

# *OUR STORIES OUR LIVES*



*1955 Seniors of Brisbane State High School*

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*Compiled and Edited by*

*Beverley Sherry*

*2015*

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*Title page photograph:* the School as it was in the 1950s, with the tennis court below the parade ground. From Don Marshall's collection of archival photographs.

## *Introduction*

The 60<sup>th</sup> reunion of the 1955 Seniors of Brisbane State High was an occasion to meet up with old friends and for “old boys” and “old girls” to get to know one another, a feat pretty much impossible in 1955, as the stories that follow reveal. In total 47 attended, including husbands and wives, but many friends were sadly missed, especially the School Captain of the Boys, Lloyd Hawkins (1937-2010), who had organized reunions in the past, and Ian Mavor (1937-2015), who died only a few days before the reunion. Both lived lives of exceptional service.

I sent out a general invitation for people to record their memories of State High and their lives sixty years on. Many of the stories are from people who were unable to attend the reunion but still wanted to contribute. By May 2015 the stories began to come in and they were circulated to everyone. Some people were initially diffident and perhaps the men intimidated the women, but in the end the girls came through as champions, and there are 38 stories in all – 21 from men, 17 from women (note: there were approximately twice as many boys as girls in the 1955 Senior year).

Memories of the 1950s recorded in the stories are windows on the culture of that time. Australia was a largely monocultural, Anglo society, and this was reflected at State High, a vastly different community from the rich multicultural School of today. Most students lived with their biological mother and father, and divorce was little heard of, indeed even a stigma. Our mothers were engaged in “home duties” and our fathers were the bread-winners. This was before the advent of the Pill (1961), so couples generally married young and had children young. Most girls saw their role in life as marriage and motherhood, and Brisbane girls who attended state schools preferred the Domestic or Commercial High Schools over the strongly academic Brisbane State High. Gay (Bidgood) Stevens recalls to “[her] dismay the favouring of boys for financial/government scholarships regardless of many girls achieving much better academic results”. However, the girls of State High were not deterred. As Joan (Cook) Jennings concludes, “We were the women who as a group first juggled marriage and family with a career. In a sense we were pioneers, on the cusp of the feminist movement of the 1960s and ’70s”.

Partly because of 1950s morality, girls and boys were segregated at State High and the great divide was the path through Musgrave Park – the girls ate their lunch on one side, the boys on the other. In the main too, male teachers taught the boys’ classes, women (all unmarried) taught the girls’. In our Senior year there were some co-ed classes, such as Latin and French. One highlight in our generally segregated lives was the much-loved traditional performance of a Gilbert & Sullivan opera in the Sub-Senior year, when girls and boys actually got to hold hands and sing and dance and act together. We have fond memories of *HMS Pinafore*.

State High was the pre-eminent high school in Queensland, as well as one of the GPS schools, which meant that it competed in many inter-school activities, with Sports Days at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds. Its academic record was outstanding. Open Scholarships to the University of Queensland were awarded annually to the top 25 students of the State in the Senior public examination. There were eight from State High in 1953, ten in 1954, and eight in 1955 (our year). Because of the School’s standing, many students came from far afield to complete their Senior years at State High, as these stories reveal – from Charleville, Tully, Childers, Brooloo,

and the wider Brisbane region. The discipline was rigorous and the study methods quite different from today. Homework was hand-written and students went to the Public Library in the city to consult reference books in preparation for their essays. Before the days of TV, computers, and the internet, there were few facilities except the classrooms and our excellent teachers. As Lawrie Copley observes, this was “a post-war era of limited resources” and the emphasis was “on essential content, very different from the broader education in today’s high schools”.

Enrolling at State High in 1952, Marguerite (Bristow) Larwill recalls, “Everyone I knew left to work after primary school, but I was willing to give high school a go”. It was not commonly expected that students who completed Senior would go on to university. Still, all the authors of these stories, including Marguerite, went into professions, many into teaching. As Anne (Starr) Elliott writes, “In the 1950’s the Queensland Government, in their forward planning, could see they would become desperately short of primary school teachers. To address this, an incentive was to give a small living allowance to students from Sub-Senior forward who made a signed commitment to become teachers.” Other favoured careers were engineering for boys and physiotherapy and pharmacy for girls.

Some have had amazing journeys. The boy from Charleville, Ray Beilby, ended up in China, where his teaching career still flourishes. Anne (Vickery) Gay, when she married a farmer, moved from teaching chemistry and physics to farming, had four children, and writes that, “Retirement is not a word in a farmer’s dictionary”. Living in Canada for the last fifty years, more recently Barrie Chadwick has been able to revitalise his dream of being an artist, encouraged at State High by the art teacher Miss Alma Platen. Phil Harrison, who writes with a journalist’s fluency, and shares Pam (Wendt) Raeside’s uncanny knack for detail, got up to various mischief at State High but travelled the world as a journalist. Tric (Heathwood) Marshall followed a career as a physiotherapist but today she and her husband care-take a population of endangered northern hairy-nosed wombats. The boy wonder Lawrie Copley, after Harvard, put down roots in Boston as an acoustics engineer, while another Open Scholar, Darrell Desbrow, became an academic at Edinburgh University and stayed in Scotland. All 38 stories are unique – in the material covered, the personal emphases, the occupations, and especially the individual voices, which range from curmudgeonly to euphoric.

Since the stories reflect both the 1950s and our lives sixty years on, they have been supplemented with photographs which reflect that dual dimension. Archival photos from the 1950s combine with photos taken at the 2015 reunion. As much as possible I have tried to link the photos and their captions to the individual stories. The sequence was to have been simply alphabetical by surname but I discovered a concentration of girls at the end of the alphabet, so I have interspersed girls with boys.

*Beverley Sherry*  
School Captain of the Girls 1955

Sydney 2015

## *Bill Adamson*

While attending State High (1952-1955), I didn't think it was really doing anything for me. It was still school and it got in the way of doing the things that most teenage boys wanted to do, like fixing old cars, playing football and trying to impress girls. (Very hard at State High)

I really didn't do any study while I was there other than what I had to do to avoid detention. I remember clearly our senior English teacher, old Balfey, wanted us to learn two pages every night of that terrible book *The ABC of English Usage*. Every Friday, he tested us on the ten pages we should have learnt during the week and if we didn't get 8 out of 10 he would keep us in at lunch time to learn them. At first, I used to scan through the ten pages on Friday morning on the tram going to school and always had to stay in on Friday lunch, but Friday was cadet day and missing out of parading about at lunch time in army uniform was too much to miss. I eventually had to learn my ten pages every week which I did successfully, not because I wanted to learn correct English but because I didn't want to miss any lunch time activity. Balfey was an inspirational teacher who, in spite of my resistance, impressed me and instilled in me, an interest in good literature. He had a turned eye so you never knew which eye was watching you and I am sure he had a couple of eyes in the back of his head because he always knew what was going on in the room and who was playing up.

Surprisingly, I still have that "terrible" book and have always had it in my desk at work throughout my working career. I often referred to it for guidance and even now I do so at times although the pages are getting a bit tattered and torn. I guess the ABC rules don't apply much to kids these days but I still like to think I conform to (or is it "conform with") the rules that I learnt at BSHS. It has certainly helped me all my life.

My experience in Army Cadets gave me my first introduction into man management and training techniques, long before these skills became the province of specialised consultants in the work force. Strange how I did do some study for promotion in the cadets and rose to the rank of Under Officer, but didn't realise that study in school work was just as important for promotion in my future working career. Probably the short term results of study in cadets had something to do with it.

During the four years at BSHS I managed to scrape through exams just by what our teachers taught us in the class room and tipping the questions that would be asked in the exam paper. My success at tipping exam questions varied considerably and therefore, so did my results. It wasn't until I went to Uni that I found that good lecturers were not a patch on good teachers. After I failed my first year at Uni, I realised I needed to change my system of studying for exams. I really needed to change because my "do or die" attempt at an engineering cadetship had to succeed or I didn't have a great future ahead of me. Lo and behold, I soon found that if I did study for my exams they were not nearly as hard to pass as they seemed to be at school. I also found that if I studied really hard, the exams became a breeze and I could even excel in some subjects. Fortunately my studies did eventually lead to a fairly successful career in railway engineering.

More importantly, this experience made me realise just how good the teachers at BSHS really were and I still wonder why I didn't do more to help them. I was amazed, during my engineering



studies, to find that I had such a sound basic knowledge, particularly in Maths, Physics and English which proved to be, not only useful, but essential in engineering and it was all because of what was "taught" by those teachers in the class rooms at BSHS, completely without any help from myself in the learning process. I am forever grateful that I attended BSHS during such an important phase of my education and had teachers that persevered in spite of my refusal to study, but I often regret that I didn't do as well at school as I could have done, through no fault other than my own.

Some highlights of my career in railway engineering are: 1963 registered as a professional engineer; 1965 a 12-month engineering scholarship, studying railway signalling in the UK and passing the exams set by the Institution of Railway Signal Engineers, London; 1970-78 overseeing the installation and maintenance of a modern signalling and communication system on the Hamersley Iron heavy haul rail network in the Pilbara WA; 1978 Chief Signal & Communications Engineer of Westrail in Perth WA; 1979 Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Aust; 1980 Chief Mechanical Engineer of Westrail in Perth WA; 1983 Assistant Commissioner, Technical Services in Queensland Rail, responsible for all Engineering services in QR; 1990 Group General Manager Coal & Minerals to manage Queensland Rail's heavy haul coal and minerals traffic.



**Army Cadets 1955. Bill Adamson is third from the right in the middle row. His time in the Cadets introduced him to "man management and training techniques".**

## *Peter Alfredson*

Not quite sixteen years old, I came to Brisbane to board in West End so that I could walk to State High to do the final two years of high school for the Senior public examination. I was a country boy from a high school "top" at the Childers State High School, which did not go past the Junior exam. There were just seventeen students in my year there including Denise Grose, who also came to State High. Even though we had been in the same class for all our Junior subjects, I rarely saw Denise except at a distance for the next two years in the tradition of State High keeping the girls largely separate from the boys.

In some unknown way, I found myself allocated to S1. I was accepted in the class and enjoyed the challenge of trying to do my best in a much bigger pool of city students. As a young boy living independently, I developed self-reliance and was well organised to look after myself.

At State High, the Senior experienced teachers were excellent. A reserved country boy, I didn't even think of talking about the teachers by their nicknames which were well known by the incumbent students. Despite an aptitude for Maths and Science subjects, I also enjoyed English and surprisingly shared the English prize with Beverley Chadwick in the Senior year. Mr Noonan was a great English teacher. Like Phil Harrison, I once spent an afternoon scanning through the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* for long words to sprinkle through one of my essays. Despite all that effort, Mr Noonan gave me only a B+ and the advice, "beware of sesquipedalism"! I was a keen member of the Debating Society and recall our Senior year as quite successful in the GPS inter-school competition. Likewise I took part in the 1954 production of *HMS Pinafore* as the popular and gentlemanly Captain Corcoran with future Girl Captains Bev and Glen alternating as "pretty daughter(s) of mine".

At the end of my State High education, for which I am forever proud and grateful, I was happy to be one of eight Open Scholars that year and was awarded an Australian Atomic Energy Commission Undergraduate Scholarship in Chemical Engineering. It paid £5 per week living allowance in the first year, increasing annually by five shillings per week. Since full board only cost £4 per week, I thought I was very fortunate!

In 1960, I completed the five-year double degree in Industrial Chemistry/Chemical Engineering at the University of Queensland with First Class Honours in both degrees. I was bonded to work for the AAEC for five years and therefore joined the Lucas Heights Research Establishment in Sydney early in 1961 having just married Annabel Robinson, also from Childers, after a four year courtship, mostly by long distance. Over the next 20 years, my research for the AAEC involved many aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle from uranium processing to radioactive waste disposal – everything except nuclear reactors! Along the way, I gained an MSc (1964) and PhD (1972) in Chemical Engineering through the University of New South Wales and also spent two years (1964-66) as a guest scientist with the Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago working on uranium and plutonium processing. I became Head of the Chemical Engineering Section at Lucas Heights in 1969 and Chief of the Chemical Technology Division in 1974.

By 1980, it was obvious that nuclear power reactors were not going to happen in Australia and I transferred in 1981 to CSIRO and became Chief of the Division of Energy Chemistry with new research projects on synfuels, solar energy and environmental chemistry. It was a challenging

time with increasing expectation that funding from industry would be obtained to match government funding. After several reorganisations, I was appointed Chief of the Division of Coal and Energy Technology in 1990 with additional research programs including coal processing, advanced power generation, and environment protection. In 1994 I retired early from CSIRO but took until 2009 to wind down completely, working as a consultant on research management, mainly for Cooperative Research Centres and universities.

After 40 years in Sydney, Annabel and I moved back to sunny Queensland and the Gold Coast in 2001. Now having been married for 54 years, we have three children and six grandchildren aged from 14 to 26 years. For the last 40 years, I have also had a commitment in the Methodist and (since 1977) Uniting Church as Secretary or Chairman of Church or Parish Councils in Caringbah (NSW) and Paradise Point (QLD).

Since moving back to Queensland, I have found a new interest in family history. Remarkably, all the Alfredsons in Australia are the descendents of my great-grandfather, Alfred Gustav Alfredsen, who brought his wife and two children (including my grandfather) from Denmark to Australia in 1882; seven more children were born subsequently. He anglicised his names from Gustav to George and Alfredsen to Alfredson. In 2007 I researched and published a history, *The First Australian Alfredson Family*, and subsequently organised two very successful Australian Alfredson Family Days in Geebung, where my great-grandmother was the first railway gatekeeper in 1887. Over the last 10 years, Annabel and I have visited Denmark many times to meet and holiday with Danish relatives and hosted reciprocal visits by some of them.



OPEN SCHOLARSHIPS—1955

**Back row: Murray Rich, Lawrie Copley, Alan Fien, Peter Alfredson, Darrell Desbrow.  
Front row: Beverley Chadwick, Jeff Rohl (Dux), Barbara Routh.**

## *Rhelma (Pringle) Barnett*

### Quite a Quiet Story

A little Paddington girl off to Brisbane State High School in 1952, a very unusual happening in those days from that suburb, then a very “working class” place – now, I gather, a trendy suburb close to the city and Lang Park, which in my childhood was a paddock. Uniforms, new subjects, language choice – what a challenge for my Mum and Dad, share dairy farmers when I was born then a move to the city. A job for Dad as a tram driver and Mum a stay-at-home mum (quite isolated) with three children under five.

I now live in Anglesea on the Surf Coast in Victoria three houses from the Great Ocean Road. (Visitors Welcome – Jetstar to Avalon).

I loved school. I loved everything about school – the teachers, the subjects, fellow students and sport, in particular athletics. Running fast gave me some credibility.

I finished Senior because, like many others, I took a Teaching Scholarship for Sub-Senior and Senior. Then off to Kelvin Grove for a year (a YEAR teacher training – imagine that to-day). A recommendation from Kelvin Grove saw me as a Physical Education student at the University of Queensland for three years. This meant teaching full time and attending University five nights a week and Saturday mornings, studying and preparing lessons to gain a Diploma of Physical Education by the end of 1959.

1960 saw me in Toowoomba teaching Physical Education (PE), but in September I married Bruce Barnett. Like all women at that time, I had to resign to marry. In 1961 I taught PE around Brisbane, but as a married woman there was no holiday pay etc. In November 1961 I gave birth to a lovely son Gregory. Hid my pregnancy for ages to keep working but eventually had to resign. But I was determined not to give up teaching entirely.

After some primary teaching and a very small lecture session in PE at the University of Queensland in 1962, I set off to Victoria in December 1962 with Bruce and Greg, for Bruce to continue working with the Shell Company at the refinery in Geelong.

Some secondary PE teaching at Belmont High in Geelong was followed by the birth of daughter Johanna. Another transfer for Bruce to Head Office in Melbourne saw us move to the capital and then the birth of Charles in Melbourne. Many years living and teaching in Melbourne in state secondary schools, and in that time I obtained a qualification up-grade to Applied Science Degree (PE). These were the years of the education of the children. I completed my teaching career as a Senior Teacher and part of the Administration Team at Montmorency Secondary College in Melbourne. Over the years I have managed to influence teachers of other subjects, like English, to appreciate the drama in sport and the value of physical well being.

Our son Greg is now owner and director of his own architecture business WMK Architecture and Design in Sydney, married to Andrea and step-father to Laura and Curtis. Johanna now a fashion designer and lecturer in Fashion at a Canberra University Campus in Melbourne married to Paul and mother of Eva and Lloyd. Charles a senior manager at the RMIT Library, married to Diane.

