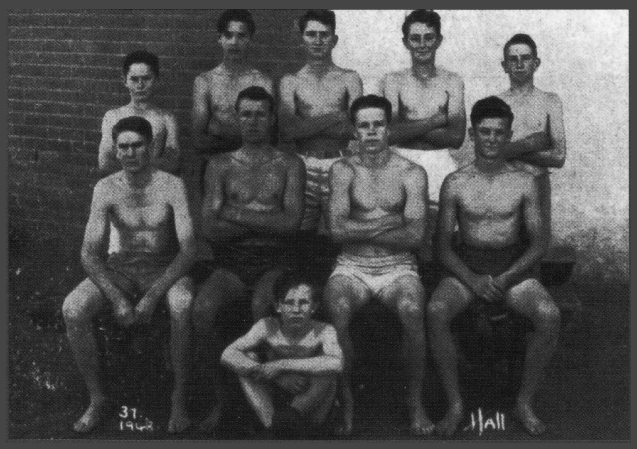
"Bedbugs, Daygos and Slabs"





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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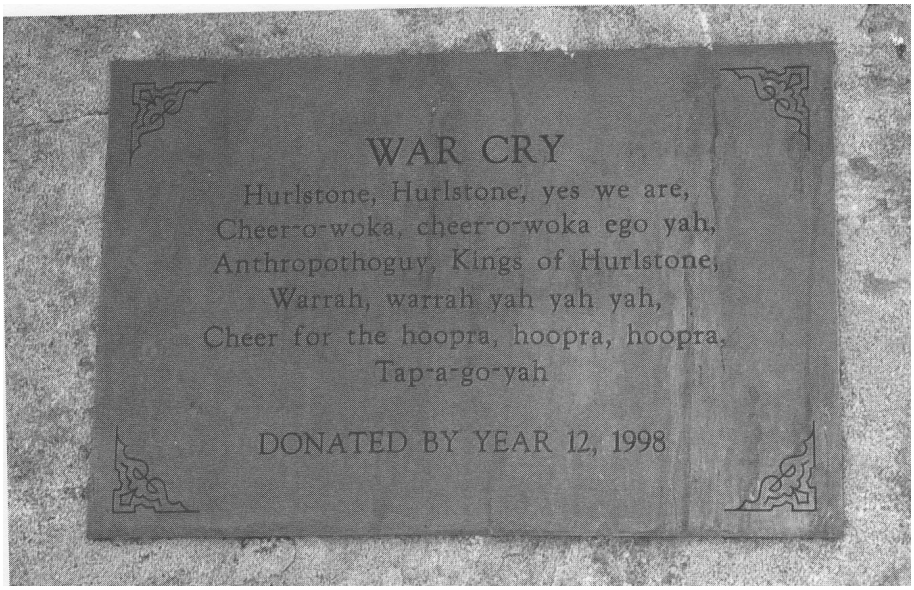
Alan Pollock

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.

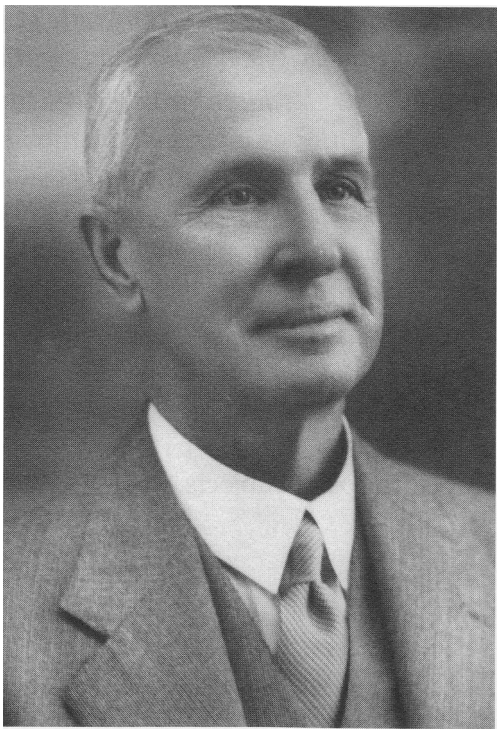
For almost a quarter of a century young ladies walked in the large grounds which had been Hurlstone College studying literature and poetry, playing tennis and preparing for careers in education. In 1907 the ladies moved to the new Teacher Training College in the grounds of Sydney University and Hurlstone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

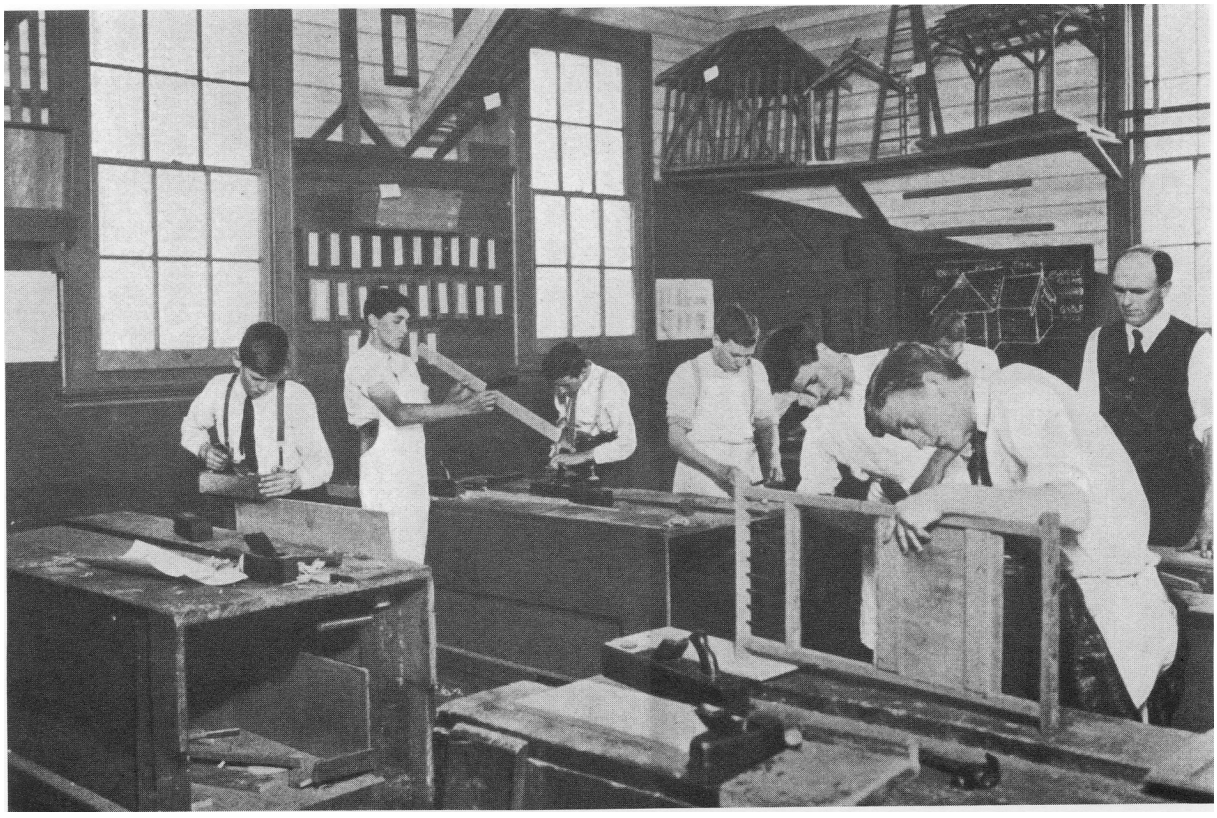
When given the appointment McMullen was given three months to organise the school. He had to write the curriculum, prepare the buildings, classrooms and hostel and have the farm cleared and stocked. As McMullen wrote,

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, Orcharding, Market/ Flower Gardening, dairying, poultry, beekeeping, manual training and Farm Carpentry.

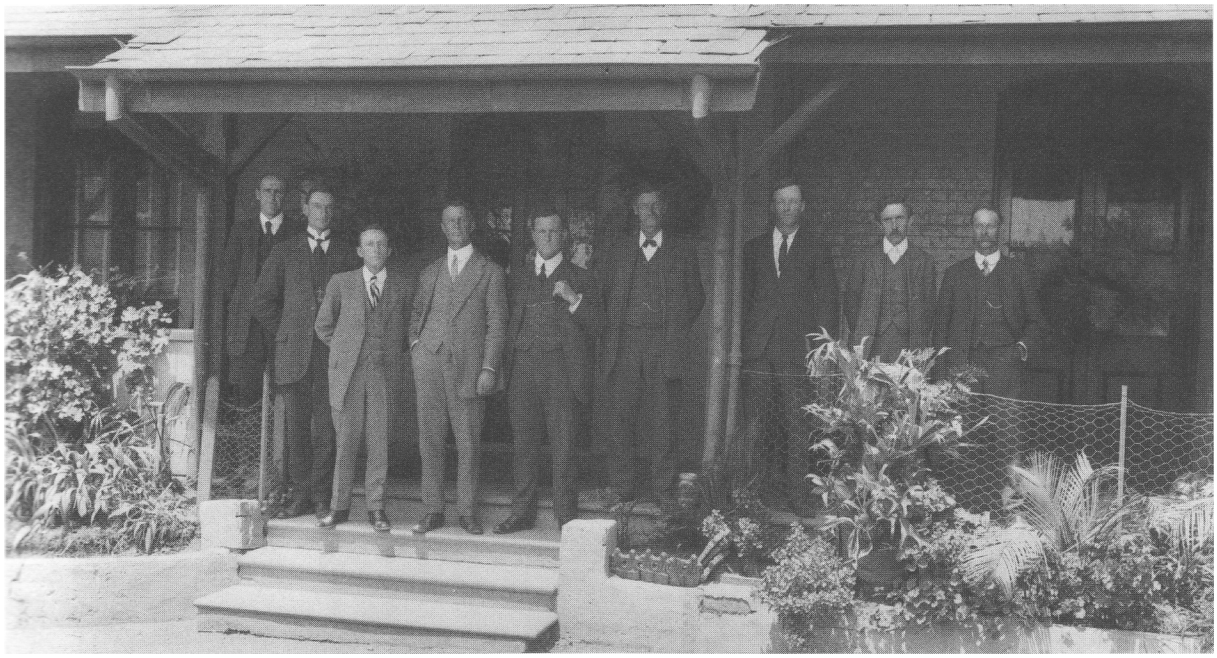


Manual Training, 1913

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 position[1].



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.

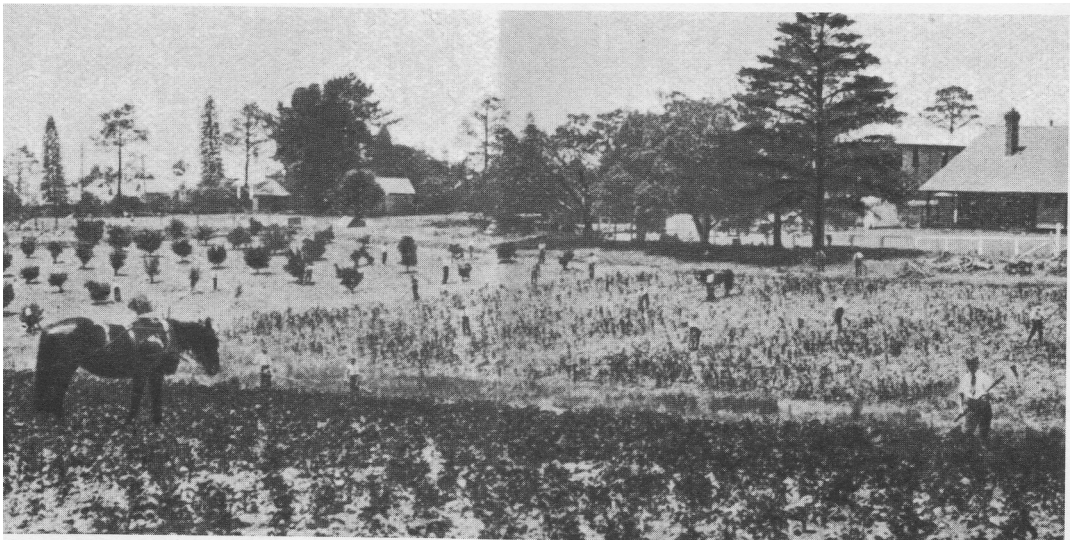
The farm was highly productive with twelve types of potatoes, ten varieties of maize, eighteen different vegetables, eight fodder crops, an orchard and vineyard and a dairy producing more milk than the school could use.

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[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:-

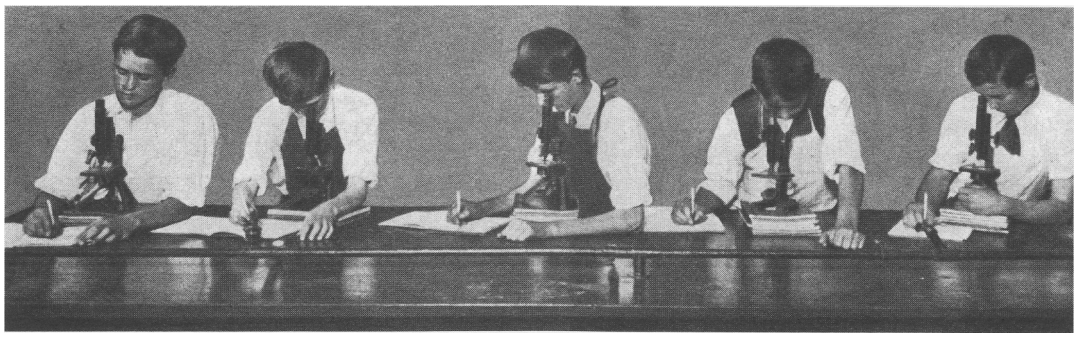
I didn't have to wait long to learn what was intended. I hadn't been in my cubicle more than a few minutes when about seven or eight of the "Monsters "packed across the doorless entrance to the cubicle. Each of them carried one or more pairs of heavy field boots, mostly hobnailed and encrusted with mud.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

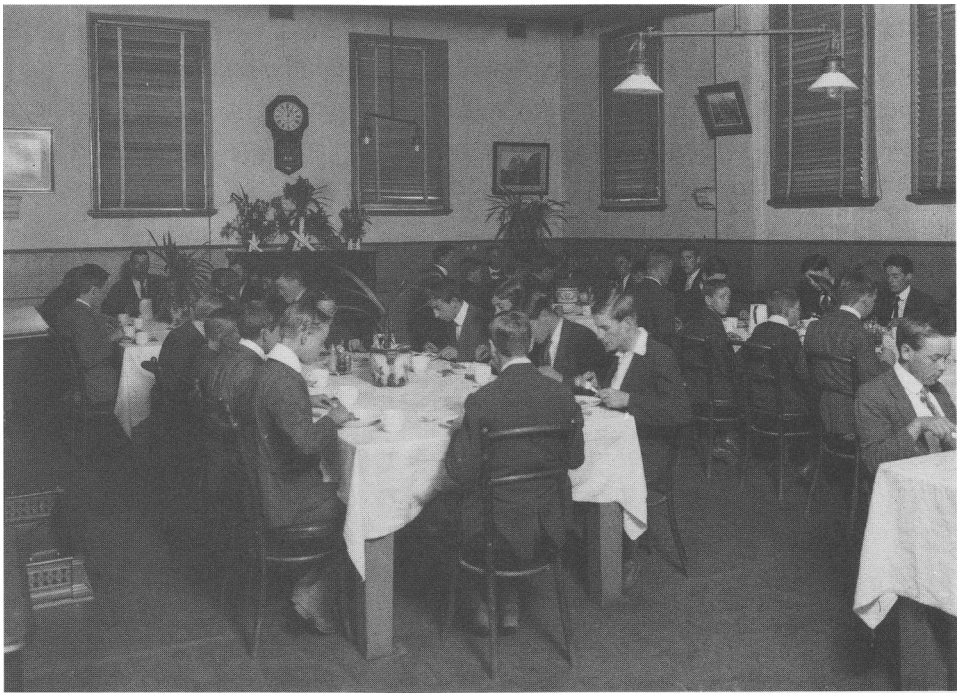
"You'll clean 'em, that's all," grunted Poobah and he pushed forward toward me.

"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.

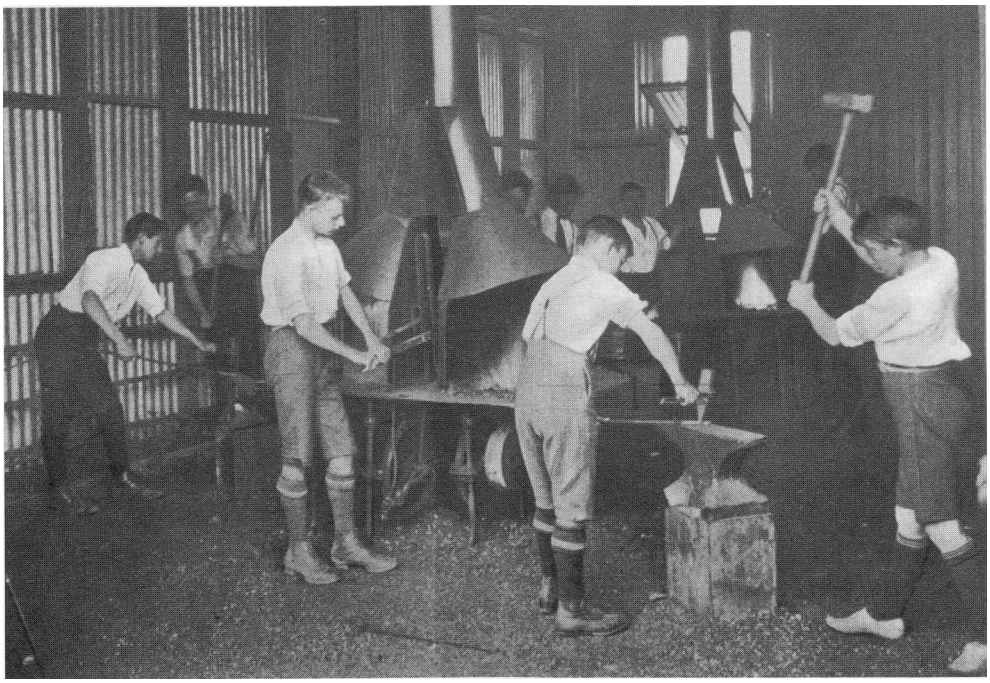


At dinner, 1913

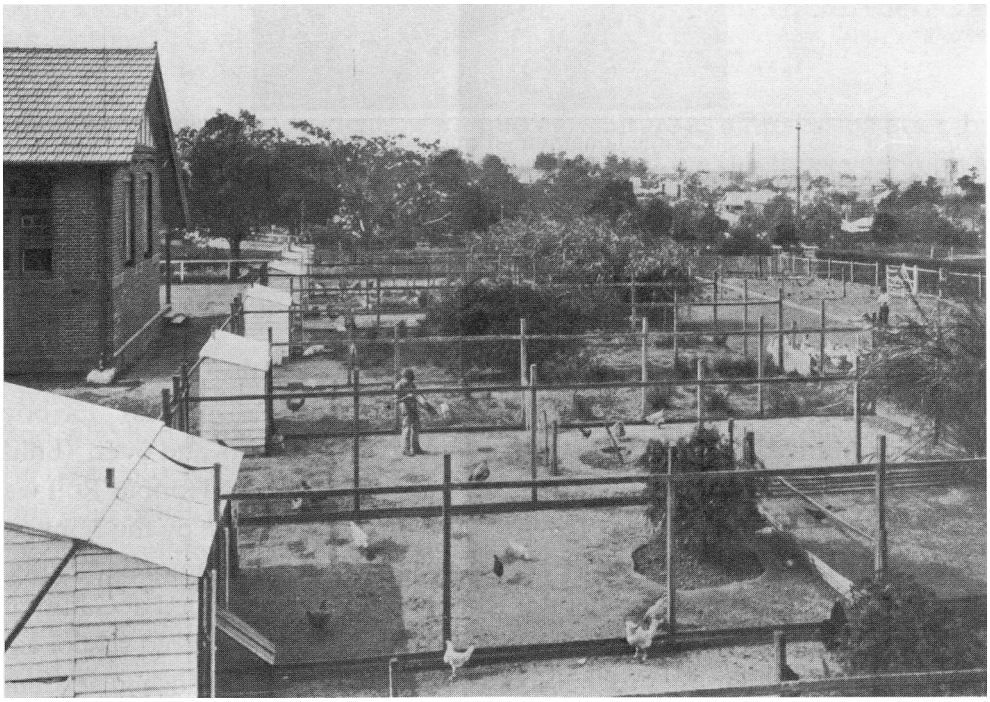
Later, Costelloe gives an interesting description of Hurlstone in the 1910s,

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-environed 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



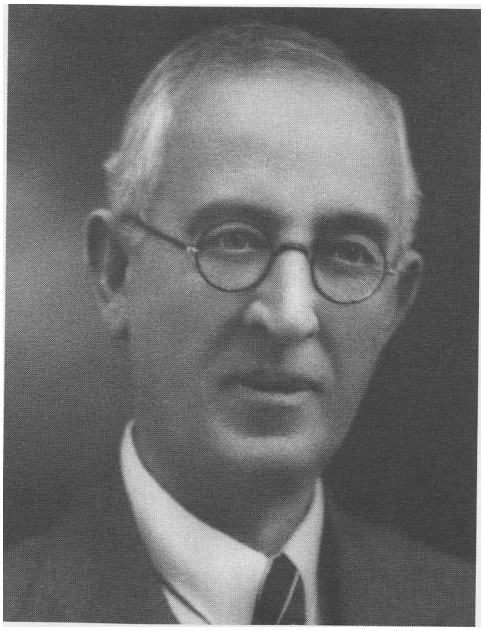
Poultry yards, 1913

Chapter Two

Relocation and Development

George Longmuir

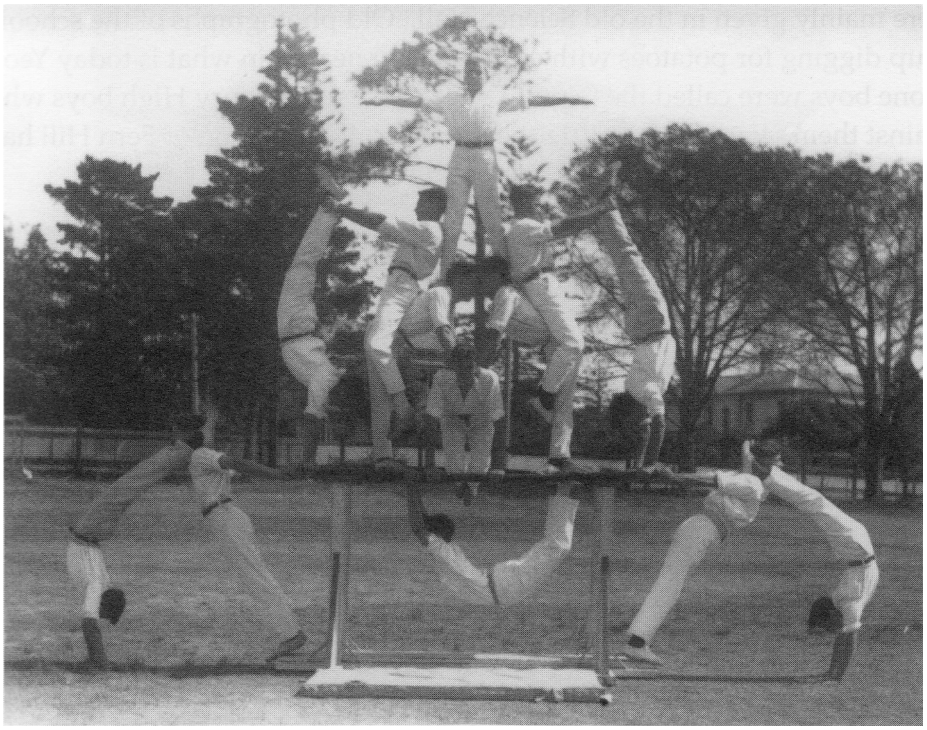
The second Principal of Hurlstone was George Longmuir (BA, Diploma in Agriculture) who was appointed on January 29, 1917. He had twenty seven years teaching experience and was two years younger than McMullen. He had been headmaster of Primary schools at Forbes and Broken Hill and had a long association 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.

