ways,
And how it is, and why it is Merino wool it pays,
And faced with aid of microscope
The fierce Amoeba's gaze
In the modern science room at Hurlstone.

And here's to those who've gone before,
To fortune and to fame, Old Boys in far Gallipoli
Who made for us a name,
And in the years that are to come
We hope to do the same, for the honour of
The dear old School at Hurlstone.

School Anthem "The dear old school at Hurlstone".

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CHAPTER ONE

The Early Years

Frank McMullen and the Beginning

Hurlstone began in the inner city Sydney suburb of Ashfield in the 1870s. The man who started the first Hurlstone school was John Kinloch. He was born in Dublin in 1832 and migrated to Australia when he was 4 years old. He was the only surviving child of John Kinloch Senior and his wife Helen Hurlstone who died prematurely of influenza when John was sixteen. John later went to Sydney University and studied mathematics. He was also a fine sportsman and played cricket for NSW.

After many years as a tutor in Maths at Sydney University he decided to build his own private school. In April 1874 Kinloch purchased land where Trinity Grammar School and Yeo Park stand today; adjacent to Canterbury Road in Ashfield. He paid 1734 pounds and 10 shillings. Kinloch called the school Hurlstone after his mother's maiden name. He built a large administration block, part of which still exists and houses the headmaster of Trinity Grammar. There was also a large boarding house block and stables and quarters for domestic staff.



Principal's Residence, 1913

Kinloch could not attract sufficient numbers of students to make the school pay and he was forced to sell to pay off his substantial debts. He subdivided the land and put it all up for sale. The government of the day run by Premier Sir Henry Parkes stepped in and purchased the entire area to be used as a residential women's teachers college. Kinloch took the money, 5520 pounds and embarked on a career as a real estate agent which lasted until the Depression of the 1890s. He then returned to his original profession as a mathematics teacher tutoring students for University Entrance.

For almost a quarter of a century young ladies walked in the large grounds which had been Hurlstone College studying literature and poetry, playing tennis and preparing for careers in education. In 1907 the ladies moved to the new Teacher Training College in the grounds of Sydney University and Hurlstone Agricultural Continuation School was born.

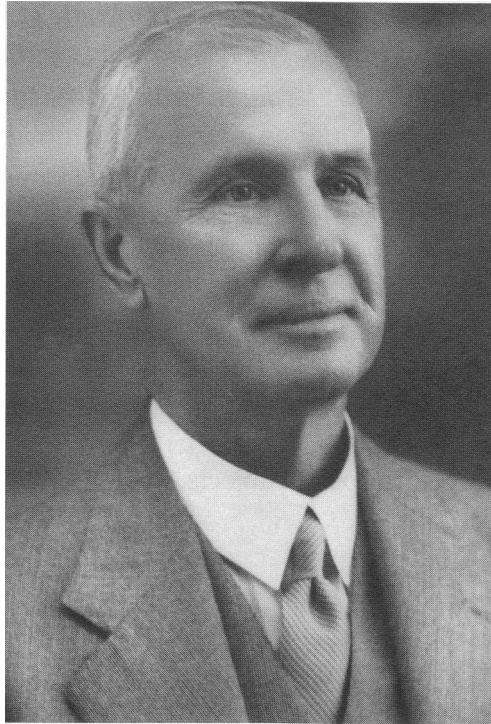
At the beginning of the twentieth century education was an important issue. As Frank McMullen, the first principal of HAHS wrote in 1938,

It was felt that all was not well with the school system... Public interest was aroused, and so insistent became the demand for reform, that the Minister for Education of the day, the Hon. J. Perry, decided to call a representative educational conference. The deliberations of the conference and its recommendations led Mr. Perry to an important decision. He decided to appoint an Education Commission to visit Europe and America to investigate and report on Educational conditions in other countries.

The Commissioners appointed were Mr. G. H. Knibbs and Mr. J. W. Turner, then Headmaster of Fort Street School. Mr. Turner in particular was interested in the different types of agricultural schools in Europe and America. At Vilvorde, near Brussels, he visited a school for practical agriculture, which impressed him greatly. On his return to Australia, he advised the establishment of a similar institution in New South Wales. The Vilvorde School was a purely practical school, the only classroom work being lectures in agricultural science. When the matter was placed before Mr. Peter Board, the Director of Education, he modified the suggestion considerably. Thus it was decided to establish a school which would:-

- (a) carry on the ordinary school education of boys beyond the primary standard.*
- (b) Give a grounding in the elementary theory and practice of agriculture.*

The first Principal of this new school was Frank McMullen. He was thirty five years of age with twenty years teaching experience. He had previously been Principal at Lindfield in Sydney. McMullen had a Master of Arts from Sydney University and had completed courses in advanced agriculture and experimental agricultural chemistry. He was Principal from 1907 to 1916.



Frank McMullen, Principal 1907 - 1916



Principal and Family, 1913

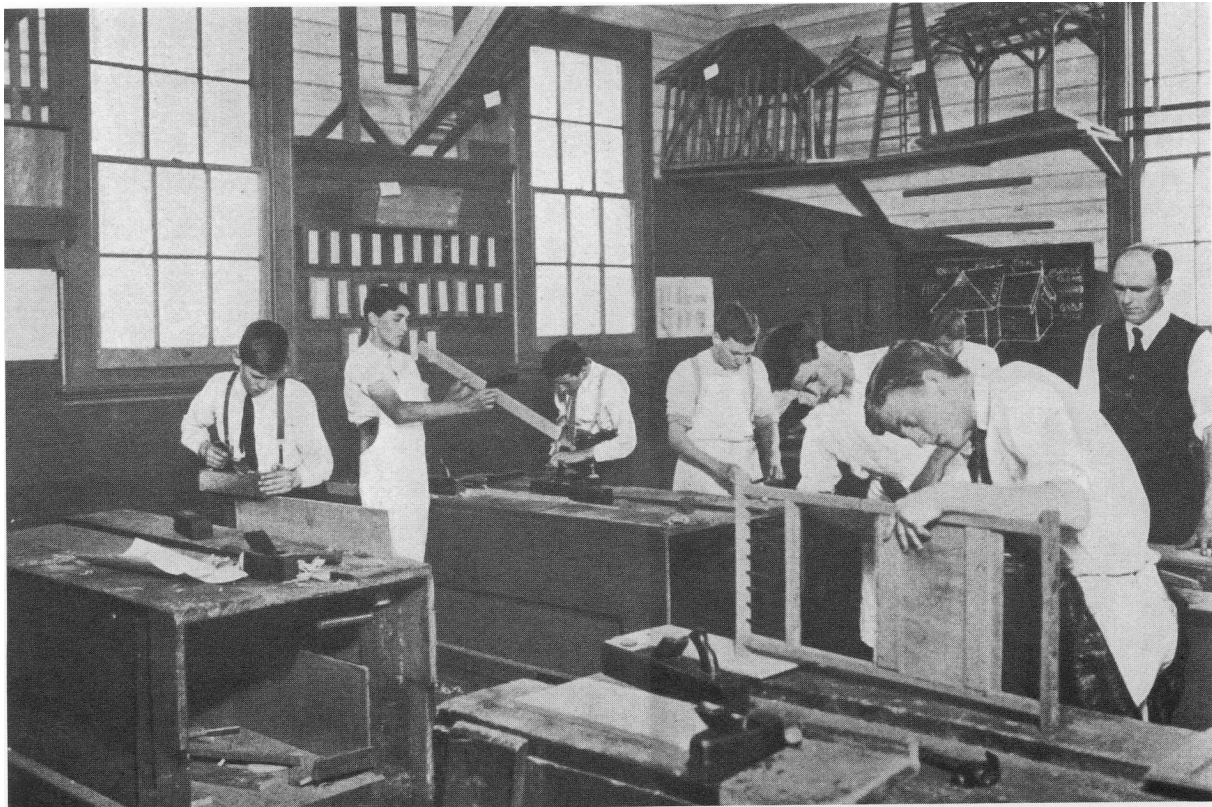
When given the appointment McMullen was given three months to organise the school. He had to write the curriculum, prepare the buildings, classrooms and hostel and have the farm cleared and stocked. As McMullen wrote,

The buildings were old, some of them in a state of disrepair, and were generally quite unsuited for the purpose. At an early stage in the school's career, too, it became apparent that the grounds- about 26 acres in extent — were insufficient to allow for the proper development of the school.

The position was a difficult one. I had no experience of agricultural education, and with the exception of the late Mr. H. W. Potts, Principal of Hawkesbury Agricultural College, there was no one to whom I could turn. However, a syllabus had to be drawn up. We found it very difficult to obtain information or literature which would be helpful. Nevertheless, a scheme and course of instruction were eventually evolved. In this I had great assistance from the late Mr. W. L. Hammond, B.Sc., who had been appointed Science Master, and Mr. J. W. Hadfield, who was to be the first Field Foreman and Instructor in Agriculture.

In the beginning there were three groups of subjects:-

1. English, Geography, History and Mathematics; which were to be practical subjects aimed at preparing students for the task of managing a farm.
2. Science — Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Geology, Meteorology, Zoology, Entomology; which were taught with special reference to the needs of agriculture.
3. Agriculture — Cropping, Orchardng, Market/ Flower Gardening, dairying, poultry, beekeeping, manual training and Farm Carpentry.



Manual Training, 1913

It was an attempt at an integrated curriculum revolving around the study of agriculture. One role of the school was to act as a feeder for Hawkesbury Agricultural College. If a boy passed the course at Hurlstone he was given one year's advanced standing at Hawkesbury College.

The school opened on April 1st, 1907. The first student to enrol was Timothy McCarthy who would become Chief of the Entomology Branch of the NSW Department of Agriculture. The school started with five teachers, and five domestic staff including a cook, an underhousemaid and a kitchenmaid, a general servant and caretaker. Enrolments were seven by the end of the first week and thirty by the end of the year.

Teacher morale quickly became an issue. Hurlstone teachers were paid no more than normal day school teachers yet were required to supervise the boarders for more than double the normal hours. The Principal received less money than day school Principals yet taught a full teaching load, supervised the boys outside day school hours and had the administrative load of school, farm and hostel. In addition, Mrs McMullen was matron of the hostel and housekeeper without being paid for either position¹.



H.A.H.S. Staff, 1913

It was obviously inequitable yet despite continual complaints the Department of Education took no action. Yet the school prospered. Enrolments grew and farmers were keen to employ products of the school. By March 1911 the school was being referred to as Hurlstone Agricultural High School. An early nickname for the students was the “Cornstalks”.