Bruce and I retired to Anglesea. We've had some overseas travel adventures. For ten years or so we played golf and I (foolishly) was Women's Captain at the Anglesea Golf Club. Health matters have ruled out golf and travel, so now a quiet life in a beautiful part of the world.



***Rhelma Pringle, star of the track 1955.***



**Sports Day at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds 1955,  
giving an idea of the proportion of boys to girls.**

## *Graham Baines*

We were gathered together at the Brisbane Sofitel Hotel on 15 April 2015 for our 60-years' reunion. Glen (Govey) Williamson was the lynchpin for organising the event. Having reached a reflective phase in our lives I guess that in the minds of many who attended the reunion, or even contemplated it, lurked the question "What does a reunion mean for me?" As she had done at the 2005 reunion, Bev Chadwick, our School Captain (Girls) gave emphasis in her presentation on the idea of the school itself having made a strong contribution to our personal development. While this may have been so for students who participated widely in non-academic activities it was not so for the likes of me, a shy, retiring type. Being somewhat short on confidence, during my BSHS days I got to know few beyond my form, S1, except for those I knew through membership of the Air Training Corps.

After leaving BSHS I forgot the school, my focus shifting to university associations and beyond. Nevertheless now in reflective mode I see those four years, and the people I met at BSHS as an important phase of my life, something that reunions have brought me to better appreciate. For me, then, a class of '55 reunion is more a chance to get to really know people from the days of my teens rather than being a celebration of BSHS as such.

### **Firewalls**

What a pity I had to bracket (Girls), above, in reference to Bev. We are all mindful of the rigid separation of girls and boys in our days at BSHS. As a result of this I got to meet very few girls during my four years there. It seems that becoming acquainted with them, at last, is one role of our class reunions.

Not only was there a "firewall" between girls and boys but, as I recall, there seemed also to be firewalls between different forms. Again, perhaps the only opportunity to break through such inter-form firewalls was through non-academic activities. My recollection is that the "brightest" boy students were placed in S1. But though that was my form in 1955 I certainly did not qualify on any academic criterion. Having left school at the end of Junior, after some weeks labouring in a Stanthorpe orchard, sheepishly I returned to school, meekly explained myself to our then Principal, A.B. Copeman, and was then allowed to proceed to Sub-Senior. But my restlessness persisted and during 1954 I was more likely to be found in the Public Library reading books on yoga or Buddhism than in a BSHS classroom. I recovered somewhat in 1955 though, with a weak Sub-Senior foundation I never quite made it up and, so, failed two of the subjects I needed for matriculation to study at University. (My absence from the S1 class photo that Benno Horwitz circulated a few weeks ago is evidence that truancy persisted even in Senior year).

### **The "Arty" group**

How, then, did I find myself in S1, among "the brightest". It seems that timetabling for those few of us who took the subjects Art, and Geometrical Drawing and Perspective - two subjects required for matriculation in architecture - was best met by tagging us onto SS1 and S1 forms. I cannot recall our classmates being resentful of this though one teacher, "Stumpy" Russell, did make it clear that he was not interested in what he labelled as the class "tail", that his intention was to focus his teaching on the "brightest".

Instead of Latin and other exotic subjects our small group of aspiring architects spent significant time in Room 23 under the tutelage of Miss Alma Platen (who recently celebrated her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday). Now, years later, though I find affinities with a number of my S1 colleagues the stronger association is with that small group of prospective architects focused on Room 23. I was delighted to find that five of our number, more than half of the boys in Senior Art, 1955, were present at the reunion. There were also some girls in that Art class but it seems the BSHS gender apartheid policy has worked so effectively on my mind that I am unable now to remember who they were (Please put up your hand if you were one of those).

It seems that all of my male colleagues in Art did, as I had at that time planned, continue on to study architecture. However during the weeks we waited on Senior results my keen interest in mountain climbing, biology and agriculture somehow brought about a shift in my preferences. I then enrolled at University of Queensland in Agricultural Science, moved on to a Master's in ecology in Canada and, later, a PhD in environmental physics in the UK. One way of keeping my brain active these days is through honorary university affiliations (University of Queensland, and University of Bergen, Norway) with social anthropology – linkages that derive from my interest in science in a social context, fostered by a career spent almost entirely in developing countries.



**The “Arty” group at 60<sup>th</sup> reunion, Sofitel Hotel Brisbane, 2015: Michael Bryce, Barrie Chadwick, *Graham Baines*, Neil Shinnars, Bob Gardner.**

## *Anne (Starr) Elliott*

State High brought some stability to my education as previously I had attended a total of seven primary schools, mostly in the country. I had to handle change, particularly social change. It didn't help that we lived on the northern fringes of Brisbane, making attending social events difficult. I found the teachers always treated me with respect, were patient and helpful, but in return they expected results, and in the end that was what I wanted too, although at times I was too unfocussed to see it. I will always remember Miss Hanger singing German songs. I used to like to join in. She tried to make the lessons interesting. But if a student overstepped the mark, she would go into drama-queen mode and turn on the theatrics!

In the 1950's the Queensland Government, in their forward planning, could see they would become desperately short of primary school teachers. To address this, an incentive was to give a small living allowance to students from Sub-Senior forward who made a signed commitment to become teachers. Since I had always wanted to be a primary teacher, this suited me just fine. I really enjoyed teaching, so much so, that I remember thinking how wonderful it was to be paid for doing what I enjoyed so much.

I have taught in Brisbane, North Queensland (where I met my husband), Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Sydney. In P.N.G. and the Solomon Islands, I taught at mission schools at lower high school level, but much older students, in some cases older than I was at the time. This was rather challenging, especially when programmes and resources were scant. These students already had a very basic knowledge of English. Most were anxious to learn and I was there to develop and expand their learning experience ready for College level. Some would become teachers, ministers of religion, government officers, managers of companies etc. Later I also taught in Sydney (north western suburbs). Considerable time was taken out of the workforce to care for my own family – two boys, both born in P.N.G.

When our boys were aged eight and five years we decided to return to Australia, Sydney as it turned out to be. In the time we had spent away, many things had changed, especially with the arrival of TV to every home, and the media and technology explosion. Teaching was different, too, but I enjoyed the challenge, the extra study, the more comprehensive work, the implementation of new methods and ideas, and the children (most of the time).

Now I am retired on the Gold Coast as are a number of past Brisbane State High students. Unfortunately my husband passed away with cancer thirteen years ago. I enjoy travel, watercolour painting (beginner), meeting up with friends, and helping with a couple of charities.

My greatest achievement I would say is my family – a loving, caring husband, two sons, each with a good profession, two lovely daughters-in-law, each with their own profession, and six beautiful grandchildren, the oldest of whom attends Sydney University. Then there are the many young children in whose early education I had a small part – hopefully opening their minds to a thirst for knowledge, and establishing a set of good values. Finally, in my view, it's lasting relationships that give us the best memories and most satisfaction.

[Photos: next page]





SENIOR GIRLS

Total Senior Girls 1955. They were streamed into two classes, S4 and S5. The boys classes were S1, S2, and S3. *Anne Starr* is in front row, 6<sup>th</sup> from right-hand end.



Eunice Hanger, whom *Anne (Starr) Elliott* remembers well.  
Miss Hanger taught German and Maths II.

## *Ray Beilby*

I'd done the Commercial Junior in a class of twelve at Charleville State School and it was said that I was bright and that I should do Senior. But there was a problem – money. This was solved, after a fashion, by a Teacher's Scholarship – £3 a week in Sub-Senior. As for a roof, my parents knew someone who knew a woman who “took boarders” and who, it turned out, ran, nightly, on what passed as my desk, the penny poker game for pom-pom slippers Paddington ladies. And so I was despatched in the hope that £3 a week would get me by. I sat on enrolment day overwhelmed, but I had the good fortune to find myself beside Pat Walpole, now Kratzke. QR Second-class sitter had brought me, somewhat dusky, from Charleville and I imagine that a similar conveyance had brought Pat, possibly a little more dusky, from Tully. Her presence cheered me up immensely.

I recall BSHS for little from the academic viewpoint – other than that I had the good fortune to have Edwin J. Balfe as my English teacher. It was fashionable to “hate” “Twarla” but he was a fine teacher. I enjoyed his lessons very much and, had I been discovered, I'd have blamed him for the presence under my desk of Chaucer when I really should have been attending to whatever it is they do in Maths classes, a matter to me then, as now, more of unconcern than mystery.

My greatest enjoyment of the school were the characters and there were plenty of them. I recognised a kind of “Bartholomew Fair”. Hugh Frederick Hopkinson – he held occasional revival meetings down the road on the steps of the Greek Orthodox Church, leading as he did tribes of jubilant Trabb's boys, all out for a good time. There was Colin Daddow, thespian – I recall the triumph of *HMS Pinafore* and his delight at the congratulatory telegram from the *Courier Mail* drama critic which Neil Wilson and I had so thoughtfully sent. There was the audacious red-head, Ronee Gay Bidgood, who eschewed black woollen stockings for what was alleged to be black silk. And I've never forgotten the magnificently named Giovanni Bruno Rosario Caltabiano whose wonderful name, poetry lost, was sadly shortened to Nana.

Off I went to Teacher's College at £6 a week and a period of academic road repair. First, there were the ravages caused by the mismatch between the Charleville Secondary Department and the BSHS curriculum to be attended to. Then, there was the matter of knowing a bit more about English than the Pass Degree offered and so to the M.A.

However, to begin, and with twelve months' training and at age nineteen, I began my time with the Department of Public Instruction at £800 a year less tax. I taught in a shed without a ceiling, splintered floors, a tin roof and tin walls on only one and a half sides – on a hill of pure sand. Then, when another school burnt down, I did time in the chook pavilion of the showgrounds. I survived colourless Principals, grand Directors with fine cv's, astounding “latest initiatives”, numerous legal threats, an attempted knifing and all manner of professional skulduggery. At one stage, I sought leave to undertake post-graduate studies but I was told “leave is not granted for that purpose”. What a mob! Forty years (a round figure) passed and I retired, a survivor, but with no gold watch.

It had been my intention to “do good” upon retirement. I ended up, quite by accident, in Hubei, China. I had the good fortune to find myself in a school that was filled with peasant children. These were generally from the dirt-poor villages and their families had borrowed, as the Chinese

do, through three generations in order to afford the money to pay the fees of this very humble private school. I soon realized that good intentions were not enough and so I returned to Australia and did a bit of part-time work to get money to get some of those kids through school.

It was on my first stint in China that I acquired my Chinese “son”. Winter came suddenly that year. I went over to the school that morning and there were the students all well rugged up except for one boy. I found first that he had no warm clothes. None. His one pair of trousers had belonged to his brother-in-law. His mother had died just before he came to the school (breast cancer, no treatment, died at home in the village, mid-summer, no pain relief). And there he stood, cold but protesting that he was warm enough. To admit otherwise was to lose face. His father had sent him off to school with only 120 RMB for food but this had long since run out and he was living on two meals a day of the cheapest rice. The problem had to be solved – and so it was. Today, he is a graduate of Queensland University in Software Engineering and has married “well”. He had what the Chinese accept so philosophically, luck.

I returned to China after getting various Hubei kids through school. Most of them are now successful businessmen, lawyers, teachers – and one is a rising official, a specialist in International Law, in the Foreign Ministry. I returned, intending to spend a short holiday in a Chinese school – which, after all, are Teacher Heavens. But this time, I found myself in a very modern, progressive province and in one of its richest and most beautiful small cities. I liked the school and they liked me and here I am fifteen years later, sort of retired once again (insofar as I ever intend to retire), actively involved in all that goes on in the school, maintaining the large rose garden I established and doing those outrageous things the Chinese would like to do if only they were foreign.

And so my dotage is not a bad career really.



**Ray Beilby with the last of his summer roses in China 2015.**

## *Desmond Berghofer*

What did it profit a boy or girl in the 1950s to pursue a Brisbane State High education? Sixty years on, the answer was writ large in the stories of achievement by the 1955 graduates who attended their 60 -year reunion at the Sofitel Hotel in Brisbane on 15 April, 2015. Accomplishments local and international in the professions, business, politics, public service, and academia were recounted. Sadly, some of the achievements had to be reported posthumously, but they were none the less outstanding for that. Aging memories reached back to interpret what it was about their State High education that laid the groundwork for life's success. Good teaching, modelling of good character, insistence on excellence, and commitment to hard work were the generally recognized ingredients.

Of course, there was more than a little good fun, poor judgment, and plain stupidity (mostly reported by boys) mixed into the pie, which makes it all the more remarkable that so much could be achieved by such a motley crew.

In my own case, my thorough academic preparation at State High saw me through Teachers Training College and a BA from the University of Queensland and three years of primary school teaching followed by four years of high school teaching at Church of England Grammar School in Brisbane (the nemesis "Churchie" from high school days). After that a year in Europe, followed by a stint at the Commonwealth Office of Education in Sydney, and marriage to an Adelaide girl, saw me on my way to Canada to pursue post-graduate work at the University of Alberta. Along the way I held a Principal's position for two years in a small-town high school before settling in to university again, eventually emerging with a PhD in Educational Administration in 1972.

After that, my career kept me in Alberta for sixteen years where I joined the civil service in the Department of Advanced Education in Edmonton, where, at that time, we were developing the Junior College system and expanding the university system. They were heady days of expanding budgets and creation of new initiatives. As Assistant Deputy Minister I was extensively involved, in addition to my Alberta work, in representing Canada at UNESCO conferences in Paris, missions to China, and other international activities.

I completed that career in 1988, and with a second marriage to Canadian neuropsychologist, Dr. Geraldine Schwartz (Gerri), moved to Vancouver to work with Gerri on building the Vancouver Learning Centre, a unique, science-based private initiative founded by Gerri in 1983 for rehabilitation of students with serious learning difficulties. This is inspiring, life-saving work. Through another company, Creative Learning International, we launched a leadership seminar service for business executives and government officials, culminating in the creation in 1997 of the Institute for Ethical Leadership in Vancouver. All of these ventures are ongoing as we work to transition them to younger leadership.

Paralleling this professional work, I returned in 1992 to my State High roots and love of English literature (instilled in me 40 years earlier through the excellent teaching of Mr. Noonan) and I published my first novel, *The Visioneers: A Courage Story about Belief in the Future*. Thus began a third phase to my life that continues to this day, in which I have become acutely aware that the achievements of my generation were made within an economic and energy paradigm that

cannot be sustained into the future. In several other published works and a writing project just now beginning I am seeking to give voice to a new story about how humanity must learn to live on the planet if the best achievements of civilization are not to be lost. I also published in 2010, mainly for my Canadian grandchildren, a memoir (called *Growing Up Grandpa*) of my early life growing up on a farm on the Darling Downs and moving to Brisbane at age ten. Such memories are too precious to be lost.

As I enter a seventh decade of post-high school life, and think deeply about the prospects for the twelve grandchildren shared by Gerri and me, I can think of nothing more important to do for those of my generation who are left, than to use our knowledge and experience to honour our high school roots by continuing to contribute in every way we can to the future of those who are following us.



***Des Berghofer* in high school days.**



***Des and wife, Gerri, helicoptering in Hawaii 2011.***

## *Anne (Vickery) Gay*

The years I spent at Brisbane Sate High School with the disciplines of education that were in place then, stood me in good stead for the demanding years of university study. Self discipline was the aim of education at BSHS. The school provided a solid grounding for me to face the challenges of life beyond formal education, namely a rewarding career, raising a family, and being part of the community where I lived.

Study at the University of Queensland for four years earned me a degree in Science and a Diploma in Education and I embarked on a career in High School teaching with the Department of Education. First placement was Charters Towers. Quite a shock after Brisbane! I had seven science classes (chemistry and physics). A hectic timetable as there were no teacher aides or laboratory assistants in those days. After two years I thought I'd earned a change. I applied for and received a transfer to Kingaroy State High School. I taught all levels of chemistry and physics with some general science when year Eight was added to the high school. I was learning astronomy, biology and geology a few lessons ahead of the students. Not ideal! I had a few maths classes and I really enjoyed that as maths was my favourite subject.

I had a few months at The Gap in Brisbane before marrying Gordon Gay, a Kingaroy farmer, in 1967. We farmed at Booie (outside Kingaroy), at Mt Murchison (near Biloela), Wooroolin (north of Kingaroy), and Coolabunia (south of Kingaroy). We have grown crops of wheat, barley, corn, sorghum, sunflowers, soya, and navy beans, millet (got to feed the birds), and a few adzuki and mung beans. At times some cattle. We still live on the Coolabunia farm though it is now owned by Stanwell Corporation, who bought many farms round here for the coal underground.

Farming is a wonderful environment in which to raise a family. We have two boys and two girls who love to come home to the farm though they have all followed other careers. None of them live nearby so we don't see our grandchildren too often. We have four boys and one girl with twins expected in September.