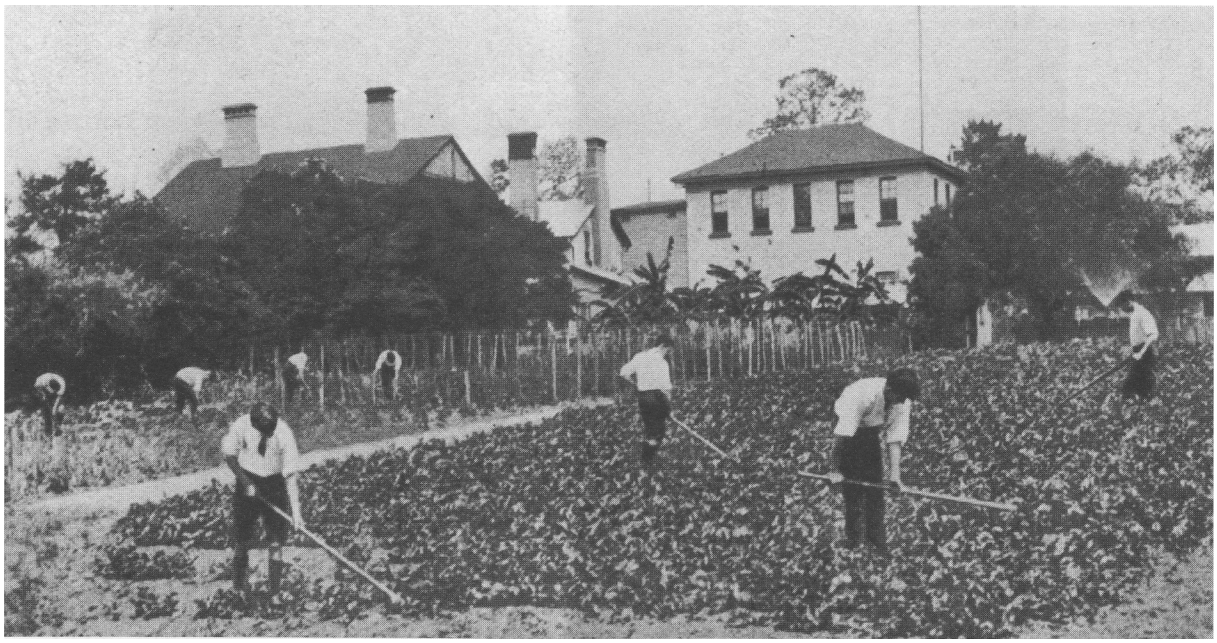
In 1921 the main buildings included the Principal's residence, student dormitories and dining hall, bathrooms, kitchen, classrooms and library. In addition there was a Science classroom and laboratory, a manual training workshop, blacksmith's shop, gymnasium, modern dairy, a silo, hay sheds, stables,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

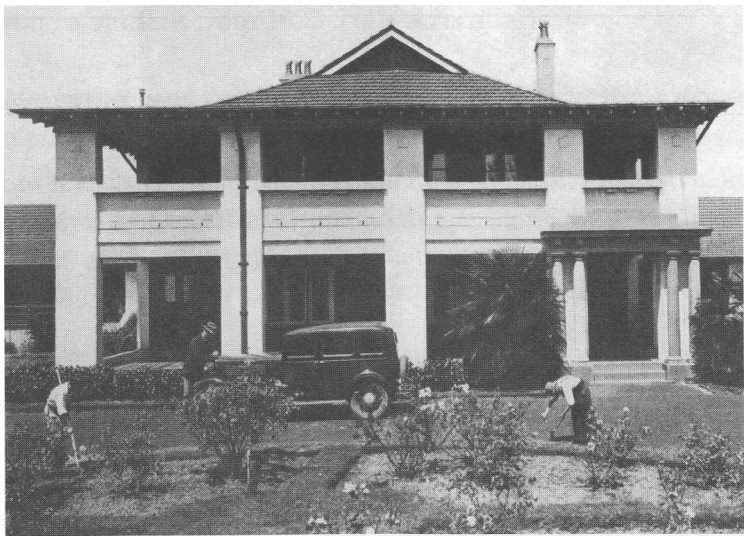


Vegetable Garden, 1913

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 days 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 Olarenshaw 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,

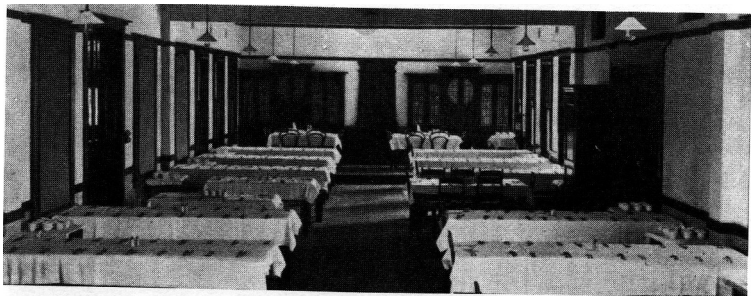
In 1919 the new pupil arrived at Hurlstone with much trepidation. ..The worst incident I can recall was while one newcomer was being branded with coal tar (which had been wrongly labelled stock tar) and having "H.A.H.S." daubed on his chest, some of the tar was spilt on his nether regions causing quite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

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.

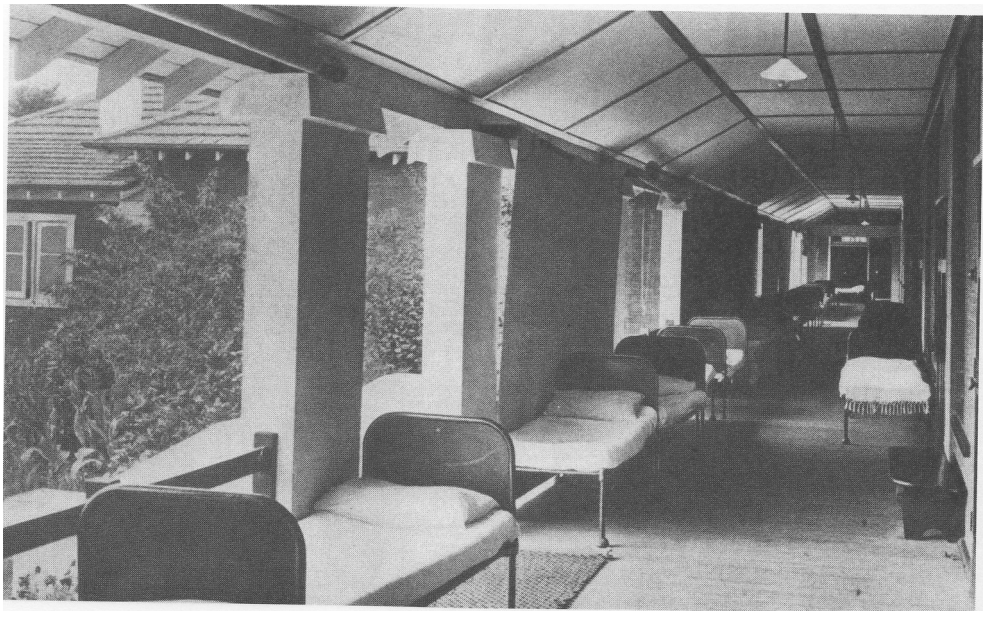
Under George Longmuir we had an excellent record in football. There were 6 grades, the 3 lower grades were based on weight and the rest were on merit. 1st grade won the McManamey Shield as the best rugby school in Sydney on a number of occasions. Six or seven high schools participated; Fort St, Sydney 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, Wooloomooloo 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.

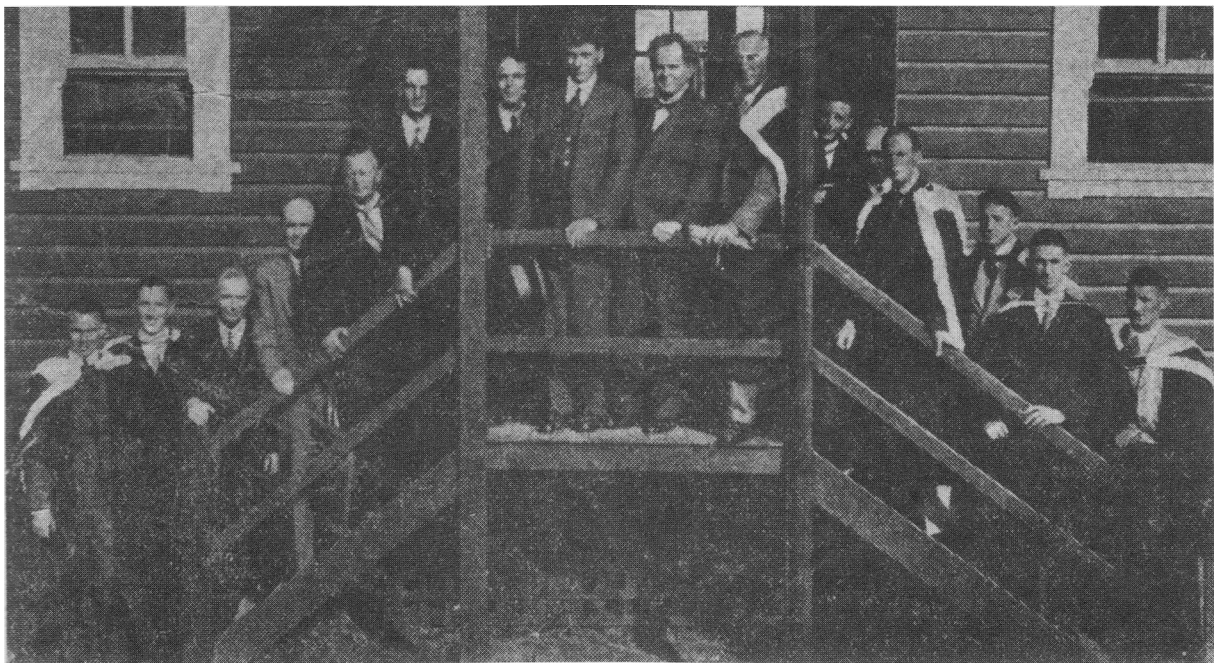
Jeff Simpson, 1930s student and brother of Jim, recalls,

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

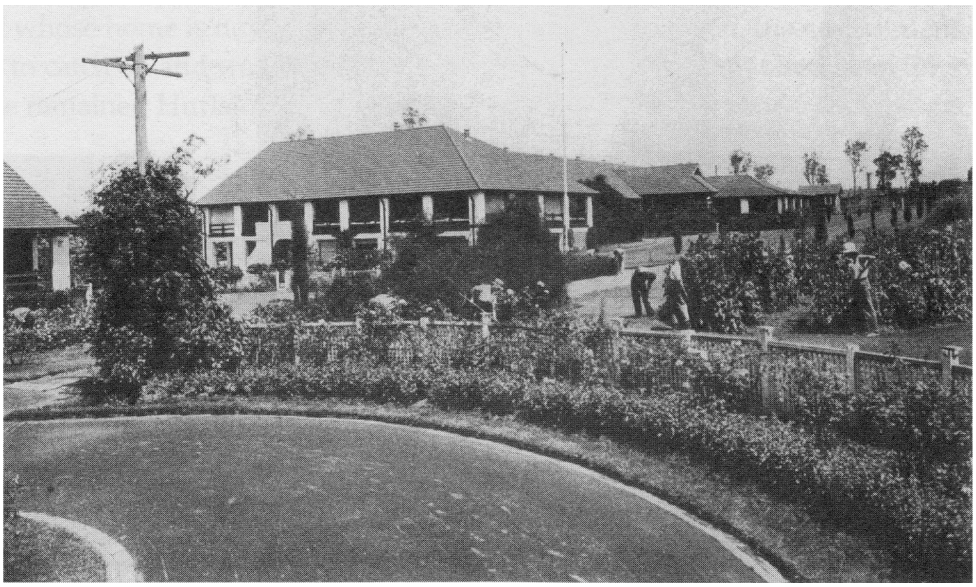
Sport was very important. Victorious teams returning to school would chant the school war cry from the station to the school. As pupils ranged in age from 11 to 21 we had some big boys in the top grades. The most notable of all players was Cec Ramalli who went from school boy football to international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



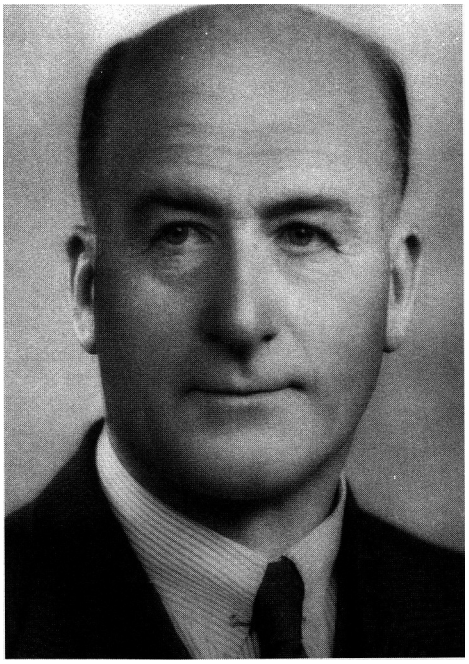
H.A.H.S., 1935

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.



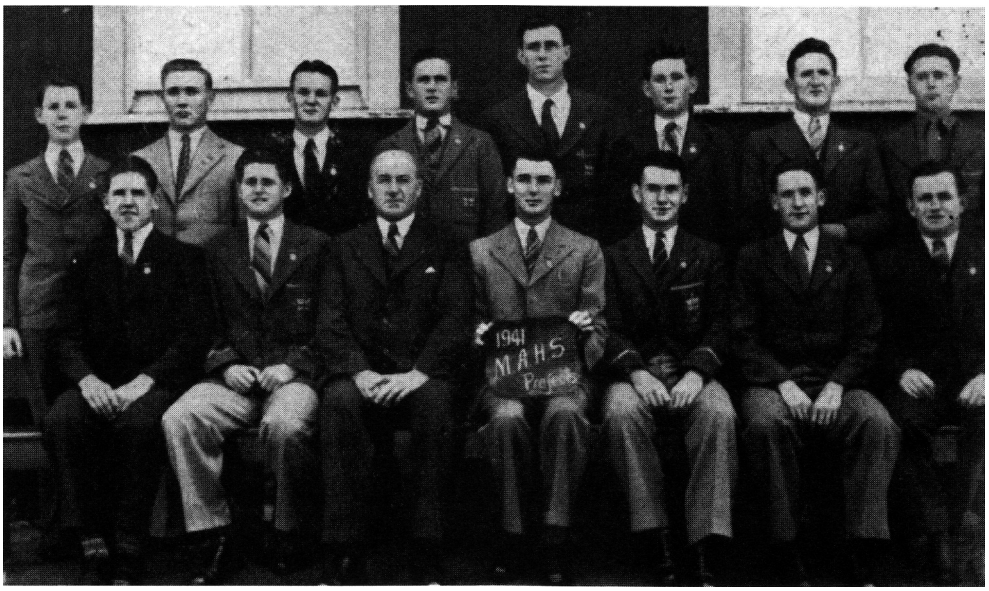
Percy Hindmarsh, Principal 1938 — 1945

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.

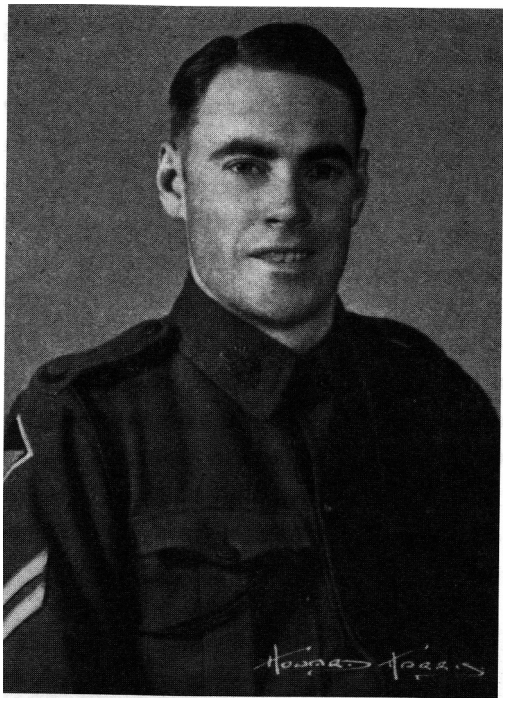


MAHS Prefects, 1941

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."

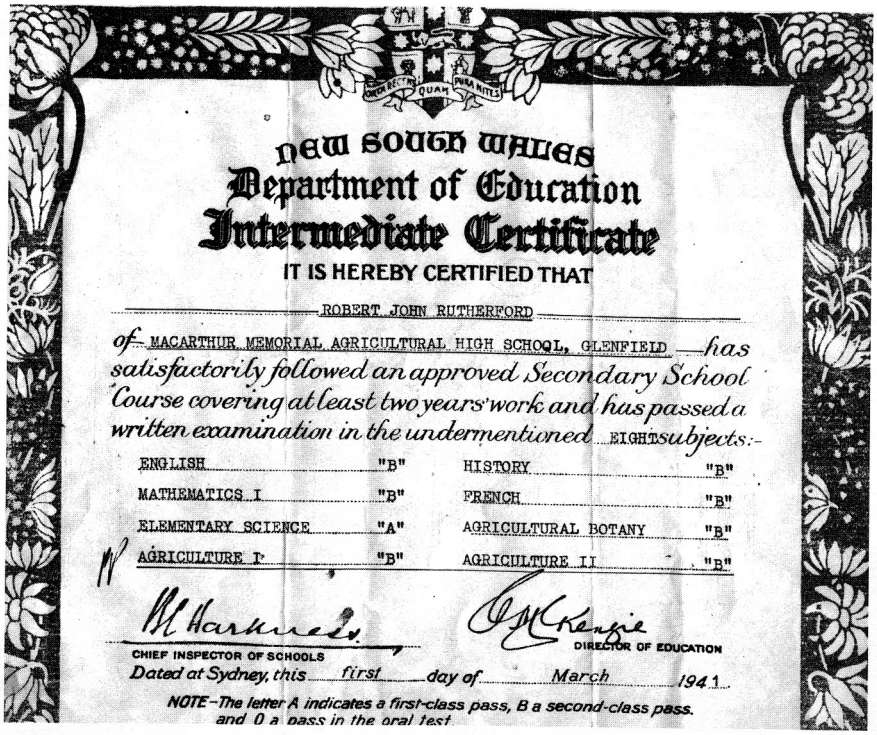
There were sadly many others mentioned in the pages of wartime Harvesters who made the supreme sacrifice for their country. These included J. Arthurson, T. McIntyre, C. Worboys, J. Love, Peter Turnbull (who won the Distinguished Flying Cross and was lost in air operations over New Guinea), Alex Will, 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.



NEW SOUTH WALES
Department of Education
Intermediate Certificate
IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED THAT

ROBERT JOHN RUTHERFORD

of MACARTHUR MEMORIAL AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL, GLENFIELD has satisfactorily followed an approved Secondary School Course covering at least two years' work and has passed a written examination in the undermentioned EIGHT subjects:-

ENGLISH	"B"	HISTORY	"B"
MATHEMATICS I	"B"	FRENCH	"B"
ELEMENTARY SCIENCE	"A"	AGRICULTURAL BOTANY	"B"
AGRICULTURE I	"B"	AGRICULTURE II	"B"

CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Dated at Sydney, this first day of March 1941.

NOTE—The letter A indicates a first-class pass, B a second-class pass, and O a pass in the oral test.

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 Olarenshaw 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.

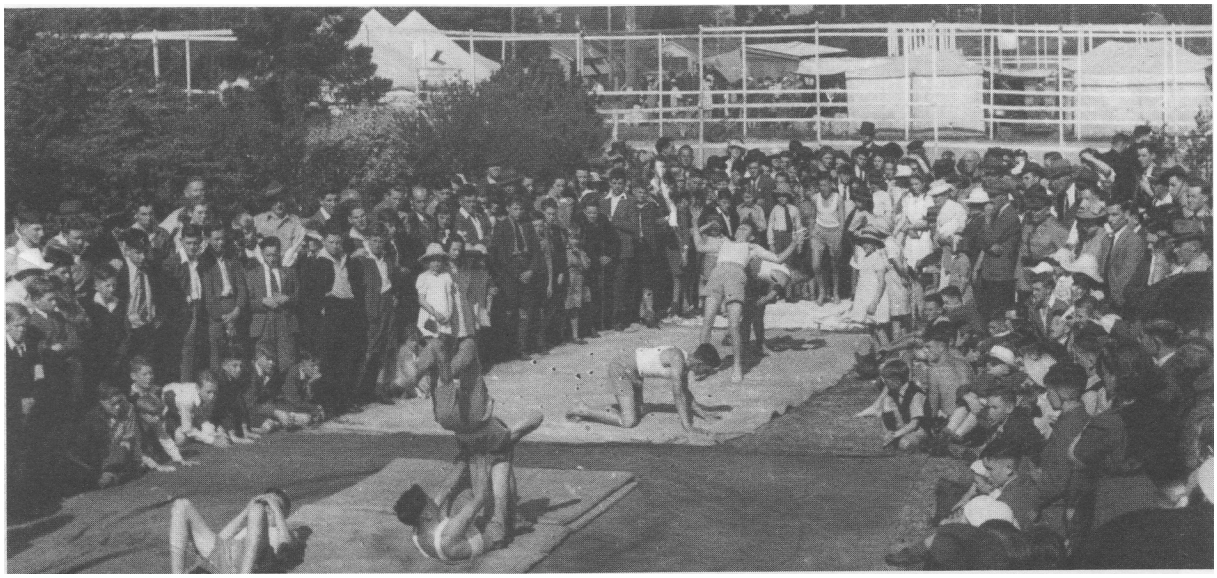


Sheep shearing at Hurlstone (Using the electric plant recently acquired), 1940

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 Olarenshaw 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.



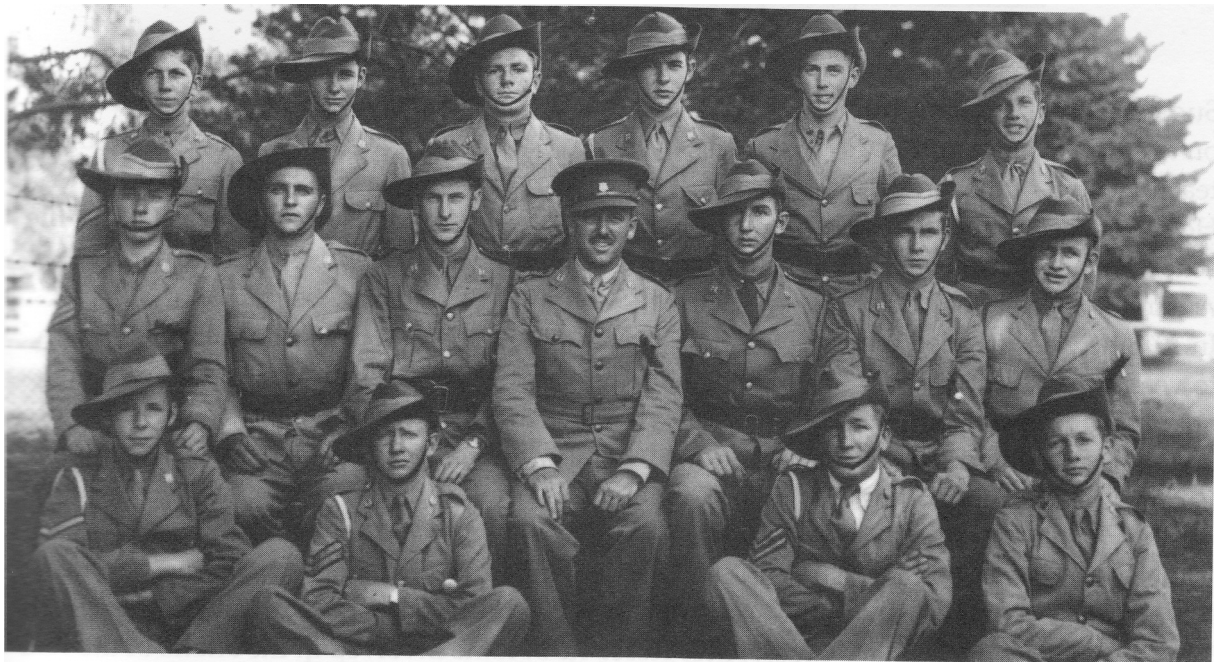
Fete Day, Gym Display, 1943

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 Olarenshaw 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.*

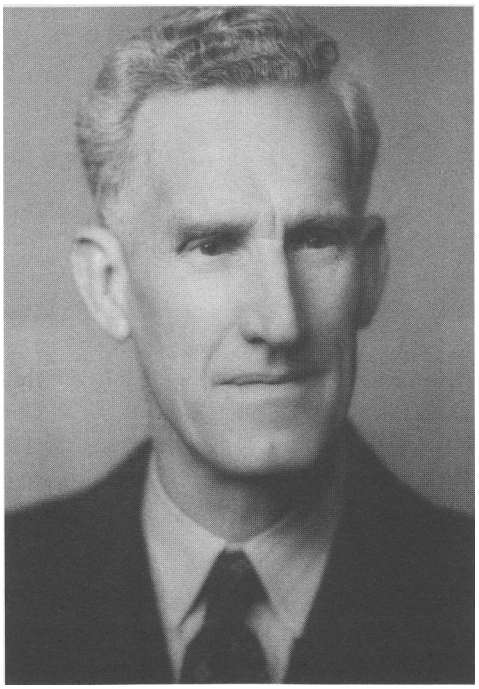
William Keys started at Hurlstone in 1935. On leaving in 1940 he enlisted and saw service in New Guinea. He continued in the army after WWII and served in the Korean War for which he was awarded the Military Cross. After Korea he became involved in the affairs of the RSL (Returned Services Association). 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 Olarenshaw 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.