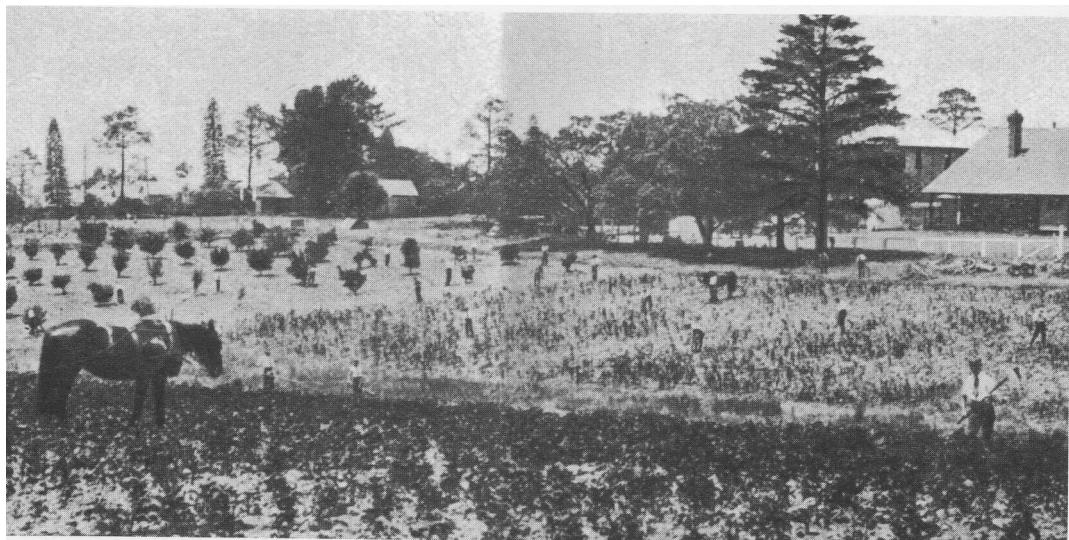
By 1914 enrolments totalled eighty seven with thirty seven boarders. In 1915 the Department restricted the total number of boarding pupils to forty one “as long as the school occupies the present premises.” The Department was even at this stage looking to relocate the school although it took another eleven years before the decision was made.

The farm was highly productive with twelve types of potatoes, ten varieties of maize, eighteen different vegetables, eight fodder crops, an orchard and vineyard and a dairy producing more milk than the school could use.

¹ Mrs McMullen only received some pay when she complained that she had to have a nurse to look after her own children so she could fulfil boarding school duties.



Carting Hay, 1913



A general view of Hurlstone, 1913

Part of the reason for the farm's efficiency was the Farm Foreman, D.G. Taylor yet his position was also inequitable. He had a full teaching load but was only given three weeks holiday a year as the Department designated him an instructor not a teacher. It was not until 1918 that Taylor was given normal school holidays after consistent complaints by letter to the Department from the Principal.

The McMullen principalship ended when he transferred to be Principal of Wollongong Public School in 1917. One of the reasons for his move was the Department's lack of response to his complaints about inequities in wages and conditions. But he left Hurlstone firmly established as a popular school with a fine and growing reputation.

Memories

There are very few written memories of this early period but Joe Costelloe, a student at Hurlstone in the 1910s gave a series of radio talks about his time at Hurlstone on the ABC and these were transcribed during the school's 75th Anniversary. The following are excerpts from those talks:-

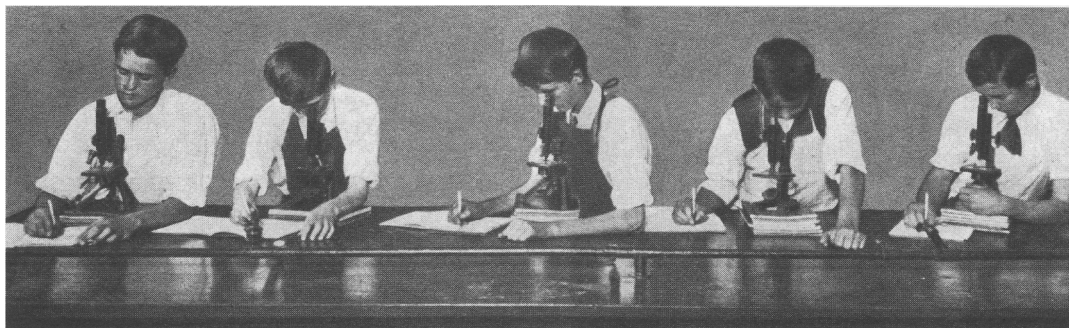
I didn't have to wait long to learn what was intended. I hadn't been in my cubicle more than a few minutes when about seven or eight of the "Monsters" "packed across the doorless entrance to the cubicle. Each of them carried one or more pairs of heavy field boots, mostly hobnailed and encrusted with mud. "Poobah" was the first to speak or take action.

"Here, insect," Poobah said, "clean 'em," and tossed a couple of pairs of his boots at my feet. That was the signal for his cronies to do the same. In a moment I stood knee deep in a pile of muddy bluchers(boots), assailed by demands that I get on with the cleaning. And I might have done so, since this seemed to be the rules of the game, and, anyway I was confronted with a pretty awesome knot of senior citizens. The trouble seemed to me to be, however, that none of the owners of the footwear had tossed in any polish for me to use. I drew attention to the omission by asking "Where's the polish?" The answer came first from Poobah, then as a chorus the others joined in. I knew I had my own tin of polish that had been packed for me by my mother, but for the life of me I couldn't see why I should use that. "Use your own," the chorus went, and the enforcers clustered more tightly, and more threateningly, about the doorway.

"No, I won't" came from me. "You get the polish and I'll clean the boots."

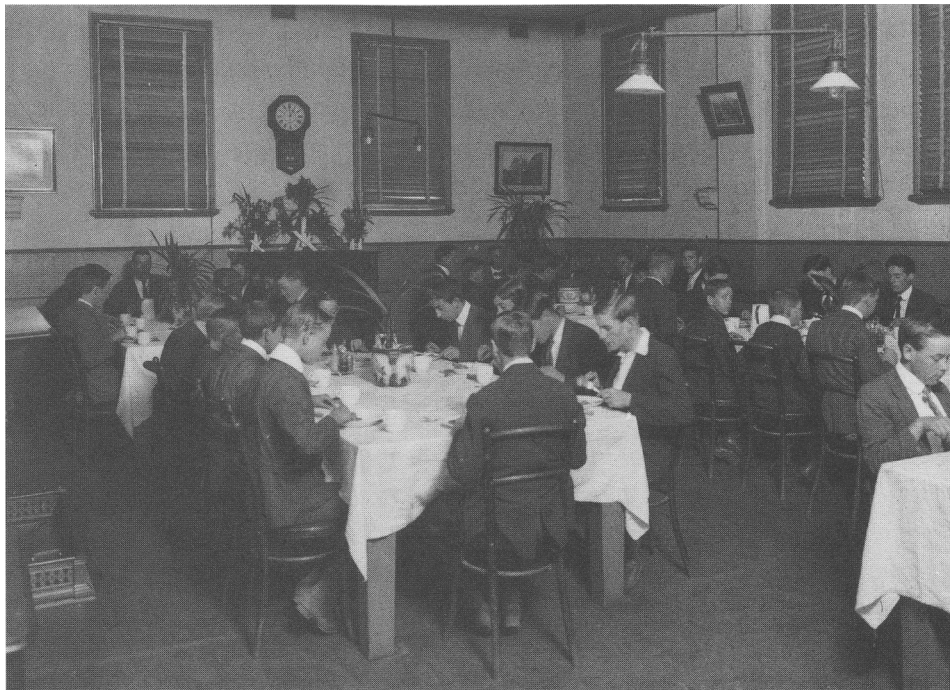
"You'll clean 'em, that's all," grunted Poobah and he pushed forward toward me.

"Go on, get movin'," he went on, and made to grab me. I must have acted in the blind courage of desperation, because I grabbed one of the boots from the pile and let him have it. Poobah took it somewhere on the body, fell back in astonishment, then thrust forward again, this time with the rest of the Monsters crushing closely behind him. Well, the battle was opened, so I acted as need demanded. I was in possession of all the ammunition, and so had at least that advantage. I picked up boot after boot and met the enemy with what was in the nature of a barrage of heavy artillery. The Monsters, as much nonplussed as fearful, stood at bay.



The microscope, 1913

And so I had my victory, shortlived as it was destined to be, for in the few ferocious moments of my onslaught my arsenal was exhausted, and I, attackwise, stood helpless as a new-born babe. Retreat, and smartly, was my only course. I didn't wait to argue or contest the confrontation further. At my back was the window of my cubicle, beyond that and to the left was the covered footwalk connecting the two lobes of the main school buildings. Midway between the buildings steel posts ran from the footway to the ground. The image of the means of escape must have sprung instantaneously to my mind, for in a trice I was out the window, along the balustrade and down one of the steel posts to the ground. Not stopping there, for the enemy was no doubt gathering its forces, I set off for the thirty yards or so to the first of the great line of pines. Up the trunk and into the lower laterals of that first lofty monarch I shinned. My bird nesting days in Temora stood me in good stead. In no time I was perched high above the ground, and in a position almost strategically impregnable. By the time the Monsters had collected themselves, cascaded down the outer stairs from the building, and gathered about the foot of the pine, I was, for the time being, safely ensconced in my elevated redoubt; their brandished fists and blood-curdling threats were not exactly music to my ears, but at least I was safe from immediate physical danger.