Retirement is not a word in a farmer's dictionary so we still do a bit. The bookwork keeps my brain active. For relaxation I enjoy patchwork. We have a computer but it doesn't really interest me. I'd rather be sewing. Only limited travel. The UK to see brother Bruce in Edinburgh and son Peter in London. He was driving Contiki buses for a season. Then New Zealand and Norfolk Is. Happy to be at home now with short trips to visit family or friends.



**Margaret Teakle and Anne Vickery, Speech Day 1955.**

## *Michael Bryce AM*

The tram from Camp Hill let me off at Somerville House from where I walked down Vulture Street to school. That walk was the closest we got to State High girls except perhaps for Art and French.

How privileged we were to have the State's best teachers, not to mention the brainiest students. Alas I was not one of them. However, I did manage a Commonwealth Scholarship and at seventeen walked into the hallowed cloisters of the Great Court at St Lucia. We were shown around by a third-year architecture student wearing an academic gown and smoking a pipe. So this is what a university student is?

This is where the State High experience might have ended but for two things: the Air Training Corps and ART. My life has been defined by these two opportunities. From the moment I put on that blue uniform and my Mum sewed on my shoulder flashes I was an air cadet, devoted to the Air Force. Marching suited me, flights in Lincoln bombers and Wirraway trainers and rifle shooting got me in. Imagine today going to school in the tram with your 303. I was to become the senior Cadet Pilot Officer at 9 Flight. I wanted to go to the RAAF Academy like so many of my friends, but ART got in the way. And I chose architecture.

I loved Art and by Senior enjoyed some modest success under the inspiring teaching of Miss Alma Platen who introduced us to Goya and Tom Roberts and Picasso and Vincent Van Gogh. Miss Platen will turn 100 this year after a lifetime of teaching.

At the University of Queensland we had the widest scope to learn about life. Physics, Geology, Structural Mechanics, drawing, and the history of architecture. We watched French movies in the day and partied at smokos at night. We ridiculed the police in Commem week and went on inter-versities to other unis. Such wonderful crazy years.

While studying at night in our final three years, we worked as student draftsmen in government or private practice. I consider myself fortunate to have worked at Hayes and Scott and Theo Thynne and Associates, both breeding grounds for some of the State's best architects. On graduation I worked for Peddle Thorpe and Walker as site architect on a high rise building. Here I learned to respect builders and workers for their practical knowledge and support.

My next stroke of luck was to marry a blonde law student called Quentin Strachan, and not long after embark on the SS Canberra for Europe, with a new baby and a job working on the design of a stadium for the Athens Olympics. At Manning and Clamp in Richmond, Surrey I became recognised as the guy who could draw a bit and suddenly found my perspective drawings in an exhibition in the Royal Academy. Thank you Miss Platen.

We had another child in London and back in Oz within five years we had three more. Quentin's career was taking its independent course as a human rights lawyer. My architecture practice was turning to graphic design. Corporate identity was a new field and soon to be my life's work: graphic design for the 1982 Commonwealth Games; World Expo, Japan; Expo '88, Brisbane; and finally as Principal Design Advisor to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

In 1988 Bryce Design merged with a British design firm, famous for the Harrod's logo, Minale Tattersfield, with offices worldwide and its head office only a few streets away from where we had lived in the 'sixties. Thus began an international phase of my work, especially in sport branding.

I have maintained my links with the RAAF and am a member of several air force associations and patron of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) and RAAF Association and Combat Support Association.

Quentin's career is a matter of public record until she retired as Governor General in 2014. This has been a great privilege and a rewarding one, but it has allowed me in some way to pay back what my education at State High gave me. We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last year but with eleven grandchildren one cannot be fully retired.

Thank you State High and the Class of '55.





## *Joan (Cook) Jennings*

Both my parents valued education and were keen for me to do well at school. My father, born in Yorkshire, migrated to Australia aged twelve. He wanted an academic education for me at a time when many girls were not so encouraged. Local comprehensive state high schools were only just starting to be established in Brisbane then, so I enrolled at Brisbane State High School in 1952 and travelled from St Lucia and back every day.

How lucky I was to have the teachers I had! Most of my teachers were clever women, all dedicated, all unmarried. I am particularly grateful to Miss Hanger who produced *HMS Pinafore*, a highlight of my experience at State High. I was a member of the chorus, one of Sir Joseph Porter's "sisters and his cousins and his aunts", and thoroughly enjoyed singing all the songs. I can recall them still. Of course we were in costume for this operetta but our regulation school uniform in those days was rather uncomfortable to wear in the summer with thick black stockings and a hat and gloves worn when in public.

After State High, I completed an Arts Degree at the University of Queensland and a Diploma in Education. I was appointed in 1960 to Pomona Rural School as a secondary teacher where I had a challenging year. That was the year I turned 21. Incidentally, female teachers were still paid less than male teachers. With a Psychology major in my degree I was fortunate to secure a secondment to the Research and Guidance Branch of the Department of Education where I worked for the next four years until I married Bill, a secondary teacher, and moved to Wollongong, NSW. When I became engaged in 1964 I was sometimes asked why get married when you have a profession?

Eventually, with stops and starts, among them having three children and seven years out of the workforce, then part-time work as a resource teacher and school counsellor, I taught English and History at Keira High School in Wollongong for 20 years until retirement in the year 2000. Along the way I coached and adjudicated debating and public speaking and facilitated mock trials. Which brings me again to BSHS. Looking back, I realise that the School had a strong effect on the person I became and the teacher I was. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to influence the lives of so many young people.

Education for women is, in my view, of great importance to society. At around the age of 25 I joined the Australian Branch of the International Federation of University Women, now Graduate Women International, and have remained a member. On moving to Wollongong I was able to meet like-minded women and made lasting friendships. Currently I am the convenor of the Book Interest Group, Gold Coast Branch, Graduate Women Queensland. Our organisation has always been involved in furthering the education of women and continues to award grants to female university students.

Since retirement I have been involved in many different activities both in Wollongong and on the Gold Coast, where Bill and I moved in 2004. We have also had a number of trips overseas, especially to England to visit our elder son. He did postgraduate study at Cambridge and has lived in London for many years.

I know I have had a similar life to that of many of the girls from our class of 1955 who have often worked in different areas from most of the boys. We were the women who as a group first

juggled marriage and family with a career. In a sense we were pioneers, on the cusp of the feminist movement of the 1960s and '70s when women really began to fly. Ours was not an easy life, but rewarding.



**Joan at Currumbin 1958 with Beverley Chadwick,  
free after third-year university exams!**



**Joan with Dr Alba Romano (from Argentina) at International  
Federation of University Women conference, Brisbane 2009.**

## *Geoff Burchill*

In looking back at why I have a soft spot for BSHS, with only one academic state high school in Brisbane when we started in 1952, I was fortunate that my parents (once dairy farmers who did it hard in the Depression) had moved me out of the two-teacher Rocklea State School to Yeronga where I eventually got to sit in third place beside Clive Hildebrand (Rhodes Scholar) and Lawrie Copley. With my scout master (who later took a PhD in cattle tick research with the CSIRO) opening doors to my Queens Scout badge later in 1954, I looked forward to what new worldly things BSHS could offer (famous for most Open Scholarship winners), if not having time for cricket and football at Senior level.

Like many others, my Senior years were assisted by a Teacher Scholarship. As a student in SJ9 and S3, I remember teachers striking some of our classmates – a blackboard jungle within the school (but with only good larrikin intentions). But having the unfortunate experience of myself as a Prefect striking a lanky Sub-Senior lout on school parade who spat out obscenities loud and clear as I walked past (I saw a blood-red haze and he was out cold), I thought better about teaching, paid back the allowances and took up the only career guidance at the school from Buster Boylan to become an engineer.

I did well enough in Senior to be enrolled two years later in Medicine but was forced to drop out under the terms of a Cadetship with the PMG where I was very unhappy with radio circuits and telephone exchanges. Geography and physics were always my best subjects – civil engineering offered intellectual challenge while making things happen on the ground.

Eventually in 1960, I began work with a consulting structural engineer while qualifying in Civil Engineering through the Queensland Institute of Technology. I was engineering designer in the early 1960s for many of the Brisbane boom buildings of that time, first since the 1930s; biggest was the new Main Roads building for £3million, three times the cost of any other building of the time. This was a great learning experience for building a consulting firm in the Gold Coast from 1966 that grew into Burchill & Partners and associated companies with civil and structural engineers, town planners, architects, market researchers, financial analysts and project managers. There were 100 plus staff, some fifteen at times in Malaysia and five or six in Tokyo, a forerunner of the huge multi-disciplinary firms today.

The Gold Coast offered rare opportunities to master plan large land holdings as the Gold Coast grew rapidly from 66,000 population in 1966 towards today's 600,000 plus. This required many visits to the US to learn risk management for new communities and resorts from greenfields starts – Kooralbyn, Robina, Helensvale in the 1970s, Sanctuary Cove, Hope Island Resort, Royal Pines, Palm Meadows in the 1980's. I made 35 visits in five years to Japan until the Japanese bubble burst, then moved to South East Asia. As the Gold Coast went off the boil in the 1990s, in 1995 I was retained in Malaysia as International Project Manager for a harbour city scheme. This provided an opportunity for setting up a sister-city relationship with the Gold Coast for shared knowledge in building a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Asian resort harbour city of 500,000 residents and tourists. It was to follow the model of what was to be the Multifunction Polis city of the future in the Gold Coast conceived in 1990 with joint Australian and Japanese government sponsorship. I

retired in 2000 and wrote my history of the Gold Coast, *Passion, Power and Prejudice: A Magic City in the Making* (2005).

Today, modern education is one of my greatest interests as a Council Member since 1986 for the launch of a new private school, All Saints Anglican at Mudgeeraba, making some new history for the future of private education. I've been living on the Gold Coast for 49 years, married for 52 years, and have a son and two daughters and three granddaughters.

One of my fondest memories of BSHS was the close friendship with another S3 student, Frank Ness, a Hungarian refugee. Frank's father was a Member of Parliament in Hungary before the war. Their escape is a horror story but landing in Australia and moving to a small fibro home at Coopers Plains was not easy either. Frank's family moved to Melbourne in 1956 where he took Arts/Political Science with First Class Honours and the University Medal. As the first non-Australian-born appointee to DFAT, Prime Minister Menzies wanted to look at this character. Frank went to Washington to add Spanish to German and Hungarian, then to Argentina at the time of its rapid political change. He was recognised as a trouble shooter, including at the Asian desk during the Vietnam War period. He worked in South Africa, Spain, The Hague, New Zealand, and as Regional Director for Victoria. He lives today in Melbourne with some disabilities, swimming for relief, two daughters, four grandsons and a passion for classical music.



**Frank Ness and Geoff Burchill 1955.**

## *Pat (Walpole) Kratzke*

I attended BSHS for only my Sub-Senior and Senior years, coming from a small high school top in Tully which went as far as Junior. I had a Teacher's Scholarship and my parents sent me to Brisbane to board with my grandparents. My first day at BSHS was overwhelming. I knew one person, Ray Beilby, whom I had met when we enrolled. Then fortune smiled and I spotted Denise Grose, also new to BSHS, who had been in my class at primary school in Tully some years before. I then teamed up with another kid from the country, Jeanette Briggs, who remained a good friend throughout. I found the girls at BSHS very friendly and soon felt comfortable. I did play a lot of sport, mainly hockey, athletics and tennis, and Lola Green had co-opted me to play in her softball club. It was a pity I did not apply the same energy to my studies.

The teachers at BSHS were much older, more experienced, and much more removed than those at my previous school. The culture was also different. At BSHS there was tradition and an emphasis on success. If one had had a good grounding in a subject then one should have succeeded. The teachers at my previous school were much younger and because of the smaller numbers and the small school building (two rooms) more accessible. We were monitored more closely. This was probably because some of my previous teachers had to teach subjects for which they had not specifically been trained. I do recall one teacher at BSHS, Mr McDonald, who sometimes took an after school tutorial for those who needed it. To be fair, I never went out of my way to ask for help during my Brisbane years.

I liked the life of a GPS school, though the hat, gloves and stockings got to me a bit. I remember the day the boys put Mr Goossens' car between two posts (I think). I seem to recall there was a special day each year when the cadets cut loose with highjinks to the delight of my friends and me.

After State High I went on to the then Kelvin Grove Teachers' College and graduated as a primary school teacher and with a recommendation to begin the Diploma Course in Physical Education at the University of Queensland along with Rhelma Pringle, Ian Mavor, and Jeanette Townsend. I taught at the Indooroopilly State School for two years whilst pursuing three years of evening and Saturday morning studies at University. My third year of teaching was on Physical Education Staff in Brisbane. After graduation with a Dip Phys Ed from UQ, I was transferred to the Physical Education Staff for the Rockhampton area where my fellow Phys Eds were BSHS past students Dennis Donnelly and Ken Vassella.

After two years in Rockhampton (which I enjoyed) I took a break and went to England where I taught general subjects at the primary school level and PE at High School level. As this was mostly relieving teaching I did not really enjoy nor gain much from the experience. Fortunately for me I picked up a job with Australia House promoting Australian goods which was really enjoyable as I was paid to travel around the UK on a team with other Australian girls, many of whom are still my friends fifty plus years on. I also had plenty of opportunity to travel in Europe and Ireland as it was easy to take time off.

On my return home I returned to primary school teaching general subjects and taught at Cloncurry, New Farm and the Camp School at Tallebudgerra before moving on to become a Lecturer in Health and Physical Education at the then Kedron Park Teachers' College where the

Head of Department was Rita Watts, who had been our PE Teacher at BSHS. During this time I had again enrolled at the University of Queensland, this time in the Bachelor of Education Studies course, which I started as an evening student and graduated as an external student as my husband, a School Principal, had been transferred to Hervey Bay.

In the ensuing years I returned to Primary Teaching at Urangan Point, Cunnamulla and Woodridge North before being co-opted onto an advisory teaching/curriculum team in the Brisbane South Education Region. After that, I continued my career as a Deputy Principal at Mabel Park State School and then Wynnum North State School before moving on through Relieving Principal positions to end my career as the Principal of the East Brisbane Primary School.

My husband (Barry) and I have travelled widely and intend to keep on doing so. My main interests now are community theatre, golf, keeping up with friends and family. I enjoyed my profession in education and am grateful to all those who helped me achieve my goals.



**“L” for Lawson House: *Pat*, second from right at back, was an asset to Lawson’s sports team.**

***Back row: Tric Heathwood, Glen Govey, Bev Chadwick, Pat Walpole, Annelies Matti.***  
***Front row: Jeanette Briggs, Allison Hoffmann, Pam Wendt, Noleen Jaffray, Eileen Baumgartner, Lyn Craig. “P” was for Paterson House.***

## *Barrie Chadwick*

Written on 27 May 2015

Today – 60 years after High School and 50 years after moving to Canada – I am celebrating my birthday and that of my twin sister Beverley, at our age of 78. My memories of Brisbane State High School have dimmed considerably and for me, in Vancouver, long-distanced by time and space, the memories have to be coaxed out of my brain. But the memories do come, of teachers who were fully committed to instruct us and by their example to show how we should conduct ourselves.

Politeness, honesty, forthrightness, respect for one another, the value of hard work, the enjoyment of sport, the love of art, music, poetry, drama, and the avoidance of phoniness and egotism were things we could observe in the persons of our teachers and were characteristics we could emulate.

Those memorable teachers for me were: Miss Platen (Art), Mr Noonan (English/Poetry), Miss Grimes (Music), Mr Russell (Mathematics), Mr Balfe (Drama), Mr Atwell (English/Debating), Mr Wolfe (cricket). To this day, I keep in contact with Miss Platen, who is now 99 years young!

At the end of my final year at BSHS I applied for an art scholarship but this fell through, when all art scholarships were rescinded by the Labor government in 1956. Accordingly I changed my plans, studied architecture and became an architect.

In 1965 I emigrated to Canada and worked in Toronto on a project designed by the famous architect Mies Van Der Rohe, from Chicago. At that time in Toronto I was also involved in some musical comedy. This was a passion of mine stemming from the days at State High, with Miss Grimes, Mr Balfe and *HMS Pinafore*, in which I played the role of Sir Joseph Porter. Through a musical connection I had in Toronto I was invited to sing in the chorus of Puccini's opera *Turandot*. Naturally I was delighted, and dearly wanted to accept that invitation. However, I had also accepted an invitation to travel to Chicago to visit Mies Van Der Rohe. What would be best for my career? Certainly it must be to visit the famous architect. I sadly said goodbye to my idea of singing in *Turandot*.