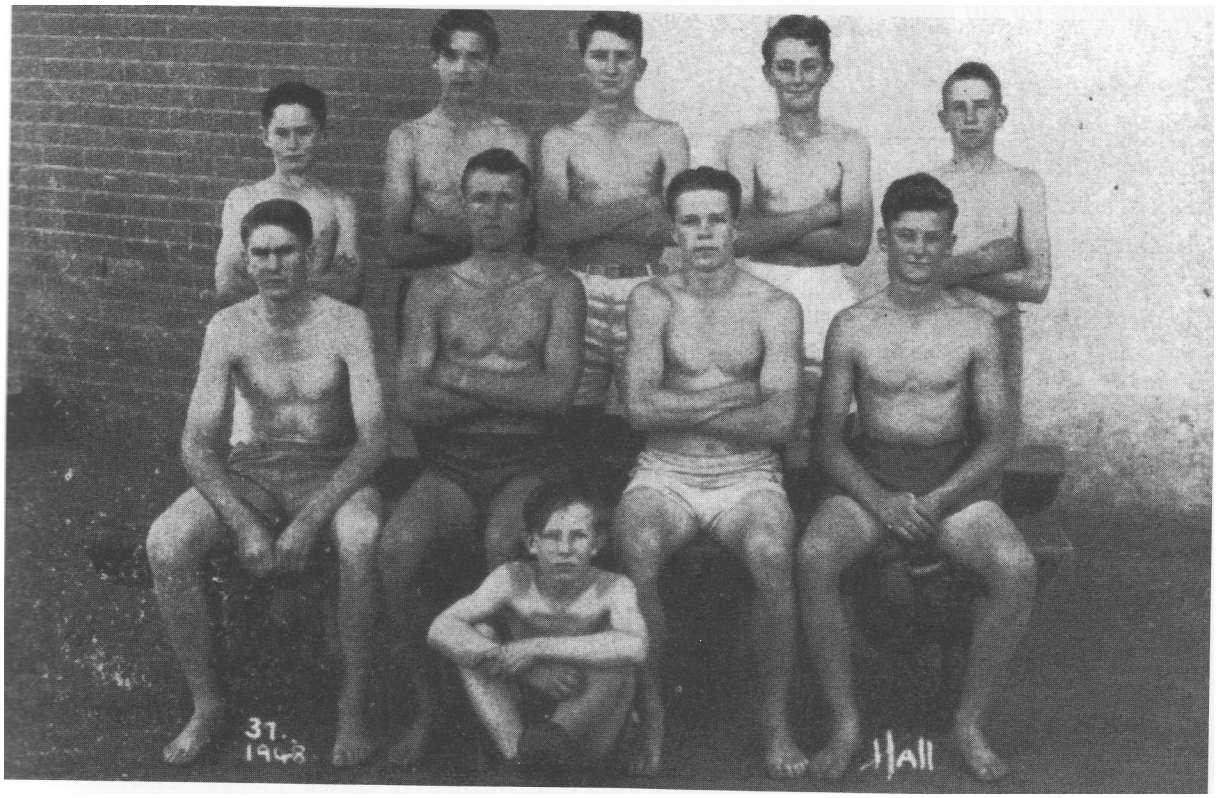
Geoff Kelly was a scholarship boy in the years 1944 to 1948. He was granted a working scholarship which meant that he only had three weeks holiday each year. In the other eight weeks he stayed at Hurlstone earning his board by looking after the farm. He remembers the school fondly,

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".



Prefects Cottage, 1948

I was very apprehensive and scared of the tall upstanding horns of the Ayrshires and managed with difficulty to get the first dozen or so into the bail and locked up – until the door opened and out came an Ayrshire named Felicity who took one look at me and charged at me – I went straight up the silo and stayed there! When the dairy Foreman came out there were about 40 head roaming the yard and I learnt a lot of new words from the Dairy Foreman for a 12 year old.

I always had trouble in the Blacksmith Shop. I could not light the forge easily and if I did succeed, very often blew it out with the bellows.

The school was almost self sufficient in that it had its own dairy, piggery, poultry, sheep, vegetable garden, orchard and flower garden, plus a large number of paddocks for pasture and/or growing cereals, wheat, oats and corn. There were stables with draught and saddle horses. Beef cattle were only dealt with in theory.

The saddle horses were used by the full time farm hands and the senior boys in 4th and 5th year. There were a couple of Clyesdales and if my memory serves me correctly a Percheron that were used in the crop farming.

In the piggery Hurlstone had a Berkshire stud and also introduced Large Whites, Tamworths and Wessex Saddlebacks for detailed teaching of other breeds. To try and catch the greasy piglet was always good fun on fete days or special occasions. The piglet was released on the school's fenced number one oval and was chased by many students. I never caught one.

As part of our agricultural studies, we had 3 years to the Intermediate and time enough to collect 50-100 different insects and classify them into their families, then pin them into their families, then pin them into a 'wogbox' or 'bugbox' very neatly, in line with typed information about them.

We also had to collect a number of plants and grasses, dry and press them and stick them into a sketch book with all the information as to their family, where found, soil, date and whether it was a good or bad season.



Boarder Squad Duty, 1950s

Peter Anthony Witschi, was at Hurlstone in the years 1951 to 1955. The school played a very important part in his life and set him on the road to a successful career in agricultural research.

I recall my first day at boarding school as if it was yesterday. It was quite a journey from Katoomba by steam train. We had to change at Parramatta and catch an electric train to Granville and then another to Liverpool via Fairfield before we could catch the "Campbelltown Terror" to Glenfield. The little steam engine would go forward on the up journey and travel in reverse on the return.

I was allocated a bed on the first year dormitory verandah which was great but when winter arrived it was another story... I tried to keep up with my piano lessons and practiced as often as I could on the old piano in the school hall but my new school friends did not want to hear classical music. I started to play the hit parade tunes by ear much to the disgust of my music teacher and she soon gave up on me because of my lack of progress. I was given some help from Brian Moffat our P.E. teacher and soon improvised many tunes which I played to the school on Saturday evenings when the movies were shown in the Hall. It was not long before I played the school song and Merv Harvey our Agriculture Master asked me to play the hymns at Thursday Scripture sessions.

In second year I could not believe my luck in being allocated a bed in the dungeon as it was called. The beds must have been allocated in alphabetical order. It was not long before we had to do squad. If we ever stepped out of line it was a dumping in the horse trough or once into the silage silo covered in molasses. This was far from funny as it was extremely difficult to wash off in cold water as we were not allowed anywhere near the hot showers until clean.

In the early hours of 6th February, 1952 we were awakened by the siren sounding well ahead of the normal waking time. The flag outside the Principal's residence was at half mast signifying the death of King George VI.

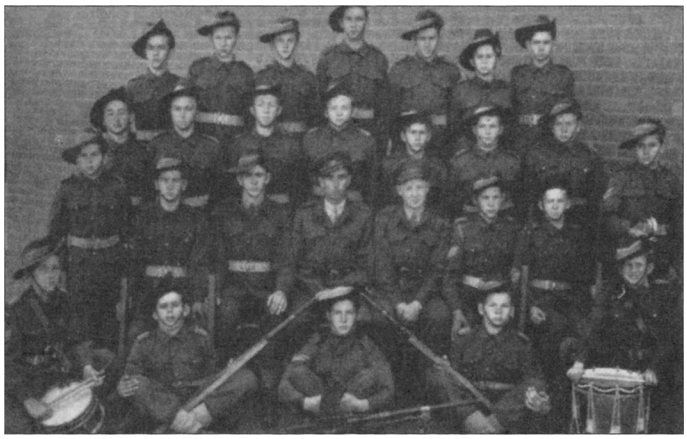


800 yards race, 1948

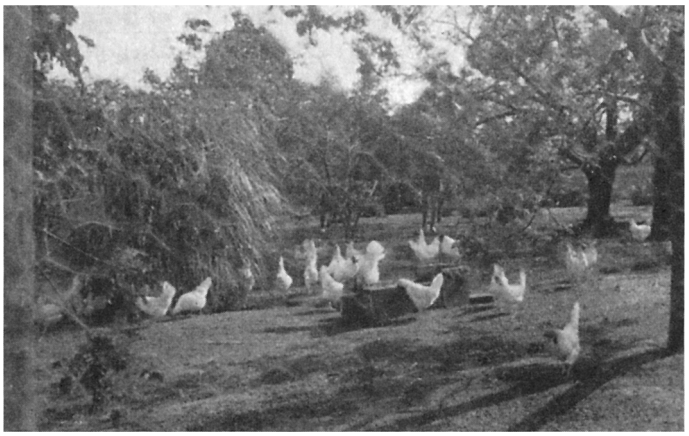
Successful Hurlstonians from this time included Donald McDonald who became a leader in NSW in agricultural research particularly in the growing of rice. He was awarded the Farrer Memorial Medal and the Douglas Mackellar Memorial Scholarship for his research. The Farrer Medal was presented to Dr McDonald by Roy Watts, NSW Director-General of Agriculture. Terry Bolin completed his schooling in 1951 and went on to study medicine at Sydney University. Terry became the President of the Gut Foundation, his speciality being Gastroenterology and in 1982 became an Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of NSW.

Tim Cartmill was Dux of Hurlstone in 1947 and studied medicine at Sydney University. After studying and researching at the Mayo Clinic in USA he became the head of the Cardiac Surgery Section of the Royal Alexandria Hospital for Children in Sydney. John Morris finished his schooling in 1951 and won the Edmondson Prize in the senior school. He became the Head of the Nuclear Medicine Unit at Royal Prince Albert Hospital, Camperdown.

John Hatton entered HAHS in 1945 and became a teacher of Agriculture at Nowra High School. He was elected to the State Parliament as an Independent on his third attempt in 1973 and campaigned fearlessly in the Parliament against corruption in public life. He retired in 1995. John Kerin was a student at Hurlstone in the early 1950s. He would later on become the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy in the Hawke and Keating governments in the 1980s and 1990s. He was briefly Federal Treasurer during 1991.



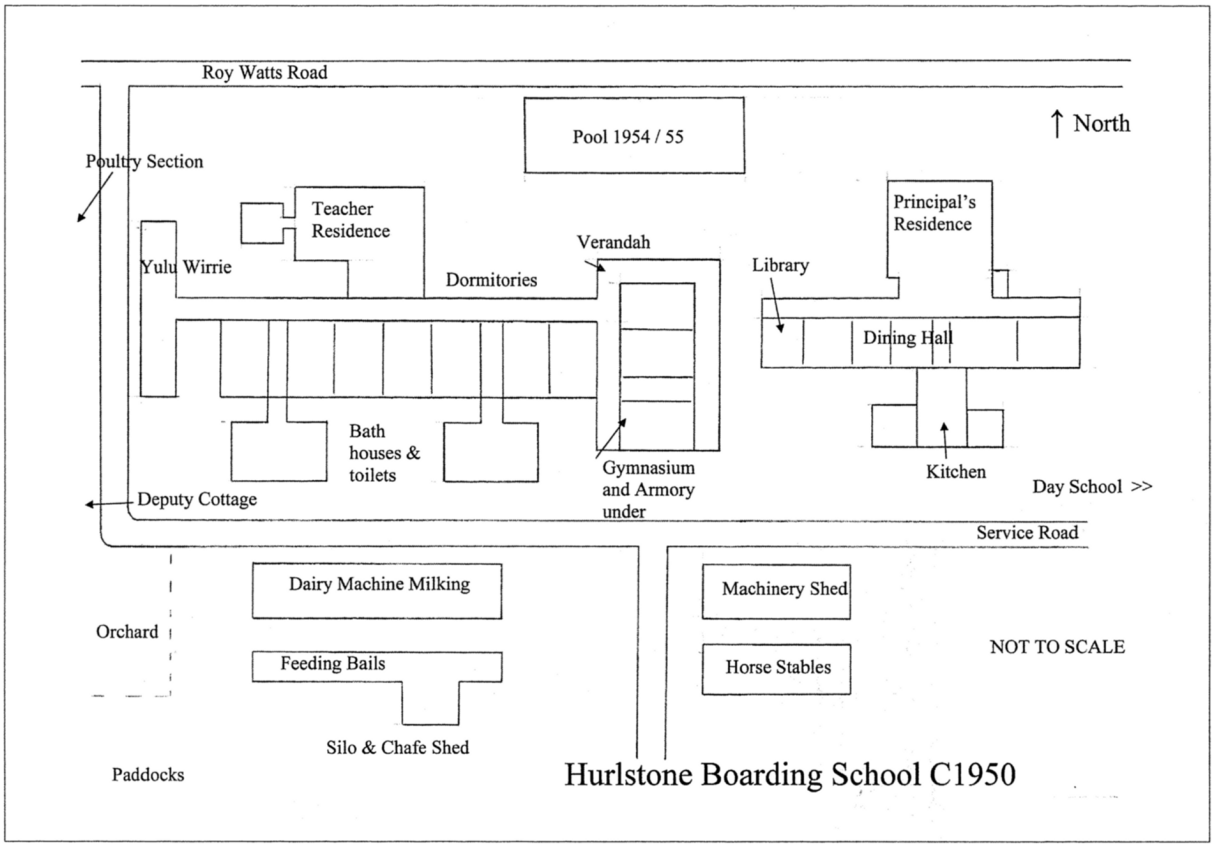
Senior Cadet Detachment, 1948

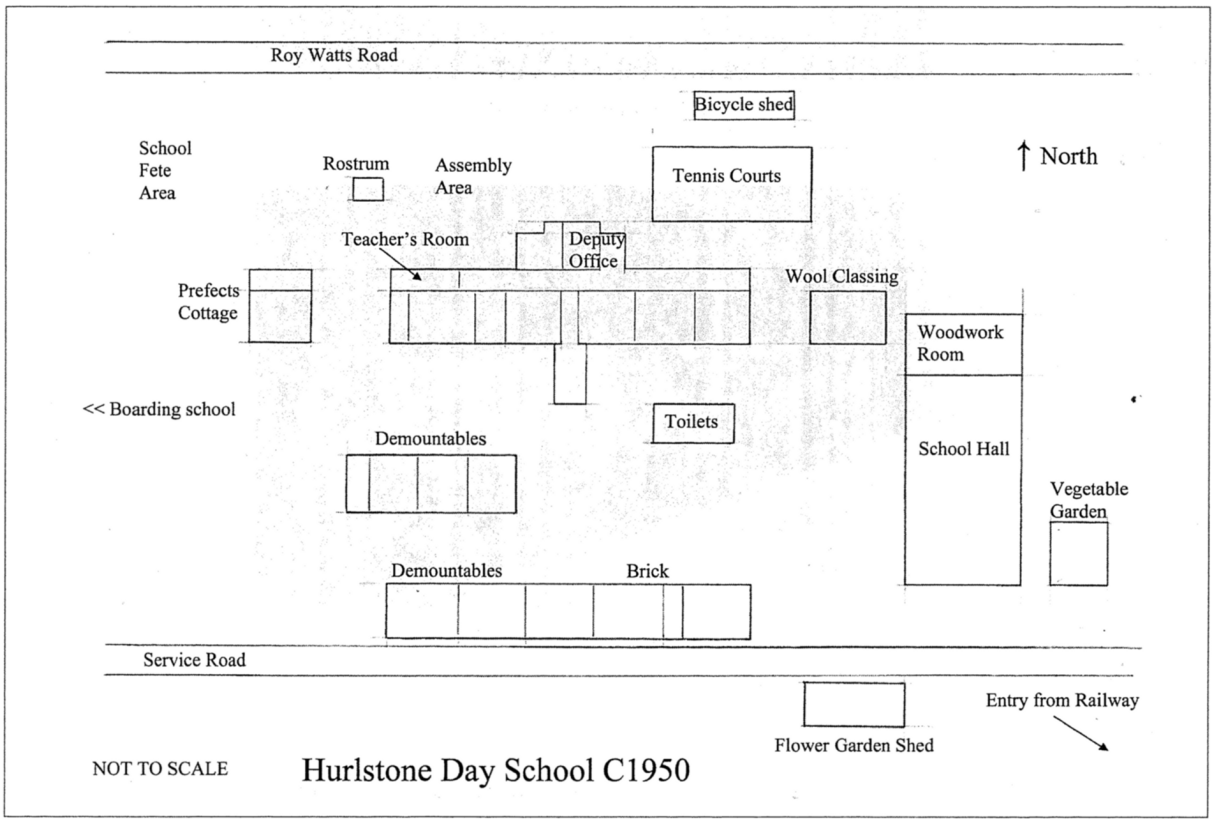


White Leghorns, 1948



Ayrshires at the feeding stalls, 1948


Roy Watts Road
↑ North
Pool 1954 / 55
Poultry Section
Teacher Residence
Principal's Residence
Yulu Wirrie
Dormitories
Verandah
Library
Dining Hall
Bath houses & toilets
Gymnasium and Armory under
Kitchen
Day School >>
Deputy Cottage
Service Road
Dairy Machine Milking
Machinery Shed
Orchard
Feeding Bails
Horse Stables
NOT TO SCALE
Silo & Chafe Shed
Paddocks
Hurlstone Boarding School C1950

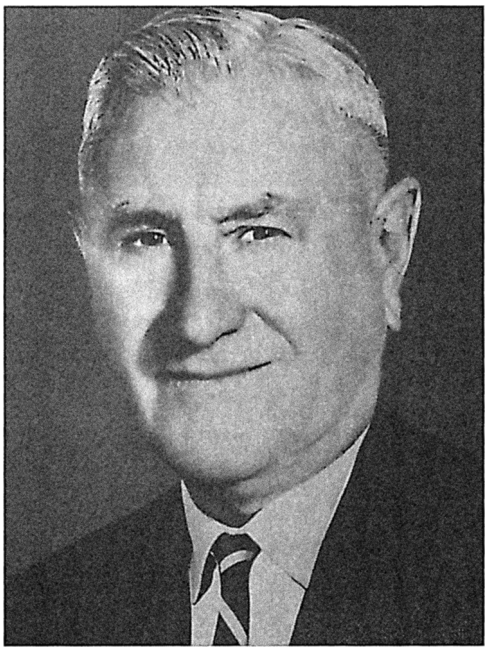

Roy Watts Road
Bicycle shed
School Fete Area
Rostrum
Assembly Area
Tennis Courts
↑ North
Teacher's Room
Deputy Office
Prefects Cottage
Wool Classing
Woodwork Room
<< Boarding school
Toilets
Demountables
School Hall
Vegetable Garden
Demountables
Brick
Service Road
Entry from Railway
Flower Garden Shed
NOT TO SCALE
Hurlstone Day School C1950

Chapter Five

Renovation

Clarence James

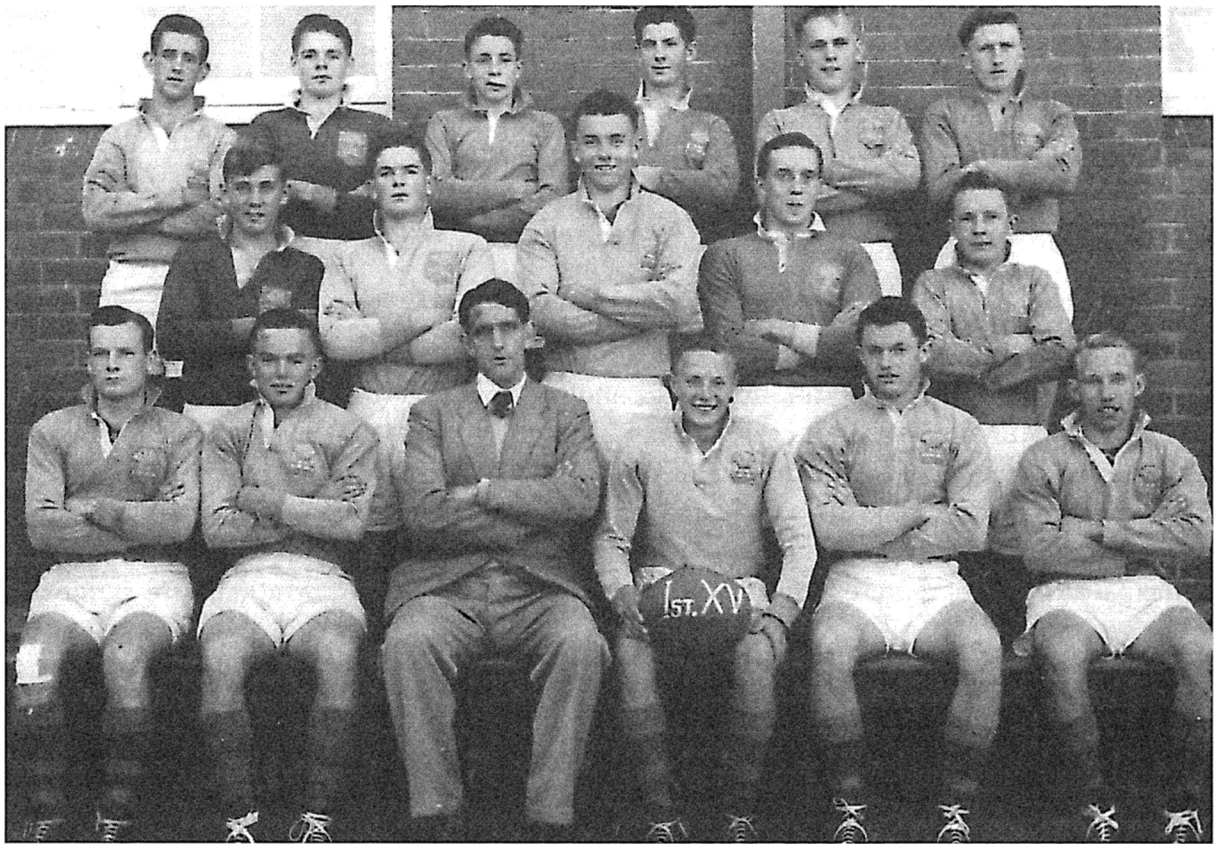
The period when Clarence or Clarrie James was Principal of Hurlstone between 1954 and 1967 was definitely one of significant change and progress. Clarrie had taught at Hurlstone in 1926 and 27 under Longmuir and had later lectured at Armidale Teachers College during 1932 to 1938. Thereafter he became the first Principal of Farrer Agricultural High, one of Hurlstone's two sister schools in 1939. He remained Principal there until his appointment at Hurlstone in 1954. He found a school physically run down, with complaints from the Principal and Parent representatives about the desperate need for renovation being ignored.



Clarence James, Principal 1954 – 1967

The introduction of the Wyndham Scheme in NSW education in 1963 led to the introduction of Year 12 and the HSC and Year 10 and the School Certificate. The number of agriculture periods dropped substantially from 8 to 5 after 1963; making agriculture much less the focus at Hurlstone than it had traditionally been.

After 1963 Hurlstone became increasingly selective. By the 1980s it was one of the four most selective schools in the State. The original idea of Hurlstone as an agricultural school with a curriculum integrated around the study of the core subject of agriculture had long since disappeared. An expansion of subject areas and departments led to agriculture becoming a part of a wider curriculum. It is interesting to note that there were a number of other agricultural high schools in NSW although not with a farm the size of Hurlstone's and not with a boarding school attached (apart from Yanco and Farrer).



First XV, 1956
Back row: C. Wood, R. Fredericks, M. Kelk, W, Clarke, M. Fisher, C. Eilbec.
Middle row: R. Murdoch, J. Sweetland, J. Paterson, R. Smith, L. Kennett.
Front row: I. Snodgrass, W. Trimmer, Mr. W Chapman (Coach), M Patton (Capt.), P. McCann (V-Capt), R. Draper.

The school underwent sizable growth during James' period as Principal. In 1957 there were five hundred and ten pupils at Hurlstone with one hundred and ninety boarders and twenty eight teachers. Ten years later in 1967 at James' retirement there were six hundred and eight pupils, with three hundred and twenty one day students and thirty two teachers.
The curriculum too expanded after 1963 with the addition of Social Sciences, Art and Music.

James made a point of encouraging the cultural side of activities. Play days, speech festivals and debating became an even larger aspect of school life. Ballroom dancing instruction became a feature of school life in the late 1950s. After the 1957 Jubilee Ball (celebrating fifty years of Hurlstone Agricultural High School), one hundred and thirty three Parents and Citizens members and friends at St. Paul's Church Hall at Burwood were entertained by an exhibition of ballroom dancing by the Australian professional champions, Mr & Mrs A. Cornwall. After this, lessons by the Cornwalls were held every Thursday afternoon at Hurlstone and were extremely popular. Dance nights with sister school Burwood Home Science High became a regular occurrence.



Play Day, 1960

The James' period however was most notable for an enormous building programme which turned Hurlstone into one of the best equipped public schools in the State. In 1957 Hurlstone opened the Longmuir Pool, the first swimming pool in a NSW public school. The 110 feet by 42ft, 200,000 gallon pool was opened by the Minister of Education and Deputy Premier R.J. Heffron on Jubilee Day, 2nd March 1957. On the same day the Hindmarsh Pavilion, a sporting amenity adjacent to the school oval providing toilets, showers and hand basins for sporting teams was opened as well as a surfaced roadway replacing Piggery Lane which went down to the Oval and past the pavilion. The road was built by boys and parents over twenty one consecutive Sundays.

In the same year considerable renovations were made to the farm. A new piggery was established, the poultry unit was replaced, a new irrigation system was introduced and there were renovations made to the dairy.

In 1959 on the site of the old piggery a new Manual Training Block was opened on Speech Day by the Director of Secondary Education, A.W. Stephens. It was named after the previous Principal, J. McEwen King.

In 1961 four new tennis courts and two basketball courts were built and in 1962 a new dormitory block was built as well as a new kitchen, dining room, refrigeration and boiler rooms.