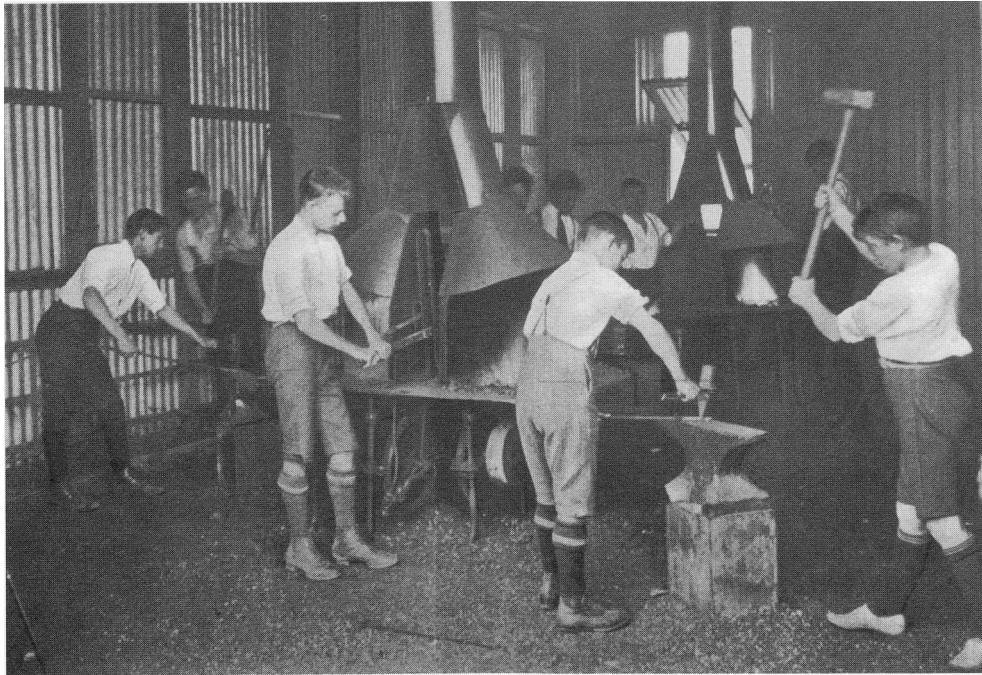


At dinner, 1913

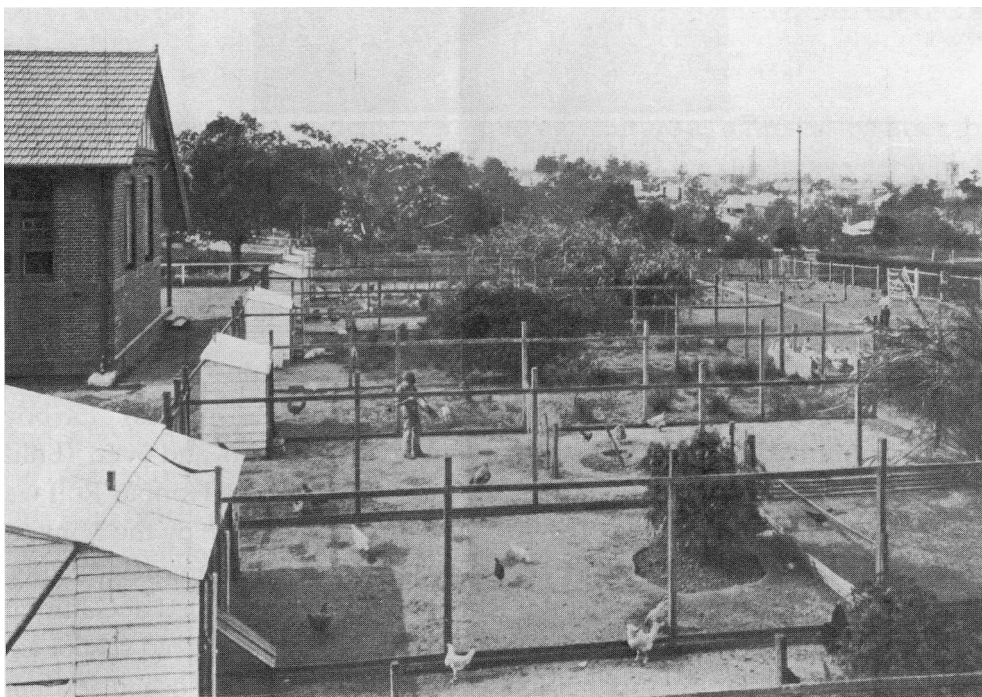
Later, Costelloe gives an interesting description of Hurlstone in the 1910s,

It occupied about seven acres of land, and something of a triangular shape. The ground making up the apex was grassed and put to no particular use, except for one area used as the school's practice football field. Extending back from the apex there were a couple of small fenced fields where crops such as maize and wheat beat out an ill-enviored seasonal span. Beyond that was a private roadway, which intersected the school property. On one side of the road were the dairy, the bull yard, the poultry yard, carpentry shop, tinsmith's shop, blacksmith's shop, a detached dormitory dubbed the Gym Dorm, from earlier use as a gymnasium. Up toward the public highway was an area that, despite that it was rough and stone strewn of surface and lay at a pronounced gradient, was the only cricket field the school afforded. On the other side of the road lay the orchard, an area of worked land, the main school building, the Principal's residence, a tennis court and the rather extensive vegetable garden...

The student body at Hurlstone in those days was quite small, and was made up of about equal parts of day boys and boarders. The curriculum ran only to the Intermediate Certificate, reached by the average student after two years of the secondary school course, at about the age of fourteen or fifteen. A particular value attaching to the Intermediate Certificate gained at Hurlstone was that the curriculum there was only partly agricultural, agricultural subjects taking the place of such subjects as languages in the normal secondary courses at other high schools. A result of this was that attendance at Hurlstone did not cut the student off from the wider range of avocations that were open to graduates from other high schools.



Blacksmith's shop, 1913



Poultry yards, 1913

CHAPTER TWO

Relocation and Development

George Longmuir

The second Principal of Hurlstone was George Longmuir (BA, Diploma in Agriculture) who was appointed on January 29, 1917. He had twenty seven years teaching experience and was two years younger than McMullen. He had been headmaster of Primary schools at Forbes and Broken Hill and had a long association with the CMF (Citizens Military Forces). His wife was appointed Matron on the same terms as Mrs McMullen. The couple had no children. Longmuir was in charge of the school for twenty one years from 1917 to 1937.



George Longmuir — Principal 1917 — 1937

The 1917 enrolment was eighty five, forty five of whom were boarders. In 1918 an Intermediate Certificate was introduced at the end of Third Year. This quickly led to an increased demand for places which strained accommodation even further.

Hurlstone boys had “nobly upheld the honour of their school in the Great War, where they did their best to uphold the cause of right against might” (1920 Prospectus). 156 boys had enlisted which amounted to 54% of enlisted students eighteen years and over. (Enlistment was voluntary). Ten students gave their lives for their country. The Honour Roll was designed by Mr Les Pinn and made by the boys and unveiled in 1918 by the Minister of Education A.G. James. The McKern Prize was instituted to commemorate the life of Corporal Howard McKern, an old boy of the school who had been killed at Gallipoli. The purpose of the prize was to encourage work amongst the pupils of his old school and was awarded each year on similar lines to the Rhodes Scholarship. Excellence in academic work, leadership, farm work and sporting activities were taken into account in awarding the prize.



Gymnastics, 1920

By 1921 there were ten teaching staff and instructors. To somewhat offset the shortage of accommodation a carpentry room was converted into a dormitory. The boys and staff led by Les Pinn, the instructor in Manual Training, built a replacement manual training room.

In 1921 the main buildings included the Principal's residence, student dormitories and dining hall, bathrooms, kitchen, classrooms and library. In addition there was a Science classroom and laboratory, a manual training workshop, blacksmith's shop, gymnasium, modern dairy, a silo, hay sheds, stables, tool sheds, turf and matting cricket wickets and turf tennis courts.

The vast majority of Hurlstone students went into agriculture as a profession after they left school. Of the thirty seven students who had completed the full three year high school course at the end of 1919, twenty nine went onto the land.

To enter Hurlstone students had to possess a Qualifying Certificate. Instruction for day pupils was free. Accommodation for boarders was six pounds, six shillings per quarter. Laundry was free. Soon after Longmuir arrived he persuaded the Department of Education to allow any Hurlstone student who had passed French in the Intermediate Certificate (3rd year) and who had subsequently been awarded the Hawkesbury College Diploma to be able to be admitted to the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Sydney. Early Hurlstonians who matriculated in this manner were Frank Bowman and Irvine Watson who later become well-known agricultural research officers.

After this innovation Hurlstone quickly won recognition as a school which provided both a cultural and agricultural education. This success led to the opening of Yanco Agricultural High School in 1922 with a similar style of educational provision. In 1938 Farrer Memorial High was formed in Tamworth along the same lines.

Lessons were mainly given in the old Science Hall. Old photographs of the school show boys lined up digging for potatoes with cows grazing nearby in what is today Yeo Park. The Hurlstone boys were called the "Spud Diggers" by Canterbury High boys who played football against them. Earlier on in 1911 the nearby railway station of Fern Hill had been changed to Hurlstone Park after a local referendum.



Vegetable Garden, 1913

Increasingly after the war Hurlstone found itself cramped for room and in 1923 it was decided to move to the rural and spacious setting of Glenfield. The Glenfield site had been selected way back in 1916 and one hundred acres of land had been purchased from Mr Robert Ross for 100 pounds per acre. By 1920, total enrolment had reached one hundred and fifty two and the school was bursting at the seams. The farm was too small and the soil was relatively poor. The school was surrounded by suburbia with the accompanying problems of trespass, burglary and vandalism.

From 1923 Trinity Grammar School's Principal Reverend G.A. Chambers had been negotiating with the government to acquire the Ashfield /Summer Hill site. The government was keen for Hurlstone to move but also keen to expand the land available for Dulwich Hill Primary School. An exchange was arranged whereby Trinity provided land and buildings it owned in Dulwich Hill to the government and Trinity took part of the Summer Hill site after paying the government 13,000 pounds for its new seventeen acre property.

In 1926 Hurlstone pupils and staff relocated to new buildings at Glenfield, south of Liverpool. The Department spent almost 40,000 pounds building dormitory and classroom blocks along with excellent farm facilities. By the end of 1927 the enrolment was one hundred and forty nine students and in 1929 Hurlstone offered the full five year course which led to the award of a Leaving Certificate. The introduction of the new course quickly led to enrolments rising to one hundred and sixty nine boarders and forty six day boys in 1930. By 1936 total enrolment had skyrocketed to four hundred and seven.



Principal's residence, 1935

Included in the new curriculum was Physical Training and the school was generously endowed with ovals, cricket wickets and tennis courts. In the 1930s a Deputy Principal was appointed to Hurlstone to ease the administrative workload. A Registrar was also appointed and they took over the clerical load of running both Hurlstone Agricultural High School and The Glenfield Special School which had been set up in 1927 on Hurlstone's western boundary.

Stan Cook was appointed Deputy and given the responsibility of running the day school and Miss D.E. Crakenthorp became Registrar. Miss Olarenschaw replaced Mrs Longmuir as matron after the latter suffered a stroke in December 1935. Longmuir was awarded the King's Jubilee Medal for Meritorious Service in 1935 and was approaching retirement. In 1937 Longmuir was notified that he would be replaced by Percival Hindmarsh who had been Principal of Yanco since 1934. Longmuir was not keen to retire and the bizarre situation developed in the first six months of 1938 where Hurlstone had two Principals on site. Longmuir continued to live in the Principal's Residence, now called Clarke House, whilst the new Principal and his family resided next door in the Prefect's Cottage, now the English staffroom. But Longmuir had firmly established Hurlstone as one of the finest schools in the public system and had managed the difficult relocation to Glenfield superbly.



H.A.H.S. 1930s

Memories

Arthur Marshall-Brown who went to Hurlstone in the years 1919 to 1921 remembers,

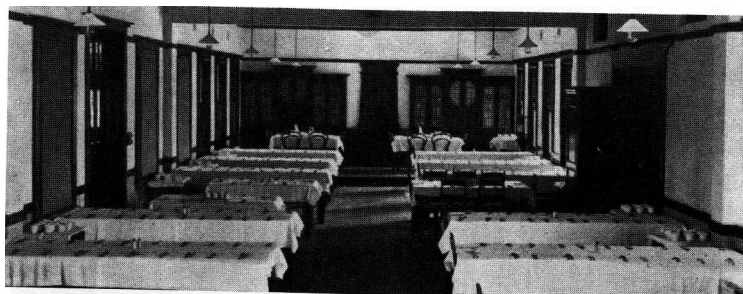
In 1919 the new pupil arrived at Hurlstone with much trepidation. ..The worst incident I can recall was while one newcomer was being branded with coal tar (which had been wrongly labelled stock tar) and having "H.A.H.S." daubed on his chest, some of the tar was spilt on his nether regions causing quite a degree of pain.