Accordingly, in August of 1969, with my wife Alice and Stephen my son and with Linda my daughter of one month, together in our VW Bug we travelled to Chicago. In Mies's office, after duly admiring drawings and models of buildings, and after some sociable chat, I asked my contact who worked at the office to introduce me to Mr Van Der Rohe. He said, "I am sorry to tell you Mr Van Der Rohe has been very ill and he died last week"! I never got to meet the famous architect and I never got to sing in *Turandot* – so much for my planning skills! P.S. As we drove out of Chicago I stopped the car and I danced with my wife in the street, in tribute to Tony Bennett and his song "Chicago".

Forty-six years on, I have retired from architecture and begun my artwork anew. I am eighteen again pursuing my dream of being an artist. I have just completed "Bushland Pool", a scene reminiscent of my beloved Mary River. You may view this at my website [www.barriechadwick.com](http://www.barriechadwick.com) [Paintings next page]

**Two of *Barrie Chadwick's* paintings**



**His “beloved Mary River” near Kenilworth, Queensland.**



***Bow River Valley, Alberta, late afternoon sun illumining the peaks, one of many Canadian scenes painted by *Barrie*.***



## *Lawrence G. (Lawrie) Copley*

I arrived at State High aged only twelve and a half. It was like being surrounded by older siblings, who helped me grow up. This was a post-war era of limited resources. My recollection of SJ-10 was large class size, and teachers struggling to impart quality education. The emphasis was on essential content, very different from the broader education in today's high schools, at least where I live in the Boston area (USA). What a difference after 60 years. At our local high school, class sizes rarely exceed 25, and every classroom is equipped with a "smart-board" which is internet connected. No more chalk dust. No more duster to throw at wayward student. Teachers that come to mind from the Junior years: Mr. Barrell (no nonsense – Chemistry); Mr. Atwell (always smiling – Maths); Miss Pigram (the boys all had a crush – French).

By the time we reached Sub-Senior, the classroom environment improved – more motivated students and smaller class sizes. Still, the emphasis was on core requirements rather than enrichment. Our Maths II class was taught by Mr. Boylan ("Buster"), who was also Assistant Principal. The Principal (Arthur B. Copeman) was in ill health, and frequently absent. On many occasions the school secretary would come to our classroom and drag Mr. Boylan away to deal with some urgent matter. This was a good opportunity for us to develop skills of independent learning. Other teachers that come to mind from the Senior years: Mr. Russell ("Stumpy" – Maths), Mr. Wolfe (very strict – Physics); Mr. Pryce-Davies (enthusiastic – Chemistry).

Overall, despite the limited educational resources at that time, State High gave us a solid grounding that equipped us well for whatever path we took.

Outside of the classroom there were several activities that I enjoyed. Much to the horror of my mother, who had lived in wartime England, I joined the army cadet corps. This was a good experience that taught me some discipline, and also an awareness of the role of the military in society. Not being much of an athlete, I still participated in track, and continued with recreational running in adulthood. Also, took up rowing while at Uni. In the arts, I enjoyed being part of the chorus in *HMS Pinafore*. This was one of the few opportunities to get to know those of the other gender. I think the segregation of the sexes was unfortunate, but customary in that era.

For me, the most valuable extracurricular activity was the debating club. Learning how to make persuasive arguments, thinking on your feet, and feeling comfortable making public presentations are very useful skills. They stand me in good stead as a consulting engineer when I make public presentations or testify as an expert witness. I actually thrive on being cross-examined by a hostile lawyer – adrenaline rush.

So, what did I do after State High? Following the advice of the guidance counselor, I enrolled at the University of Queensland in mechanical engineering. This was a good choice that I have never regretted. After graduating, I worked for a year or so at Queensland Railways – good practical experience, but not my future. I was fortunate in receiving an opportunity to study at Harvard University in the Boston area, and spent four years there earning a Ph.D. Following that I returned to Brisbane for two years, but yearned for the better opportunities in engineering research that were available in the USA at that time. So I went back to Boston, and put down roots.

Later I became disenchanted with the research environment. So I have made a career here as a consulting engineer specializing in acoustics – mostly in the construction industry – making buildings sound good. Outside of work, my passion for many years was sailing, owning a small sloop. I have done quite a bit of volunteering. Having become involved in the sport of rowing, I eventually became director of the *Head of the Charles Regatta*, a large rowing event held in Boston on the Charles River each October. More recently I have been on the board of *Amigos de las Americas*. This organization sends young people to Latin America to live with local families and do volunteer work in their host communities. Two of my sons participated in that program.

Much more I could say, but this will suffice to give a glimpse of what I have been doing in the last 60 years.



**Above: Lawrie as a Cadet in 1955, and below: at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 2012.**



## *Marguerite (Betty Marguerite Bristow) Larwill*

My mother was the one with ambition for me. She wanted me to go to university to become a physiotherapist (whatever that was!). Everyone I knew left to work after primary school, but I was willing to give high school a go with the promise of being given a dog when I passed Junior. A cousin and I passed Senior, and Grandfather gave him a guinea (over \$30 today) and not me. That made me an instant Feminist. I enjoyed State High and still have friends made at high school. As my primary school was a girls' school, although a state school, it was a novelty to at least have boys in sight.

I did become a physiotherapist and specialised in different areas according to the stages of family life – Obstetrics (during the child-bearing years, four sons), Orthopaedics (during the fractures and football), and on to Rehabilitation.

My non-professional community life and family life have been very fulfilling also. Travelling, hiking, Book Club, running a large craft group (up to 90 people in classes for almost 30 years). Since retirement, I have completed international qualifications for teaching English as a second language. I went immediately to inland China to teach at a university Summer School to experience what it is like for my students, in a strange country with no local language. In Brisbane (Logan and Greenslopes) I have taught as a volunteer. I was a puppeteer for Camp Quality giving anti-bullying performances in schools (Leukaemia Foundation), and now have completed training as a guide at the Queensland Art Gallery and GOMA (QAGOMA).

At high school I was rather immature and drifted through, but Brisbane State High School certainly began a love of learning which I have never lost.



**Marguerite, puppeteer for the Leukaemia Foundation.**

## *Darrell Desbrow*

Looking back it seems to me now that my relationship with BSHS, even from outset was, and still is, somewhat semi-detached. Certainly my time there seemed somehow to pass me by strangely without much impact; indeed scarcely contact. Partly that might be because the lad that was me then was shy, introverted, gauche, bookish, and definitely not sporty (a trait nurtured thereafter) and I dare say gave to others the impression of my being not a little remote, perhaps priggish I imagine. Thus in the normal turn of events I would not respond to an invitation (such as has been given) to set down some thoughts on my school days at BSHS. A remark coming from Graham Baines' reflections has spurred me into response, however. More of that later . . .

An amusing (to me at least) anecdote to illustrate just how disconnected I had been from the school environment was provided by the run-up to the 55th (previous) reunion of the 1955 Senior Class. Unexpectedly, in remote Caledonia, up pops a communication from a certain Lloyd Hawkins announcing the event. I had not the slightest idea who this Lloyd Hawkins was but convinced myself that he had not been in S1, wrote and told him so and asked for identification. Quite reasonably as it turned out I got back a somewhat understandably peeved response reminding me that he was School Captain of Boys, Captain of this, that and the other sports team, and Commanding Officer (perhaps Commander-in-Chief or Field-Marshal; I forget the technicalities) of the Cadet Corps in general and of the Intelligence Platoon in particular.

All this was news to me but the latter high office allowed me to infer Lloyd as the likely person responsible for my humiliating reduction to the ranks in the Cadet Corps. By dint of serious application contrary to my nature and inclination I had risen meteorically over four years in the Intelligence Platoon from the ranks to Lance Corporal. In a trice all that was swept away by this Lloyd Hawkins, I deduced but could not remember, after a moment of insubordination on my part deriving from my being inveterately unbidable and unwilling to take orders judged by me to be unreasonable or simply silly (as most military orders were I thought). But that is another amusing story...

I mean no disrespect to Lloyd (now sadly deceased) in relating this tale but merely use it by way of illustration of just how detached I must have been from day-to-day school life.

Back to Graham Baines' reflections. He writes, disapprovingly I judge, that one teacher "Stumpy" Russell did make it clear that he was not interested in what he labelled as the class tail, that his intention was to focus his teaching on the brightest. (Bye-the-bye was he "Stumpy" or rather as I seem to remember "Monkey"? Certainly his physical aspect was scarcely worse than unappealing and decidedly simian; but could we have been so cruel? I dare say we very well could have been!)

I cannot gainsay Graham but I write here in defence, admiration and gratitude of Mr Russell who taught S1 Mathematics I and certainly inspired me to take the study of Pure Mathematics seriously. Accordingly I graduated with First Class Honours and University Medal in Mathematics at the University of Queensland, went on to do post-graduate study at Trinity College, Cambridge and got a lecturing job in the Mathematics Department of the University of Edinburgh where I saw out my professional life.

But the effective teaching of Mathematics to the willing was only one aspect of this teacher's ability and character. His knowledge outwith Mathematics was equally impressive and he would regale us with his reading, music, theatre and artistic interests and adventures; if only he could be diverted, as he usually easily could, from the teaching of his subject. That enthralled me coming as I did from a background where these things were not emphasised and opportunities were restricted. On one occasion I recall him reading the class an entire Stephen Leacock short story that he himself had read the night before and another time a story about (yes!) monkeys by H. H. Munro (Saki). I thought him then as a student, and still do, one of the most erudite and urbane individuals, looks notwithstanding, that I have encountered. Here are two illustrative anecdotes.

His wife bought him for a birthday at auction a Morocco bound edition of an early 20th century edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica which he set about with a will to read all through. Often he would recount what he had read the night before art, literature, biography, science whatever, all of course with a somewhat dated but still fascinating flavour. He calculated that he should need to read six pages a night in order to cover the whole contents before he was a certain age. Unfortunately his early death must have put paid to that.

Admirably he could tell stories against himself too. The Master at Ipswich Grammar where Mr Russell was a schoolboy had a tradition that he (the Master) would take all the boys bush-walking to relax their brains before sitting the Senior Examination. *Mens sana in corpore sano*, I suppose. Mr Russell refused to go, preferring instead to revise. The outcome was that the top student in the whole state in the exam went bush-walking while Mr Russell came second. Notwithstanding he recommended revision right up to the exam!

Good memories of a good teacher at BSHS.



**Darrell punting on the Cam, Cambridge 1960s.**



**Darrell at home in Scotland, near Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire, 2015.**

## *Norma (Moore) Kukovec*

Having passed the Scholarship Examination in our final year at primary school, we then progressed to high school, with free education. Our generation had wonderful mothers. You went out to play in the morning and then came home at “Tea Time”. I used to ride my bike to a deep quarry a few suburbs away and swim, then swing from the rope attached to a tree. Another day I would ride to the other side of town through the huge intersection at Woolloongabba and go to Davies Park Baths. With this freedom we were taught independence and confidence.

I did BSHS's academic course. In my first year I perceived the general opinion was that no one did any homework, came the end of year exams and I observed that the results showed that all the other girls must have been geniuses. Thus I then had to knuckle down and study. This taught me a good lesson for the rest of my life.

Passing Junior I received a Teacher's Scholarship. Reflecting the *times*, my father objected on the grounds: 1) that I would be a Blue Stocking and never marry, and 2) that often young women teachers had to go into the country and sleep behind hessian-partitioned accommodation! So I went to work in insurance – a whole floor of young women at desks doing clerical work supervised by older unmarried women. After one year I went to work in the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac) in the suburbs, where I learned all facets of banking. On the move again, I transferred to the head office. This also was like the insurance company, a whole room of unmarried females working accounting machines, supervised by married men. In this period, women when they married became housewives and mothers so there were few married women in the workforce. Having the branch experience, I relieved holiday/sick leave staff in branches. The accommodation at country branches was in country “Temperance” hotels (pubs without alcohol) mainly accommodating travelling salesmen.

In 1959 I applied for one year leave of absence and went by ship to London from Brisbane. Five wonderful weeks later, I arrived. I lived in Birmingham and worked as a temp accounting-machine operator for one month. As it was December, the fog would descend on the city from 3pm and visibility was reduced to 300cm. I moved to London and lived in Notting Hill Gate working as a temp again at High Holborn and ultimately at Park Lane. Australians had a wonderful reputation as hard workers. I toured the UK, Ireland, and Europe.

On returning to Brisbane, I was given the job previously done by men – Examiner – due to my branch training. As well, I did relief work within the bank and branches. Eighteen months later, I applied for a transfer to Melbourne, where again I did relief work in the city and country. Then I met my match and married.

On marriage we bought an old Edwardian (1901) weatherboard house greatly in need of repair in an inner suburb. Both of us preferred inner suburb living. In 1963 banks lent money mainly for new houses in the suburbs. After ten years of working and renovating and now having two children (seven and five), my husband had a heart attack. If you got cancer or had a heart attack in 1973 the general opinion was that death was imminent. He was home a month and, harking back to BSHS when we girls lunched sitting in Musgrave Park next to the path dividing Boys

and Girls, there used to be winos and bag ladies walking through the park on the path, and I determined then I would never be in that position. So I sought a job.

I obtained a job as cashier in a hotel/restaurant working 6pm to 2am with free taxi home, as at that time mostly women did not drive or have their own car. In 1975 I applied for a public service job as a computer operator, I was 38 years old. A few token females in a group of twenty were chosen for Telecom. The hours after nine months training course were to be 24/7, which enabled us both to cover minding the children without outside help. The position was with equal pay! I progressed up the ranks. Many colleagues were male, with a degree fresh out of university, aged approximately 22 years. A primary teacher had written in my autograph book "Be good sweet maid, and Let who ever can be clever" etc (Charles Kingsley). Now in a senior position I found this invaluable in my relations with the bright younger ones. As there is constant change in IT and it requires continuing study, it was an area which challenged me and which I enjoyed. My husband defied all predictions, returned to work, has had a full life and lives on. Choose a partner with the same values, work as a team, and with luck grow old together.

BSHS was an important two-year period of my life and I am immensely proud to have had the opportunity to attend.



**Two of our dedicated teachers, Miss Marjorie Rahmann, whom *Norma* specially admired, and Miss Nesta Brown.**



***Norma (Moore) Kukovec* and *Geraldine (Woolley) Morris* at the 60<sup>th</sup> reunion, Sofitel Hotel Brisbane, 15 April 2015. *Norma* and *Geraldine* left State High after Junior but the School had a lasting influence on them both.**

## *Bob Gardner*

I might have gone to Churchie. They had “Boof” and Spitballs. State High had “Buster” and Spitballs. That was the talk between Grade Seven boys in 1951 on the verge of what was one of the biggest transitions to an eventful adult life. Anyway, I went to State High. It was just a short walk along Annerley Road to the Dutton Park tram and on to high school. I shall leave the gory (or should that be expectoratory) details of spitballs to your imagination and my fellow correspondents, but they were enterprising, they were creative, they were disgusting.

Part of the allure of State High was the rumour that the school got the best teaching staff. The rumours proved correct. The names of Barrell, Maize, Attwell, Noonan, Russell, Ernst, Hunt, McCorkell etc. all conjure up a pinnacle in education. “Buster” Boylan, who taught Physics and Maths, created the image of discipline. When addressing the throng he had this habit of swaying from side to side to keep your attention. When he chastised us over the Renault on the garden walls incident, he nearly capsized.

The segregation of the sexes in this co-ed school was almost complete. An exception was Patricia Heathwood, famed for two architect brothers, who sat with her Sub-Senior Don Marshall in the cuddle seat of the tram to Dutton Park whispering sweet nothings (or perhaps discussing strategy for the next inter-school debate) until they changed to the Yeronga bus to which I am not a party, but their youngest, a well-credentialed chemical engineer, is my godson.

Art and drawing were my chosen head subjects. This was probably under false pretences as I did not know the difference between a Rembrandt and a Renoir. This suddenly changed when I came under the spell of Miss Alma Platen, who took me on four years of a cultural journey which was to prove most influential in my life. She had me hooked. After a miserable Senior result (alright in Art), I took Miss Platen's advice again and enrolled at the Central Technical College School of Architecture under the stewardship of Charles Fulton. Charlie had a team of lecturers who were all architectural practitioners by day who gave up their evenings to show us the way. Absorbing. I did not fail another exam in six years.

After graduation, I soon joined the firm of Bligh Jessup Bretnall (BJB) who gave me a six-month contract. I worked on Toombul Shoppingtown with Neil Shinnars. All the recent graduates around me wanted to exert their creative flair. Designers were a dime a dozen. Technology and construction interested me, so I let the others design while I built. Then an opportunity to head up the firm's construction management services was offered. I had found my niche. BJB sent me overseas and interstate on post-graduate courses in my field. Construction management logically led to business management and as the senior partners retired I took up the reins. Six months eventually led to 40 years. 30 years on the examination panel for candidates for registration by the Board of Architects Queensland kept me in touch with the emerging talent.