Construction of dormitory block and kitchen, 1962

In 1964 stage three of the building programme was completed. Two 2-storeyed blocks were completed. One was an administration block with administration offices, classrooms and a new library on the top floor. The second was a Science Block with laboratories, staffroom, classrooms, preparation room, dark room with a tuckshop and shelter area beneath this. Ugly portables were removed and the old Science block was converted to music and art rooms. The new buildings were officially opened in 1967 by the Deputy Premier, Charles Cutler.

In 1967 there were an increased number of faculties at Hurlstone. They were; English/History, Mathematics, Agriculture/Science, Modern Languages, Commerce/Geography, Manual Arts/Crafts, Physical Education, Wool Science and Art/Music.

James' long period as Principal saw many teacher retirements and sadly a number of deaths. In 1954 D.G. Taylor died and long-term Registrar, Miss Crakanthorp retired. Mr Taylor had been associated with the school for forty years in the areas of farm management, as a housemaster in the boarding school and as sports coach and organiser. In 1960, Hurlstone's Farm Foreman A. Moir retired after 30 years service to Hurlstone. In 1961, John D'Arcy who had taught English/History at Hurlstone Agricultural High School from 1955 and had been Senior Resident Master of the Boarding School for the previous three years died tragically in a car accident in Southern Queensland on Christmas Day. In 1965 Jim Neylan died. One of the pillars of the early years he had been a teacher of Science for twenty eight years at Hurlstone. In 1967 Russell Copeman (1960-62) was killed in the Vietnam War on the 10th April.

On a happier note in 1966 a prominent Old Boy, Roy Watts, was appointed Director General of the Department of Agriculture. Earlier on, in 1955 Don Strachan (1942-46) had represented Australia on the Wallabies tour of New Zealand. In 1961 George Cooney won the University Medal with 1st Class Honours in Applied Maths.



Don Strachan, Wallaby Selection, 1955

The school was as successful as ever in sport, particularly in Rugby and also in swimming especially after the construction of the swimming pool. Hurlstone Agricultural High School Rugby sides invariably won their zone premiership.

In those days the school was part of Lennox zone, playing against Liverpool, Fairfield, Granville, Parramatta and Macquarie High Schools. In 1960 Hurlstone was Zone Premiers for Rugby in all six grades and in 1961 they won five of the six zone premierships.
In 1964 Hurlstone won the Waratah Shield, the State Schoolboy Rugby Premiership defeating Meadowbank, Punchbowl, Sydney Technical, Narrabeen and North Sydney Boys in the final. In 1966 they were beaten finalists in the same competition.

In 1964 reference is made in the school magazine to the Country Fair of 26th September (which had previously been called the School Fete). Over one thousand pounds profit was made for the school and entertainment on the day included various stalls, a pipe band, Hurstville marching girls, a coffee cellar, an International Exhibit, the Parramatta model aeroplane club and a model train exhibition.

"Clarrie" James retired at the end of 1967, leaving Hurlstone considerably larger and with a number of significant physical changes.

Memories

Geoff Goodfellow was a student in the 1960s. He remembers some of the teachers of the time,

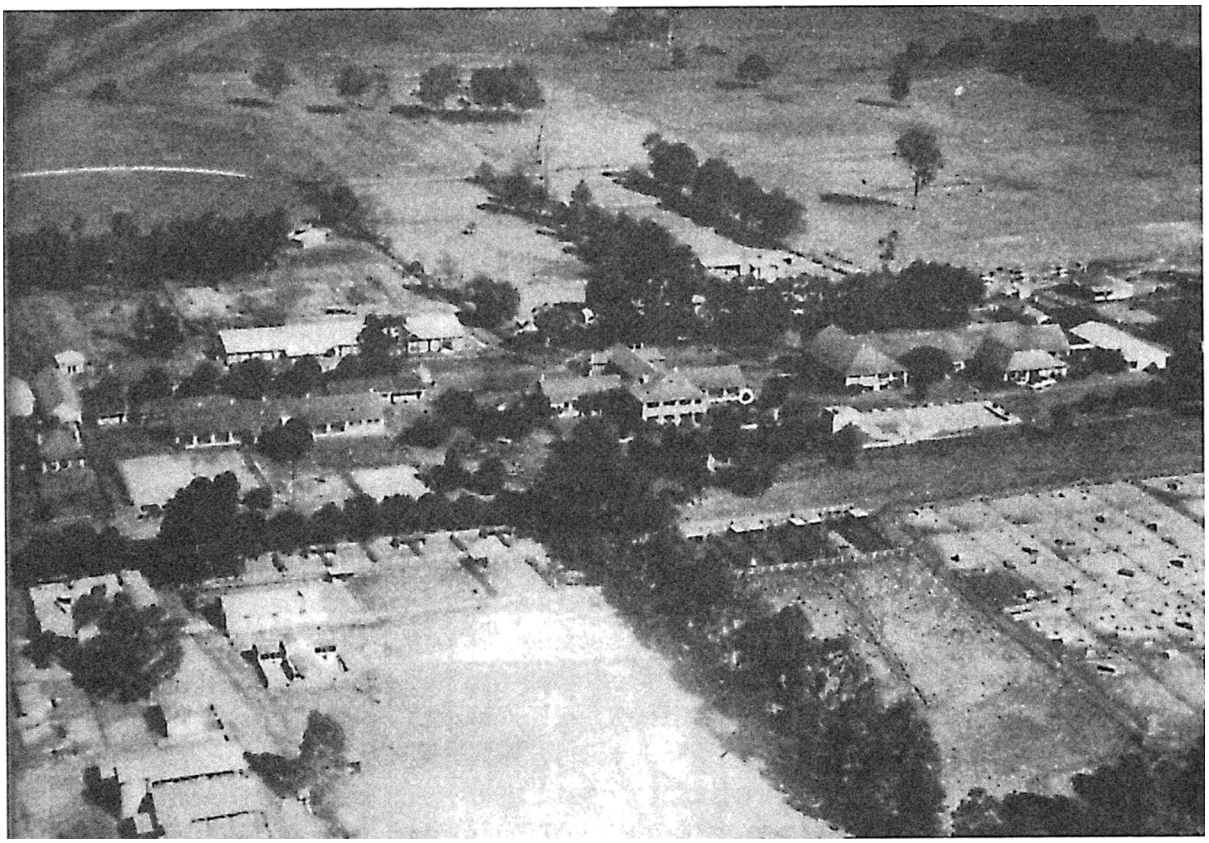
The Department of Education sent us some really interesting blokes [and they were all blokes] out Glenfield way to knock knowledge into us. A hell of a mixed bag, when you think about it. But having said that, they were a generally a committed lot and many were good teachers.

Science teacher and first grade rugby coach, "Tige" MacPherson, became a legend in a career spanning many years at Hurlstone, with his filthy old roll-your-own fags struck to his bottom lip as he irreverently barked commands at you. It is rumoured his dirty old nicotine stained lab coat had to be washed in a chemical cocktail with about 73% sulphuric acid to get it clean enough to wear.
It certainly looked like it had.

Dick [what do you think you are doing, son] Horne also created an indelible image, but under that miserable, hard almost sadistic veneer, methinks there may have been a decent human hidden in those stuffy suits.

Then there was "Boney "Davis, who once uttered the classic line, "Listen son, I happen to know your IQ and you're not too bright". The same bloke suggested Tony Souter "had the brains of a Dorset Horn Ram."

Physical Education Supremo, big Jim Patterson was rostered on to teach us history one year.
The champion 400 meter runner, by his own admission wasn't strong on history, but he got through all right. His strategy was to stick strictly to the topic and keep about one chapter ahead of us in the textbook. Whenever some clever dick asked him a history question that wasn't in the bits he'd read, Jim used to calmly consider things and say, "That's a good question, son. Make that your homework for tonight".



Aerial view of H.A.H.S, 1962

The following was penned by an anonymous teacher in 1966, describing boarding school duty in the 1960s,

"So boys are always moaning about the easy lives of our teachers", thought Mr X. as he consulted the duty roster, hoping that tonight was not the night. "Oh no! Yet another spell of duty in the dorms – and it's taken me the whole week to recover from last time.

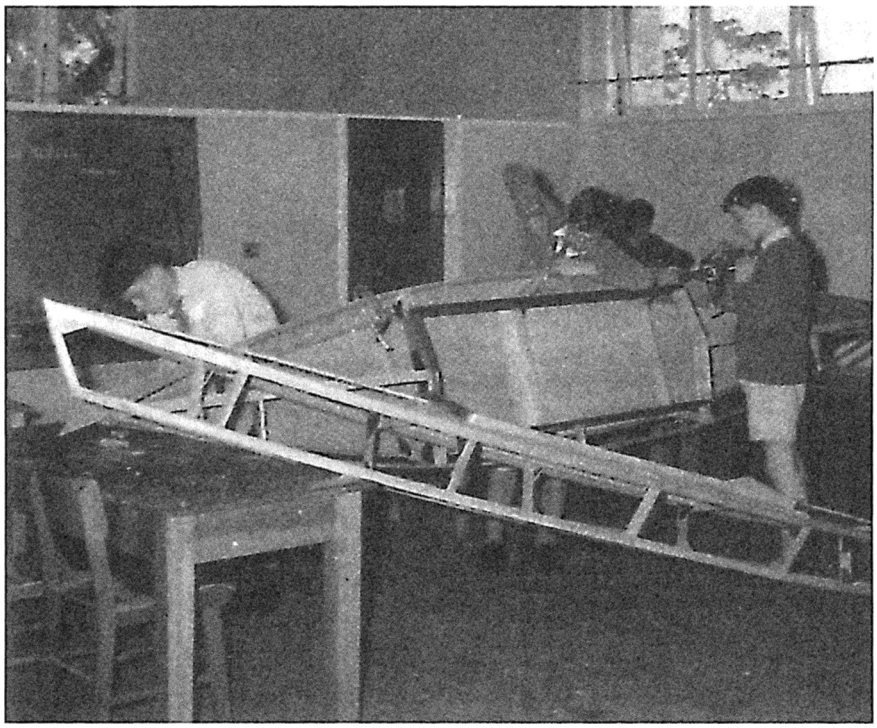
After prep, you lock up the buildings and walk up to the dorms, looking up at the stars and thinking what a lovely peaceful night it is. Or was, for the silence is suddenly split by a series of banshee wails, screams, crashes, shrieks as the patter of tiny feet thunders along the corridors up ahead. "Dear boys", you think! After a welcome cup of tea, you walk around until 9 pm, dodging flurries of pillows, clothes and other assorted missiles.

*9 pm. Lights out! You find that your dulcet tones of "Into bed now boys" are completely crushed by the roar of the latest top 40, blaring from a series of radios. Scream at top of voice. No effect! Take hold of nearest, nearly everybody is missing – where? "Oh, Sir, they're probably down cleaning their teeth". I swear ?*IX&*?!!!*
After many warnings about talking, silence reigns [you think]. Not quite. Scuffle, scuffle, thud, giggle, laugh. Sort of silence anyway.

9:30 pm. After another cup of tea to sooth shattered nerves; stroll meditatively along the verandah. A bit of noise up there you think. Must be A dorm having a rumble….I'd better…. But what's that noise up the other end? Turn. Pillow files out of door close by. Turn again. Suddenly the coup de grace. All the lights go on. You stagger back, blinded. "So sorry, Sir", an anonymous voice pipes up. It's all

a conspiracy you think. That's what it is. As sight gradually returns, you see a fleeing figure in the gloom. It's ..... I've been waiting to catch him for months. "Stop", you scream. "Where do you think you're going?". "Oh, Sir, just to the toilet, Sir". And then … "Why are you looking at me like that for sir?"

After a few more encounters, you head wearily for bed. But suddenly you remember no lessons prepared for tomorrow. And that huge stack of compositions to be marked! Groan! Collapse into bed about midnight [if lucky], thinking that what they want is not a teacher, but a combination of James Bond, a Lion Tamer, a Psychologist and an Army Major.



Hobbies Room, 1961

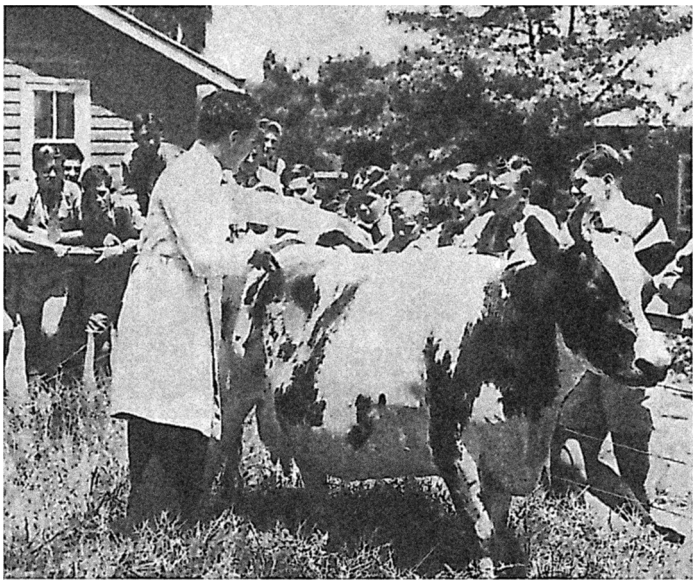
Geoff Goodfellow continues his reminiscences,

We were among the privileged lot who got to move into newly built dormitories with hot showers after about a year at Hurlstone. Mind you the old Dorms had character, but they didn't have hot showers and on a cold winter's morning when the boilers had run out of puff, that was pretty important. Yes, it was a quick lick under the cold water on those mornings.

There was an interesting bit of excitement in our last year at Hurlstone, when a fairly deranged bloke called Wally Mellish fell off the Disorient Express at Glenfield, holing up in a house not all that far from the school in Australia's first significant siege. They'd probably occurred before, but this particular siege got Australia-wide media coverage because of the bizarre antics of the then Commissioner of Police, Norm Allen, who gave good Wally a can of coke, a hamburger and an Armalite Rifle to play with during the siege negotiations.

Yep, Wally and his little lovely, Beryl Muddle. They even made a movie about it all. Stuart Cardwell, who recently reviewed the movie, clearly remembers the television news footage at the time, with six blue Hurlstone tracksuits quickly scampering off camera into the safety of the nearby bush.

We tend to laugh about the Mellish Seige these days, but for a while things looked grim. There was even talk of evacuating a couple of Dorms at Hurlstone that were deemed to be in the range of the Armalite rifle. A couple of us sneaked out of the school at the time to get a closer look at the action. Silly thing to do, I suppose, I recall wandering up through the media mass to have a look at the house where Wally was holding the New South Wales Police Force at bay. We took some photos, then quickly left, pretending all the time we weren't really scared witless. That wouldn't have been at all cool, would it?



Livestock instruction, 1960

Brian Booth was at Hurlstone as a teacher. He is better known as a famous NSW and Australian test cricketer, one of the finest batsmen of the 1960s. Here he recollects some interesting incidents,

I taught there for 4 years from 1955-1958 as a Physical Education teacher and Assistant Sportsmaster to Brian Moffat. As a teacher I lived at the school in the teachers' residence.

Hurlstone was very much a rugby school. Hockey was my winter sport so I set about introducing hockey in lesson time and during weekend recreational activities. Apart from the five sticks I owned we did not have enough sticks for two teams. The oval fence at the time was in a sad state with many palings missing. Hurlstone boys showed their initiative and removed a few more palings to make up for the deficiency in sticks.

Mr James, the Principal walked onto the ground and watched for a while. He could see the boys were enjoying the change in sports. During a break in play he complimented me on introducing hockey as an alternative activity. On closer inspection he could see that many of the boys were using fence palings rather than hockey sticks. Ruefully he said, "Mr Booth, when the boys have finished their game would you get them to nail the palings back on the oval fence. If you do that old chap I will see that you get two sets of hockey sticks". He was even better than his word. Not only did I get the two sets of hockey sticks but the oval fence was completely repaired and painted.

I commenced teaching at Hurlstone on the first week of term 1, February 1955. I could well have had one of the shortest teaching careers on record, as it could have finished on Monday morning of week 2.

Before the swimming pool was installed the Hurlstone boys had a favourite swimming spot on the Georges River. The first Sunday of school term I was on recreational duty. It was a very hot afternoon and senior boys, including prefects, thought it would be good to go to the river for a swim. I had not been there before but the seniors knew the way. The Principal gave approval.

We ran to the river, some three km from the school and on the river side of Glenfield township. It was in bushland and somewhat isolated. We were a mixture of classes from Year 7 to Year 11. Boys were told that no one was to go into the river until all had arrived, including me, and before the spot was checked. Some Year 7 boys were the first to arrive. As I arrived I was greeted by other boys telling me that a boy called John had dived in on arrival, had hit his head on a rock and was unconscious. On examining John I found he had taken a piece of flesh out of the middle of his forehead about the size of a 20c piece. There was little blood but he was concussed. That ended the swimming. Prefects were given the task of getting the boys back to school while others and myself started to carry John. Fortunately we met a family who were at the river and who had a car. They took us back to the school where the accident was reported and John examined by the matron. He spent some time in Liverpool hospital under observation and then went back to the school sick bay. Apart from concussion and the wound, John was not badly hurt and soon recovered.

On Monday about 10.00 am I received a message that the Principal wanted to see me in his office immediately. I thought the worst, that I was going to be sacked. However, when I entered his office rather tentatively, he said "Mr Booth, I want you to meet the parents of John. They want to thank you for what you did for their son yesterday". I breathed a sigh of relief.



Diving, 1960

Geoff Cochrane, a student in the years 1965 to 1967, recalls the frequent use of the cane,

Corporal punishment was the order of the day and my father was very pleased when I told him at the end of my first year that I had received 126 cuts of the cane, topping my year. He was pleased to see that they were as strong on discipline as he was. Some teachers were ruthless and seemed to delight in inflicting pain on their victims. Others weren't very good at it.

I remember one night at "prep" (the 2 hours between 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm when we had to do homework with a prefect out the front to keep control) when the prefect sent the whole room (about 30 of us) out to be caned. The teacher lined us up outside the staffroom and we were called into the hallway one at a time to receive two cuts each. After about ten boys the teacher took off his coat, a few more and he loosened his tie. He looked outside to see how many more were left, a few more and near exhaustion; he looked out again but the line didn't seem to be getting any shorter, he sent the rest back to the classroom. I don't know if he realised we were getting back on the end of the line after we were caned, but we had a great moral victory that night.

Boredom was a problem for us boarders but when our Ag teacher gave us an assignment to collect and press a collection of 10 grasses and 10 legumes, it gave me an interest that I really enjoyed. By the time I left school I had over 200 plants in my collection. (I still have it today). Collecting plants and birds' eggs and trapping rabbits took us far and wide, probably as far as a 5 or 10 mile radius of the school, but mainly "over the vet station" (the veterinary station over the road), along the railway or the army ground (over the other side of where the expressway is now).

For boys in their growth spurt the food was poor, both in quality and quantity. We would supplement our diet with fresh chicken and fruit and vegetables by going on a "chook run" or a "raid on the top school". Next door had a very good garden, orchard and grape vines. For a chook run we would get up around 3 am on the weekend and pinch a preferably young rooster or two from the poultry shed, take it down to the creek where it would be cooked and enjoyed with bread and butter and various items we got from the kitchen. The chicken was usually wrapped in foil and cooked in a large jam tin over an open fire but later we had a spit that we had made in metalwork.



Welding class, 1955

Phil Haerse, at Hurlstone between 1963 to 1967, harks back to an era of cultural change,

We caught a bus to Liverpool railway station and then a steam train called "The Terror" to Glenfield. The steam era was drawing to a close but we were lucky enough to experience it. I knew lunchtime was close when the whistle of the Moss Vale milk train blew at 11.00am departing Glenfield and it was a sight to behold as it thundered past from the south.

My period of attendance at Hurlstone was 1963-1967 and there was a musical revolution taking place with the Beatles gaining momentum. I recall their influencing a lot of things we did and wore. Beatle boots (pointy toes) were favourites. Surf music was big with 'Little Pattie' and 'The Delltones' coming to mind. Dances of the day were 'The Twist' and 'The Stomp'.

One decision we had to make was whether we were going to be a Rocker, a Surfie or a Mod. I'm not sure if the boarders had this ritual, but with dayboys it was very important. I can't remember how Rockers identified themselves, Mods had to ride a Vespa scooter at some point in their life and all we had to do was splash lemon juice and peroxide in our hair. That's probably why I decided to be a surfer – it was easy.

There was a septic tank, or sewerage outlet near the metalwork-woodwork building, and in the school breaks this is where everyone wanted to be. I'm not sure what the attraction was, but Joe Gardiner, the Deputy gave us a lecture on the downside of eating our lunch in such a hostile environment.

John Cashel, who lived and worked at Hurlstone from 1960 to 1964 and was the Head of the English Department from 1982 to 1992 brings to mind what it was like to live and work at HAHS at this time,

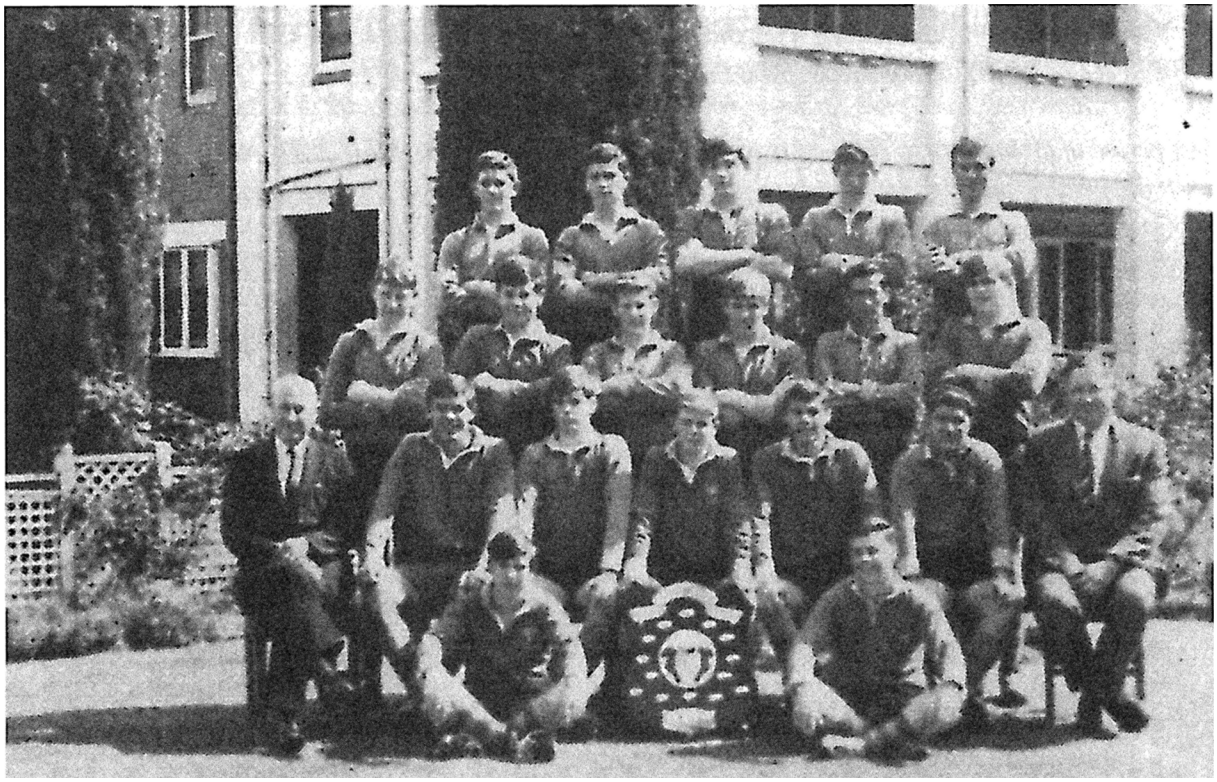
In those days you were not paid for being a resident. In fact, you had to declare when you filled in your income tax the value of board and lodging. All the duty teachers lived in what we referred to as the Res and they had just one bedroom and there were about ten teachers living there. They were all reasonably young, male teachers. There were no female teachers in those days. The principal lived in Clarke House and the dining area before they built the dining room block was at the rear of Clarke House. The deputy lived in what is now Mrs Hackett's (Head Teacher Welfare – Girls) house. The assembly hall was a very old building which was where the southern end of the science block is today. They used to do a bit of wool classing there and on weekends show films for Saturday night entertainment. The canteen was close to where it is now.

Col Davis, the Maths Head Teacher (known as "Bones" or "Boney") remembers a sporting victory in 1964 and another interesting story,

In 1964 Hurlstone won the Waratah Shield. It was the biggest day I can remember at Hurlstone. We beat North Sydney Boys High 11-6 in the final. The team was coached by "Tige" Macpherson. The game was played in the morning and the whole school travelled to the game at Homebush. The school returned back about lunchtime but nothing was taught after lunch.

Peter Dalton was a Maths teacher who arrived at Hurlstone in 1957. He was an excellent teacher and was also a great sporting coach. Peter had a problem with his right shoulder, it popped out easily. Later in life he had to have it pinned. One night when Peter was in prep a boy was sent out by me and the prefects to get the stick. Peter usually gave them four for this wrong doing. Peter gave him two

cuts and his shoulder popped out. He dropped the cane and lay on the floor. He gave his right arm to the student who gave it the correct twist and he managed to get it back into place. Peter got up off the floor, thanked the boy and then gave him the other two cuts.