We soon learnt that "Bikie" ruled the school with a rod of iron or more accurately a length of cane. "Bikie" was Principal Longmuir's nickname, as he was a keen cyclist. At the end of Dorm 1 was a door which communicated directly with the "Boss's" bedroom. The first cubicle on our side of the door was occupied by a red head by the name of "Blue" Skelton. He was a nice quiet lad, one who I am sure would never be involved in any nefarious activities. One night a pillow fight erupted: boys, pillows and feathers went everywhere. The noise awoke Blue from his dreams, and he emerged from his cubicle rubbing his eyes to dispel sleep, so that he could see what was going on. At that moment "Bikie" emerged through his door swinging a long cane. "Blue copped it!" By the time it was over Blue was red at both ends. I think in those days a cane was almost a necessity and the Boss could be excused for seeing red.

A momentous happening in that period was the "fish strike". Friday was fish day. Fish was supplied by State Fisheries and if the breeze was in the right direction you would smell it about half a mile away. I presume that on arrival it was dumped in a big boiler and cooked that way. The kitchen staff then ladled it on to plates...

If there were any complaints about the food, it was the rule that the prefect head of the table took the offending morsel up to the teachers' table. The teacher on duty took action or not as thought fit. As this rule, when applied to fish, produced no action or results it was decided to make a combined effort when the next really obnoxious serving of fish arrived. I stood up with my plate of fish and slowly walked to the teachers' table followed by the other five prefects bearing their plates. This was the sign to all that no one was to eat fish that morning. The effort was effective; about 90 percent of the fish was returned to the kitchen. What results were achieved? The few that did eat fish that morning were served with delicious fried fish in the future. The others received a slab of bread and butter to munch on while they watched the favoured few devour their feast!

I was called to the office, to listen to a tirade from Mr. Longmuir. "Bikie" considered expelling me from school and canceling the McKern prize which I had already been awarded, "but in consideration of your poor sick father" he accepted an apology.



Dining Room, 1935

James (Jim) Simpson, a student from 1922 to 1924 recalls,

Of our daily life at Hurlstone, breakfast consisted of porridge or prunes and rice and I have to admit that I have not eaten prunes since, followed by chops, or steak and scrambled eggs, tea and toast.

Grace was said before all meals by the teacher on duty; no person was allowed in the dining room without a tie even if it was tied around his bare neck. One of Mr Longmuir's favourite sayings was 'if you don't wear a collar and tie, you won't go to heaven when you die'.

Breakfast over, we were free until 9a.m. when we assembled in the quadrangle to salute the flag, dismissed and went to our classrooms. This ceremony was very important to Mr Longmuir and I recall the time when one of the teachers did not salute the flag. He was called to the Principal's office and left the school the next day.

Lunch was at 12.30pm and was usually a hot meal of roast beef with boiled vegetables. We always had fish for all meals on Fridays.

Classes again until 3.30pm when we were all given a thick slice of bread (a "slab") and butter for our afternoon tea and most of us kept a supply of marmite or fish paste in our lockers to add a little flavour.

Those on stable or poultry duty had to attend our various tasks, the dairy boys had to attend to the milking but the rest were free to play sport or study until the evening meal at 6.30pm.

This meal was a little more elaborate, we cleaned up for the meal and had soup for the first course, followed by cold meats and trimming and tapioca pudding.



Farm Depot, 1927

Geoff McIntosh, an old Boy from 1933-1937, recalls,

In my 1st year the 3rd years were brutes. They put us through initiations in the dungeon near the downstairs gym. They would get us in there and belt us on the backside with a wet towel. Lloyd Hurrell said that he and some of the big fellas from the 1st grade footy team used to look after the little kids to make sure things didn't get out of hand.

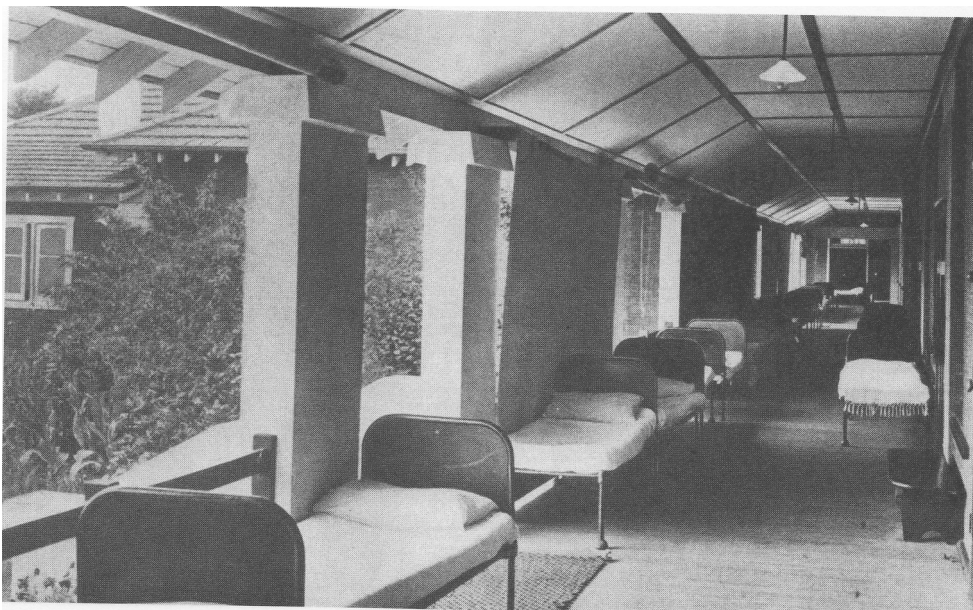
Under George Longmuir we had an excellent record in football. There were 6 grades, the 3 lower grades were based on weight and the rest were on merit. 1st grade won the McManamey Shield as the best rugby school in Sydney on a number of occasions. Six or seven high schools participated; Fort St, Sydney High, Parramatta, North Sydney Boys, Sydney Technical High, Canterbury High and us. There was athletics, cricket, soccer. There was also boxing; Joe Wallace, a professional referee from Rushcutters Bay used to come and teach us . It was all done in the gym.

The food was simple and never enough. Twelve to a table, eleven of us and one prefect. We had one loaf of bread cut up into "slabs". The 1st piece was called a "fly breaker". We reckoned the flies would perch on that and you didn't eat it unless you were very hungry. We took it off and cast it aside. There was treacle or "log", porridge, (rolled oats), a milky scrambled egg and mince meat for lunch and tea.

We swam on the weekend at the Georges river; we walked over the railway line and over the hill. School events were held at the Domain baths, Woolloomooloo Bay and also near the bridge at North Sydney pool. Athletics Carnivals were held at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Cricket was played on North Sydney oval and our oval which had been made by us and earlier boys. The CHS athletics carnival was at the SCG.

Jeff Simpson, 1930s student and brother of Jim, recalls,

I was put into class ID and assigned to sleep on number 3 verandah with a locker in the corridor that led to the shower room. Then followed a month of home sickness and misery until I settled in, as I had not been separated from the family for any time before.



Sleepout verandah, 1935

The school buildings were scattered over several hundred yards, the main building containing the dining hall, kitchen, hospital, and maid's quarters, and Principal's residence. The dormitory adjacent was huge with 6 twelve-bed dorms, 3 verandahs, 2 shower rooms with a gym, and sleeping area underneath called the dungeon, where 3rd years used to sleep. Attached was the teacher's residence for live-in unmarried teachers. Except for one brick class room block and the teacher's staffroom, all the others were weather board with NO heating. The main assembly hall, used rarely, was divided and half used for woodwork.



Opening of new school hall. The hall had been built by the students under the direction of Mr Les Pinn.

We had about 110 boarders and 80 day boys. The day boys and day teachers came by train at 8:45 am and left on the 4:15 pm. Boarders lived in during the week and went home at the weekend, except those on scholarship or boys with no relatives in the city or the dairy squad.

When school finished at 4:00 pm; we all lined up for a slab, supervised by "Old Mum", from the balcony above.

Dorm prefects were 5th years with the power of punishment, so those who talked or misbehaved after lights out usually got a wack across a pyjama-clad bum with a key chain. This raised a welt that lasted a week, and hurt like buggery. Every one had a key chain and keys to get into the dorm and book lockers.

Kids were rostered into squads to do farm work. This was for a week, under a 4th year leader, with some teacher supervision. The following is a rough description of the work:-

DAIRY — Get up at 5:30 am. Milk and feed cows, clean and hose dairy, and deliver milk to kitchen by 7:45 am. All hand milking and same in the afternoon from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm, as well as the weekend.

HORSES — Up at 6:00 pm, groom and feed horses, then clean out stalls.

PIGGERY — This was run on commercial lines and was quite large and well supervised. Morning chores included cleaning pens and feeding pigs and a student was rostered on for afternoon feeding and watering.

POULTRY — There were several breeds of poultry. Mixing mash and feeding took most of the time with cleaning up as usual. As there were no battery system, egg collection took a long time.



Ayrshire Cattle, 1935

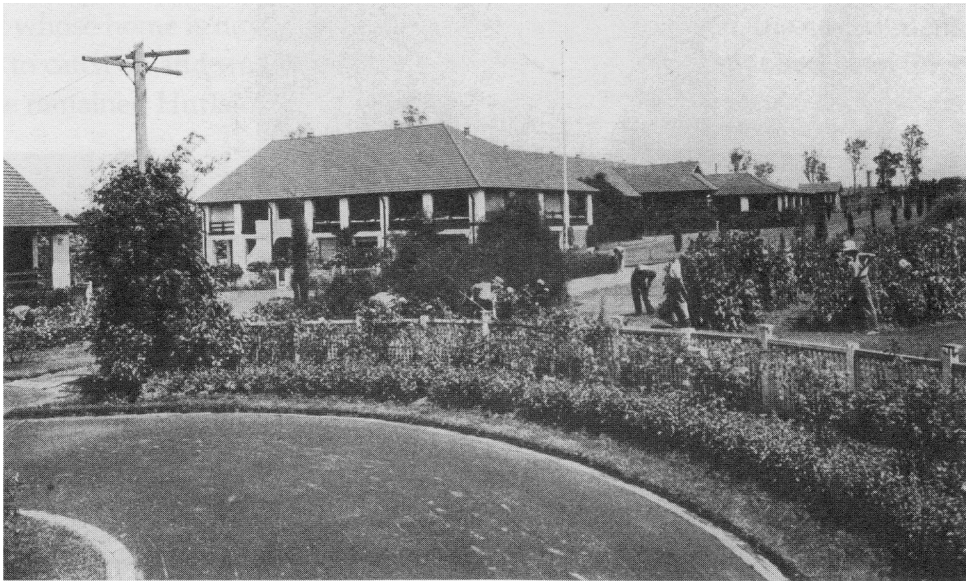
Sport was very important. Victorious teams returning to school would chant the school war cry from the station to the school. As pupils ranged in age from 11 to 21 we had some big boys in the top grades. The most notable of all players was Cec Ramalli who went from school boy football to international in one step.