Some might say that I still do not know the difference between a Rembrandt and a Renoir, but when I am at MONA on Derwent, Bauhaus on Landwehr Canal, or Peggy Guggenheim on Canal Grande, a wry smile crosses my otherwise sullen countenance and I think . . . *Thank you Miss Platen . . . Thank you BSHS.*



I've been married to the same girl for 53 years, have three intelligent daughters, two sophisticated granddaughters, two impish grandsons, and one grand dog called – wait for it – Buster!



**Murray Rich and *Bob Gardner*, Sports Day at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds 1955.**



**A great sportsman and leader: *Lloyd Hawkins* OAM (1937-2010), Captain of the Boys 1955.**

## *Phil Harrison*

I went to Brisbane State High School from Humpybong State School in Redcliffe. At that time, BSHS was the nearest high school. It was a two and a half hour journey each way from my house – bus to Sandgate, train to Roma Street, tram to Musgrave Park. The bus left at 6.30 am and I arrived at school just before 9 am. I left school at 3 pm and got home at 5.30. Quite a journey, but it enabled me to do my homework on the train. It also meant that I was rarely involved in any after-school activities. When Banyo High School opened in 1954 and took students from the Redcliffe area, I was ready to go into SS2 at BSHS so continued to go there.

It is interesting to read some of the other reminiscences and marvel at the way everyone seems to remember what teachers they had. My main memory is of an unfortunate teacher named Dudley Grimes who was nicknamed Dodo and teased unmercifully by the class. I can't even remember what subject he taught, but one lesson was on a day we had cadet training and many of us were wearing khakis complete with slouch hats. One of the boys who was obviously ahead of his physics class had rigged up a buzzer hidden inside one of the lockers at the front of the room. A wire ran along the wall to his desk, where he had a button concealed under his slouch hat on the empty seat beside him. Every now and then a loud buzz would suddenly blast out, startling Dodo, who could not work out where it was coming from.

Those were innocent days, weren't they? Cadets were allowed to take their .303 rifles home after the Friday drills (minus bolts, of course) and return them on Monday. Imagine these days if a group of teenagers carrying military rifles were seen on buses or trains.

Graham Baines's photo of the old tram also brought back memories – as usual, of mischief. Several of us would always pile into the driver's compartment at the back of the tram and pull faces at the driver in the following tram. The trams had a foot pedal which was used when it rained – it spilt sand on to the tracks to minimise slipping by the metal wheels. Unfortunately for the powers that be, the pedal just lifted out of its socket – it was a solid steel peg about 12 cm long with a flat round top – so, of course, we souvenired several of them over time. As we had no idea what to do with them, we stored them in a classroom locker. There were probably a dozen or so. One day there was a locker inspection and much puzzlement from teachers when these objects were discovered. What were they? What were they for? As they had no idea and no one would enlighten them, let alone own up to being the collectors, they were taken away to goodness knows where.

Although we did not wag school much, I remember several of us taking afternoons off to see such films as *Bwana Devil* (the first 3D movie in colour – “a lion in your lap, a lover in your arms!”), a Swedish film called *One Summer of Happiness*, which was reputed to have a nude scene, and *Blackboard Jungle*, which caused several of us to swagger into school the following day full of US-style urban teenage rebellion, only to have it quickly squashed by a few sharp words and a cuff around the ear from a teacher. After the movies we would go down to Albert Street, where the brothels were reputed to be, and run dragging our ports along the corrugated iron fences to make maximum noise. That was about the limit of our rebellion, apart from the odd drag on an NQ cigarette accompanied by paroxysms of coughing under a tree in the nearby

park. As I remember it, the dress code was that you could wear a short-sleeve shirt or a long-sleeve one, but you were not allowed to roll up your sleeves.

All of the above may suggest that actual education was a minor part of my school experience, but there is no doubt that the teachers were good, and the syllabus excellent. My particular interest was English and I had a fascination with words. Once I wrote an essay using the longest words I could find in the dictionary. The teacher took it in good humour.

I had no particular career in mind when I sat Senior (results: 4 Bs and 2 Cs) and even had a medical exam to join the Commonwealth Bank. Then my father, who was editor of the *Redcliffe Herald* and local correspondent for the *Telegraph* and the *Courier Mail*, told me the *Tele* had a couple of cadetships available for reporters and suggested I apply. Best thing I ever did. The rigid emphasis on correct grammar, clarity of expression, spelling, and sentence construction drilled into me at BSHS really paid off. (Incidentally, I was pleased to see during a recent visit to Brisbane that the façade of the old *Telegraph* building has been preserved.

I spent four years at the *Tele* and then got a four-year contract in Hongkong with the *South China Morning Post*. I married there and successively worked in London (for the ABC and Fairfax), South Africa (*The Friend* newspaper in Bloemfontein), back in London (the *Evening Standard* and *Daily Sketch*) and then returned to Australia with my English wife and two children. After six months at the *Sydney Morning Herald*, I decided that having worked nights for much of my career, I was not seeing enough of my sons, so I switched to *TV Times* magazine. After eight years there, I got the wanderlust again and joined the foreign service, with successive postings to Stockholm, London and Washington as press attaché. Between postings, I was in charge of publications for the Department of Foreign Affairs.

By this time we had three sons – one born in London, one in South Africa, and one in Sydney. We now have four grandchildren, all born in Canberra, including, at last, two girls. We have retired to the south coast of NSW. My wife Eve and I both attended the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion and one of the great moments was when I and several other stalwarts got up on stage and belted out the school war cry.



**Phil the journalist between Björn Ulvaeus & Lance Barnard, Sweden 1977.**

## *Tric (Heathwood) Marshall*

Brisbane State High School set me in train for life's journey (so far) in many ways. This followed a Sub-Junior first term at St Aidan's, Corinda, where tennis and becoming a lady took precedence over study. At BSHS I met so many urban, regional, and rural students over just four years to really broaden my outlook on life after primary school. Study in those years is a bit of a blur today, but challenging Jeff Rohl (the Dux!) in Physics exams and the Debating Society was rewarding, as was being the only girl in the team to debate Brisbane Grammar School. Speaking out came naturally and this continues! The boys/girls dividing line was not too strict with a Reading Room and very basic library meeting place, debating, and other out-of-class activities. Besides, I met 1953-56 pupil and husband-to-be Don on the Yeronga bus and Dutton Park tram each day.

I studied sufficiently to enter Physiotherapy at the University of Queensland with classmates Flo Saunders (Jamieson) and Marguerite Bristow (Larwill). Graduate work at the Children's Hospital was followed by a trip to Europe with work in London and Edinburgh. Private work for the Queen's physician led to an invitation to sherry and canapés. As wages were low, I indulged politely to avoid buying dinner! I hitch-hiked around Northern Europe with two friends and then took three months to visit the southern countries by train, mostly reaching youth hostels before eleven pm closing.

Marrying journalist Don in 1963 meant I could no longer work at Royal Brisbane, so I became a UQ tutor and lecturer. After 1966, son Rod (now a periodontist), daughter Ingrid (speech therapist, audiologist, and architect), and son Alex (chemical engineer) kept me busy with home and school-mum duties with physio part-time. With Don working nights, as a family we enjoyed weekends outdoors, particularly on the family launch on Moreton Bay and tent camping. We ventured across Europe for six months in 1976, mostly in a camper van, and other overseas trips followed. New Zealand and trekking in Nepal stand out.

Supervising students at the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service led to part-time then full time CRS work where I specialised in treating head injured patients. I retired in 1999 but keep in touch with several patients and am recognised even walking by the patients' limited employment stall in Edward Street

Retirement years (not very retiring) have seen great variety including 4WD camper trailer trips to the Outback, Darwin, and Perth plus boating and Point Lookout stays. We're volunteer caretakers for several large Queensland national parks such as Nairana, between Clermont and Charters Towers, for a month each summer. We also care-take a relocated population of endangered northern hairy-nosed wombats near St George, assessing hundreds of video images from 24 cameras but never seeing a live one.

After a knee replacement, tennis has given away to mah-jong weekly to help keep the mind in trim along with lots of chatting. Five grandchildren in Brisbane keep us on the hop babysitting and driving while appreciating their schooling, music, dancing and computing skills.

I've happy memories of high school, of life-long friends made there, and of reunions from time to time.

[Photos next page]



***Tric Heathwood, always smiling,  
in summer uniform 1955.***



**Reunion at the Sofitel Hotel Brisbane 15 April 2015. *Left side: Michael Bryce, Ron de Flamingh, Don Barrett. Right: David & Gay Stevens, Tric & Don Marshall.***

## *Ian Kelk*

It seems an impossible task to condense into one page the experiences of an adolescent male at Brisbane State High School and what happened to him in his later life, but let's try.

First, why was I there? Certainly because of a smart mother, who said, "You are a big fish in this little pond (Hemmant State School), now go and be a little fish in a big pond." So off I went to State High in 1952.

Once there, I discovered outstanding teachers who had lasting influences on me. There was Buster Boylan, who could out-teach any Maths teacher, except perhaps Stumpy Russell known for his wandering black-board set-outs. Hoppy Noonan moulded my stunted literary background to advance me from Zane Grey to the classics. Harry Mayze was the catalyst to develop my humour in science. Boyd Kleinschmidt inspired me to follow physics throughout my own teaching career.

Then there were fellow-student influences. My primitive art efforts, previously thought successful at the Ekka competitions, were moulded by Alma Platen by contrasting them to the works of Mike Bryce and Barry Chadwick with that Senior kid William Robinson and his work as an objective (definitely unachievable).

Disciplinary influences were also an integral part of State High. The eagle eyes of the staff kept the "young ladies" and the "lads" in their respective domains. The influence of the Army Cadets, under the guidance of Harry Atwell, meant that you knew your place in the ranks and how to climb up the ranks.

There were also lasting pre-vocational influences. The scholarships for post-Junior enabled students to enter teaching and then offered the further chance to gain a fellowship to the University of Queensland to become a secondary teacher (a bonus for the son of a meat worker). This led me to a career pathway in teacher education, a wonderfully satisfying career.

Thinking back to my mother, what chances of success were possible for "little fish" at State High? Honestly it scared me silly when I suddenly realised that I was a Cadet Under Officer and a Prefect and I didn't know why. This reminds me of my wise father saying, "well you must have done something positive, just remember you are as good as anyone else no matter what your background."

Thank you Brisbane State High. You set me out on a road that has been personally satisfying and rewarding and has made, I hope, some small positive effect on society in general during my lifetime.

[Photo next page]

The “little fish” becomes a Prefect: *Ian*, second from right, middle row.



### Prefects 1955

***Back row:*** Michael Bryce, Maurice Martinelli, Geoff Burchill, Desmond Berghofer, Peter Alfredson, Mervyn Littmann, Ian Mavor, Barry Molloy, Cecil Gleason.

***Middle row:*** Stephen Chen, Jeffrey Rohl, B. Duncan, Margaret Teakle, Rhelma Pringle, Florence Saunders, Barrie Chadwick, Ian Kelk, David Moo.

***Front row:*** Barry Lennon, Lola Green, Betty Robertson, Barbara Routh, Glenise Govey, Beverley Chadwick, Noeleen Jaffray, Lyn Barclay, Eileen Baumgartner, Lloyd Hawkins.

***Curious photograph:*** Michael Bryce remembers that the boys in the back row were standing on a plank that sloped down on the left, so those that end have been short-changed height-wise in this photograph.

## *Barry B Lennon*<sup>1</sup>

Brisbane State High was, to me, my “local” school. Not only was it just up the road from where we lived but it was taken for granted that my brothers and I would, at least, attend high school before “setting out in life”. Being brought up without a father in what many considered to be a rough part of town, I rather suspect that our mother saw a very real need to expose her boys to better role models than would otherwise be available to us. More than anything else, BSHS, through teachers like John Hunt, Henry Mayze, George Lochie, and Harry Atwell, showed us, by example, how to respond to life’s challenges.

But, on graduation, I, like many others, had no clear career plan. It was enough to know that whatever you did, as a Senior class graduate of BSHS, you stood a reasonable chance of doing it well enough to earn a living. On leaving school I joined Rheem Australia as a commercial trainee and started a bachelor’s degree in Commerce at U of Q by night. After two years, including six months national service as a recruit naval airman on HMAS Sydney, I switched to teaching, attending Teachers Training College at Kelvin Grove, and then taught maths and science in high schools in Maryborough, and later Toowoomba.

In 1961 I followed my elder brother into the Army when accepted as an undergrad entry into the Officer Cadet School in Portsea, Victoria. This commenced ten years with the Australian Army as a military engineer with service in Malaysia (Sarawak and Sabah), Singapore, and Brunei during Indonesian “Confrontation”, Thailand during the Pathet Lao uprising, and a couple of tours in Vietnam.

In 1971 I transferred as a major to the Reserve (my resignation from the regular army was declined) and joined IBM Australia as a sales trainee. After ten years in various jobs in Sydney and Canberra, I was assigned to run IBM’s business in Singapore, Brunei, and Sri Lanka – based in Singapore. My initial two years in Singapore was followed by five years running IBM’s business in Taiwan (based in Taipei) and then a further nine years based again in Singapore but responsible, initially, for marketing, manufacturing, and software development in eleven countries in South and South-East Asia. In the last three of these years I was responsible for re-engineering business operations in all countries in the Asia Pacific region from Korea to New Zealand and west to India. For three years prior to retirement in 2001, I was based in London but had a worldwide mission to re-engineer the company’s logistics systems in 158 countries around the world.

But then, a bout with cancer signalled that it was time to come home to Australia and smell the flowers – or more correctly – the sea breezes at Broadbeach on the Gold Coast. Since then, I have continued to dabble in software engineering and have kept my hand in with general business consulting to small businesses in Queensland.

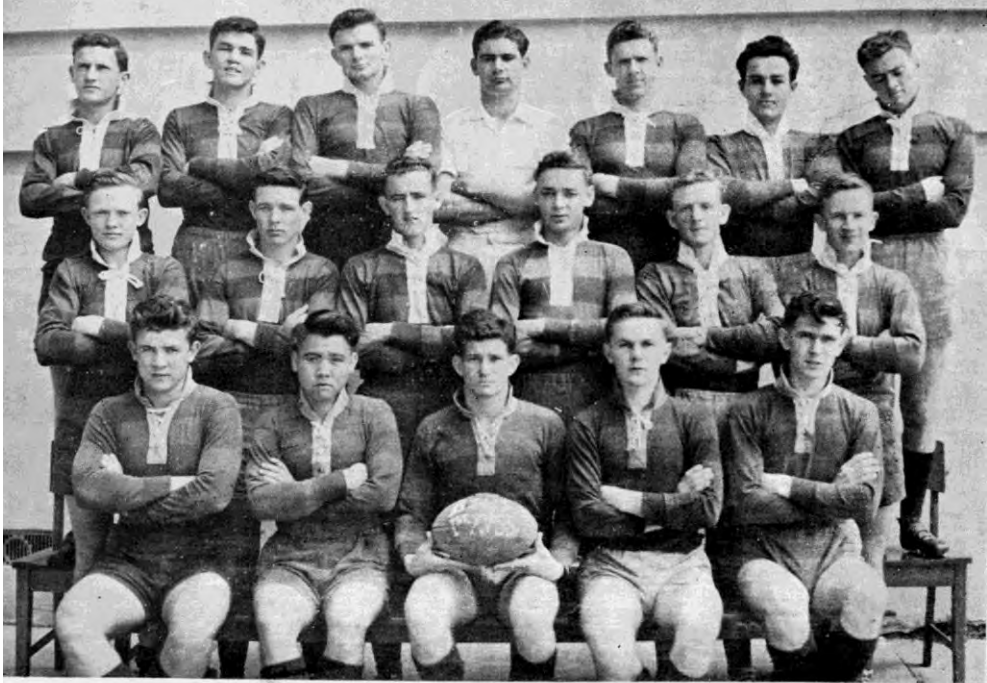
During most of my working life and since, I have been very fortunate to have had the support of my wife Patricia, a Somerville girl, who has been able to pursue her teaching career wherever we happened to be living – at Terendak High in Malaysia, Deakin High in Canberra, Turramurra High in Sydney, the American School in Taipei, and the United World College in Singapore. Blessed with two children, we now have three grand-children – living in Sydney and in Brisbane.

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Lennon was Vice-Captain of the Boys in 1955. Lloyd Hawkins OAM (1937-2010) was Captain of the Boys.



After years in the tropics, Patricia and I are, however, unable (or unwilling) to winter in Australia. So from late May we forego the ocean views of Broadbeach for a quiet rural existence in Barwick Park, Somerset, UK, and in travelling in Europe and USA. We are usually home in Broadbeach by early October for the annual whale migration and for the start of the southern summer.