First grade football team with Waratah Shield, 1964
Back row: I. Chard, S. Folkard, T. Wetherall, G. Rumph, R. McGoogan.
Middle row: M. Macpherson, J. Becke, I. MacDougall, I. Frost, B. Thorne, R. Ingram.
Front row: Mr. James, G. Brown, R. Tempeton, G. Grey, D. McGrath, C. Pickering, Mr Macpherson (Coach).
Sitting: P. Mead, B. Pratten.

Prominent Hurlstonians from this time included Brian Farrow who attended the school in the years 1954 to 1957. He went on to study Veterinary science at Sydney University. In 1990 he was appointed Professor and Chairman of Clinical Sciences at Cornell University, one of the world's finest universities. Allan Morris attended HAHS 1953 to 1957 and became a well known politician in later life, winning the Federal seat of Newcastle in 1983 for Labor and holding it till he retired in 2001. His older brother was John Morris, mentioned in the previous chapter. Another successful politician was Bob Martin who was at Hurlstone from 1958 to 1965. He became the Labor member for the State seat of Port Stephens from 1988 to 1999 and was the Minister for Mineral Resources and Fisheries.

Chapter Six

The End of an Era

Reginald Clarke

The new Principal, Reginald Clarke taught at Hurlstone in 1950-51 as a teacher of Agriculture. He had graduated B.Science Agriculture from Sydney University in 1939 and began his career as an Assistant teacher for nine years at Muswellbrook High School. He later became Subject Master at MacLean Intermediate High School on the North Coast and then Deputy Principal of Yanco Agricultural High. He was Principal of Broken Hill High School, the largest school in NSW for four years before moving to Hurlstone as Principal in 1968. He retired from teaching at the end of 1978. Reg was interviewed in July 2006 and made the following comments about his time at HAHS:-



Reg Clarke,, Principal 1968 – 1978

One of the first things I got for the school was a school bus. It used to be of great use with the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme. It was also used to take sports teams various places.

Also, building wise, the only building I got when I was there was the library, but it was more than just a place for keeping books. It was the only decent building that I had to hold meetings of various kinds. The old hall was a shambles. It should have been burnt down years ago.

After the bus, I suppose one of the things that the kids liked was a billiard table. But there again you can't always win. I remember a couple of the "old boys" coming back and saying, god what do they think this is, "Casino Royale" or something. The day boys who came on early trains were allowed to play before school when the boarders were having their breakfast and then of course the boarders had it after school to play.

Another thing that we were lucky about, it was the time when schools were going in a lot for teaching driver education and McGraths Motors from Liverpool gave us a car and staff volunteered to take kids driving. In fact some non-sporting types on sports afternoon did their driving lessons then.

Also, on sports afternoons for the kids who obviously had no sporting aptitude, we had a model train setup behind one of the buildings where they used to run their trains there and I felt that was relaxation.

One successful experiment that we tried was when we hired June Dally Watkins to come out and give the boarders particularly, some lessons on what I call decorum. I left the syllabus to her and she showed them how they should dress to go for an interview for a job. It was mainly for seniors and I thought at first the kids would rubbish it a bit. She brought a barber out from Liverpool to get their hair cut in a way that would impress an employer and also she had one of the local nurses come out and show them how civilised people wore clothes. She gave them lessons in table manners, and this was particularly useful for boarders who didn't have a mother to teach them. She showed them how you handle knives and forks, which way you eat from the outside in or the inside out. Also she gave them things like what to do when going to a dance with a girl; how and where you walk with her and all those sort of things that I would call social graces. It really took on. It was financed by a group of parents I think from Orange.

One of the things I introduced was to have P&C meetings away from Glenfield. We had meetings at Orange, Dubbo and later at Narromine. We only went there once a year. I went as Principal and I took the Senior Resident Master with me, a marvellous chap named Dick Horne.

I was the last Principal of an all male school and I always remember a bit of a joke when the tradesmen came out they started to put bars up on the windows. I said, "Hey mate you haven't got a very high opinion of our boys, they're not animals."
He said, "This is not to keep the boys out, this is to keep the girls in."

We were lucky that our local member for a while was Gough Whitlam. Gough happened to be the Prime Minister and he came to our speech day. I always asked the local members to come to be at the Speech Day to be held on a Saturday and Gough was a great attraction. Except that one time he came it happened to be the time he'd decided to cut out the bounty for super phosphate. This of course cost a lot of farming families a lot of money and so it wasn't very popular with a lot of the boarders. I don't think they wanted to hear from Whitlam, but he and Margaret came to our place for lunch.

In my time selectivity was much fairer than it is now. We were as good as James Ruse used to be in those times for the simple reason that we both had the same selectivity program but the dividing line between whether you went to James Ruse or Hurlstone was the Western Railway line. Kids who lived south of the western railway line went to Hurlstone, north went to James Ruse.



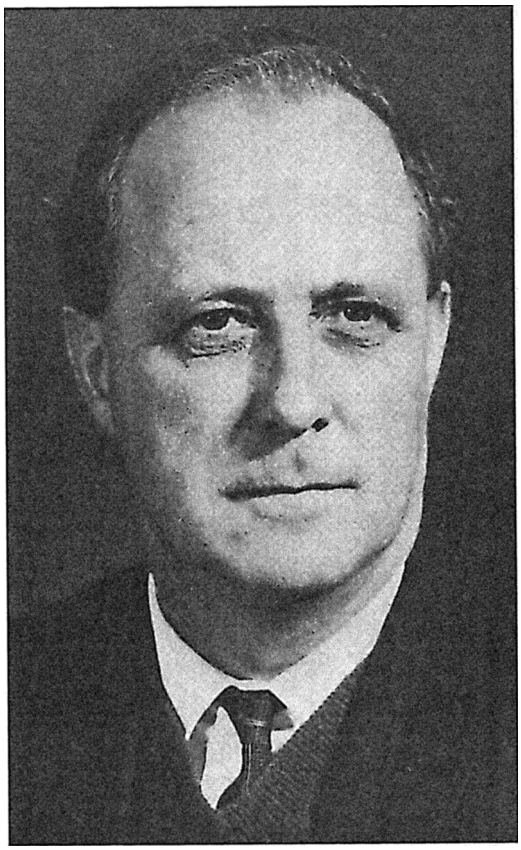
Gardens outside Principal's Residence, 1969

I'll always remember the first address I gave to the school, I took assembly the day I arrived and I said that this was the hottest day I'd experienced in my teaching career. I told the students they could take their ties off. This wasn't quite as successful as I thought, because there was a cranky old bugger on the staff who said "we've just spent a bloody long time getting them to put those ties on". I told him, "If I can't get them to put them on I'll go home."

The most contentious staff meeting I had was the year we wanted to change the school football jersey. When I went there we were still playing in the same jersey they always had. I thought it was time for a change. After all practically every football team in Sydney in both league and union has changed the colour of their jerseys. I didn't want to change colours, I just wanted to recognise the 1st fifteen as being different so I gave them an all-white with blue and gold and red which are the dominant colours of the badge. The only reason I liked white is that it makes you look bigger. But we had the most contentious staff meeting about that. All the old boys wanted to keep it as it was.

Another thing that I'm glad I did was name Roy Watts Road. When I went to Hurlstone there was no name for the road from the Railway Station to the top school. People would say what's your address and I'd say Glenfield; what street and I'd say we haven't got a street. So I thought I'll satisfy them, I'll see if I can get a name. Well, Roy Watts was a distinguished old boy. He was Director General of Agriculture and he had been Head of the Veterinary Research Station at one stage of his career.

A prominent Hurlstonian from this period was Mark Latham. He completed his schooling at HAHS in 1978 and in the 1980s became the Mayor of Liverpool. In the 1990s he entered Federal Parliament taking over Gough Whitlam's old seat of Werriwa from John Kerin, another old Hurlstonian. In 2003 he was elected Leader of the Federal Labour party. As Opposition Leader he contested the 2004 Federal election. The Labour Party was defeated and in early 2005 Latham resigned and retired from public life.



Roy Watts, Director General of Agriculture, 1967

Other Memories

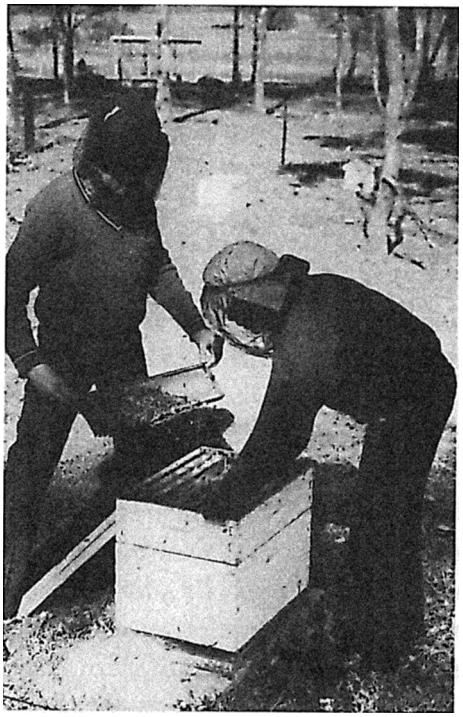
Geoff Holmes was a Mathematics teacher at HAHS from 1972. He retired in 2006 but is still doing casual teaching at Hurlstone. Here he remembers some amusing characters and incidents from this period,

One of the characters in the 1970s was Barry Ross, he was interested in football and was Rex Mossop's man (Rex used to call the football games on television and had a popular TV sports talk show). He used to write a lot of articles for sporting magazines. He'd be on the phone all the time. He actually had a compulsion, if he walked into a room and there was a telephone he had to make a call. His mother wouldn't have a phone in the house. He got to know my parents because of a Japanese trip he took. One day Mum got a call from Barry, he was at a sporting fixture in New York, there was a phone in the commentary booth so he decided to ring my mother. Most of his stories used to come from foreign sporting magazines and he would dictate them over the phone to the local editors (in other words he'd steal them!) There was a story that one day he had to get this article in to the city and he gave one of the students the keys to his car and during school hours the student just drove in and delivered the article.

There was a house for the boilerman. All the heating to the school came from a massive boiler about 15 ft in diameter which was situated in what is now the laundry. It was a big oil fired boiler which required a licensed boilerman and that was just his job, to look after the boiler. There are all steam pipes under the quadrangle and all the heating in all the rooms was by steam. There was also a house for the gardener near the forest.

Col Davis (the Mathematics Master) was always very dry too, he used to come out with some very funny lines, like 'son, if you had twice as many brains you'd be a halfwit'. One particular day he was giving a tirade to a kid. I think I'd sent him out of class and I was standing there and Col was talking to the boy and produced out of his pocket a screw and he said to him "Have you got a screw missing?".

When I first came here there was a bit of a war going on between resident staff and the matron. Someone had put instant coffee in her bed so she was quite upset about that. The guys up there decided they'd make home brew and they went into it in a big way. Every bathroom up there had plastic garbage bins with home brew in various stages. Eventually matron thought she would get back at these guys so she rang the police. The police came out and they said it wasn't on, not that it was illegal to make home brew but the amount they had it couldn't possibly be for private consumption it must have been commercial. They ended up loading it all into paddy wagons and all the guys were watching all this home brew loaded into wagons after school. This happened in my first year here in 1972. Sick bay at the time was part of Clarke House and matron lived in there. The English cottage was the Prefects cottage and the English staffroom was 21B.



Bee keeping, 1977

Kevin English was at Hurlstone from 1974-1976 as an assistant , teaching mainly English and then from 1982 to 2004 as Head Teacher History. He also has some interesting stories,

There were some real characters teaching there at Hurlstone. One was the P.E. teacher Jim Downes, known as "Jimbo ". He was the only PE teacher on staff. Two classes were combined for a double period and another teacher with a light load was assigned to help. The kids would assemble at the oval or pool at the beginning of the lesson. The first kid who arrived did one pushup, the second kid two and so on and last kid did sixty. As you can imagine there was great competition to get to the area first. So much so that boys would actually start to change into their PE uniform towards the end of your lesson, if PE was next, and would bolt as soon as the bell rang. It was a real sight to see the stampede by the boys. The poor kid who was last was "pizzled" by Jimbo and the students for the next week.

Another Jimbo story. Summer PE was free swimming in the pool. Once you'd done your pushups you could swim and have diving competitions which were judged by Jimbo from his waterbed. This had a rope attached to the end and was pulled around the pool with Jimbo lying on it sipping a fruit juice by any unfortunate boy who forgot his costumes. If they all had their gear the last boy to class, after his sixty pushups, would do the honours.

Another Jimbo story. At the end of the year was the staff pool party and bbq. This developed into a real "pissup" once all the families had left. At this time there was only one female teacher on staff and there were heaps of young blokes who loved a beer. Jimbo ran the golf competition from the pool lawn (the change rooms weren't there then). You had to hit a golf ball over Clarke House (the principal's residence in those days) to collect the prize of free beers. Mr Clarke was never amused when his house was hit.

In those days kids expected to be disciplined and the only teachers who were respected were those with rigid control. My first year there I had a year 8 class for English. I gave them some Poetry homework at the end of the first lesson and they had a week to complete it. The next Poetry lesson I asked the first boy on the roll to read his answer. He said sorry but he had not done it. I went around the class and all thirty boys gave the same answer. The boys had made a pact to test me out. I was teaching in room 21 and the small teaching room between it and the Hall of Honour was our staff room. I lined the boys up from the staff room, past room 21, down the steps into the playground. I gave each boy four cuts of the cane and each said "sorry sir it won't happen again." And it didn't. This turned into a superb class! The message must have got around because all students in all my classes always did their homework. I continued to use this method successfully throughout my career.

We had a teacher on our staff called Doug Reynolds who was always leaving his class and going back to the staff room. One day, Terry Chapman and I decided to teach him a lesson. Doug was teaching between myself and Terry at the end of the Maths verandah. He had a pleb class (Year7) and when he left Terry and I rushed into his class and said, "pack up your gear, be quiet, stand, follow us."

They obeyed. Behind the back of the canteen where the art rooms are now was an old theatre (the old assembly hall built by students in the 1930s). We stashed them in there and told them not to make a sound. We went back to our classes, who were perfectly quiet the whole time, and resumed teaching. Doug arrived back at his classroom to find it completely empty. He knocked on my door and asked did I know what happened to his class. I said, "you've lost your class!" He stormed out of my room into Chappo's room and got the same response. He them went and reported this to the deputy who politely told him to find them as he was responsible for losing them. Meanwhile, Chappo rushed down and retrieved the class, put them back in the room, told them to continue with their work, and to tell anyone who asked them that they'd been in class the whole lesson. The deputy wandered by and asked the class what was going on and the captain said, "What do you mean ,sir?"

Apparently the deputy had a wry smile on his face and left. Doug returned and his class was working quietly. He did his "lolly "with them but they were more frightened of Chappo and me than him and never admitted anything. Doug never left his class again and the deputy about six months later quietly congratulated us.



Brass Band, 1977

Richard Purves, the present Head Teacher Welfare remembers when he first came to Hurlstone,

I arrived on a Monday. I was a little bit awed by Reg Clark from what I'd heard about him, he was on the Board of Studies and one of the most senior principals in the state. I walked into his office and he looked at me and said "Where's your tie?" I said "I don't wear ties, I don't have any" and he said "At my school you wear a tie". So that afternoon I was at Grace Bros at Roselands buying my first ever tie, apart from my own school tie. That was my first memory of the school, apart from seeing over 40 kids being caned at the cottage while I waited to be introduced to staff. People were sending kids out left, right and centre and belting them for not doing their poetry homework and other strange things.

Cadets were marching around everywhere, it looked like a military camp. There were so many cadets marching around that it actually gave me a bit of a sense of foreboding that this was a pretty rough, pretty tough sort of a school.

The week before I took up the appointment at Hurlstone Mr Bedford, the Minister, had announced Hurlstone was going co-ed the following year. I arrived to find the school in an uproar with the boys and male staff. There was only one female teacher in the whole school, Jenny Llewellyn, in the cottage and an English teacher. The staff and the boys were up in arms about the girls coming the following year which I thought was very strange. I thought most males would like having girls around but rugby was the worry. Rugby teams will be destroyed! We will only have 2 teams instead of six or something like that.

Staff smoked all over the place and when I complained I had smoke blown in my face. It was very rough if you spoke out of turn at a staff meeting or expressed an opinion. There was a small group of aggressive people who would abuse you and hail you down. I wasn't very happy here in my first year.

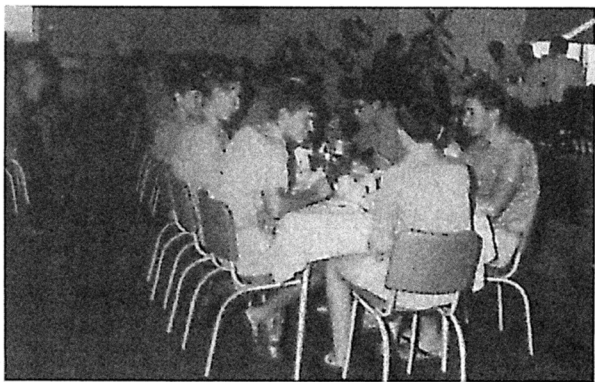
Reg Laing was the Senior Resident Master in charge of the boarding school in the 1970s and 1980s. Here he remembers his predecessor,

Dick Horne (Mathematics Master and also Senior Resident Master before Reg Laing) was an excellent teacher and a man of strict routine. Each day he would leave his desk clean and clear of all books and paper. Always prompt he would stroll from his flat each morning and stand by a grate in the ground. He would take a few drags on his cigarette, throw the remains into the grate and stand near the assembled youths. His usual acknowledgement of a friendly greeting was a wry smile with an equally wry comment.

Dick also expected staff to be on time. Regularly he and a few mates would visit the Teachers Club in the city. To his annoyance the self-adjusting brakes on his Valiant car were a little too keen and locked on. This was the night for the visit to the club so things were a little tense. The PE teacher, a practical sort of chap, was soon under the car. He emerged some time later with the problem solved. Tony had gained quite a lot of dirt, grime and grease in the activity so he said to Dick that he would be with him as soon as he had showered. The departure time was 6.00 pm and exactly at that time Dick looked at his watch, walked down the steps from Res, entered the car and drove off. Soon after Tony arrived only to find the Valiant gone. His response was colourful and forceful and repeated over the telephone when he contacted Dick at the club some time later but the friendship continued.



Bed inspection, 1968



Breakfast, 1968

Female students were to begin at Hurlstone in 1979 and it was very controversial. Eula Guthrie, a school inspector and later regional Director, worked hard behind the scenes to achieve co-education at Hurlstone. Here she explains some of the background to the decision,

My mother's family were farmers and country people and I'd grown up having one foot on a farm and some relatives away at 'Ag schools', so it wasn't a closed book to me. One of the contradictions that had occurred to me was that in the country only boys could go to agricultural high schools.

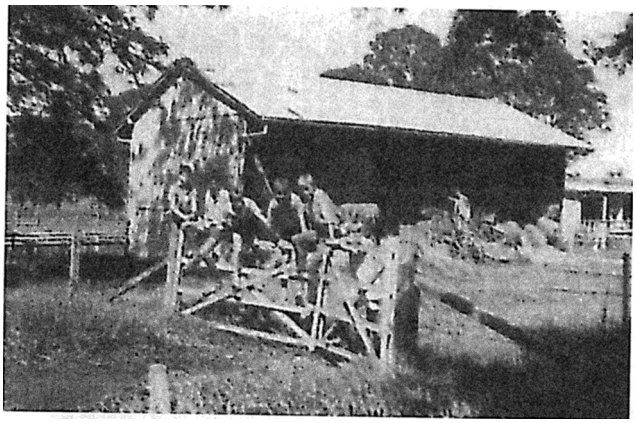
The advantages of having some time away from isolated homes, living with a wider group than the family, learning group sports and social skills, having relief from long hours of travel to reach a school and often not seeing home in daylight in winter had long been urged for boys – why not for girls?

We were ready to take the plunge by 1976, having persuaded two principals, Mr James Hoskins and Mr Reg Clarke, and their staff to join the venture. Those two were Hurlstone and James Ruse (a day school). Hurlstone would take boarders and day-pupils.

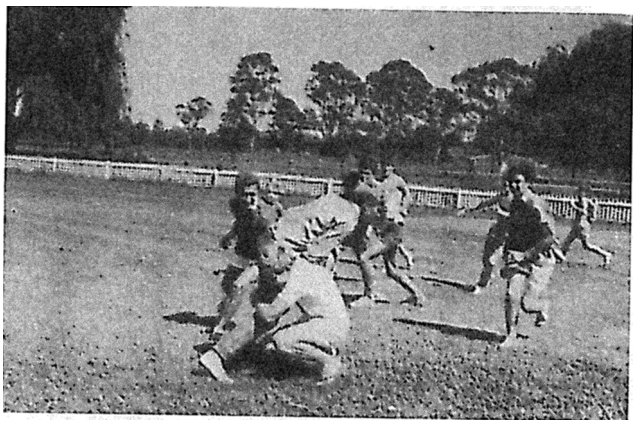
There was resentment as well as co-operation even in the two pilot schools. Some of the objections Hurlstone raised were that introducing the girls would dilute the academic standards. There was fear that the school's sporting achievements would suffer at carnivals and in competitions so that the school would never win again. Also, that girls would keep boys out by taking their places.

We decided to introduce some seniors and juniors simultaneously for mutual support and to bridge all years more quickly than starting in Year Seven. Staff training sessions were held (for many staff had been to 'all-boys' schools and taught only in boys' schools).

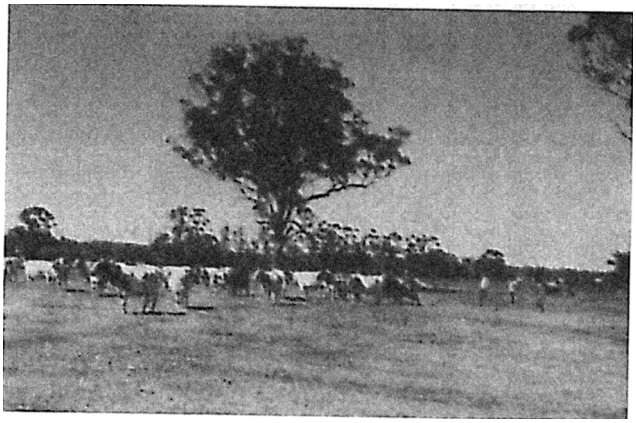
The following years would be very different and very challenging.



Back-breaking Farm Labour, 1968



A game of Rugby after lunch on Saturday, 1968



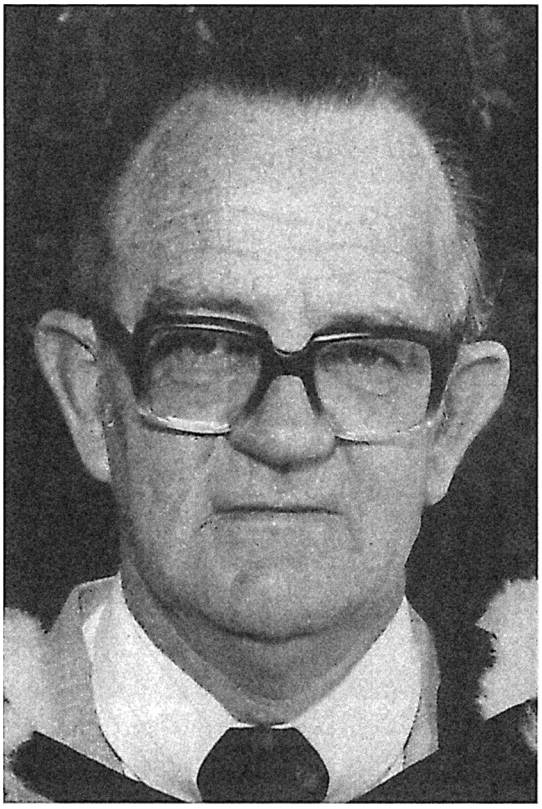
Rounding up the cows for milking, 1968

Chapter Seven

The Arrival of Girls

White and Wilson

The seventh Principal of Hurlstone was James White. He started teaching in 1951 on the upper north coast and by the 1960s he was English/History Master at Campbelltown High School. From there he had two stints as deputy, first at James Meehan H.S. and then at Liverpool Boys High School. He became Principal of Hurlstone in 1979 and in 1983 moved to become Principal of a new high school at Nowra, Shoalhaven High School. He retired in 1987.



James White, Principal 1979 – 1982

In 1979 Mr White moved into the new Principal's house (now the house of the Head Teacher Welfare Boys) with his wife Barbara and son Robert. There was an enclosed garden between the principal's house and the deputy's house where a couple of pet kangaroos were kept.

The Principal and Deputy would take turns being in charge of the Boarding school after hours and on weekends. Mrs White remembers occasions when the cows got out at the weekends and Mr White being called to get them back in. This was quite a challenge for an old English/History teacher who had no experience of farm animals. Mr White was the first Hurlstone Principal not to have an agricultural background.

The old assembly hall had been built in 1932/33 of rusticated cypress pine by the students under the supervision of Mr Les Pinn. It was completed in December 1933 and opened by the Director of Education on the 11th of December. It was located near where the current canteen stands. It was demolished in April 1979 because it had become unsafe. The new school hall, Edmondson Hall, name after the Hurlstone VC winner in World War Two, was built in 1981 and was opened in December by the State member for Ingleburn, Stan Knowles. Musicals were performed there, an early one being "Sweet Charity".