"Stu" Currington was an explosives nut. During a science lesson he put some pot chlorate and sulphur in an iron mortar and dropped it into the iron pestle from a great height. The explosion sent the pestle back past his head and through the ceiling. Mr James, the science teacher, did not appreciate the damage. On another occasion he filled a burner tube with cordite, extracted from 303 shells, and lit the fuse. His hand was badly cut and the book used to protect his face cut to ribbons.

... Sodium was kept in the science room, in a jar under the kerosene, so it would not decompose. The science teacher foolishly demonstrated that a small pellet placed in water would fizz then explode. Stu stole some and would float a pellet in a wax paper boat in a toilet. An unsuspecting kid would sit on the toilet, sink the boat and then be blown up. This cured constipation. The game got out of hand when Stu flushed a big bit down the toilet and ruptured the main sewer line which had to be dug up and a new section put in.

Prominent students from this period included Douglas Blood, who scored ten "A" passes in the Intermediate Certificate and won the McKern prize in 1935. He went on to become the Founding Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Melbourne. Another outstanding student was Henry Carroll who boarded at Hurlstone in 1926 to 1928. He became a foundation member of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists. He worked for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) between 1953 and 1974 lecturing and reporting on agriculture in countries across South America, Africa and

Europe. Tom Hungerford, the McKern Prize winner in 1926 also became one of Australia's leading figures in Veterinary Science. He was made a Foundation Fellow of the Australian College of Veterinary Sciences and in 1980 was awarded an Order of the British Empire for his services to the subject. Roy Watts was at Hurlstone in the years 1929 to 1932 where he won the McKern prize in 1930. He became the Director General of Agriculture for NSW 1965-1980 and was given numerous awards including Officer of the Order of Australia in 1980. As a mark of respect the road between Hurlstone and the Veterinary Research Station was named after him. Another famous student was Cecil Ramalli from the early 1930s. He was hailed as a teenage prodigy when he first played rugby for NSW in 1938. He played for Australia on 6th August 1938 against New Zealand. Ramalli went to Britain with the 1939 Wallabies and was expected to return a star but the tour was postponed when World War Two intervened.



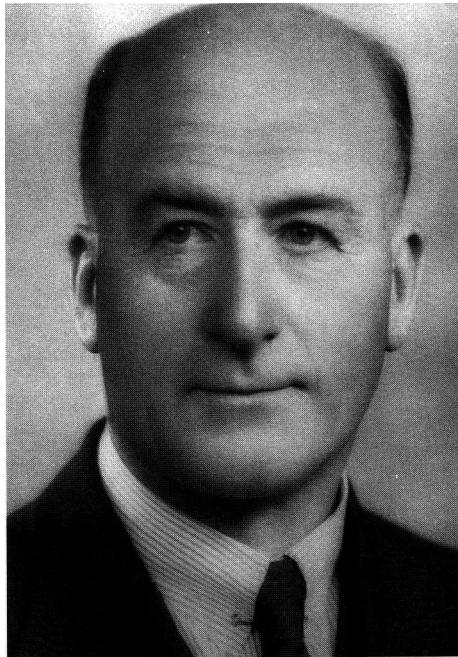
H.A.H.S., 1935

CHAPTER THREE

The War Years

Percival Hindmarsh

The new Principal was Percival Hindmarsh, M.A. B.Sc. Agriculture. He had considerable experience in agricultural education and boarding schools as he had been the Principal of Yanco Agricultural High School for the previous four years. Before that he had been a lecturer at Sydney Teachers College. He was married and the father of two children.



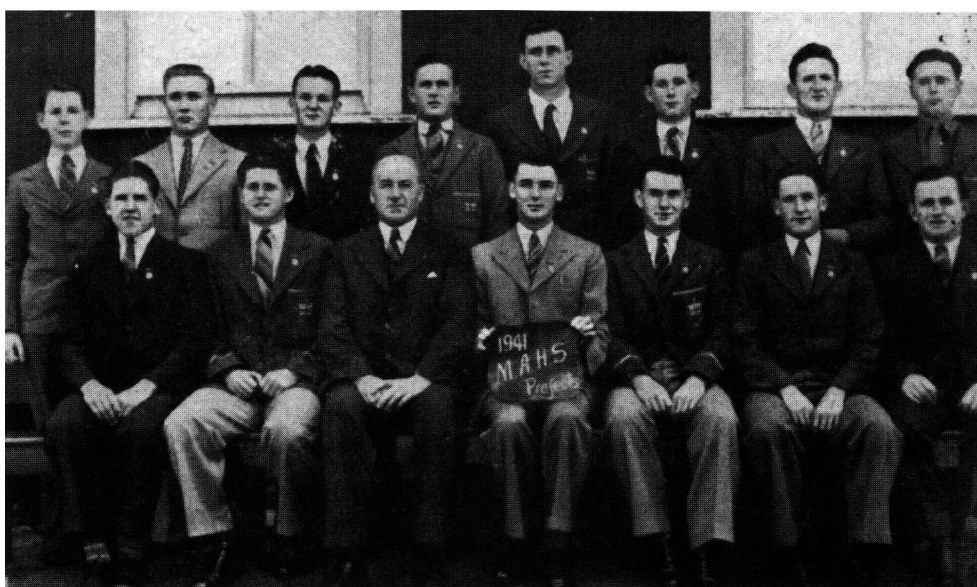
Percy Hindmarsh, Principal 1938 — 1945

Hindmarsh took a close interest in the farm and during his term as Principal considerable developments were made. A new silo was obtained in 1939 and in the same year a new, modern piggery was constructed. Experimentation was commenced in milk production and sheep and poultry breeding. Hindmarsh's brother was the Director of the nearby Glenfield Veterinary Research Station and co-operation between the two institutions culminated in the first calf produced in Australia by artificial insemination born to a Hurlstone Ayrshire cow.

A major reform Hindmarsh introduced was the creation of a School Parents and Citizen's Council in October 1938. An executive was elected and the council pledged to aid the Principal in developing the school and organising various activities. Membership was fixed at two shillings and six pence per annum. In the years ahead the School Council successfully lobbied the Department of Education directly over basic yet important issues such as the inadequacy of hostel and classroom accommodation and the need for an expanded and improved library. Within a year the Council had purchased motion picture equipment to enable the boys to view educational and general entertainment films.

In 1938 Hindmarsh introduced a number of innovations especially for the boarders. These included:- picnic lunches at the river on weekends, Friday evening entertainment and weekend sport. During Hindmarsh's tenure, the area near the railway station known as Horne Park was built and completed; a new science laboratory was finished and a picket fence around the oval was erected, chiefly by the boys under the guidance of teachers.

An interesting development in school history occurred in December 1939 when the decision was announced by the Director of Education, Ross Thomas, to rename Hurlstone as the Macarthur Memorial Agricultural High School. It was so-named after John Macarthur, who had demonstrated the commercial possibilities of the wool industry in the early years of British settlement of Australia. On the 26th October 1940, the official change was announced by The Governor of New South Wales, Lord Wakehurst. This coincided with the opening of a new agricultural high school near Tamworth called Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, named after William Farrer, the first of Australia's plant breeders. Similarly, Yanco Agricultural High School became the McCaughey Memorial Agricultural High School named after Sir Samuel McCaughey, the leading pioneer of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and whose home is now part of the current school. However, the government edict did not seem to catch on and well before the end of Hindmarsh's term it had been forgotten and Hurlstone remained Hurlstone.

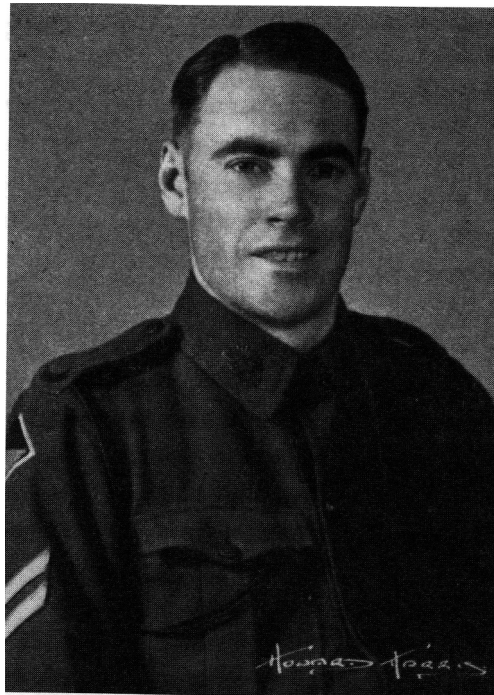


MAHS Prefects, 1941

The dominating issue during Hindmarsh's period as Principal was World War Two which broke out in September 1939 and finished in August 1945. Eight hundred and forty four old boys of the school fought in Australian and British forces during the war and tragically sixty eight died.

One of these men, Corporal John Edmondson was tragically killed while fighting in the city of Tobruk in Libya on April 13th 1941. He was only twenty six years of age. He had been a student at Hurlstone in the years between 1928 and 1930. Edmondson was awarded a Victoria Cross, the most prestigious award which could be given a soldier in the then British Empire. He was the first Australian and the first soldier from the Empire to be so honoured in WWII.

The Edmondson Memorial Tablet was unveiled by the Minister of Education, Clive Evatt on 27th January 1942. George Longmuir, the Principal of HAHS during Edmondson's time said the following in his address to the school,



John Edmondson, 1941

"John went to the assistance of his officer, whose life he saved at the expense of his own. His courageous action was typical of the true Anzac spirit and the spirit born at Gallipoli where Howard McKern a former student, lost his life... This tablet, about to be unveiled and the annual memorial Prize, will keep Edmondson's name fresh in the minds of future generations of Hurlstonians. But whilst we are proud and exalted by the heroism of John, we must not forget the sadness brought to the Edmondson home."

There were sadly many others mentioned in the pages of wartime Harvesters who made the supreme sacrifice for their country. These included J. Arthursen, T. McIntyre, C. Worboys, J. Love, Peter Turnbull (who won the Distinguished Flying Cross and was lost in air operations over New Guinea), Alex Will, Flying Officer Rear-Gunner Tom Swann, John Burnham, Lieutenant John de Meyrick, Private Arthur Moses, John Smail, Flying Officer Dudley Ward, Sgt. Peter Callow, Sgt Ralph Storey and Private Max Eggins.