FIRST XV  
Back: R Stewart, A. McArthur, P. Scott, J. Jeffries, G. Pearce, M. Martinelli, M. Maher.  
Middle: K. Baudistel, N. Cheetham, M. McPherson, B. Hoffensetz, I. Bryce, B. Yule.  
Front: B. Molloy, D. Moo (Vice-Captain), B. Lennon (Captain), J. Rohl, M. Littmann.

**Barry holding the ball, Captain of the Rugby Union team 1955.**



**Barry's hideaway in the UK, an apartment in Barwick Hall, Somerset.**

## *Pam (Wendt) Raeside*

A few days before my thirteenth birthday and following in my mother's footsteps, I travelled by tram to the CBD en route to State High. Wearing a uniform for the first time, with gloves, hat and uncomfortable black stockings, I was very nervous until I met Gay Bidgood in Queen Street. We were at Windsor School together and have remained friends to this day, being in the same class for all our high school years.

Our new environment was highly disciplined, but similar to our Grade Seven experience. (Earlier years in small country schools were more relaxed). We were kept busy every day as our competent teachers set very high standards. Crossing the Alps with Hannibal and Miss Gormley in Latin was exhausting, but exploring Paris and cruising the Seine made Miss Arnell's Senior French lessons enjoyable! Zoology excursions to Caloundra were more interesting than dissecting frogs in the lab. Miss Cameron delighted in distributing (throwing) frogs "pickled" in formalin when fresh ones were scarce.

Because many of us travelled long distances daily by public transport, we rarely met out of school, but weekly dancing lessons at the Ritz Ballroom enabled us to socialize. Dances at O'Connor Boathouse and a couple of evening cruises to Mandalay were special occasions. In 1955, I also attended an evening dressmaking class at the Domestic Science High School, after lessons at the Ritz and spaghetti at Nick's – in uniform!!

A ride to school in Bill Adamson's vehicle was one special event I remember, as was a Saturday trek through the bush to the summit of Mt Coot-tha. We almost crawled the last few steps, but we "soldiered on" because some of the boys had already "conquered" the mountain. I also remember a daring "escape" after roll call at end of term, to see a movie – just once!

After a busy year in 1956 – four days a week at Kelvin Grove Teachers' College, one prac day at Wilston School and one evening lecture at UQ – I was appointed to Virginia School (again following in my mother's footsteps), where I gained valuable classroom experience and mentoring from excellent teachers. Prior to marrying John in 1961, I was asked to teach English and French at Boonah. Ray Beilby was also on staff there and one Saturday we took the excited high school students to Brisbane to see *Macbeth* and discover the city.

As marriage meant resignation for women teachers, I wasn't in Boonah long. Until 1973, I was a farmer's wife at Harrisville and a "stay-at-home" mum in Biloela, Brisbane, and Atherton. Anne Vickery lived in Biloela when I was there. We attended the same church. In Brisbane, I sold World Books and was a tutor. When Greg, Tony, and Kym were all at school, I taught with the dedicated young principal at Yungaburra in an interesting, open-area, multi-grade situation, which was very effective and enjoyable in the small, country school.

Happy years followed at Emerald, Palmwoods and Wilston as we moved around Queensland with the DPI, Agricultural Bank and with the QIDC. While in Emerald I completed my degree from UQ externally and also enjoyed many extra-curricular activities with my pupils, with the help of my teaching partners, supportive parents and John. A highlight on two occasions was a Year Seven tour to North Queensland during the August holidays. It has been a pleasure sharing special events with some past pupils to this day.

John retired while I was teaching at Wilston. I took a year's leave and we travelled extensively overseas (especially Paris) before moving to Commissioners Flat to establish a redclaw lobster farm and fatten cattle. Teaching Year Three at Woodford was fun-filled and productive until 1996, when I retired from the classroom to become a home tutor. We are now happy in retirement at Rothwell near Redcliffe, where I am still a tutor when needed. All my school years were enjoyable, as a pupil and as a teacher, but my greatest achievement has been raising three children to become fine, happy adults who are all high achievers. We now have five grandchildren – three boys at university and two girls at high school.

I am grateful for the tuition I received at State High and am extremely pleased that our three Brisbane grandchildren have excelled at “our school”. Discipline and guidance during my BSHS years helped me combine a rewarding career, further studies, family life and community activities. Our “60<sup>th</sup> Reunion” was a memorable occasion which I hope we'll repeat annually for “Auld Lang Syne”. Looking forward while looking back keeps life interesting and enjoyable. Our Class of '55 *Other People's Lives* (remember that?) will be a great read for young and old.



***Pam Wendt*** on right with **Colin Daddow (1938-2013)** and **Gay Bidgood**, Seniors Dance at O'Connor Boathouse 1955. Girls and boys were segregated at the School, so these functions were something special. Colin played Ralph Rackstraw in our class's production of *HMS Pinafore* in 1954.

## *Merv Littmann*

I was not an impressive scholar. But I did not pass unnoticed: Miss Pigram, our French teacher from Junior, greeted me at the Yeronga reunion with “I remember you. You were lazy.” I was also young. Perhaps I took too seriously the droll counsel of our English teacher, Mr Noonan: “Don’t let school interfere with your education.”

So my clearest memories are less of the academic and more of the environment: the new uniform and confusions of that first day in 1952; travelling to and from school in the “rear” driver’s cabin of the tram; managing two meat pies at the morning break from the side-street pie cart; Air Training Corps cadets; debating; football; *HMS Pinafore* with Bev, Glen and the rest – and Miss Hanger’s reprimanding me during a rehearsal to “Stop acting like a schoolboy!”; weekend tennis at Bev and Barrie Chadwick’s (determined to get our “two bob’s worth” Barrie and I would rather return balls than let them go out – better, longer rallies, you see).

On the academic side, I liked Physics and English most (and French least). I have only one claim to academic fame: I once scored 99% on a Physics exam (It was really 100%, but there was something about a megalomaniacal teacher and a missing full stop.) I never did the like again; perhaps I really was lazy. English was fun, exciting, intellectually demanding, and creative. English teaching today widely avoids grammar, and seems more devoted to politically correct social studies – far different from the subject we studied in 1955. (I tutor, and yes, I still use my *The ABC of English Usage*.)

More mature attitudes were soon dictated by the demands of a career. I gained a scholarship with the Department of Agriculture. Evening study led to a Science degree and a decade working in a laboratory as a research plant physiologist; then came a Masters degree in Science and a ten-year stint as the (part-time) editor of a scientific journal – a step that would later lead in important new directions. A Masters in Public Administration contributed to a move and new title as Director of Information and Training of a Government department. But the public service eventually palled, and in 1989 the calls of independence led to my quitting to go freelance editing, running writing workshops and consulting (three months in Pakistan in 1995 was an education in itself). Now there is only editing and tutoring students – stuff I still do to avoid the rigours of retirement.

Overlapping these were the military years. Merv a soldier? Surely not! But in 1957 I was one of the winners of the birthday ballot and found myself conscripted into National Service. There I discovered a taste for challenges, both physical and intellectual, that I had not expected. So when the National Service scheme folded, I continued in the Army Reserve (Citizen Military Forces) . . . and continued . . . for twenty years. As a Lieutenant Colonel, I was posted as Commanding Officer of the Queensland University Regiment (Note: as heroes to the feminist cause, we introduced women into the officer training stream!), and later as Senior Instructor in charge of a leadership and management wing of an officer training organisation at Wacol.

However did my family ever put up with my absences? No harm seems to have been done. Jeanette and I have three children: Kate, a librarian who could have been just about anything she wished; Greg, a Professor of Philosophy (he still lets me edit his papers); and Sarah, a Doctor of Psychology. Both Jeanette and I continue to tutor students in English. It’s a neat arrangement.

But there's one schoolboy thing that I particularly remember: my chance to become a hero. It happened like this. During football training, a fluke kick from half way put the ball neatly through the posts and over the bar. This astonished and impressed both me and our coach, Johnny Hunt. During our next match, when State High was awarded a penalty, our Captain, Barry Lennon, handed me – yes, me – the ball! Schoolboy dream! In front of our massed supporters I confidently drove the ball . . . about three yards at zero altitude, where it rolled, drunkenly, at 45 degrees from the intended direction. Sigh.

At State High, I learned many things, including a little French, enough English, a lot of Physics, and, I'm proud to say, something about humility. What more can a good school offer?



**Mervyn Littmann as an Air Training Corps Cadet 1953.**



**Remember *Cloudland*? Merv, Beverley Chadwick, Barbara Routh, Barrie Chadwick at Glen Govey's debut ball 1956.**

## *Allison (Hoffmann) Reichert*

After Camp Hill primary school the choices were: 1) apply for a job, which many did in those days, 2) the new Cavendish Road High School which opened in 1952, or 3) Brisbane State High School. As my cousins had been to BSHS, Mother decided I would follow them there. I was so fortunate that Mother believed in a good education as it must have been very difficult for her to manage my sister and me after her devastating loss, when Daddy was killed in an RAAF accident in Darwin in 1944.

Attending high school by myself was a daunting task at first but meeting new girls, making friends and embracing new subjects turned it into an exciting and enjoyable experience. State High offered a high standard of education, encouraging us to widen our knowledge with new subjects taught by highly skilled teachers. I liked French with Miss Cribb. If there were two girls with the same name she insisted one be known by her second name! Miss Arnell was great too, in our Senior years. Miss Sully often spoke highly of famous authors, whose work I did not like in my school years but have since read and very much enjoyed . . . is this maturity or growing older? Mr Fred Barrell fostered my interest in chemistry and also physics. Having so many new subjects made us apply ourselves and work hard. This resulted in our desire to seek further education at a tertiary level.

My choice was to do Pharmacy, in those days a three-year apprenticeship, with prac classes and lectures at the Central Technical College. After graduating in 1958, I worked in Brisbane and during that time I occasionally met up with some of the girls from our Senior year, a practice which continued for quite a few years. Some of these friendships are still special today and I so enjoy the times when I see my "old" school friends. At college I met my husband, Fred, and we married in 1961. Then we decided to buy a pharmacy business in the small country town of Lowood where we intended to stay a few years; this actually became 30-plus years. We both enjoyed the area, the people, and the closeness to our families in Brisbane and Southport.

Over the years Fred and I became very involved with the local community: the kindergarten, the establishment of a golf club and a Lions Club, later the School P & C, and also the building of a town swimming pool. It was a great place to bring up a family and during this time we had three daughters, two of whom did Pharmacy at UQ and the youngest one Physiotherapy. After 31 years, Fred and I decided to retire to our favourite holiday spot, Noosa Heads. Our two pharmacist daughters bought the business and operated it for a further eight years. We love our relaxed lifestyle here and the fact that our family all enjoy visiting us often.

Today I often meet friends of our daughters whose children attend BSHS. Some are there because of family connections and others on scholarships. Some families move to the area especially to attend BSHS because of its high academic reputation. I am always pleased to hear them praise the standard of education there. Of course the subjects are more varied, music is very important, and the Athletics and Sport teams are often top of the ladder. It is with pride that I say I was a student there for four years!

[Photos next page]

**Allison at the 1954 Senior Dance, O'Connor Boat House, right-hand end.**



**The 1950s! *Back row:* Jeff Rohl, Barry Molloy, Barry Lennon, John Aboud. *Front row:* Rhelma Pringle, Glen Govey, Lola Green, Noreen Kenneison, Pam Wendt, Beverley Morgan, *Allison Hoffmann.***



**The 1960s: *Back:* Linda Grant, Denise Grose, Betty Bristow, Tric Heathwood, Lola Green. *Front:* Pat Walpole, Noeleen Jaffray, Lyn Craig, Gay Bidgood, Jeanette Briggs, *Allison Hoffmann.***

## *Robert Mahoney*

I can't remember my first day there at all but I have lots of memories of those years from 1952 – 55. I was in SJ1, J1, SS1, & S1. The '1' was as a result of two things: I was a male and through my combination of subjects. Up to Junior they were English, German, Latin, Geography, Maths A & B, Physics and Chemistry. After Junior I dropped Geography and changed the Maths A & B to Maths I & II. French was the popular language, but I was fixed on German. And this was at a time only a few short years after the end of WWII when things German were terribly unpopular.

German was my best subject for the whole four years. I knew there were girls at the school but there never any in my Junior classes. The first classes with girls for me were the combined classes in the two senior years in German and Latin. They did really exist! I had some wonderful teachers over the years. These included Miss McCorkell, Miss Hanger, and Messrs Honour, Barrett, Lockey, Noonan, Boylan, Mayze, Barrell, Goossens and Wolfe amongst others. They taught me the benefits of hard work, organization and to not be content with what you thought was the best you could do. Jimmy Wolfe was the one who kept challenging me to do better. I didn't appreciate this at the time but the message stuck and became a touch stone for later life. I wasn't a sports person but the school still fostered an enjoyment of sport, which has stayed with me to this day.

I spent four years in the cadets and enjoyed the experience so much, even though never promoted, that I joined the CMF early in the year after I left school and stayed with it for a number of years. Drawing on this I eventually joined the RSL and am still a member, having made some much appreciated friends through my membership. My love of music, with a big fondness for that of Gilbert & Sullivan goes back to being a member of the chorus in *HMS Pinafore*. I relax by listening to classical music, on the radio as I write this, but also to music from the 1950s-1980s.

Immediately after school, I was awarded a Teachers' Fellowship to study for a Bachelor of Arts and then a Dip. Ed. at UQ. My major was German, which became my beloved teaching subject, together with a double in Pure Maths and a single in Applied Maths. Again the realization of the need for hard work drummed into us at school paid off and got me through all my units.

Since school my life has been varied. We married in 1964 with now three adult children and four grandchildren. In 1967 pursuant to my love of German, I applied for and was granted a year-long post graduate scholarship to live and study in Germany at the University of Mainz. And so off we went. What a fabulous time it was. My poor mother-in-law was worried we would stay there and never come home. But we did. We still correspond with German friends made in this time. Social networking makes this so easy.

Professionally I became a secondary teacher with the Queensland Education Department. I was so impressed by my teachers at BSHS that the thought of another occupation never entered my head. I saw the schools of Queensland and eventually retired in 1994 from the position of Deputy Principal. I then took on a position in middle management in the administration of the Australian Catholic University here in Brisbane, retiring again in 2003. While holding these positions I managed to find time to be a Returning Officer for the Electoral Commission of Queensland, organising 20 electoral events in 30 years.



In spare time I've been a member of the ABC Queensland State Committee, and the Queensland Youth Concerts Committee, an executive Member of the Queensland and Australian Debating Unions, developed an avid interest in ornithology and watch fanatically cricket and football at the Gabba. To really relax I and my paraplegic wife, for whom I am a full-time carer, go on cruises. Red wine also helps.

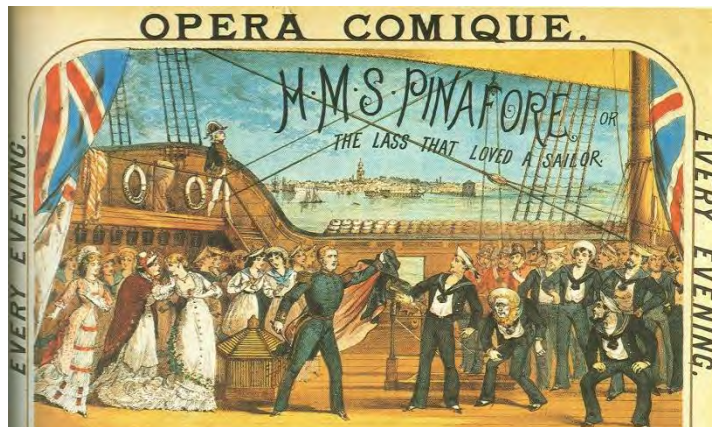
All of the above spells for an at times chaotic life, needing careful management if some semblance of sanity is to be preserved. But as I look back, what has kept me going are the skills I learned at school and have never forgotten – hard work, organisation and a desire to seek constant improvements in whatever I do. My highlight has been my German, which formed the basis of my career, took our young family around the world, and has given me lasting friendships, both here and abroad.

And that's why I value my time at BSHS as it shaped my world then and continues to shape it.



Judy Holman, Ian Kelk, *Robert Mahoney*, and Cec Gleeson at 2015 reunion, Sofitel Brisbane.

*Robert* has fond memories of singing in the chorus of *HMS Pinafore* in 1954.



## *Beverley (Chadwick) Sherry*<sup>2</sup>

Living in Highgate Hill, I was able to walk to school but a unique advantage was having a twin brother (Barrie). We studied together, and through him I met a few other boys, especially Peter Alfredson, who helped me with the horrendous Maths II. Before that, in my Junior years, I was a bit of a renegade. Miss Cribb, who taught English, threw me out of the class to languish on the verandah. A more memorable rebuke was from Miss Hanger. She came downstairs when we girls were getting ready for sport. Probably I was shouting when we heard, “Her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman” – Miss Hanger quoting from *King Lear*! Oh it made me feel smaller than an ant.