The most significant change to Hurlstone in the century occurred in 1979 with the arrival of female students. Elaine McVicker was the first Girls Resident Mistress or Head Teacher Welfare for girls between 1979 and 1984 and has related some of her memories of this turbulent period,

There was no government school in the state that catered for girls from the country and there were a lot of families that had very strong links in the family to Hurlstone going back many years. All of their sons had been able to go but their daughters hadn't been able to.

There were girls that got homesick so to keep them occupied we organised a couple of hockey teams for Saturday morning competitions. There was one teacher who was particularly interested in sports so she organised basketball teams and that competition was on weeknights. Saturday evening was a movie. There was a group of students who would tape a specific movie or one of the teachers would tape a movie or get one from a hire shop and that would be the weekly movie. We showed it in a room in the school, a big long room above the common room which was the ex library.

They would go and train for hockey, basketball and netball. There was the mushroom club, bee raising and market gardening. There was the school cadets. Janine Best who came in my 2nd or 3rd year, undertook to introduce the girls to the cadets and to be the female to go along to that. They would go away on camps and walks, go caving and abseiling and learnt to handle rifles. There was debating and a radio club for ham operators, video editing of the movies for the group that did all that to show the students on the weekend.



Girl's Hockey Team, 1986

In the second year we had another three female staff members appointed which meant it would be better because we had Year 7 going into Year 8 and a new Year 7 coming in, Year 11 going into Year 12 so we got another three extra staff each year. It was a pretty onerous task because you went from 7:00 to 11:00 at night. We only had seven women so on average you did that once a week. That was seven days a week.

The girls were in houses as they are today. Initially they were all in B Block so the dorms were different houses. Then as it expanded and Wentworth moved out, they went up to the old servants' quarters above the rear of Clark House. Then numbers grew more and more and they put portables up beyond the main buildings.

With the compulsory change there was a bit of ill feeling with the men thinking what's going to happen. Boy students were worried that the rugby team was going to suffer in standard and all their sporting prowess was going to be depleted by having the girls coming in and having fewer boys to try out for all the various teams. I don't think that happened at all.

They started to have a few dances where they had boys and girls there, whereas before they had to invite other girls schools to go along to school dances whenever they had one. They held them in the old gym that had all the supporting pillars in the way which was dreadful for a gym.

Robyn Simpson was one of the first girls to arrive and remembers the time well,

Well, I don't recall that any of the girls had 2 heads or 3 arms and we certainly weren't green but, due to the fact we were drastically out numbered it felt like I had arrived from some outer space station as I began to bond with my fellow species. On first impressions the natives were friendly even though we had invaded their planet. So life began at Hurlstone as we all tried to mix and mingle and understand the odd behaviours of the opposite sex. As you can imagine, there was much trial and error, embarrassment, hot flushes, tears and "lovely dovey" moments but primarily a lot of laughs. From early days it became apparent that most of the boys had limited experience in communicating with women. About half the girls fared no better as they had previously attended all girls' schools.

The boys had been given prior instructions to "treat us like ladies". One of the initial PR stunts involved the senior boys offering to carry our bags to the station each afternoon. Wow, being treated like royalty. I loved it. As time ticked on there was a rule that came across loud and clear, from all teaching staff male and female, and I call it RULE No: 1 **NO PHYSICAL CONTACT**. *I used to refer to certain teachers as the "hand police, here they come"!*

I was told it was compulsory for all girls to study agriculture which in my view was a cross between economics and geography with a few animals thrown in. Any subject that involved wearing overalls, gumboots and the thought of my carefully painted fingernails going anywhere near a cow's bum left me feeling nauseated. I failed agriculture dismally so it was then I realised I was not likely to find myself a handsome wealthy farm boy.

School excursions were always a blast with a chance to spend 24 hours with your school mates. The year 11/12 Snowy Excursion involved a lot of physical pain, broken hearts, female whingeing and bitching. For most of us it was our first time on skis. The injury list from this excursion was massive; damaged knees requiring surgery, swollen ankles, frostbite, hypothermia, boys having "emotional meltdowns". As the bus arrived back at school a group of tired, hungry exhausted

teenagers limped away and spent the next week licking our wounds and nursing our injuries. The teachers were less than impressed with our behaviour. There were many rules broken, smuggled alcohol, boys in girl's rooms, girls in boy's rooms so RULE No: 1 had really been tested. I recall the threat of no further excursions as we were too hard to handle.

School dances were another opportunity for us to test our newly acquired social skills. Dances were held in the Gym and if you needed to leave the gym to use the toilets (which were outside) a teacher would escort you to check that you were not smoking, drinking, drugging and most importantly not breaking RULE No: 1.

Towards the end of Year 11, all girls were asked to bring one female friend to the final dance. All of a sudden I had many long lost friends from Cabra High. An invite to a Hurlstone School Dance was the equivalent of a Lotto win back then! This is when the experiment started to sour. By this stage Hurlstone Boys were not only attractive, academic, sporty and well groomed we had managed to teach them how to be competent and confident in relating to the opposite sex. What had we done?

The boys got to have a great laugh at watching us do what females do best; fight their own gender. The ratio had greatly changed. No longer 5 boys a piece, now it was a case of hang on to the one you have if you were lucky enough to have one.



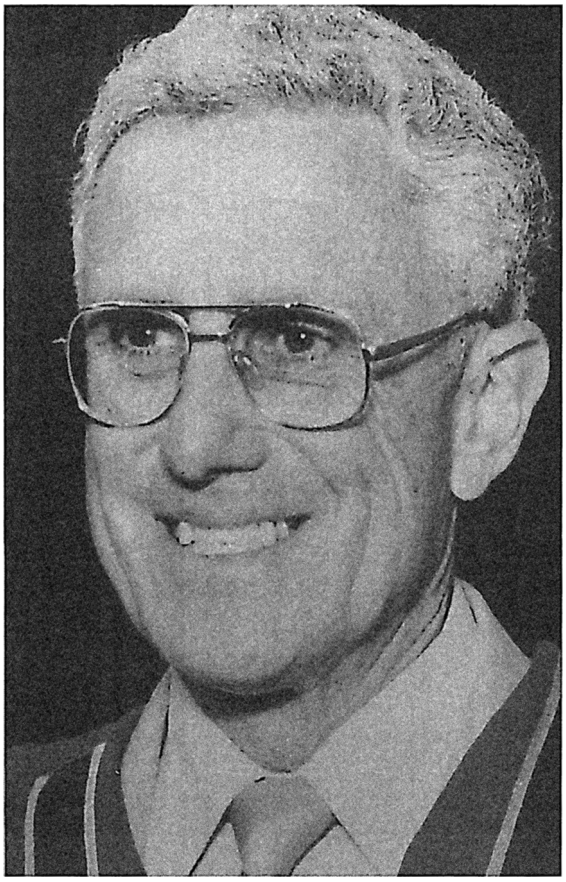
Royal Easter Show, 1987

Sandra Hackett was also a student at Hurlstone in the 1980s and is now Head Teacher Welfare at HAHS with strong memories of her time as a student,

I think one of my lasting memories and probably one of my mother's as well was in Year 8 when we were given the wonderful task of, as a class, looking after a load of eggs, nursing them and watching them hatch, feeding the little chickens and looking after them all the way through until they were big enough to kill. We didn't get told that bit at the start. Our agriculture teacher at the time was Stewart Peterson, who was nicknamed "Pepsi".

When it came to the day when the chickens had to be killed, the boys, especially the boarder boys, took great delight in watching the reaction of the girls to this special event in our agricultural careers. I think when it came down to it I braved it although I didn't kill the chickens. The first one that was killed was killed by "Pepsi" himself with a spade because he couldn't find the axe on that particular day. The spade didn't quite cut through the chicken's neck so running around like a headless chicken became running around with a head- hanging- off chicken. Much to the delight of the boys, many girls screamed and ran away.

The eighth Principal of Hurlstone was Graham Keith Wilson who held the position from 1983 to 1987. He commenced teaching in 1952 at Ashfield Junior Technical HS and later worked at Drummoyne Intermediate HS and Tamworth HS. He was promoted to Camden HS as Manual Arts Master (1964 to March 1973) and then to Hurlstone Ag HS as Deputy Principal (March 1973-1977). He became Principal at Cootamundra HS (1978-1982) before transferring to Principal at Hurlstone. He has many memories of his time here,



Graham Keith Wilson, Principal 1983 – 1987

An impressive activity mainly involving boarders, was door-knocking for charities such as Red Cross, Austcare, Red Shield, Blind Society etc in Glenfield or wider afield when required. Dressed in full uniform and showing great courtesy they always generated an excellent impression. As well as the many clubs, activities and excursions to healthily occupy the students, an essential item of infrastructure for a boarding school was the school swimming pool. Not only was it used for recreation, training, swimming carnivals, diving, life-saving etc by the school but also as a resource for primary schools and for 'learn to swim' instruction for children from the locality. The pool had serious leakage which resulted in excessive water consumption and various attempts were made to seal it.

Hurlstone was not connected to the Sydney Water and Sewerage Board infrastructure, instead we had our own treatment plant for all the sewerage and grey water from showers, wash basins, washing machines and kitchen and from the school. The effluent from the treatment plant was run into a 'forest' near Bow Bowing Creek for absorption. Neither was there a garbage service. Pits were dug not far from the creek and decayable waste was buried. Other material such as old fencing wire, broken equipment was just dumped near the pits.

Norfolk Island Central School only provided education to the School Certificate. Students wishing to proceed further needed to come to the mainland. A small number of students from Norfolk and also Lord Howe Island enrolled at Hurlstone from time to time. A former administrator of Norfolk Island and distinguished ex-naval office proposed a scholarship scheme for up to six Norfolk students. He visited a number of boarding schools in Qld and NSW and decided Hurlstone was best suited. Later I was invited to visit Norfolk.

The Norfolk students had a major adjustment to make in coming to Hurlstone. On the island after school, they would mount their light motor bikes and disperse to their favourite locations. They were not expected home until evening meal time. At Hurlstone their days were largely regulated by the hooter, showers, meals, prep etc. However most adjusted well.

When I was appointed as principal, I found that the school song had fallen into disuse and was barely known by most. I determined to resurrect it. However, there was cynicism by some staff who regarded school songs as a thing of the past or old hat. My opportunity came when a specialist in spinal injury was invited to the school to speak to the staff and instruct them in proper training to avoid injury and proper care if it happened. All staff needed this instruction but what to do with the students? I offered to take them to the assembly hall and with the aid of one music teacher for accompaniment and a couple more to man the doors, I taught them the song. Although some seniors took it lightly, the response was generally very good and the school song was sung at every formal assembly after that. It was encouraging to hear it being sung with gusto in buses as teams returned from sporting victories.

The sportsmaster, Mr Jones received a tip-off from the region that a secret decision had been made to rezone Hurlstone from Edmondson to Hume zone. Hume zone consisted of co-ed schools but had an entirely different sporting philosophy to Edmondson. Instead of a progression of age divisions in any sport, allowing development with increasing experience and maturity Hume zone seemed to have a philosophy where different codes were provided in different years but with little, if any, progression. Rugby union only figured minimally. Mr Jones and I spent many hours calculating the sporting opportunities and the result was a huge loss of opportunity for the boys and minimal extra opportunity for the girls. In the end, a compromise was reached. Hurlstone would be placed in Hume zone with the full commitment of boys and girls for all their competitions and for the additional boys they could compete in Edmondson zone as well. Although this placed great demands on the school we managed to do very well.

The following is from a school magazine from the time and indicates the fear amongst some students concerning the sports zone issue,

A BALLAD TO HUME

Let me tell you a story,
One of great renown,
About a school name Hurlstone,
And how it's falling down.

Our great men took up Rugby,
They played a demon game,
There was no school in Edmondson,
That could put our teams to shame.

Then the Regional Director
Said "You're changing zone",
But the words on all the boarders' lips
Were "If we change we're going home".

Now the "reason" for this changing
Is so girls can play grade sport,
And with the amount of boys left idle
The advantages will be nought.

The sports that will be murdered,
By our zone change to Hume,
Are tennis, cricket and rugby,
Just to name a few.

The quality of sport in Hume,
Leaves much to be desired,
We could send the plebs to play them,
And they wouldn't even feel tired.

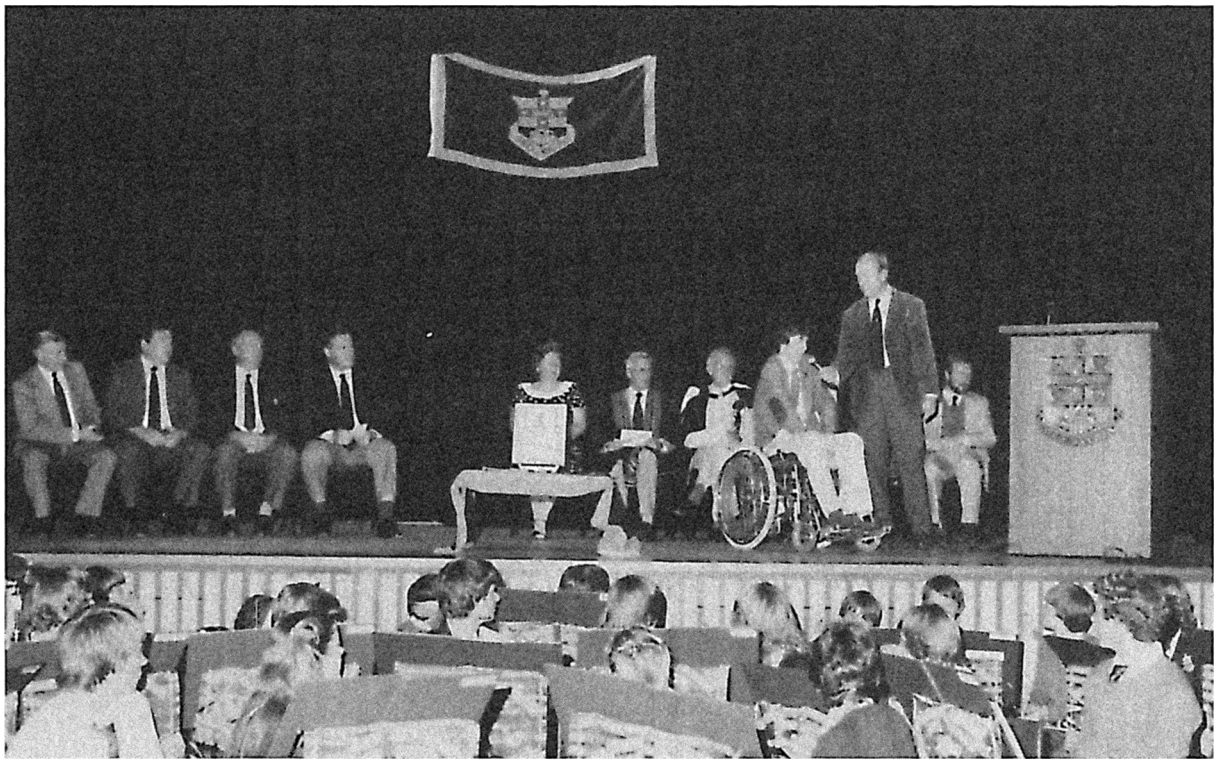
Rugby is the backbone,
Of Hurlstone as you know,
And if we lose our rugby,
The school will soon follow.

BJ had a stress attack,
"You can't do this to me,
We'll fight to keep our sacred rite,
and play First Grade Rugby".

So when he gained enough support,
He sent a petition around,
He said, "Show out all your feeling,

Show it right down to the ground".

So the moral to this story,
Is to stop our move to Hume,
For if this move does go ahead,
Our great school will be doomed.



Gary Croker Assembly, 1983
Gary was the captain of the school rugby team who was injured in a tackle and confined to a wheelchair. Fundraising led by the school raised over $100,000. He went on to represent Australia as a ParaOlympian.

Mr Purves, the present Head Teacher Welfare (boys) began as a teacher at Hurlstone in 1978. Here he remembers his time in the 1980s,

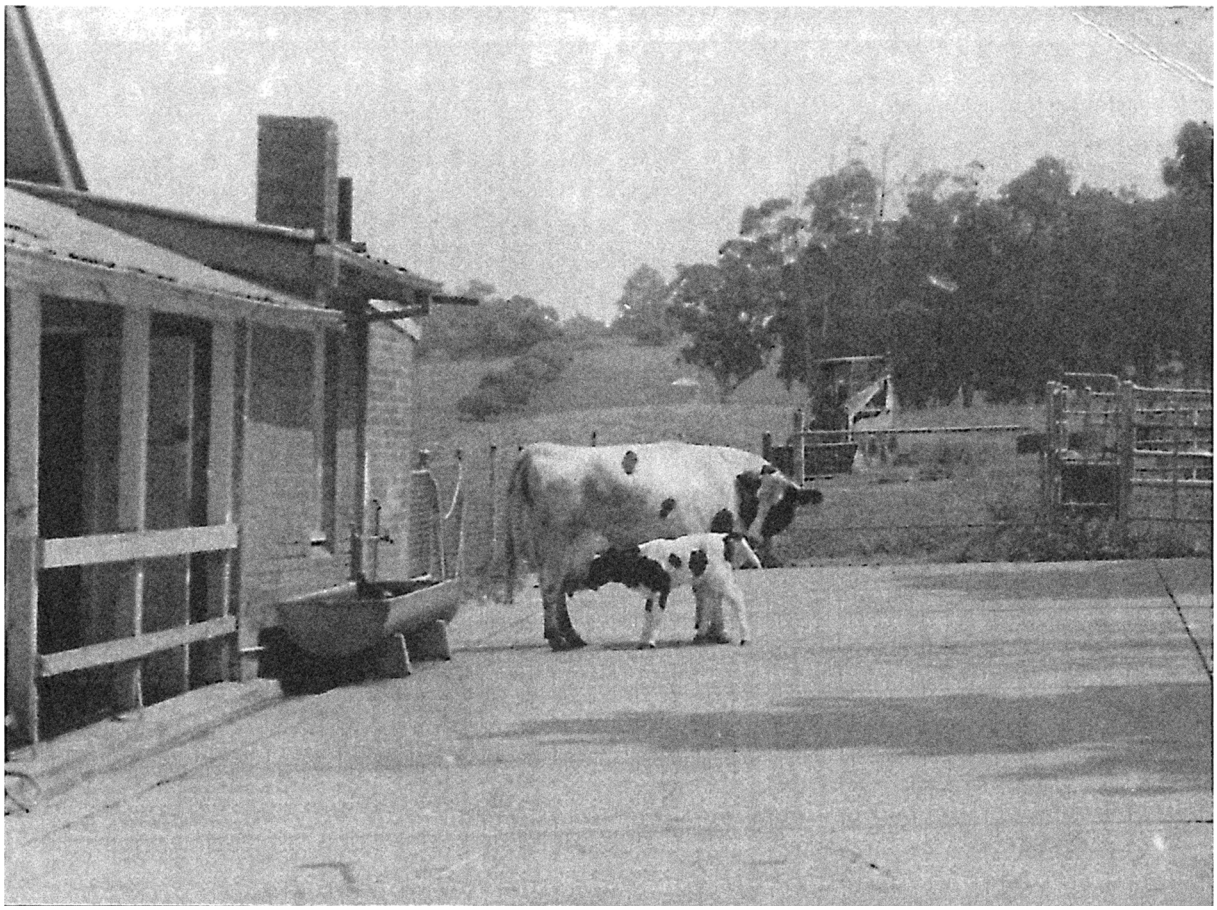
The girls made a difference. Having female staff around the place meant that staff couldn't swear and abuse kids and say things like "Do you want a clip across the ear?" because you really couldn't say that to girls. One staff member in the cottage, a history teacher, was outraged that he couldn't belt the daylights out of everyone. He was disgruntled and soon transferred to an all boys school where he boasted that he belted more than anyone else there in his first month to let them know he was a man.

A practice called Preference went on, that was everyone older than you in the boarding school could order you around and virtually treat you like a slave. So Year 12 would send kids over the line to do their shopping and other things and if you failed BI (bed inspection) in the morning you got four cuts of the cane automatically and that was with the prefects failing you.

The violence continued in the boarding school unabated for some time. You even had some staff in the mornings boasting about how many kids they'd hit the night before. It slowed down a little bit as more

and more girls came into the school. It was only the abolition of the cane at the end of 1985 by the then minister Rod Cavalier that stopped a lot of this violence that was going on here.

Some staff had reputations as being weak caners so they always had this problem. Others had the reputation of leaving black marks across your hand that were there for three months and no-one was in trouble when they were on duty. Everyone caned happily and every problem was solved using a cane.



The Farm, 1984

Mark Sargeant was a student at HAHS from 1980 to 1985. His father, Glenn and uncle Owen had attended the school in the 1960s and 1970s. Mark is now the Deputy Principal of the Boarding School. He recalls a disturbing incident,

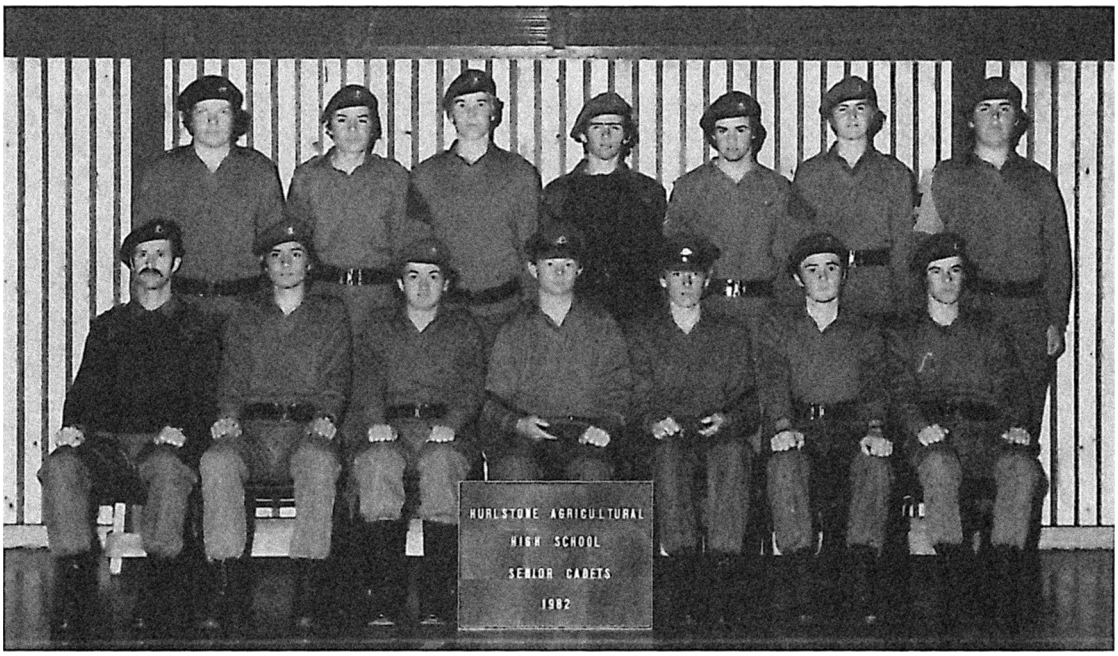
For my six years at Hurlstone I was a boarding student and one of the things that really sticks in my mind was when I was in Year 10 a student in the year below us became quite famous for his mischief around the school. I remember very well one of the things he had learned was how to make small explosions. Evidently he had spent several weeks learning how long it took a cigarette to burn down and he was able to actually light a cigarette, attach a wick to that and was able to time the bomb to go off at a time and a place where he was obviously nowhere around. After some experimentation this particular student decided it was time to test it at school. He lit the wick in the boys' toilets and went back to his class where he spent several minutes and then joined the school assembly in the main quadrangle on the podium. He had timed the wick perfectly so that in the middle of the principal's address quite a large explosive device went off. It was large enough to damage a few windows and to damage the toilet blocks around.

Peter Marsh, another of the present Deputy Principals at HAHS, recollects what it was like for him as a student at HAHS in the 1980s.

Our agriculture practicals would be a combination of things, walking down to the creek and having a look at it would be a good double period exercise. The creek is still down there beyond the end of the soccer field. The boarders used to swim there. We'd be in the paddocks and we'd plough and sow the fields which was really interesting because some kids kept dropping the clutch and throwing the tractor right off.

I was in the cadets. It was huge back then. We had parades in the quadrangle with two platoons with just over 60 kids. Back then we'd wear our uniforms all day. We'd do abseiling and caving expeditions. Paul Gabel used to run the cadets back then. We had a firing range where we'd fire the 22s for fire practice. It was down at the base of the combo oval. We fired at targets on a brick wall which is no longer there, we used bolt action 22s.

We cadets used to camp up at Singleton, in the freezing cold months of June and July. We would go up for about eight days and sleep in the bush. There was a mix of day and boarding students in the cadets back then.



Senior Cadets, 1982

Glenn Roche who has taught in the Social Science Staff since 1975, remembers the geography of the school back then,

The Social Science staff room was where the print room on the wooden verandah is today. The Maths staffroom had no sink and was very small and claustrophobic. The English and History staffroom was also a print room before it became a classroom. The English cottage used to be the Prefects' cottage and the prefects used to go there and have a smoke. The gym was the games room in the boarding school. It had too many pillars so the only sport you could do there was gymnastics. The canteen was a big, condemned old building where they let boarders in to watch movies on a Saturday night. Not long after I came here they got rid of it.