Hurlstonians seemed to be pretty much everywhere during WWII:-over the skies of Germany and New Guinea; in prisoner of war camps in Germany and Japan; in Borneo, Malaya, the Middle East, Greece, Crete and North Africa. Hundreds of Hurlstonians had laid their lives on the lines in the "fight for Liberty itself" as Hindmarsh put it in the 1941 Harvester.

Special mention should be made of Squadron Leader Ron Rankin (Distinguished Flying Cross and Croix de Guerre) who saw service in England, the Middle East, Malta and Dutch New Guinea. Ron had had an equally distinguished rugby union career, being captain of Drummoyne and representing NSW and Australia.

Special mention should also be made to Mr Les Pinn whose last year of teaching was 1945. He had been at Hurlstone since its beginning in 1907. As Hindmarsh wrote, "There is not a place in Hurlstone that does not bear the marks of his handicraft. But more lasting is his influence upon the lads, who for thirty seven years have worked with him at the carpentry bench." Under his direction the boys had built the assembly hall and the first cricket oval in the 1930s.

By the end of Hindmarsh's time there were three subject departments at Hurlstone; English/ History, Mathematics and Science/ Agriculture. There was a teaching staff of twenty one, a farm staff of seven and a student enrolment of almost five hundred. Academic results were excellent and there was conspicuous success on the sporting field and in debating and drama. There were four platoons of Cadets and the largest Air Scouts Detachment in NSW.



Intermediate Certificate, 1941

Hindmarsh was promoted at the end of 1945 to the position of Inspector of Schools. The 1946 Harvester wrote of Hindmarsh after he had left Hurlstone;

"He brought to his new school an abounding enthusiasm and a wide vision... Percival Hindmarsh gave encouragement to all phases of sport. We shall miss that energetic, massive form on the football field during coaching runs...In hostel matters he was a second father to the lads, his kindly advice and sympathetic treatment bringing their own reward of respect and discipline."

And the 1957 Harvester commented,

"He steered the school through the difficult years of the second world war and many of the "old boys" will recall his great personal interest, his kindness, ability and the high academic standards he maintained."

Memories

David Bailey was a well known student at HAHS, starting there in 1944. He remembers,

I commenced at Hurlstone in 1944 with the Second World War still in full swing. We dug air raid trenches near where the present swimming pool is situated. Food rationing was strictly observed and I remember taking home a small allocation of butter on my weekend leave. We killed our own lambs and pigs at school for the dining room, and there was plenty of fresh vegetables and eggs.

Most students commenced in Year 7, sitting for the Intermediate Certificate after 3 years, and the Leaving Certificate at the end of 5...I won the McKern prize in 1946 and the Edmondson Prize in my final year, both awards honour distinguished service men.

Sport filled a huge part of our school life. Rugby and Cricket were the main organised sports and the school competed strongly against other Sydney High Schools... From daylight to dark boarders never stopped playing all kinds of ball games. I can well remember after tea at night hotly contested games of rounders on the paddock below the dining room. For swimming we ran through the Glenfield village over those hills in the east to the Georges River, often doing this in the summer mornings before breakfast as part of our general fitness program.



Macarthur Memorial High School Fete Day, 1940

Geoffrey Woods was at HAHS during 1940 — 1944. He recalls his time at HAHS remarkably clearly,

The first thing a new pupil learnt when starting school at Hurlstone was the prescribed method of making a bed. I enrolled the day before classes began. Mr. Hindmarsh introduced me to Matron Olarensshaw who took me to my bed in B dorm and demonstrated the prescribed method of making a bed as well as the correct way of packing clothes into a locker.

Dorm inspection took place after breakfast each morning. The dorm prefect was responsible for seeing that all was ready before Matron's inspection. Each boy had to stand at attention at the foot of his bed while Matron inspected not only the bed but also the neatness of its owner. Any unsatisfactory bed was stripped and remade for a second inspection before leaving for class. Locker inspections were made on occasions.

Dormitories were cleaned daily by maids, but as the war progressed and staff became hard to obtain, the job of sweeping and dusting (scrubbing if necessary) was done by the boys.

Beds were of variable quality. All were iron framed with a wire mattress beneath and a kapok or horse hair mattress on top. Kapok mattresses were either thin, knobbly or comfortable. Horse hair ones were stiff, hard, prickly and always uncomfortable. It is interesting to note that the best beds and mattresses were occupied by boys who were first to return to school after vacation.



Sheep shearing at Hurlstone (Using the electric plant recently acquired), 1940

There were three levels of punishment, depending on the seriousness of the crime.

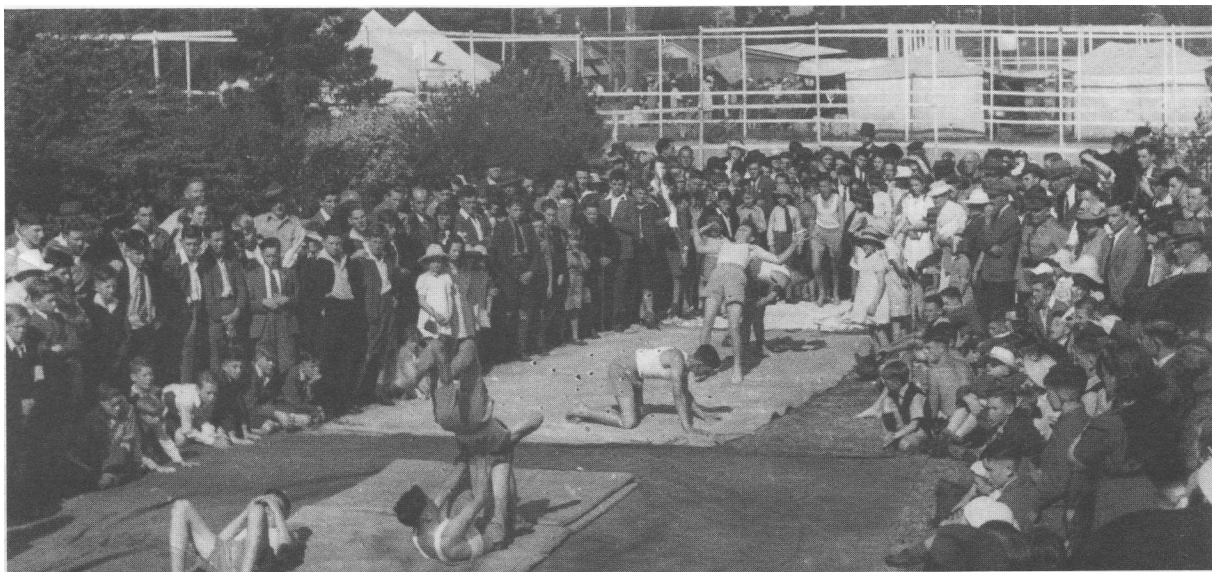
Farm work: The mildest form of punishment and the only legal type used by prefects. Before the closing of prep a farm punishment list was passed to the class prefects who entered the names of those who caused any disruption to the peace and quiet of the class. The most serious farm punishment was dairy then piggery followed by horses and lastly poultry.

Corporal: Administered by class teachers and resident teacher on duty. The cane was used for any misdemeanour such as disobedience, failing to do homework, unsatisfactory class work and for boarders; disruption in dorms, pillow fighting, out of bed after lights out and the most serious of all was a dorm raid.

Most serious offences: These were punished by the Headmaster. The punishment was often the maximum; caning and/or cancellation of week-end leave and other privileges. The most extreme punishment was expulsion from Hurlstone.

Life was very hard for boarders at Hurlstone at this time. Many students from inland areas left school to help on the farm as labour became harder to obtain. Tea, sugar, butter and meat rationing made catering for the two hundred resident boys extremely difficult for Matron Olarenschaw and her kitchen staff. The school dairy provided ample milk, cream and occasionally some home made butter. Yields of fruit and vegetables from the school orchard and garden were poor due to severe drought. Students worked hard to harvest what was available. The laying hens provided sufficient eggs for the table. Meat was rarely available and was replaced with frequent meals of sausages (curried or fried), saveloys, frankfurts and bacon, often from the school's own pigs. As kitchen staff became almost unavailable boys were rostered to the kitchen duty. Some of the chores were making toast, peeling potatoes, serving meals to tables, washing up, etc. Each table received a weekly supply of butter and sugar which rarely lasted a week. Cake and biscuits were eagerly sort after. Boys returning to school after a weekend at home often brought back cooked goodies which were quickly hidden in the locker and shared with dorm mates at night or often secretly eaten in bed under the sheets. Hunger was a constant companion. A butter box of "slabs" was brought from the kitchen at four o'clock each afternoon and eagerly consumed by hungry boys. Many boys kept a small bottle of jam hidden in their lockers for the purpose of making a slab more edible.

Another source of food was during summer when the corn crop was loaded with fully formed cobs. These were eaten raw or taken down to the creek, boiled in a tin of water or roasted over the coals. The tuck shop was a small weatherboard and fibro shed at the end of the science lab. Those who had money could purchase sweets, meat and apple pies. Chocolate was not available in war years.



Fete Day, Gym Display, 1943

Geoffrey comments on the impact of the war on Hurlstone,

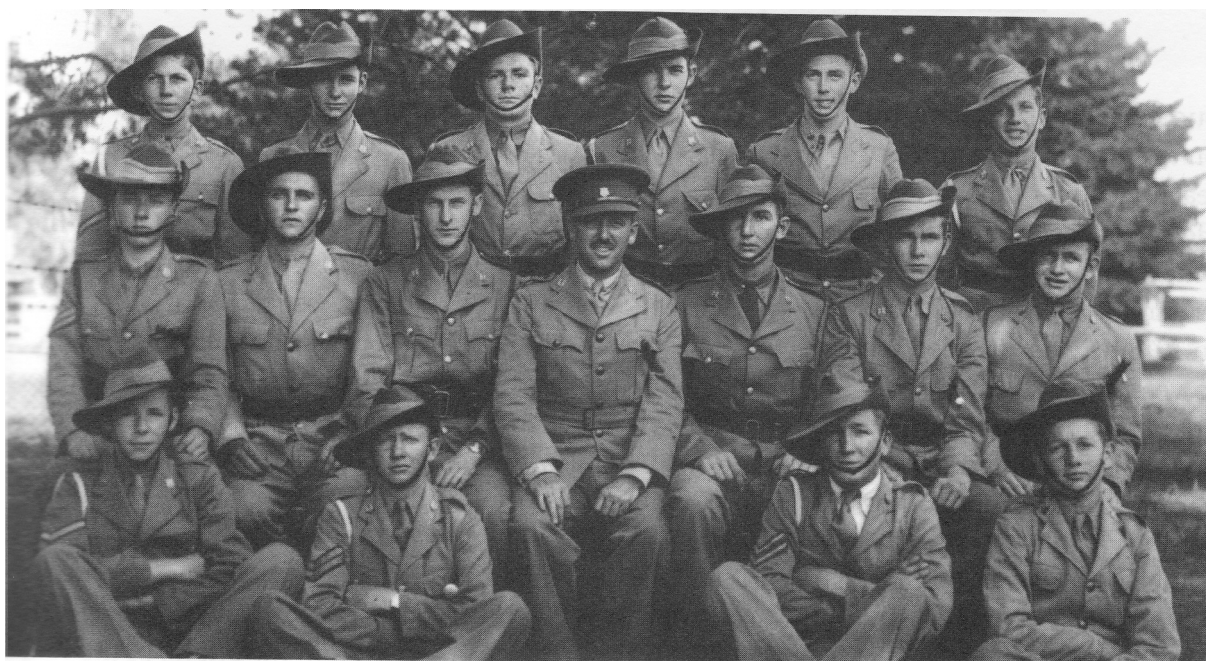
*With the threat of a Japanese invasion and possibly air attacks on our military bases Hurlstone was in a very precarious situation being placed mid-way between Ingleburn and Holsworthy military establishments. Measures had to be taken to ensure the safety of students and staff. These included:-
Air Raid Warning: The school siren was placed on the then library roof at the western end of the dining room. The siren served as an air raid alarm for both the school and the small village of Glenfield.
Trenches: These were dug in the lawns opposite the dorms where a swimming pool was later located.*