Curiously, a few years later, I got a job as a junior lecturer at the University of Queensland and the only training we had before facing the lecture theatre were two sessions with Eunice Hanger, by then a lecturer in the English Department. She tried to teach us how to “throw our voice”! I have other vivid memories of Miss Hanger at State High, her directing of *HMS Pinafore*, her efforts to teach us Maths II. Her true forte was Shakespeare and directing. When I joined the University in 1960 she was the only other woman in the English Department. She loved men but, perhaps because of the restrictions on professional women of her generation, she never married. There were no married women teachers at State High in our years there.

I was asked recently how I rated State High and the University of Queensland in my “intellectual development”. Well, my best teacher and a life-long influence was Rosemond Tuve, who taught me in 1963-64 during my PhD studies in the United States. But State High was the foundation. In 1955 I was debating whether to go to university. I had applied for a cadetship in journalism, but then I won an Open Scholarship and thought I can’t turn this down. Winning the Scholarship I owe very much to State High. The school simply fostered a culture of excellence – that year, eight of the State’s 25 Open Scholars were from our school. The University had some outstanding lecturers, including the Yeats scholar F.A.C. Wilson, who supervised my thesis on T.S. Eliot. Then as a Junior Lecturer in 1960-62, I was thrown in at the deep end having to teach Milton, it was great! Discovering art during my years in the US was inspiring and I taught comparative studies of literature and the visual arts at UQ 1965-77.

Because of my husband’s business commitments we moved to Sydney in 1977. The University of Sydney took me on, on my own terms, which included some lecturing but allowed me to spend periods of time in Oxford and especially to diversify my research interests. In Sydney I became much involved in heritage and the conservation movement and was commissioned to write a bicentennial history *Hunter’s Hill: Australia’s Oldest Garden Suburb* (1989). By far my most pioneering research, though, is my book *Australia’s Historic Stained Glass* (1991).

As an Honorary Associate at Sydney I continue to write (and speak) on Milton and I designed public readings of *Paradise Lost* for Milton’s 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2008) in Sydney and Brisbane. I’m on the committee of the International Milton Symposium and the editorial board of *Milton Quarterly*. But since that day at UQ when I was thrown in at the deep end, teaching has been immediately rewarding. Since 2002, a colleague and I have been conducting seminars with graduates on a range of writers from Homer up – a marvelous journey! You want to know who

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<sup>2</sup> Beverley Chadwick was Captain of the Girls 1955.

writes best about war (and the human face of war)? Virgil in the *Aeneid*. And a man for all seasons? Odysseus! The most untranslatable poet? The matchless Dante. And searing honesty? William Blake. But never forget the one-and-only Shakespeare.

In our years at State High 1952-55, there were about twice as many boys as girls. It was fairly unusual for girls to attend a strongly academic school and to last out to Senior, more unusual still to go on to university and into professions. Many of us did just that and had babies along the way. We were trail blazers. We were resilient, adapting to different situations and demands. On occasion our hackles were raised. When I finished Senior, a boy remarked, “girls don’t go to university” – kapow to him! A few years later, when I was wondering if I might try for an academic career, another boy said, “but girls get married” – so? Later still my Head of Department said he doubted my ability to manage young children and a lectureship. This provoked me to apply (successfully) for a senior lectureship. When I moved to Sydney, a fierce feminist said, “ah Bev, you are accommodating to your husband” – why ever not? Sean moved to Australia to accommodate me. 50 years married now with two daughters and five grandchildren.

Being Captain of the Girls was a great honour, but at eighteen I wasn’t really a leader. How fortunate we were to have Lloyd Hawkins (1937-2010), exceptional, natural-born leader and Captain of the Boys. In later years he drew us together for reunions. Thank you Lloyd.



**Graduate student in the US: *Bev* at Bryn Mawr 1964.**



***Bev* with her Irishman Sean, Donegal 1992.**

## *Don Matthews*

My first encounter with Brisbane State High School was with my father when enrolling – I met George Young, the janitor. George had been at the school when my Dad was a student there! Initially, I remember my bewilderment at the size of the school and the number of new subjects available. This all seems nothing now compared to the options students have today. Looking back at what we studied, I realize that we were given an introduction to many disciplines. It all helped us decide what individual paths to follow after school. The knowledge and attitudes we acquired in the classroom, the schoolyard, and school activities all contributed in helping to prepare us for life ahead.

On completion of Senior I went on to Kelvin Grove Teachers' College, and Queensland University as an evening student. I taught primary school for two years and secondary for six years. On one occasion while teaching Physics during a school inspection I was commended by the Inspector for the way I had approached a particular subject. I had great delight in telling him that I had only copied the way I had been taught by Joe Boylan at BSHS. Many of us were taught Chemistry by Harry Mayze at State High. I had the privilege of teaching Chemistry at Camp Hill High School with him. Harry was a great mentor to many junior teachers. He always said that it was better for a student to like a subject than pass a subject. I am sure that the influence of many of our teachers at BSHS has filtered through to subsequent generations.

I left Queensland Education in the mid-sixties and joined the Australian Army as an Education Officer. My background in Mathematics and Science had me posted to various military training units in Australia to instruct officers and soldiers in technical knowledge and skills. Some of these areas included surveying (map making), ammunition, basic flying, and tank technology.

This opened another door as I was able to pursue further study in at the Royal Military College of Science Shrivenham, in Wiltshire UK 1971-72. The course involved military technology and management. On return to Australia I was posted to Canberra and my career now changed. I became engrossed in the development, evaluation, and selection of military equipment. I dealt with new ideas and new technologies. There were many disappointments but some successes in this field of work. Military technology is not all about the weapons of war and how to support them. Indeed, many ideas began that way, but then became useful in everyday life. For example, radar is used in weather forecasting, aviation, and police speed guns to name a few.

In 1962 I married Ann. We have two children, and two grandchildren. I retired in the mid-eighties and came back to Queensland from Canberra. We have enjoyed our 4WD and travelled to many places. My hobbies are many and varied. I especially like old cars, woodwork, reading (mainly history), music and gardening. I also had fifteen years with the voluntary Marine Rescue at Mooloolaba. Currently, I am the convenor of the Australian Shareholders' Association on the Sunshine Coast. Recently I've become interested in tracing the ancestry of my family, working on the principle that it's better to wear out than rust out! Tennyson said it better in his poem "Ulysses".

"Future Shock" is a reality as the rate of change keeps accelerating; but the skills and ability to adopt new ideas and ways – that began for us at State High.

[Photos next page]



**Don at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham, UK, 1972. He is in the *Middle Row*: fifth from the left.**



**Don with Allison Reichert listening to Michael Bryce, 2015 reunion.**

## *Gay (Bidgood) Stevens*

My memories of BSHS are of a happy time, enjoying the stimulation of my friends and excellent teachers as well as coping with some bizarre events, e.g., being reprimanded for removing a glove on my home railway platform hours after leaving school! The classes were “streamed”, a practice that later fell into disrepute but which I found helped us to energise discussions and ideas. It was also a time of 4.30 am mornings for the two hours of daily violin practice as well as the time lost travelling between Newmarket and South Brisbane.

State High was a mixed school so I was intrigued by the fact that teachers expected girls and boys to appear at school dances together while it was forbidden to speak to each other at any time at school. Needless to say notes were thrown across the dividing path in the park to say nothing of varying telepathic abilities. There were few amenities, so Beverley Chadwick and I often spent lunchtime in the church hall across the road preparing for our violin and piano performances. Beethoven’s *Spring Sonata* and Massenet’s *Meditation* (our party pieces) still bring back memories of those days.

I recall the final external exams – five consecutive days of two three-hour papers each day with more on the following Monday, all accompanied by heat and rattling trams. No continuous assessment, so you had to get it right on the day or else! Lastly, I recall my dismay the favouring of boys for financial/government scholarships regardless of many girls achieving much better academic results. My pass was 5As and 2Bs. The intention was to invest in boys’ futures but clearly the future of girls was marriage. This attitude severely limited all employment opportunities for girls with opportunity decreasing in inverse proportion to their looks.

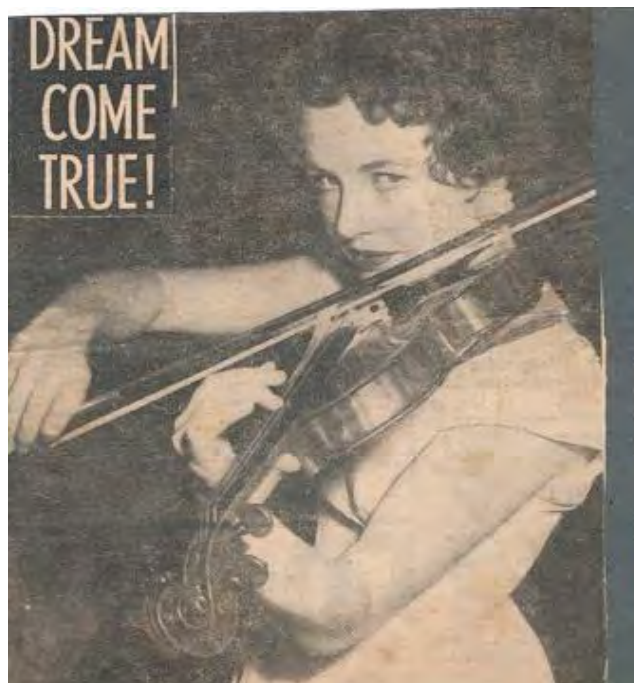
The year after Senior I was awarded a scholarship to study at the newly opened Queensland Conservatorium of Music and was the first string player to graduate three years later. I married an Italian the next year and early in the 1960s went to live in Italy for a year as well as discovering a lot of Europe. I learned to speak Italian, greatly aided by my four years of Latin. How I wished I’d tried harder in Mr Goossens’ lunch-time spoken German class!

When we returned to Australia it became increasingly hard for my husband to cope with the evening performances and rehearsals which are the life of a professional musician. After my two children were born I completed a Graduate Diploma in Education and became an instrumental teacher with Queensland Education. In 1979 I was appointed to BSHS in charge of Upper Strings, that is, violin and viola. By this time I was a single parent so teaching was the most practical career and my children subsequently attended BSHS. Life there was very hectic but rewarding. There were at least eight student ensembles, from eight to 50 children, rehearsing mornings, lunchtimes, and afternoons. Students would have to clear the classroom and set up music stands and chairs and then restore all at the end of rehearsal. Now there is a purpose built rehearsal room! Weekly tuition was mainly in groups of two to four rotated, so a different period was missed each week. My students never seemed to suffer academically because of this. By this time many Vietnamese and Korean students were enrolled and they were excellent students. Competition for enrolment was intense with families actually moving to live in the area to achieve a place. At one time I was on a selection committee where applications were often accompanied by sporting résumés five centimetres thick.

State High excelled in sport, music, and academia, which unfortunately was resented by parents of students at other GPS fee-charging schools. This gave rise to a political push in the 1960s to change BSHS to “The South Brisbane High School”. Past students, staff, and parents successfully resisted this. Honour was brought to the school by the music students whose efforts were rewarded with prized blazer pockets, not without objections from the sporting staff! Several of my students, as well as my children, became professional musicians while others continue in amateur orchestras. I enjoyed having my students get to the point where they didn’t need me.

After retiring from teaching I met my second husband, a senior banker at the time. I enjoyed accompanying him when representing the bank at many functions and my attention was diverted from the kitchen to the wardrobe. When he retired we spent a year travelling in Europe guided by *The Lonely Planet*. Speaking Italian and German opened up many opportunities.

We retired to the Gold Coast in 2004 to live in a high rise. Because it is our home, I became a member of the Body Corporate committee in 2006 and was made Chairman from 2008-2013. Having never been a chairman before, I was initially intimidated. I would have to control meetings of 125 owners and management rights’ lawyers because it was decided to allow the building’s management rights to expire. This precipitated a flurry of legal documents, letters to owners, and threats of court action which lasted until late 2012. But I reasoned that I could always research procedures and explain to owners why this was in their best interests. Once again I was grateful daily for the preparation I’d received from our excellent teachers which gave me confidence knowing that I had the ability to comprehend and not feel out of my depth. We appointed our own building manager and to date have saved our owners about \$750,000.00, almost \$250,000 per year. All the owners are delighted, the atmosphere is relaxed, and we have the cheapest levies on the Gold Coast. Finally I’ve decided I’m a Ulysses girl. My motto “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”!



**Young violinist *Gay Bidgood*, 1958.**

## *Stan McLiesh*

I've been fascinated by all the feel-good stories I've read of the glorious years at Brisbane State High School. Regrettably I can't share the enthusiasm, although BSHS did give me the strong educational framework to succeed in a number of general management roles. Apart from two long years in Dot McCorkell's Modern History class, where I was one of only five lucky boys among a classroom of girls, there were few highlights other than the comradeship with Merv Sellars, Peter Scott, and Bob McLaren. I went to the 55-year reunion in the hope that I might catch up with them but I later found it was too late for Scotty and Merv and I'm not sure whether Bob is still with us. I regret missing the 60<sup>th</sup> as I was overseas and it seems there was a good spirit of story swapping.

Like Don Matthews and many others, I spent four years with the Education Department but decided there had to be more to life than that, so I joined Coronet Records calling on Disc Jockeys and looking after visiting artists. It was a rough life drinking gin neat with Sarah Vaughan ("Misty"), playing chess backstage with Dizzy Gillespie, who played a "bent trumpet", downing beers with Crash Craddock ("Boom baby boom"), and generally leading a dissolute existence. So I made a life-saving change to the pharmaceutical industry and began a 40-year career with Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, finishing up as the President of their Pharmaceutical Division and being closely involved with Brian McNamee in the 'nineties in the move to privatise the business, which has gone reasonably well. I must say the years with "Moaner" Trickett and "Bunsen Burner" Billy Beckman in the science area were of absolutely no help to me in my CSL career.

Tragically I lost the love of my life to melanoma in 2001 but retired to care for her through her final year. Life goes on, and to keep the brain cells from disintegration I've spent ten years as Chair of the Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School in Melbourne and still am Vice-Chair after 20 years. I've been a Board Member of Clinuvel Pharmaceuticals for twelve years and Chair for the past six years. This is a really tough ask and keeps me on the move as we seek approval in Europe and North America for a new chemical entity, *afamalanotide*, that will alleviate the pain associated with EPP, a rare solar-related skin disease.



**Stan McLiesh in 2015, Chair of Clinuvel Pharmaceuticals,  
a far cry from Stan the disc jockey.**



## *Helen (Creagh) Thiess*

I came to Brisbane State High School in Sub-Senior. My previous school didn't have physics and chemistry, and I wanted to do physiotherapy. My schooldays were very happy, and the biggest highlight was the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore* in our Sub-Senior year (1954). Miss Hanger must have seen the thespian in me and I played Little Buttercup, the handsome captain was Peter Alfredson, with Glenise Govey and Beverley Chadwick alternating the role of the heroine Josephine. Many teachers were involved, including Miss Rahmann, who played the entire piano score, and we all enjoyed ourselves enormously. I also did debating, I was quite shy and this forced me to get up, think on my feet, and speak.

Most of our classes were segregated, but we had combined Maths II class. I think I irked Miss Hanger as she lobbed a duster at me one day, I ducked and it collected the boy behind me. I loved the English classes, the poetry, and the in-depth study of *King Lear*. The final exam at the end of grade twelve was a disaster: I had just done the English paper and was whisked away that night with acute appendicitis. Consequently I was unable to complete the following exams and was forced to do the posts. Fortunately I passed them all. I missed out on a scholarship to do physiotherapy, so it went to plan B, studying medical science at night while I worked during the day.

My first job was at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research at Herston. I moved over to the Pathology Laboratory at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. I studied at the Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT), the medical school at Herston, and Vet school at the University of Queensland, St Lucia. But now it's all under one roof at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). My studies included bacteriology, biochemistry, histopathology, and mainly haematology. I received a certificate of medical technology from QIT in 1958 and a Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology in 1960, which is now a Bachelor of Applied Science at QUT.

Like many of my contemporaries, and with these qualifications, I went overseas for nearly two years and worked at Fulham hospital for infectious diseases and St Mary's hospital in London. I visited about 50 countries. The most interesting were Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon before all the wars and destruction. I even rode on a horse through the Siq gorge in the ancient city of Petra.

On returning from overseas in 1963 I was placed in charge of the Royal Brisbane Hospital Blood Bank. When I left in 1965 it was the biggest hospital blood bank in the southern hemisphere.