Geoff Holmes, a teacher since 1972 recalls a grisly incident,

In the 1980s a murder at the Glenfield Park School occurred the night before our Anzac Day memorial service. The next day when we were up in the Memorial Forest for the Anzac service there were helicopters buzzing around. Numerous calls came to the school because the media had reported it as a murder at a boarding school in Glenfield. It wasn't Hurlstone but the school up the road which also used to have boarders. The police found the killer the same day in a caravan park at Lansvale. He was an ex-student of Glenfield Park School.

Reg Laing, Senior Resident Master in charge of the boarding school in the 1970s and 1980s remembers a painful incident of a different sort,

Fortunately there were some humorous incidents. One night I was summoned with some urgency to a dormitory to find a boy with a large cut on one cheek of his backside. With a gauze pad and a towel we attempted to stop the flow of blood as we transported him to Liverpool Hospital. Hours later with the wound stitched and the bleeding stopped we sought an explanation. He confessed to having jumped up on the window sill but alas the window was closed. He quickly heard the breaking of glass and felt the pain in his posterior. In 2006 I met the boy's father in a caravan park in Victoria. He remembered the incident well and revealed that his son had dropped his pyjamas and jumped up on the window sill to show his bare bottom to the girls in the next block.



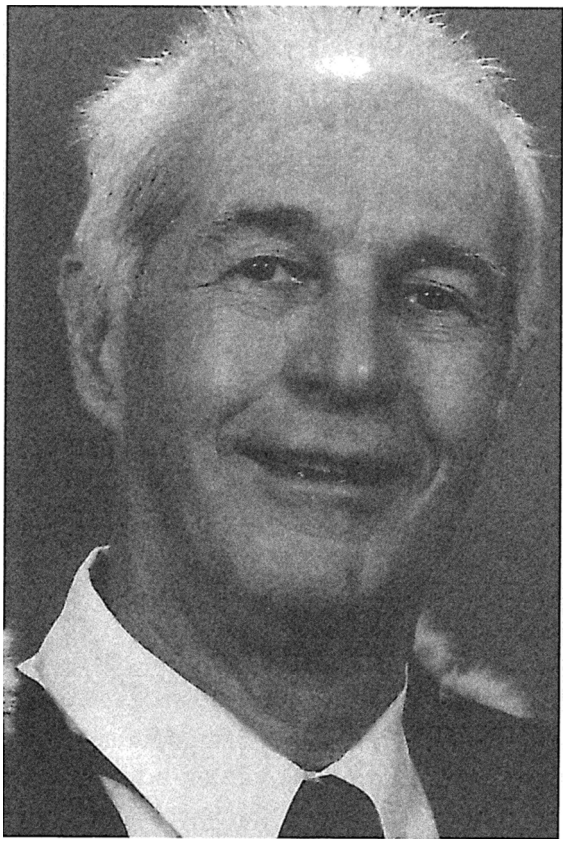
Resident Staff, 1981

Chapter Eight

The Hurlstone Family

Michael Kidd

The ninth Principal of Hurlstone Agricultural High School was Michael Kidd. He trained as a primary teacher and began his teaching career at Narwee Public School in 1961. He subsequently completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at Sydney University and was enticed to change to secondary teaching. He was appointed to Narwee High School as a mathematics teacher in 1969 and then taught at Punchbowl Boys' High, Sylvania High and Airds High before being appointed to Hurlstone in 1988. He was Principal from the beginning of 1988 until April 2003.



Michael Kidd, Principal 1988 – 2003

In Kidd's first year some of the greatest changes were physical. The current administration block and accompanying classrooms were constructed and this resulted in the removal of several unsightly demountable classrooms that had been scattered around the site. Further building projects completed during the nineteen nineties included the construction of the art and home economics block, the agriculture staff room and adjacent horticulture facilities, the sick bay and nurses' quarters, the current Principal's house, the laundry and a new dairy.

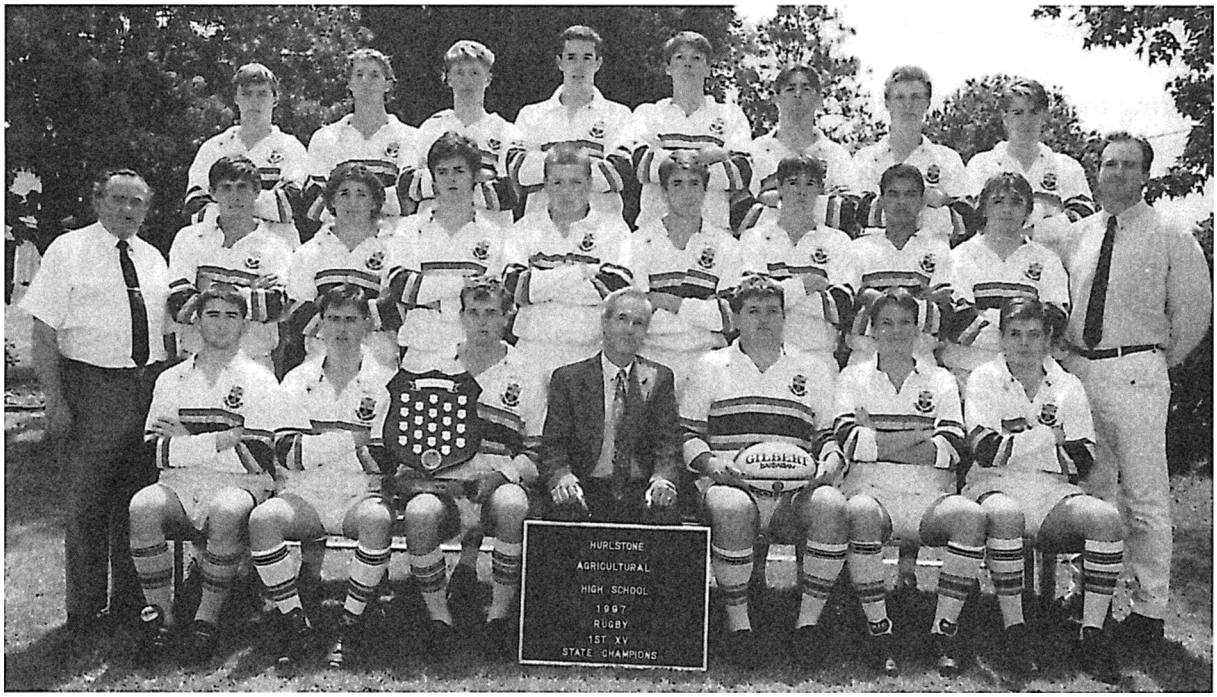
At the school's Presentation Evening in 1988, the first of some wonderful whole school community ventures was launched. The school's swimming pool was leaking badly and in need of significant overall renovation. There was talk at the Department of Education's Sydney South West Regional Office of closing it down because of the huge costs involved in any renovations but, after representation by Kidd and District Inspector Denis O'Neill, the Regional Director agreed to share the cost of the necessary renovations if the school could raise half the required amount. The Hurlstone community more than rose to the occasion and raised $120,000 in an eighteen-month period which left enough funds, after the pool renovations, to surface the bitumen tennis courts with synthetic grass. In later years the community again responded brilliantly and raised over $100,000 in fund-raising drives when called upon to help Hurlstone families affected by floods in Nyngan in 1990 and by the drought in 2002.



Pool reopening by Virginia Chadwick, Minister of Education, 1991

When Kidd was appointed the Department of Education hierarchy made it quite clear to him that academic standards needed lifting. Staff responded to an increased emphasis on academic performance with excellent results. The school annually appeared on the media's lists of top performing schools in the Higher School Certificate and students repeatedly gained first place in the state in subjects ranging from science to art. During this period the Department of Education began producing valued-added statistics which demonstrated that, for cohort after cohort, the staff improved the vast majority of students' statewide rankings as they progressed from Year 7 to Year 10 and then again as they proceeded from the School Certificate to the Higher School Certificate. Students also performed with distinction in academic-based competitions. Students won numerous first place trophies in statewide academic competitions but also met with success nationally and internationally with highlights including John Kusilek's selection in the 1997 Australian Mathematics Olympiad team and Gareth White's selection in the 2002 team where they both won medals in international competition and Ashleigh Peters' success in a 2003 national essay writing competition called the Simpson Prize where her entry earned her a trip to Gallipoli to attend an Anzac Day Dawn Service.

Kidd also encouraged a wide range of extra-curricular activities that he saw, not only as making the Hurlstone experience more enjoyable for the students, but also as ensuring that more well-rounded students emerged from the school. Sport was always strong and the school continued to enjoy considerable success in this area. Hurlstone was renowned for its rugby sides that repeatedly won their way through to state final series with the First Fifteen clinching the champion public school title in 1997 and in 2000. As well, an excellent player development program saw hockey grow in strength and both the boys and girls hockey teams also repeatedly won their way through to the final series with the school winning four state hockey titles between 1996 and 1999. Rugby forward David Lyons earned Wallaby representation after leaving Hurlstone while Adam Commens and Melannie Twitt were two Hurlstonian hockey players who also went on to represent Australia. An unlikely sport that rose to prominence in the nineteen nineties was snow skiing, particularly cross-country skiing, which was introduced to the school by boarder students from Jindabyne. Increasing numbers of students participated in the ski program and enjoyed considerable success in inter-school competition. Squads of up to 30 skiers competed annually and cross-country ski relay teams won several state titles and eight national titles in the first nine years of competition.



Rugby State Champions, 1997

Cultural activities also received strong support during this period with students continuing the school's proud history of success in public speaking and debating. The school won several interschool competitions in these areas including two national and four state public speaking competitions as well as two state debating titles. Music programs flourished with the current very successful pop group Human Nature beginning their singing careers at a Hurlstone variety night. Andrew and Michael Tierney, Toby Allen and Phil Burton met at Hurlstone in 1989 and formed a band known as 4Trax. They have since had numerous Top 40 hits, five featuring in the top 10. Dance was another successful introduction into the school's extra-curricular activities with the school regularly performing at the state dance festival and in the state Rock Eisteddfod finals.

The nineteen nineties also saw an expansion of leadership programs at the school. The Student Representative Council raised its profile and in the boarding school, the Boarder Council continued its outstanding role. In conjunction with Ingleburn Rotary Club, the school also initiated an Interact Club which has grown to be Australia's largest.

The school's cadet unit proved to be successful as a leadership and character building activity but also played an active role outside the school where it undertook valuable community service. Cadets attended local primary schools to add to their memorial services and developed strong relationships with local ex-services associations with whom they shared and contributed to memorial marches and ceremonies.

Student participation in charity work also flourished. The Interact Club raised thousands of dollars each year for a range of charities and the student population in general also strongly supported the Salvation Army and the Red Cross in their annual fund raising activities as well as the Nyngan Flood and drought appeals. The school was regularly the most outstanding regional collector for the Red Cross Annual Door Knock Appeal and senior students readily donated blood through the Red Cross resulting in Hurlstone becoming the state's top blood-donating school. In 2000, the students' outstanding charity work helped earn Hurlstone a place in the Australian Newspaper's top 10 national schools.

During the nineteen nineties a dairy herd improvement program introduced by Agriculture Head Teacher Rod Russell bore fruit. The school's Ayrshire herd began to enjoy considerable success at agricultural shows around the state including the Royal Easter Show where cows won several Grand Champion ribbons and the school was repeatedly awarded the Most Successful Ayrshire Exhibitor trophy. The school also seized an opportunity to exchange a parcel of land on its southern border for Department of Agriculture grounds and buildings on its northern boundary. The facilities gained from this exchange allowed the agriculture staff to improve and further diversify the educational programs it offered.



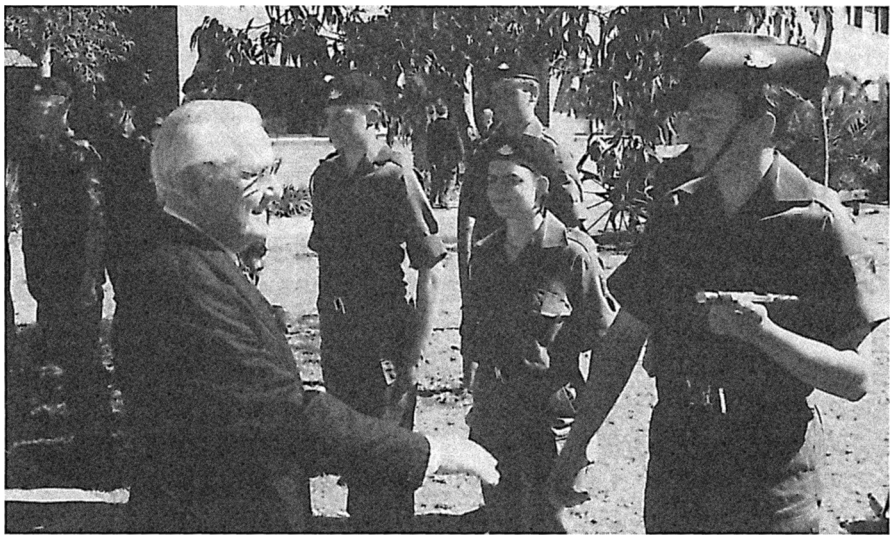
Royal Easter Show Winners, 1993

Kidd believed strongly in the concept of the Hurlstone Family and widely promoted it. Several initiatives were introduced to strengthen the relationship between boarders and day students. The parent community also became more and more involved in the school. The family concept was particularly applicable to the boarding section because students lived there for so much of their time. Many staff began travelling to parent meetings held by the two country auxiliaries. Parents were keen to support the formation of new auxiliaries and the number grew to five. At the same time parents began coming into the school for weekend working bees and this greatly increased the opportunities for parents and teachers to get together for social interaction and to discuss school issues as well as carrying out invaluable maintenance work in the boarding section. Accommodation was also made available for boarder parents visiting their children and this further strengthened the bond between school and the parent community.

A contentious issue in the P & C when Kidd began was a proposal to re-introduce an annual ball at which debutantes would be presented. Kidd was a great believer in this sort of function, having seen it successfully introduced to Sylvania High School and then having initiated the concept himself at Airds High. Despite strong resistance in some quarters, it was decided to have a ball in 1988 and the event has subsequently become a special event on the school calendar where families, students and staff can acknowledge and celebrate the fine young men and women the school produces.

Two of Hurlstone's longest-serving teachers retired during the nineteen nineties. English faculty Head Teacher John Cashel retired in 1992 while Mathematics Head Teacher Colin Davis, or "Bones" as he was affectionately known, retired in 1994 after over 30 years of service.

Several very moving ceremonies honouring the deeds and achievements of ex-Hurlstonians were held during Kidd's time and ex-student Allan McClelland played a significant role in the organisation of each. In 1995 the World War II Honour Roll was unveiled; after an extensive search to locate ex-Hurlstonians, one hundred and eighty of the ex-students named on the Honour Roll were in attendance when one of their own, Sir William Keys, unveiled the roll during a memorable day of ceremonies. Sir William Keys himself was later the focus of a memorial service and unveiling of a memorial display as was Squadron Leader Ronald Rankin. A Post-World War II Honour Roll was unveiled in June 2002 by Major James Copeman whose son Russell was killed in Vietnam while the wish of renowned agriculturalist and ex-Hurlstonian Roy Watts was honoured when his ashes were buried during a moving ceremony in the rose garden in front of Clarke House. A ceremony of a different tone was held in April 1997 when the school celebrated Hurlstone's 90th birthday in fine style with the oldest known Hurlstonian at the time, Tom Taylor, as the guest of honour.



Sir William Keys and Cadets, 1995



Oldest surviving Hurlstonian, Tom Taylor, 90th Anniversary, 1997



Post World War II Honour Roll unveiling by Major Copeman

While the ceremonies honouring student and ex-student accomplishments were among the highlights of the Kidd years the death of student Hamidur Rahman on the 2002 Year 8 Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area excursion was undoubtedly the lowest point of this period. Hamidur suffered a severe allergic reaction and, despite the gallant efforts of staff to save him, died before an ambulance could reach the Yanco High School campsite. A very moving tribute ceremony to Hamidur was held at the school a week later.

In the early nineteen nineties the Department of Education gave school principals greater flexibility and independence in the financial management of their schools. Schools were encouraged to undertake entrepreneurial ventures and the farming and boarding sections of the school lent themselves particularly well to this sort of venture. Sale of produce from the farm earned the school thousands of dollars each year while the hostel began to provide accommodation to various groups during vacation times and to boarder parents visiting the school during term time. These hostel initiatives, together with a successful drive to increase boarder numbers to new highs, allowed the school to build up large cash surpluses which were spent improving boarder conditions. Dormitories were fitted with new furniture and air-conditioning, internet access was provided for boarders, the dining room was re-furnished and air-conditioned and a new female student dormitory was built. The dormitory was named Guthrie after Eula Guthrie who had been so important in bringing girls to Hurlstone.

Security of boarders became quite an issue in the mid nineteen nineties. There were several incidents both day and night where intruders entered the dormitory environs and even the dormitories themselves. The School Council took up the issue with the Department of Education and played a significant role in helping the school have this problem addressed. Subsequently a security fence was constructed around the school site and a guard patrolled the grounds from dark until daybreak. These measures proved effective with the negligible number of subsequent incidents of intruders being efficiently handled by the guard. The School Council was also successful in having State Rail abort plans to build a commuter carpark on the school grounds and to resume part of the school grounds south of No. 1 Oval to accommodate the first section of a new rail link.

Memories

Joe Wessen was Deputy Headmaster of Hurlstone between 1985 and 1998. He remembers some of the intriguing events of his tenure,

When we moved into the Deputy's residence in late January the boarding house dormitories were barricaded off and many workman wearing masks and protective suits were crawling in and out of sealed-off areas. When we enquired as to the nature of the work, we were told in hushed whispers by the maintenance staff on site, that asbestos was being removed from the buildings.

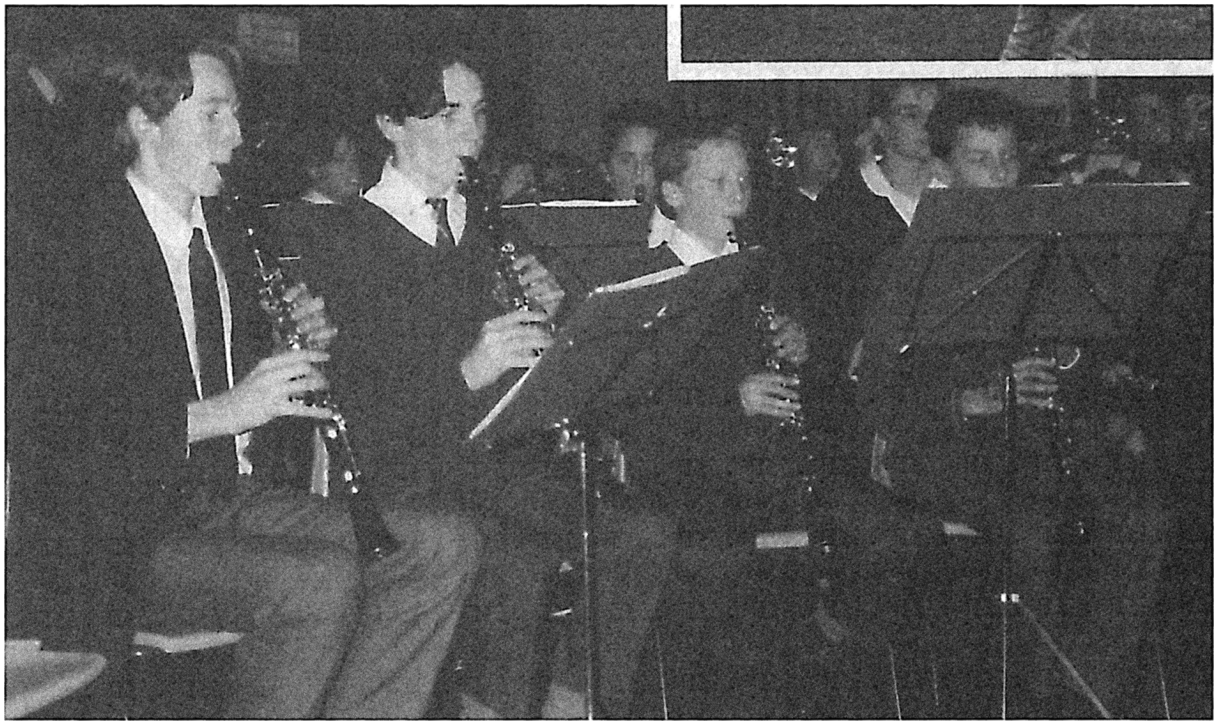
In the years that followed many other 'big' projects were undertaken.

To lay the natural gas pipeline along the road leading from Glenfield station to the Deputy's residence the road was dug up. When it was refilled large chunks of steelworks slag were placed along the road. These made it impossible to walk or drive on, as it resembled a rock-strewn creek bed. After some weeks someone responsible for the project had the insight to reseal the road with bitumen.

Two other main building projects during my time at Hurlstone were the building of the new Administration Block and classrooms and the new Sick Bay and Dormitories. The older "verandah" class rooms were also refurbished.

Alarms going off in the middle of the night were regular events. The B Block girls dormitory had door alarms which went off regularly. They needed to be reset with a key and often my wife, Barbara, and myself ended up doing so. One night, whilst we were carrying out this task, one girl was heard to say, "There's a man in the block." Another replied "No, there's not it's Mr Wessen."

In the early years hot water for the boarding house was provided by a boiler system. If the boiler flamed out an alarm bell would sound until the boiler was relit. This happened on many occasions, usually at the most inconvenient times. If the boiler attendants were not around, which happened frequently, the job usually ended up on my lap. It could take up to an hour to relight the boiler and build up sufficient steam pressure to heat the water. Needless to say I became quite proficient at this task although it was one that was not listed in the Deputy's job description.



Country Fair, 1993

Andrew Lynch was a student at HAHS between 1991 and 1996 and is now a teacher in the HSIE Faculty. He remembers when he was a student,

I compared Hurlstone to a private school in part due to the principal of the time, Mr Kidd. He would always talk at assemblies about school pride and school spirit, I very much thought it had that private school ethos about it.

Kate Ritchie (a star of long running soap-opera, Home and Away) stood out. A sporting achievement that I myself wasn't a part of, but some of my friends were, was a big deal at the time. The soccer team in 1995 or 1996 made of guys from my year, won the Edmondson zone soccer. It was a pretty big thing because that was the first time it had happened and the coach 'Boxhead' was pretty proud of that.

Another sporting thing that stuck out for me was in the basketball Hume zone grand final. We were playing James Meehan, Mr Kidd came along to watch. Two thirds of the way through the game it got called off and we were declared the winners because James Meehan players had decided to push the ref around.

I guess most of what I remember about teachers was when I was in Years 11 and 12. I had Mr English and he had a unique style which included a dry sarcastic humour. I had "Boxhead" for English and he could be quite entertaining. His real name was Mark Nicholl. He'd tell us about his other pursuits like being a clown and occasionally do some juggling for us and sometimes he'd bring his guitar in and sing us a song.



Michael Kidd and Eula Guthrie

Annaleise Robertson was a student at Hurlstone in the years 1996-2001. She vividly remembers a teacher who inspired her,

During high school, some people are lucky enough to have a teacher that goes so far beyond syllabus requirements that they ultimately have a profound impact on who you become as a person and how you see yourself. For me, that teacher was Mr Richards. He was kind, funny, encouraging and endlessly supportive throughout the years he led Hurlstone's dance company, as we performed at various events including Regional and State dance festivals, Rosehill race course (in those dreaded skin-tight yellow unitards), and the School Spectacular.

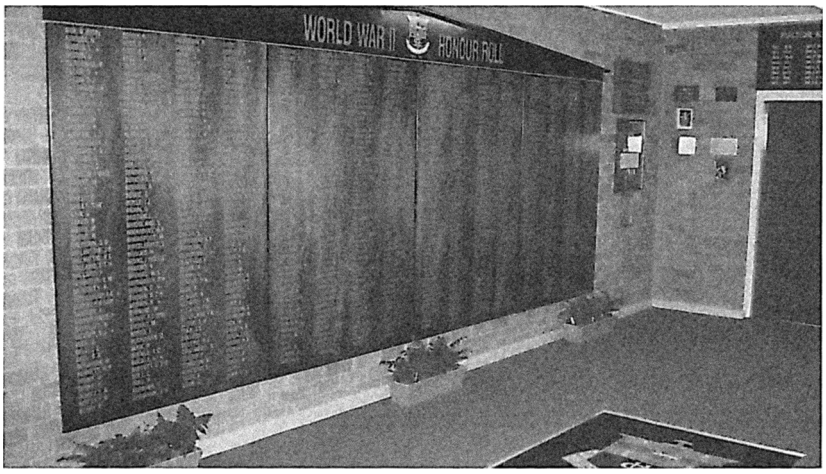
I remember my very first class with Mr Richards when I was in Year 7, at 3pm, on a Tuesday afternoon. Feeling pretty confident coming from a background of competitive ballet, jazz and tap, I was quite dumbfounded when he asked us to get on the floor and move around like a baby. Despite not being a dancer himself, he was skilfully able to create beautiful dances with stirring moods and motifs, such as "Remembered Present" (1996), a dance about the preciousness of youth (hence the baby moves). He put his whole heart into our dancing, and we did the same in return.