Work teams were rostered from dormitories to dig sections of the trenches. The rock and soil was heaped on either side of the trenches and then the whole covered with logs. These were cut from trees felled in the school's eighty acre bush block near the Georges River and between Glenfield and Casula. The logs were then brought by dray or wagon to the school. All the work was done by students and the farm staff. Matron and kitchen staff provided evening meals for the workers. These were greatly appreciated at a time when food was so scarce. The trenches provided sufficient protection for the two hundred boarders. Air raid drill was carried out in daylight as well as the night of the submarine attack on Sydney. We were woken from sleep by an air raid warning siren, gathered into our allotted evacuation groups and assembled at the trenches where we waited for the all clear siren.

Air Raid Safety: Buckets of paste and rectangles of mosquito net were provided for safety from flying glass. All the dorm windows had the netting glued to the glass windowpanes.

Blackout: Evening prep rooms were blacked out by covering the windows with blackout frames prior to the lights being switched on. Dorm lights were dimmed. This was known as a brownout. All outside and verandah lights were turned off at night.

The Cadet Company grew to a maximum of five platoons of about 150 cadets. Uniforms of shorts, shirt, slouch hat and greatcoat were provided by the army. In 1940 the cadets corps had two Hodgekiss machine guns which were later replaced with four Sten and two Owen light machine guns and a Bren gun. Each cadet was armed with a single shot .310 Martini Henry rifle. A rifle range was built near the creek at the back of the school where target practice took place using .303 Lee Enfield rifles fitted with .22 sleeves. Cadet drill was held one afternoon each week and weekend camps were occasionally held at the school. Once a year, a week long camp was held at Holsworthy, Ingleburn or Walgrove army camps under military instruction. Rifle and machine gun firing practise was popular with cadets. Officer and NCO training camps were held each year. One platoon consisted of company drummers, machine gunners, officer and special duty cadets.



Cadet Officers, 1941

All students participated in house sport on Wednesday afternoons. There were seven high schools in the CHS Competitions in league and union football, cricket, tennis, athletics and swimming. Training was held after school and also at weekends for boarders. Interschool debating was also popular.

Resident students had plenty of spare time when not rostered for farm duty. Boxing and gymnastics made good use of the gymnasium. Matron Olarensshaw conducted a fencing class at weekends in the gym. Film shows were often held at night in the hall. Saturday afternoon leave was granted for students to attend Liverpool movies. Insect and plant collecting was an essential activity for Intermediate Certificate students wanting to pass Agriculture. Many hours were spent out of bounds searching the Glenfield bushland for interesting specimens. A Hurlstone swimming pool was often hoped for, but never eventuated. However the creek, which was out of bounds, had an excellent water hole that served the purpose for the more adventurous and braver students.

Boys who had a difference of opinion and became involved in a brawl were given the opportunity of settling their squabbles in the gym. A boxing match was arranged and well publicised in the school. Day students fought out their differences during lunch hour and boarders after school or weekends. A boxing ring was set up in the gymnasium, seconds appointed and either a teacher or senior refereed the match. The match was stopped before damage was done, everyone had a great time and the participants shook hands and departed in the knowledge that justice had been done.



View of Dairy and Pastures, 1940s

Successful Hurlstonians from this period included Wyn Owen (1937 to 1941) who went on to study Science and Economics at Sydney University. He spent thirty one years on the *teaching staff of the University of Colorado, twenty five of them as Professor of Economics. He specialised in the field of agricultural economics. Kenneth Johnston, who was Dux of the school in 1945 became a leading veterinarian and researcher. He served as Chairman of the Australian Society of Microbiologists and the Australian Veterinary Association. In 1978 he was awarded the Seddon Memorial Prize for his meritorious clinical contribution to veterinary science. Barry Wren who completed his Leaving Certificate in 1949 went on to an outstanding career in medicine. He served in obstetrics and gynaecology in a number of hospitals and universities around the world, notably in London, Nigeria and Chicago. He became the President of the Australian Menopause Society.*

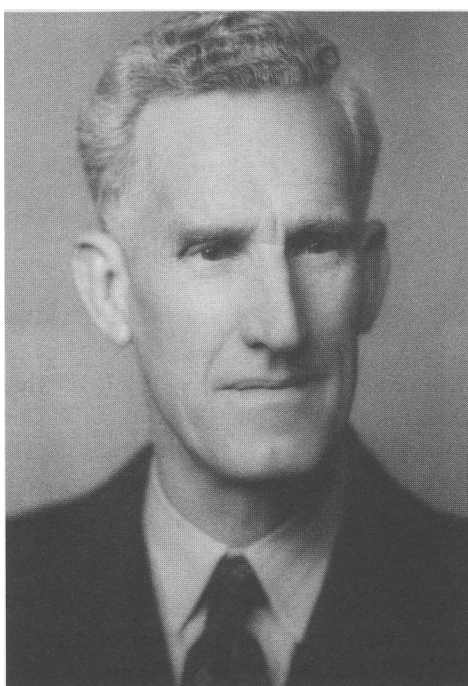
William Keys started at Hurlstone in 1935. On leaving in 1940 he enlisted and saw service in New Guinea. He continued in the army after WWII and served in the Korean War for which he was awarded the Military Cross. After Korea he became involved in the affairs of the RSL (Returned Services Association). He eventually would be elected National President in 1978. He was knighted in 1980 and received an Order of Australia in 1988 for his work with veterans and their families. Richard Klugman attended HAHS 1939 to 1941 and became a well known politician in later life, holding the Federal seat of Newcastle for twenty one years, retiring in 1991. He was a foundation member of the Council of Civil Liberties.

CHAPTER FOUR

The King Years

James McEwan King

The fourth Principal of Hurlstone Agricultural High School was James McEwan King who had replaced Hindmarsh as Headmaster at Yanco in 1938 and did so again at Glenfield in 1946. He was Principal between 1946 and 1953. He had started teaching as a pupil teacher in 1904, was a student at Sydney Teachers College in 1910 and a lecturer there from 1912. He began a Bachelor of Science degree at Sydney, majoring in Chemistry and helped the British government's war effort in World War One by managing a munitions factory at Gretna in Scotland. King returned to Australia in 1919 where he completed a Science degree and taught at schools in Newcastle, Bowral, Maitland and Glenwood before becoming Principal at Yanco in 1938. Tragically for King he and his wife had lost their son in World War Two. His body was never discovered.



James McEwan King, Principal 1946 - 1953

By King's time there were three academic departments; Agriculture / Science, English / History and Mathematics each supervised by their respective heads. The Kings were able to pay particular attention to their hostel where they were described as being like father and mother to the all male population. Mrs King served as matron after the retirement of Miss Olarenschaw after eighteen years in the position. The very welcome addition of a Senior Resident Master with direct responsibility for the hostel began in 1951.

A number of the teachers who had laid the foundations of Hurlstone left during this period. Charles Hughes, who had initially laid out the beautiful gardens at Glenfield left in 1948.

Mr Pinn, "the Mr Chips of Hurlstone ", did not return for 1946 and in 1947 J. J. Neylan, ("Mr Twigs"), the senior teacher of Botany who had been at the school for 28 years retired, Mr Wilcox, who had been Sportsmaster for 17 years, 1931-1948, retired in 1949 and sadly Stanley Cook, the Deputy Principal who had been on sick leave for an extended period, died in 1950 from heart problems. He had been Deputy since 1932. An ardent church worker and community activist, for a time he had been Mayor of Ingleburn. He had taught at Summer Hill with Longmuir and came back to Hurlstone in 1932. Bruce Gardiner who had been a senior teacher at the school returned as Deputy Headmaster. In 1951 came the retirement of D. G. Taylor after forty years of service to Hurlstone as an Agriculture teacher.



The teaching staff, 1951

Front row: J. Surgeon, G. Squire, D. Stuart, R. Cowley, G. Henderson, R. Whitebread, H. Turner, W. Chapman.

Second row: J. Argent, C. Spencer, G. Browne, B. Moffat, J. Simmons, M. Stirling, K. Maxwell, C. Mullavey.

Front row: R. Clarke, A. Wilcox, B. Gardiner (Deputy Headmaster),

J. McE. King (Principal), A. Neil, L. Bonnor, A. McAndrew

Absent: H. Allen, J. Harvey, A. Parkes.

Many complaints about the standard of the buildings and accommodation were made during King's period as Principal. King himself made frequent requests for improvements to the Department but to no avail. At Speech Day in 1948 King mentioned the need for improvements in his address to the school. H.S. Robertson, President of the Farmers and Settlers Association, at the same Speech Day described the buildings as resembling slums and the Secretary of The Old Boys Union, mentioned a promise of the Director of Education for 60,000 pounds for school improvements.

Despite the need for improvements in school facilities, academic results continued strongly and significant improvements were made. The school retained the Hume Barbour Debating trophy by defeating Sydney Technical High School in the final. Hurlstone Agricultural High School argued the Affirmative case on the topic "That Australia's medical services should be nationalised". Other topics in the competition included: — "Capitalism is a better way of life than socialism" and "The Communist Party should be declared illegal".

The poultry section of the farm was improved through the purchase of more modern equipment. A site for a new orchard of three and a half acres was cleared and made ready for planting. Interestingly, in May 1947, the first scientifically planted woodlot in New South Wales was planted at Hurlstone. The seeds were provided and sown by The Forestry Commission. The First Annual Dinner and Reunion of The Old Boys Union was held in 1947.

Of particular significance to present Hurlstonians who attend the Anzac Day service was the planting of the Memorial Forest by First, Second and Third year students in May 1950.

A feature of the school during 1950 and the five years previously was the Annual Play Day where all classes participated by performing a play in front of the school with prizes being awarded. In 1950 the Best Senior play was adjudged to be "The Murder of Caesar" by class 5B. Other regular features of this period were an Annual Play Night and an Annual Speech Festival for aspiring and developing public speakers.



Play Day, 1948
John Howard and Ivor Morton

Another facet of the school was squad work which was done mostly by boarders but also once every week by day boys. There were four areas that squads of boys worked in - Dairy, Horses, Piggery and Poultry.

The Hurlstone Annual Fete or Country Fair which had begun 13 years earlier was held in 1952 on the 25th October. Events included a Flower and Vegetable Show, a cake competition, a Physical Culture Display, a Boxing Championship, food stalls, rides on the school hay wagon, motor trips to Macquarie House, a Puppet Show and sessions with the latest sound technology purchased by the school with funds donated by the Parents and Citizens Association — a tape recorder.



Tug of war, 1948

Two incidents which highlight both change and continuity with the present day can be reported from the King period. Empire Day celebrations were a feature of every year with the singing of "There will always be an England" and speeches on topics like "The place of The Empire in the World Today", as well as an organised bonfire and fireworks display in the evening. In 1951 the Principal's message in the Harvester magazine concerned the fiftieth jubilee of the Commonwealth of Australia. He noted that this marked the emergence of the nation onto the world stage as well as the need to support the United Nations and the need to strive to understand and win the allegiance of the large numbers of migrants who had come to Australian shores since the end of World War Two.

1953, the last year of King's principalship, saw the first school dance in the school hall where the boys of Hurlstone entertained the girls of Burwood Home Science School in the evening. King retired at the end of the year. Academic results remained high but both the farm and day school facilities were sorely in need of refurbishment.

Memories

Huon Hassall was a student at HAHS in 1950 and 1951. In the 1960s he set up Hassall & Associates, a private agricultural consultancy and project management firm. Much of the work has been undertaken overseas in Asia, the Middle East and Africa sponsored by organizations like AusAid, the World Bank and the Asian Development bank. He was awarded an Order of Australia in 2005. Here he describes the Hurlstone he knew,

HAHS was a pretty tough school back in the early 50s. There was a strong pecking order from the seniors to the juniors and woe betide anyone who upset a senior. I was forced to do the "under and overs" for being caught using the senior year 5 toilets when I was a senior in year 4. This involved trying to get under and over twelve beds (six each side of the dormitory) while the senior year 5 boarders flogged me with pillows full of clothes and shoes.

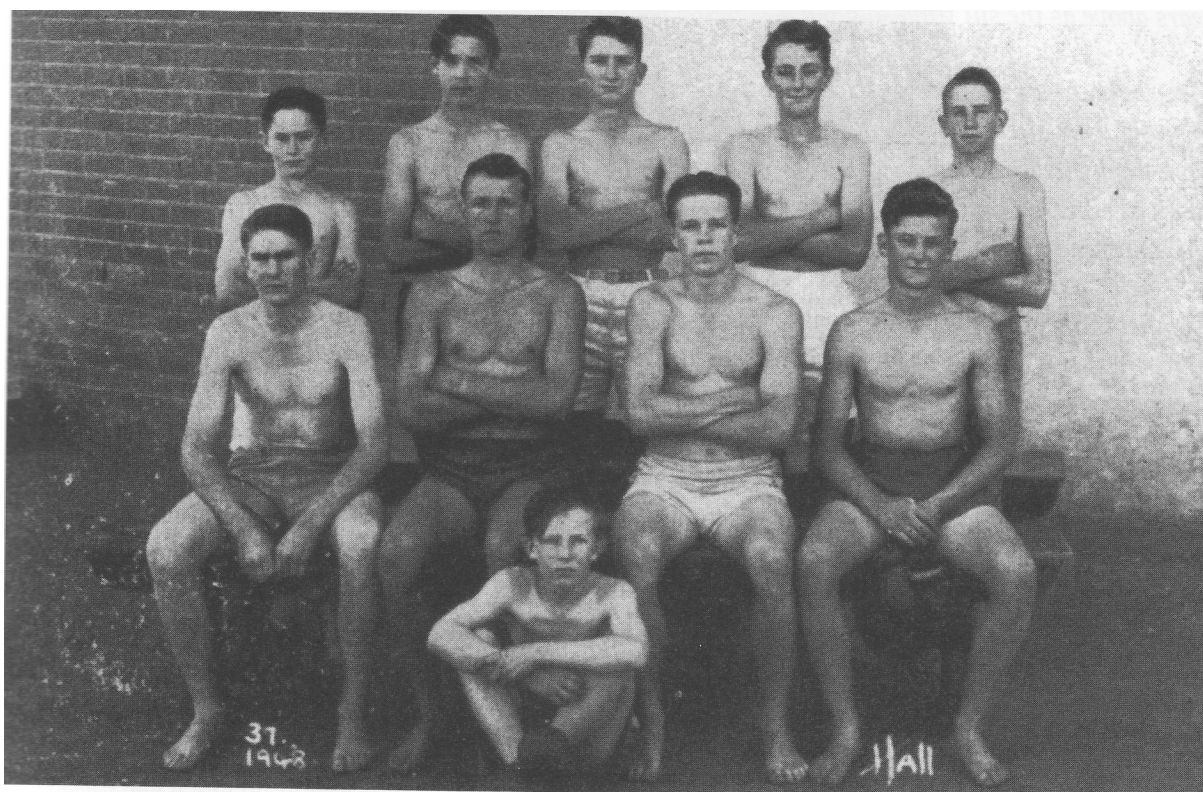
Geoff Kelly was a scholarship boy in the years 1944 to 1948. He was granted a working scholarship which meant that he only had three weeks holiday each year. In the other eight weeks he stayed at Hurlstone earning his board by looking after the farm. He remembers the school fondly,

The Combined High Schools (CHS) then were Hurlstone, Canterbury, Homebush, Parramatta Sydney High, Sydney Tech, North Sydney High and North Sydney Tech.

Each year there was the CHS Athletic Carnival and our own carnival was held on our oval and then a team selected to go to the CHS Carnival at the Sports Ground.

Granville Pool was the venue for the school swimming carnival so the whole school virtually set off for the pool by train and then we commenced a House Competition. The winners of the events then qualified for the CHS Carnival held annually at the North Sydney Olympic Pool.

We tried to participate in as many sports as we could. In 1st Year the finals of the boxing inter-house boxing competition were held down on the oval and the contest I had with David Pilcher, which I lost on points, was judged by Mr Hindmarsh as the best of the tournament. In our early years Ian (Midge) Walters was a dayboy ("daygo") and appeared daily from the 9.05am train with a set of boxing gloves hanging around his neck. This proved very successful for him and led to many a lunchtime three one minute round boxing event. Ian later became a boarder and was a very good all round sportsman. He went on to win a University Boxing title.



Boxing Champions, 1948

Standing: R. Davey (7st.), K. Swan (8st. 7lb.), B. Hutchinson (8st.), D. McLennan (7st. 7lb.), M. King (6st. 7lb.)
Seated: W. Lamond (9st. 7lb.), D. Dickson (Open), D. Bailey (10st. 7lb.), T. Stacey (9st.)
In front: J. Neil (6st.)

It was great to also play a part in the Educational strip film with Stewart Pfeiffer. I well remember "Gunner" Moir making me repeatedly make a furrow with the single mouldboard plough being pulled by two Clydesdales until I got it straight enough to suit him. It was not so difficult during the milking scenes and any other we participated in.

Many were the great times during our weekly sporting ventures around the Sydney sporting fields but a most memorable time was Victory in the Pacific Day signalling the end of the war against Japan. We were able to go into Sydney and join in the excitement of that day. This meant a lot to us around Hurlstone as we had army camps at Ingleburn, Glenfield, Moorebank and Holsworthy, while the United States Army Camp was at Warwick Farm. After going to "the pictures" on a Saturday afternoon in Liverpool we walked past three hotels on the way to catch the train back to school. It was great to watch the interaction between the Aussie and Yank soldiers especially after they had had a few beers. They were by no means the friendliest as our men received their "6 bob a day" while the "Yanks" were far better paid and were more of an attraction for the female population. This led to a lot of jealousy and, at times, animosity.

Raiding the different dormitories after lights out proved great fun especially when D Dorm raided The Dungeons or vice versa. Then, of course, when teachers arrived we had to pretend to be asleep. This ruse failed when certain teachers would insist on us showing them our feet and if dirty, punishment was delivered. The raids were made on the Dungeon and reciprocated on D Dorm because at that stage both were dormitories for Second Year pupils. It did not pay to raid dormitories of pupils in the years above as the silt traps and horse troughs would become used even more.

Punishment was simple and fairly consistent. Being sent out of "prep" was two cuts as was harmless misbehaviour after "lights out". However, sometimes more was handed out. I received an extra two from my football coach for having nicotine on my fingers whilst once for being sent out of "prep" I received six... an extra two for leaning against the door jam whilst my co-rogue received his two and also another two for chewing chewing gum. I was not real happy.

Glenfield was only a very small village in the period during which I attended Hurlstone. The Post Office was run by Mrs Magee whose nephew attended the school at that time while the general store was owned by Mr Downes, whose son was a member of the 1st Grade Cricket team with me in 1947. Mr Downes also ran the school tuck shop. This was a most popular venue at recess and lunchtime if you could afford such a luxury.

The Church of England was on top of the hill and between the shops and the church were vacant paddocks in which there was enough bush for us to hide in to read the Sunday papers while supposedly attending church. In our earlier years it was much harder to "wag" Sunday School as our teacher was the daughter of the Deputy Principal, Mr Cook.

There was no picture theatre at Glenfield which is why on Saturday afternoons we were allowed to attend the matinees in Liverpool or Ingleburn. I can remember the Glenfield tennis courts and cricket field and also the grape orchards on the banks of the Georges River near the bridge and our swimming hole. Otherwise there was very little else there at that time except, of course, the homes of the townspeople, many of whom had children attending the school.



Cadets parade at the Fete Day (Lt. John Dunbar i/c), 1947

Norm Cooper recalls Hurlstone in his student years between 1949 and 1952,

There were two types of students at Hurlstone in my period, "Daygo & Bedbug", of which I was a "Daygo", a day student who travelled to school daily, while the "Bedbug" was a boarder who only went home at school holidays or in some cases, at weekends.

The "Bedbugs" did the morning milking and the "Daygos" did the afternoon milking. The school had stud dairy cattle, mainly Ayrshires, but also one or two of all other major breeds for instructional purposes.

All classes had a day on practical agriculture each week and in the first two weeks I drew "dairy". As a 12 year old I had never been closer to a cow than looking at one from my Uncle's car on a Sunday afternoon drive. On my first visit to dairy, it turned out I was the only lad in my class who had never milked a cow, so I was put in charge of 'bailing up'. The school had 60 plus cows in milk. The 'bailing up' yard had two extremely tall silos in the middle of the bails for silage. The Dairy foreman stressed upon me the importance of bailing up and showed me how, finishing up with the words: "I don't want to come out after the milking and find a lot of cattle wandering around".