Year 12 student and Vice Captain Stefan Jamal (2006) also remembers his time at HAHS fondly,

A big part of being at Hurlstone is being involved in extra-curricular activities, and debating and public speaking was the one for me. From the onset, I found that I loved being involved in the spoken sports and throughout all six years I tried to involve myself as much as possible. As a result I was exposed to many different aspects of the arts like public speaking, English debating, impromptu debating, History debating, mock trials an drama. But the thing which will stay with me the most was its culmination in my team's progression through the Hume Barbour Debating Competition in Year 12. Claire Bradbury, Bianca May, Kiera Peacock and myself took the state by storm and actually made it through to the State Final, having won debates over obesity, violence in media and so on. However in the final, on the topic "That the alliance with America is in Australia's best interest", our moral and political views were challenged and we were forced to argue an affirmative case we didn't believe in. Unfortunately we were defeated, but in any case, we had a great time and I daresay that the experience brought us all much closer together.

One thing that I loved about Hurlstone was the sense of community which it managed to capture and maintain. As a bored student sitting in Edmondson Hall waiting for assembly to conclude, every Friday I attempted to drown out the monotonous reminders about the 'Hurlstone Family' and the traditions and respect which the school has. But as a matured young adult walking out the green gates for the last time, I looked back and realised that they had been right. Leaving Hurlstone was very much like moving out of home. One feels a surge of pride when they remember that they attended Hurlstone because of the sense of 'family' which it did maintain. With ridiculously lovable sayings like 'it's cool to succeed' and 'it's just not Hurlstone', I remember the legend of Principal Kidd whom every student in the school had respected and whom upon returning for an awards ceremony received a standing ovation from those who had been present in his time. It was leaders like Mr. Kidd who not only created the warmth and love within the school but kept its traditions alive.

When one remembers their time at Hurlstone how could life on the farm escape their attention? Expeditions into the uncharted territory of agriculture provided uniqueness to Hurlstone, and experiences that you couldn't have found anywhere else. Be it foot pairing goats, drenching sheep, watching your class mates being chased by calves, growing potatoes while the deadliest snake in Australia sits idly by the patch or convulsing in horror as the teacher demonstrated how cows were tested for pregnancy, every day in Ag was a new adventure.



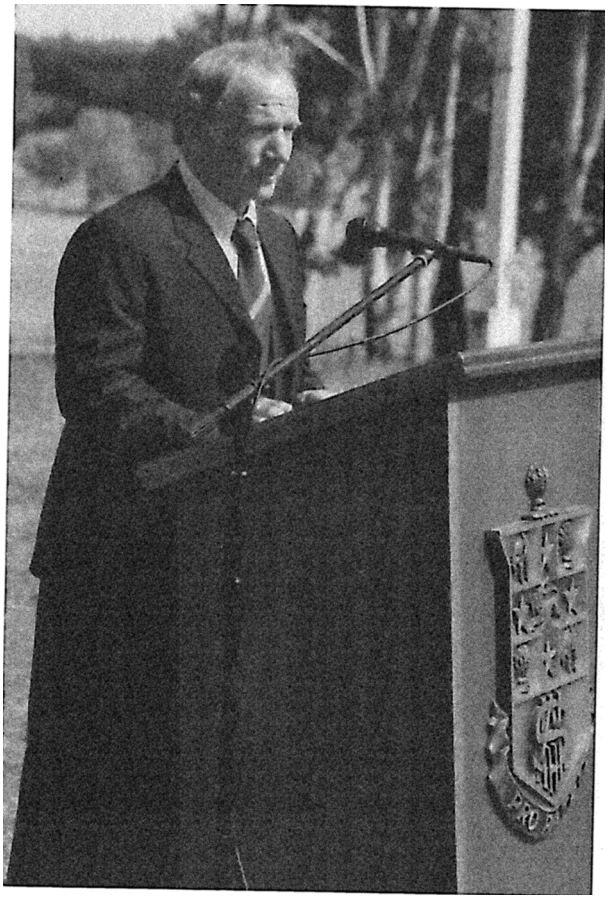
World War II Honour Roll, 1995

Chapter Nine

A New Century

John Norris

John Norris became the tenth Principal of Hurlstone in April 2003. Born in Fermoy, Ireland, his secondary education took place in a boarding school. John graduated from University College, Dublin with a B.A. degree (English and French) and a Diploma in Education in 1971. His first teaching position was at St John's College in Dublin where he taught English, Latin and Gaelic. In July 1972, he embarked for Australia, wooed by the prospect of "teaching in the sun".



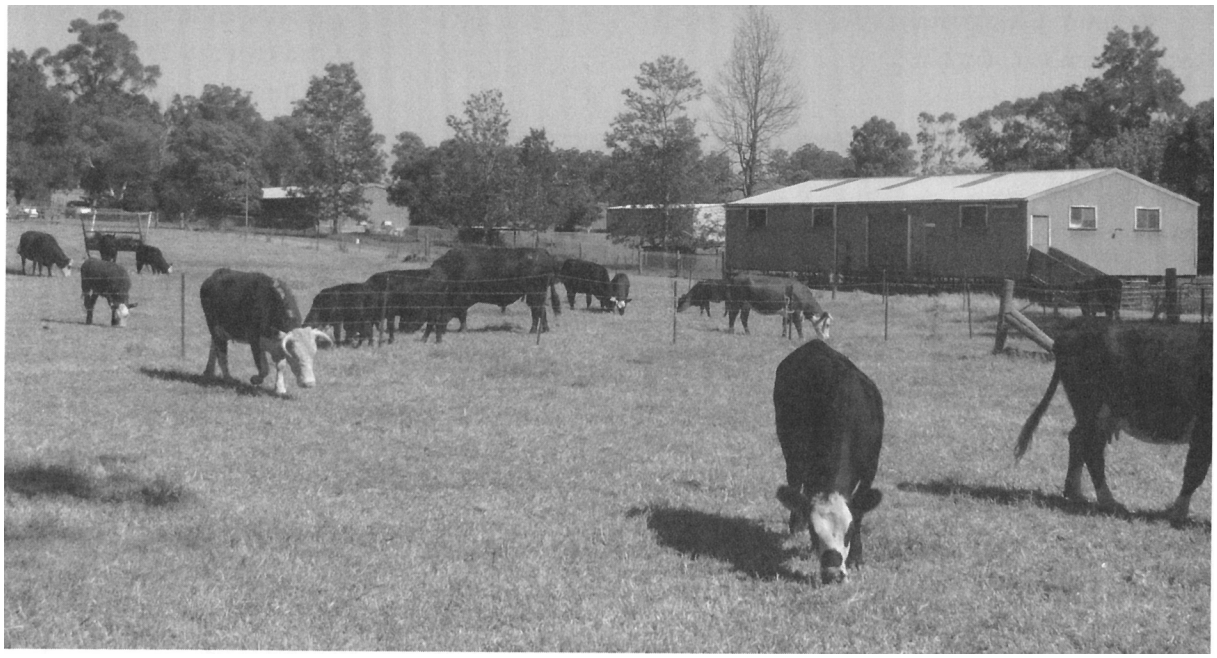
John Norris Principal 2003 – 2006

After an initial appointment to Ashcroft High School, he later took up a position as a teacher of English, Drama, History and French at Busby HS in 1973. He enjoyed a long stint there and, in 1978, got married and became the English Master. Many very productive years later, Norris accepted a transfer to Macquarie Fields High School as English Head Teacher in 1988. There he also presided over debating and drama while helping to usher in the new selective stream of students. In 1990 he gained the position of Deputy Principal at Ashcroft HS and was subsequently promoted to the Principal's position there in 1998.

In his time at HAHS, John made many improvements. The curriculum, centenary, finance and technology committees continued their fine work with renewed emphases. The curriculum was widened by changes involving additional elective lines and IPT studies in stage 5 and the introduction of an on-line course with Wollongong University in stage 6. There were also new dance classes, study-skills programs, increased support for low achievers and dramatic changes to student reporting formats.

Technology at Hurlstone was revolutionised with the introduction of a school intranet, new hardware, new fibre-optic cabling, increased staff training and development in use of computers, and the creation of three computer labs. By 2006 each staff member had a computer with internet access on their desk so that there was every opportunity to come to terms with the new technologies.

Norris was very interested in the environment. A new dam was built to save millions of litres of water and a grey water project was explored. Norris was keen to make other improvements to the farm. He had informed an assembly that "even if the farm did not make a profit it could, at least, make an environmental statement." He announced a commitment to the planting of 100 trees each year. Another plan was to create a farm which could be used for research into sustainable living. He opened up discussions with Sydney University and the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living and looked to the farm becoming a "mini CSIRO". He argued that the school had some of the brightest students in the state and that research was "right up their alley".



Farm, 2006

A new rugby competition brought greater challenges for the students while hockey, equestrian events and skiing also recorded outstanding achievements. The school magazine, "Harvester" was reinvigorated and a planning and innovations committee established. A new alliance was established with the other residential agricultural high schools in order to be better positioned to argue for improvements.

Norris invited regional staff-development teams to work with staff on-site. In demonstrating innovative techniques in teaching, curriculum development, assessment and reporting these teams helped expand the array of best practices that staff could bring to their classrooms.

Great pride was taken by the school in successive outstanding HSC results: Premier's Awards - 9 (2003), 11 (2004), and 12 (2005); first in a subject – 2 (2004) and 3 (2005). Student works adorned ArtExpress each year and there was particular satisfaction in getting a first place in music in 2005 given the extra emphasis on the performing arts that Norris brought with him from Ashcroft HS.



'Guthrie' Dormitory, 2006



Hostel Dining Room, 2006

Memories

Kelsie Robertson, a Year 11 student and prefect in 2006, comments on the special nature of Hurlstone,

When people ask what high school that I attend, I've always felt a great sense of predictability in their impending response; "Ah, the smart school".

Hurlstone has not only developed my "smartness" though. It's taught me a much wider variety of skills and instilled qualities in me that no other school ever could.
Take Agriculture for example. I'm an animal lover but definitely not a farm girl. I don't enjoy the theory or practices such as castration, ear tagging of sheep or the hoof clipping of the goats.

Although when our practical lessons came around, my problem- solving skills were certainly put to the test. "How to stay as far away from the animals as possible while still looking like you're highly involved." Recording results in your farm notebook always worked well or clapping and whistling to move animals up the race made you look like a true animal whisperer. I'm sure many students have this apprehension when it comes to our farm animals but the experiences that are gained from being actively involved in Agriculture Practicals create memories that no-one will ever forget.

In 2005 we frequently worked with the goats. We were warned about how friendly hand-raised goats were. I always kept my wits about me around the animals but there was nothing I could do to stop one particular goat from standing up and placing its front hooves on my shoulders! My faith in our goats was restored later in the year though when viewing a day-old baby and our teacher placed it in my arms to be carried back into its enclosure. This furry little warm body, I was just awestruck!

So my reply to stereotypes associated with Hurlstone is that the school does not just develop our intelligence. Our individuality and strength of character all unfold due to the wonderful experiences which Hurlstone offers.

Some excerpts from a 2006 monthly newsletter sent home to parents give an insight into Hurlstone in the Norris period. It shows the amazing diversity of activities undertaken by students, staff and parents. Note that this refers to one term (10 weeks) only.

Students participated in 50 separate scheduled excursions including: subject excursions in Geography, English, Drama, and Languages; sport knockout competitions in basketball, netball, hockey and volleyball; mock trials; year 11 cross roads camp; university visits; student debating competitions; course seminars in History and English; agricultural expos and visits; dance activities, and student representative council (SRC) activities.

74 separate scheduled professional learning activities occurred involving one or more staff members for each activity. These were a combination of school based learning activities and external courses offered by the department of education and training or other external providers.

40 other scheduled in-school variations occurred including: careers seminars; public speaking; debating; fundraising including 'the worlds greatest shave', 'worlds biggest morning tea', the year 12 cake stall and a variety of student led activities through the SRC and Interact; academic competitions

including the APSMO and the University of NSW Mathematics competition; the Young Achievers business presentation; school photos, and various assembly presentations.

Parent working bees from central and auxiliary Parent and Citizens (P&C) groups focused on improving school amenities and grounds for the benefit of all Hurlstone students.

Many meetings were held including P&C and sub-committees, School Council, boarder parent welfare support, centenary, environment, prefect, SRC, interact, learning support, gifted and talented, and the many welfare and staff meetings.



Multicultural Day, 2006

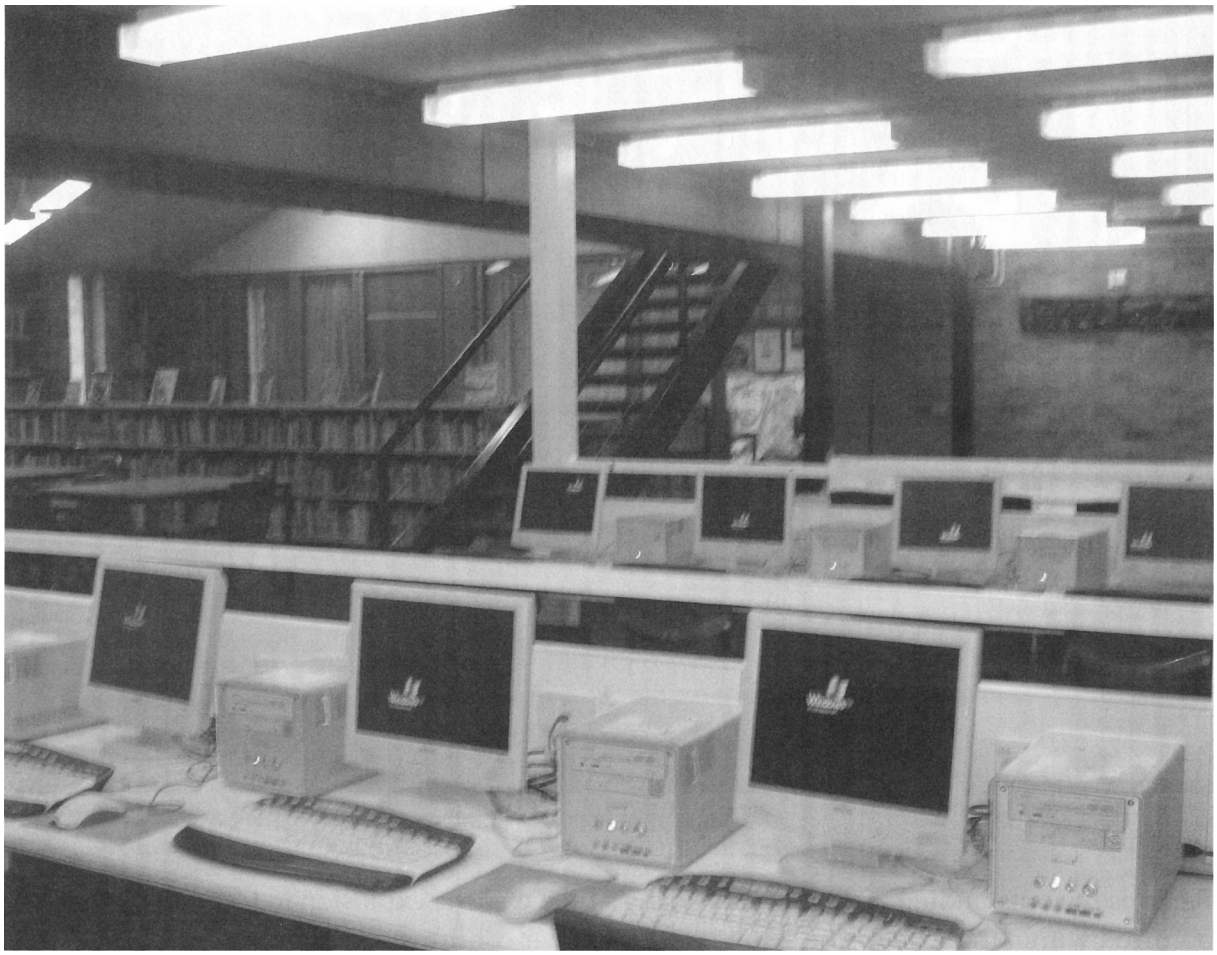
Perhaps the outstanding feature of the Norris's time was the explosion in technology that occurred within the school. The same 2006 newsletter confirms this point,

Significant improvements in the area of technology have and are being made to support student learning and experiences at Hurlstone.

A combination of funds from our P&C last year and school funds this year has seen 18 data projectors permanently installed into classrooms. These data projectors provide to staff the opportunities to incorporate information and communication technologies into learning programs. For students, they can make their presentations, seminars and speeches with the aid of computer generated slides and other multimedia. The ease in connecting to the data projectors have been enhanced through the hard wiring of sound and a variety of display leads. We are looking forward to wiring in separate powered sound to complement the projectors that will allow videos and DVDs to be used in these rooms and also provide greater scope for student presentations.

New software has been installed into most areas around the school. The Adobe Creative Suite is a combination of adobe software products that will assist in creating superior digital materials. This suite includes adobe acrobat professional indesign and photoshop. Students can access this software from the computers in the library, room 15 and the art multimedia centre. This software is soon to be available in rooms 42 and 43.

Two new computer rooms are soon to be in full operation in the TAS area. The increasing demand on computer access for TAS and for courses across the curriculum have prompted the much needed development of these rooms. Both rooms 42 and 43 have been refitted to provide first class learning spaces with appropriate computer, printing and scanning access.



School Library, 2006

Elle Wenban, female school captain in 2007, gives some clear examples of Norris's work ethic and enthusiasm,

During Mr Norris' time at Hurlstone I was privileged to be chosen to read the ode of remembrance at Martin Place on Anzac Day. True to his dedication to the school there Mr Norris was, in the city at 3:30 am, to see Roland and myself speak.
Mr Norris was also found videoing the ski team during a blizzard and at the airport at 7 am to welcome a group of students back from a trip to America. These events show the amount of time he dedicated to the school and his devotion to Hurlstone and the extra-curricular endeavours he encouraged students to participate in.



Clarke House, 2006

Two unnamed students give a powerful indication of their feelings for their school in statements they presented when applying to become prefects,

"I specifically want to be prefect in 2006/2007 because it would be an honour to lead Hurlstone into its 100th year and to play a more integral part in Hurlstone's centenary celebrations, commemorating Hurlstone's rich traditions and magnificent heritage. With the privilege of being a prefect I would also be able to pass on the true spirit of being an Hurlstonian."

"A deep sense of the 'Hurlstone family' has been instilled within me since my enrolment at this school in year 7. As a result, I have been committed to the school and students passionately, participating in many school events, representing my peers. I want to pass on my experiences and skills to the younger grades, and becoming a prefect would assist in my goal of passing on the Hurlstone traditions."

During 2006 two longstanding Hurlstonians retired after over thirty years of service to the school; Rod Russell, Head Teacher Agriculture and Geoff Holmes who have been mentioned before in these pages. There are quite a few thirty year or more veterans approaching retirement. Glenn Roche in Social Science, Bob Schippers in Agriculture, Greg Pitt in Science, Richard Purves in History will all eventually "hang up their chalk" just like the other veterans of years gone by at Hurlstone; just like Pinn, Taylor, Neylan, Wilcox and Davis.

But Hurlstone will go on regardless, meeting the challenges of the future be they technological, political or educational; providing to students what parent Ross Yeo, whose family has sent three generations to HAHS describes as,

"...opening up a world of opportunity and experience...learning to communicate with many varied types of people, witnessing many different vocations and lifestyles, opening up so many more choices to young people in their path through life and giving them the qualifications to head down that path."



Horne Park, 2006

Appendix

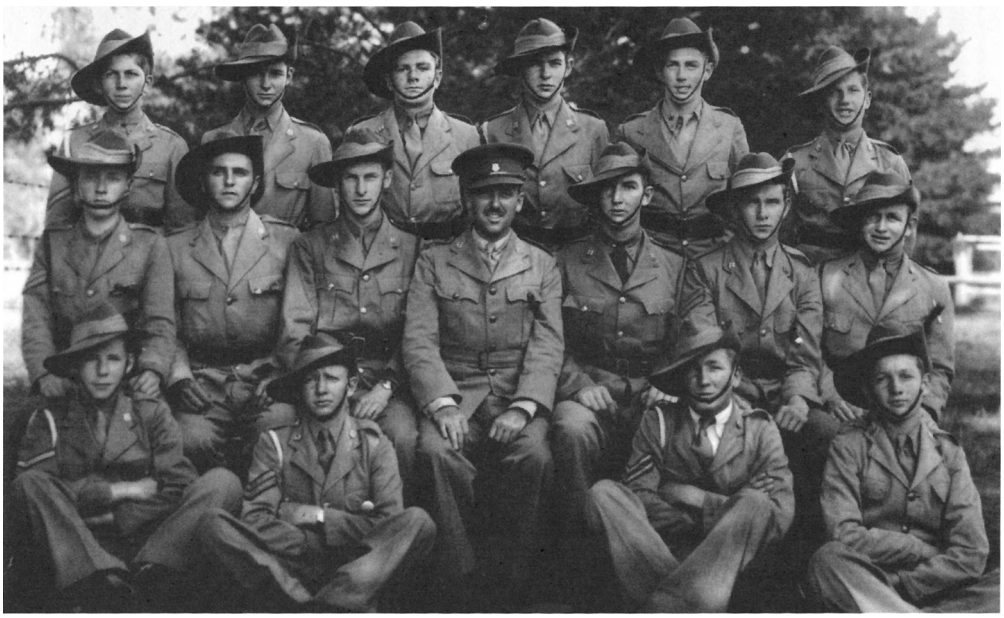
History of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Army Cadet Unit

by Ashleigh Peters and Lachlan Simond

Since Hurlstone's establishment in 1907, the school has had a strong association with the Australian Army Cadet movement. Several units have existed within the school during different periods, beginning as early as before the First World War (1914-1918).

One of these units was established in 1937 under Principal Longmuir. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, joining cadets took on new importance for many Hurlstone students. Barrie Booth remembers, "The war was brought home to Australians by the Japanese bombing of Darwin, the midget sub raid on Sydney Harbour and the exploits of Australian soldiers at Tobruk and Kokoda... A lot of Hurlstone kids had fathers and other relatives fighting overseas – so naturally a lot of us joined the cadets."

Being a cadet during the Second World War exposed Hurlstonians to some unique experiences. During annual inter-unit training camps at Glenfield, Ingleburn and Wallgrove, cadets would often encounter Italian and Japanese Prisoners of War (POWs) who were in transit. Booth also recalls the difference in Australian soldiers' attitudes towards the national groups: "The Japanese were very hostile and closely guarded. On the other hand, the Italian POWs went out on daily work details and I recall seeing one group straggling home one evening with one solitary Australian soldier bringing up the rear, cigarette on lip and his rifle being carried by one of the POWs."



Cadet Officers, 1941

The Hurlstone tradition of cadets could not have endured without the commitment of the teachers involved, from English teacher and Officer-of-Cadets Leo "Los" O'Sullivan in the Second World War era to John Reddington in the 1990s and 2000s. Another teacher, Paul Gabel, was instrumental in re-establishing the unit in the 1970s. Despite the challenges to the Army Cadet unit under the Whitlam, Fraser and Hawke governments, this unit has existed until the present day.

In the intervening period, many changes to the unit have taken place. Female cadets first joined the unit in 1981, a milestone made possible by the commitment of English and History teacher Janene Best. This coincided with a greater emphasis being placed on adventure training, to complement the traditional activities of drill, field exercises and weapons practice. During this transitional period, the unit has also been supported by former Hurlstone students and cadets, most notably Peter Brown and Lachlan Simond.

One of the unit's foremost functions has been to provide a public face for the school at Anzac and Remembrance Day commemorations. Hurlstone cadets have provided catafalque parties for school services in the Memorial Forest and at local primary schools. They have also had a long association with the John Edmondson VC Memorial Club, Liverpool and with the 2/18th Battalion Association, whose banner they carry in the Sydney City Anzac Day March.



Cadets at Anzac Day Service in Memorial Forest, 1997

Today the unit is small in size, but still successful. Several members have been involved in the handover of the Duke of Edinburgh's Banner to the Australian Army Cadets at Victoria Barracks, Paddington in 2005, and have represented the New South Wales Brigade in the national Chief of Army Cadet Team Challenge. In 2004 and 2005, the Hurlstone unit produced consecutive New South Wales Army Cadets of the Year. Many cadets have gone on to join the Australian Defence Force (ADF); undertaking training as officers through either the Royal Military College - Duntroon or the Australian Defence Force Academy, and often comment on the "family" of former Hurlstone cadets that exists within the ADF. But whether they pursue a military career or not, the Australian Army Cadet values of teamwork, friendship, self-discipline, respect and a spirit of adventure serve Hurlstone cadets well during their school and professional careers.

Thanks to:

Lionel Boxsell

Barrie Booth

Peter Brown

John Croyston

Bert Folkard

Daniel Israel

Michael Romalis

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About the author

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"Bedbugs, Daygos and Slabs"

A Century of Memories, is a celebration of one hundred years of public education at Hurlstone Agricultural High School. Unique in the NSW education system, Hurlstone is a boarding school, a farm and a co-educational, selective day school. The book contains brief narratives for each of the nine Principals of Hurlstone describing some of the developments, controversies and achievements during their time in charge. The book also provides numerous intimate glimpses into the lives of Hurlstonians across the century in the form of memories transcribed from letters and interviews with past students and teachers. This provides a fascinating insight into the history of one of the state's best known schools.

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