When I returned from overseas I also met Glen and married him in 1965. He was in the construction business and we were in a caravan on sites for 5 years, transferred to Darwin and then Mt. Isa, where I went back to the pathology lab at the hospital. I couldn't manage that and raising our three boys, so reluctantly resigned after a few months. I have a great husband and our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is this year. In the past few years we have done extensive travel. We have three wonderful sons, three lovely daughters-in-law, and seven fantastic grandchildren. I am a happy "Little Buttercup" and hope to go to the next State High reunion.

[Photos next page]



***Helen as Medical Scientist in the 1960s.***



***Helen on right with Gay Stevens at the 2015 reunion.***

## *John Ower*

Following interesting discussions and memory recalls at our very enjoyable State High 60<sup>th</sup> reunion on Wednesday 15 April 2015, I wish to record some statements that I made to various fellow 1955 students.

I had three levels of schooling. First, I had a basic primary education at a single teacher school at Brooloo in the Mary Valley, with attendances of 25 to 30 pupils. Being a senior pupil in 1951, younger pupils looked up to grade seven pupils for guidance. Fortunately my scholarship results were 84% with 100% in mathematics which proved helpful later in life.

To then graduate to Gympie High School for Sub-Junior in 1952 in an area where I knew no one among possibly 200 students, was a challenging experience. By focussing entirely on the range of new subjects, there was little opportunity to get involved in other activities, given my limited sporting capability at Brooloo. It was necessary to depart school soon after lunch on each Friday afternoon to catch the rail motor home to Brooloo, when Friday afternoon was sports time. This meant that I missed out on sports opportunities. However I did make friends with some students, especially those that I travelled with each Monday and Friday by rail motor.

In May 1952, partway through Junior year, my parents sold their Mary Valley farm property and we moved to Brisbane where I enrolled at Brisbane State High School into J4, based on my Scholarship and Gympie High School test results. Again, moving in as a quiet country 15-year-old lad into a school of possibly 1100 students partway through a school year, without knowing anyone, was even more challenging. The most effective ice-breaker was Harry Attwell's invitation to join cadets, which I gladly accepted. Harry nicknamed me the "Boy from Brooloo" which gave me some identity.

Again, focussing principally on my studies, I moved from Junior to Senior S1 where I was fortunate to meet up with former Gympie student Barrie Chadwick, whose talent as an artist was evident in the class room. He proved a real friend, as my confidence was growing, particularly through various roles in cadets. I also made good friends with fellow members of the S1 group. Driven by my latent interest in sport, the nearest that I could achieve in sport was to become scorer for the BSHS first cricket team!!

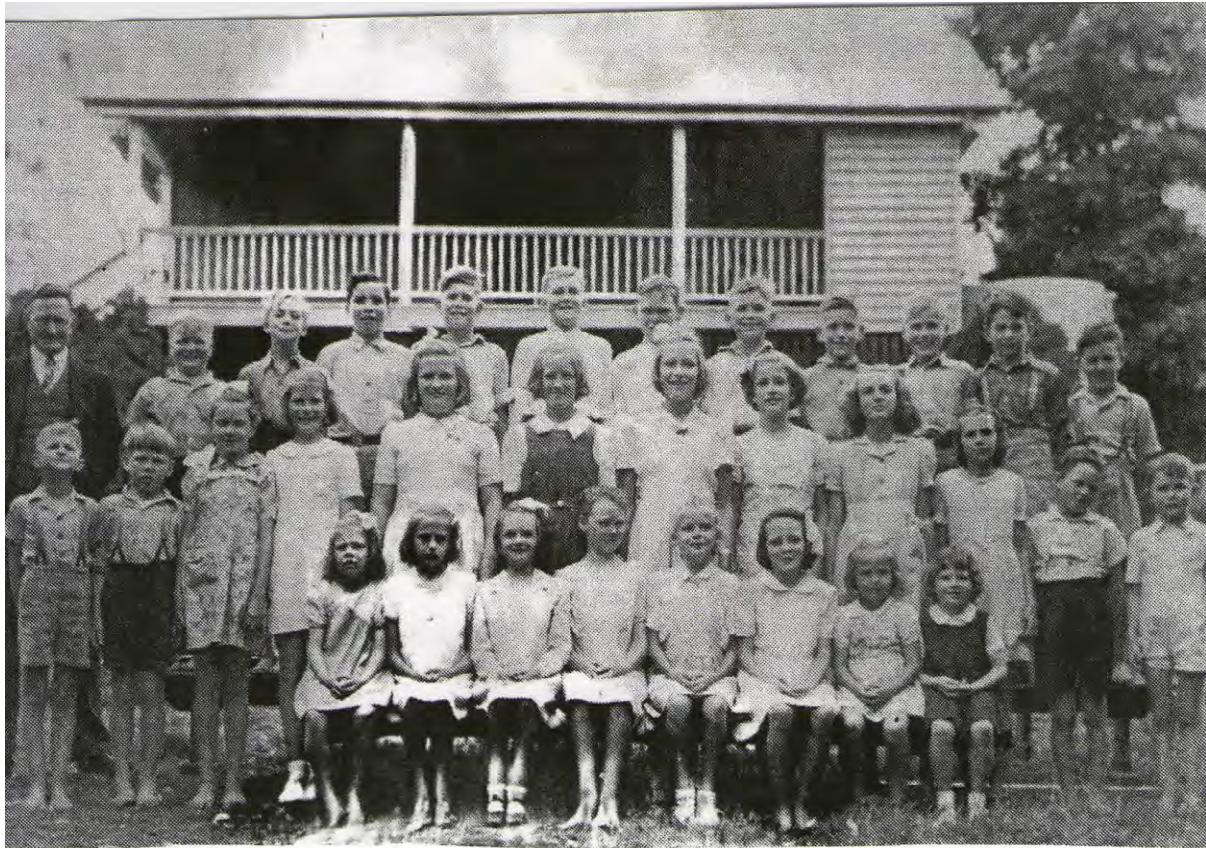
For the first fourteen years in industry, I enjoyed an electrical engineering development experience with the English Electric Company at Rocklea, covering design, manufacture, testing, site erection, estimating, tendering, and contract administration for a range of high voltage large transformers. During this period, through evening study at CTC/QIT, I gained electrical engineering qualifications commensurate with Corporate Membership of Engineers Australia.

After joining SEAQ in 1971, I progressed via QEGB, QEC and Powerlink, from Electrical Contracts Engineer through various positions to Project Electrical Engineer for Tarong Power Station Project, to Technical Services Manager at Northgate, then Transmission Area Manager, and finally Manager Maintenance and Technical Services for the state-wide grid with the high voltage transmission authority Powerlink, from which I resigned in 1998.

The experience gained at State High set a solid base for future career development and grasping development opportunities as was evident from the wide range of career which eventuated.



**Mr Harry Atwell, teacher, who nicknamed *John Ower* "the boy from Brooloo".**



***John's* first level of education: he is in the back row next to the teacher, Brooloo School, Mary Valley (Qld), c.1948.**

## *Flo (Burke) Wadley*

When looking back over my life, one thought springs to mind – how much I enjoyed school. I began this experience at Kangaroo Point State Primary School in 1944. I can still remember how excited I was at the end of the first day. In those days we spent two years in Preps, under the influence of four dedicated young teachers. One of those was Eunice Pacholke, who I was fortunate enough to have in Grade One. I decided I *had* to be a teacher, just like her. Another influence was Louise Grimes, who introduced us to music in the last two years of our primary schooling. Our Principal, who also taught Grades Six and Seven, was keen to introduce us to the reigns of the Stuart Kings and Queens, quotes from Shakespeare, and Greek and Latin derivation of the English language.

I was fortunate that my next educational experience was at Brisbane State High. I can vividly remember my first day, walking along Ernest Street to the school entrance. I had never seen so many young people! Having come from a school of fewer than 300 students, and a Scholarship class of sixteen, I was quite overwhelmed. Fortunately I met Lyn Craig as we walked in, so I didn't feel so lost among the crowd. We are still friends after 64 years.

The range of subjects presented challenges, as well as satisfaction. Misses Crib, Hanger, and Gormley taught English, German, and Latin with enthusiasm and good humour, Miss Rahmann guaranteed our commitment in Maths B, and Mr Herring and Mr Buch opened the world of Science and Physics to many, most of whom had little experience in such subjects at Primary School. In fact, the only science lesson I remembered from Grade Seven was Magnetism. It grabbed my interest to such a degree that I always included this subject in every grade I taught, even though the syllabus dictated it be taught only in Grade Six.

Another source of fun was Physical Education. It was great to try out various sports, such as hockey and volleyball. Sports carnivals came twice, as State High was not only a State School, but also in the GPS group. I remember meetings at the Exhibition Grounds and the Gabba Cricket Ground.

I thank the school and teachers for giving me such a comprehensive education, the opportunity to seek out new experiences, and the confidence to work to my ability, and sometimes beyond.

I left school after Junior, and joined the workforce, first as a Laboratory Assistant, then transferred to a clerical position. I married in 1961. I met Bob after his friend Geoff brought him to join our tennis club. We had two sons, Greg and Ian. We invested in a caravan, and had many happy adventures exploring our great country.

When the boys were in middle and upper primary, I decided to study for better qualifications in case I found myself once again in the workforce. I completed one course at the TAFE College in Book-keeping. Next step was Matriculation. I enrolled in five subjects at Coorparoo High School. With a lot of assistance and encouragement from Bob and the boys, in 1977 I applied for a position at Mount Gravatt College of Advanced Education as a student. This was a very interesting time. Most of my classmates were about eighteen, and tolerated the few “senior citizens” amongst their number with bemusement, but eventually accepted us. It was in my second year that I again met up with the legendary Miss Pacholke. Having been one of Brisbane

State High's top Senior students herself in 1939, she had moved from Primary to Secondary teaching, then to the field of teacher education.

After three years dealing with assignments and practical sessions in front of a "real class", I graduated, and found a position at Carina State School. This was another huge learning curve, but I eventually came to terms with this new stage of my life. I worked there, teaching Grades Three to Seven, and retired in 1995, after eighteen years of hard work, great fun, and much satisfaction. From my first thought of becoming a teacher in 1945/46, to the actual accomplishment, over 30 years had elapsed. Never give up a dream.



**Above: Flo Burke on right with Beverley Chadwick. Below: Mavis Milne and Geraldine Woolley. Sports carnival Brisbane Exhibition Grounds 1952.**



## *Margaret (Teakle) Watters*

I have been enjoying the contribution of my fellow classmates so much, I felt I should add a short one, too. My memories of BSHS remain happy ones, and I feel the teaching staff were great role models for me in my future career as a teacher of French and English, which followed my graduation from the University of Queensland.

After I had saved some money teaching at Somerville House, I set off with my girlfriend on our travels to Canada, where I continued my teaching career in Toronto. I went down to New York for a great weekend in 1962 to meet with Beverley Chadwick, who came up from Philadelphia. In Toronto I had the good fortune to meet my future Canadian husband, Ralph. Then my girlfriend and I travelled to London, England, followed shortly after by Ralph. Here I did more teaching in London and extensive travelling throughout Europe before we headed back to Brisbane to be married. Incidentally, Anne Vickery (Gay) was my bridesmaid.

We have three sons, David at home, Cameron and family nearby, and Bradley and family two hours away in London, Ontario. Music remains important in my life in playing violin locally in an orchestra (with our youngest son, David, on the cello) and we sing in several choirs including a 150 voice choir in London, Ontario which, at present, is rehearsing monthly for a big benefit concert for ovarian cancer research, under a dynamic conductor who herself is a cancer survivor.

Since we live near Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada we would be happy to welcome any travelling Australian friends to our home if you're in the area, and show you some of the local attractions.

Now we're saving up for a trip home to Brisbane A.S.A.P. to visit my three brothers, their families, and our old friends.



**Grandma *Margaret* in the kitchen.**

## *Cliff. F. Robinson*

My memories of State High are mostly cherished, and a few items stand out. We studied chemistry using the text by Mayze and Barrell. Henry Mayze was actually our teacher, but all his lectures indicated that substances were made by “the well known method”, whether we knew it or not. But I remember his forbearance after school hours as a couple of us tried to extract metallic sodium using our homemade apparatus and the school facilities. I recall “Bunsen Burner” Bill Beckmann trying to dry electrostatic equipment by passing it through a bunsen burner flame, with questionable success, during our humid summers. The vehicle growing in the front garden bed of the school was a Renault owned by the Goossens family. How did we ever develop a reasonable German accent when taught by a Dutchman who also taught French and Maths? The classic parade ground utterance by “Stumpy” Russell, indicating a miscreant, was “Th, th, th, that boy out there in the blue shirt!” Stumpy taught Maths. Like other classmates, I shall forever be grateful for the love of English and literature passed on to us by “Hoppy” Noonan of happy memory.

Those four years at State High included time with the Air Training Corps. Then followed Mechanical Engineering at the University of Queensland, mixed with National Service in the RAAF. Then there was die and tool design and maintenance engineering with Queensland Can Co. for some thirteen years, just a mile down Vulture Street from State High.

My engineering skills continued with work in tape and disc recording and electronic servicing in Brisbane north side. Related was company management in the domestic equipment hire industry servicing the Brisbane area for some 40 years, before retiring.

My National Service in the RAAF and earlier experience of the Air Training Corps at State High must have stayed with me, though in truth it goes back much further, to falling into our air-raid shelter during the war, when practice alerts were sounded, and having models of Allied aircraft. So my extra-curricular activities have included a private pilot’s licence and 35 years responsible for the Queensland operations of Mission Aviation Fellowship, which provides transport support in remote areas worldwide, such as Papua New Guinea, Timor, Africa, and South America. Similarly, 35 years involvement with Queensland Air Museum at Caloundra included positions as Treasurer, eleven years as President, and leader of aircraft recovery teams, including a four-week trip to Singapore to dismantle and ship three jet fighters.

I’ve been married for 52 years to Yvonne (Wagner), with four children, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren! Having retired four times, now I just keep doing smaller projects at my own pace.

My father used to say that he was not going to sit down and wait for the undertaker.

[Photos next page]





Planes have been part of *Cliff's* life since he fell into a World War II air-raid shelter. Here he is pictured with Heather Christie of Combined Ex Servicewomens Assoc. and Matt & Simone Denning who flew the Wirraway donated to Queensland Air Museum (Caloundra) in 2010.



*Cliff* in conversation with Barrie Chadwick at the 2015 reunion, Brisbane Sofitel Hotel.

## *Lyn (Craig) Williams*

What most of today's secondary students probably do not realise, is that in the 1950s the school leaving age was fourteen and many left on their fourteenth birthday. Jobs and apprenticeships were plentiful and "on the job" training often led to very good careers. Those of us who did continue with our education felt very privileged to do so. Brisbane State High School was academically very well regarded then and it still is today. Our teachers were strict but fair and we worked hard (I needed to) but we also had a lot of fun. I remember one day a group of boys (not '55ers I'm sure) carried a teacher's car from its parking spot and put it on a garden bed – just a prank and I guess no harm was done. Then there was the ad that appeared one morning in the *Courier Mail* classified section: "For Sale, substantial double storey brick building in extensive grounds, also including many items of antique hand carved furniture. Phone ..... BSHS phone number." I wonder how many phone calls Miss Russell fielded that day.

As for me, after Senior (year 12), I studied pharmacy. Pharmacy was not a university degree course then and our lectures were held at the Central Technical College in George Street, now Queensland University of Technology (QUT). After graduating I did several locums in country towns which I thoroughly enjoyed. In 1961 I married fellow pharmacist Wal Williams. Wal had been in the Citizen Military Forces (CMF), now the Army Reserve, for many years and in 1964 he decided to join the regular army. In 1966 he (which means we) was posted to Puckapunyal in preparation for a posting to Viet Nam. Our children at the time were Lauren aged two years and Jenny aged four months. We wives and families who remained in Puckapunyal were well looked after by the army, and once I got used to clothes freezing on the clothes line if left out over night in winter, the social life was quite good.

On Wal's return from Viet Nam he was posted to Melbourne, then Army Staff College at Queenscliff, then back to Melbourne, and finally to Canberra – we always enjoyed our various postings. The much reviled Canberra is a great place to raise a family and all our four children did all or most of their secondary schooling in Canberra.

One of my first locum positions in Canberra was at the pharmacy at ANU, and on day one I decided I would buy the pharmacy if ever it became available and in 1988 I got my chance. It was a good decision. Such a great place to work – the students were good fun and the staff very interesting. Then after eleven years we both decided it was time to retire and move back to Sunny Queensland, and we now live in Maroochydore.



**Lyn Craig and Barrie Chadwick, Sports Day 1955.**

## *Neil Shinnars*

Well, I went to Brisbane State High School with a fixed idea of becoming an architect and so most of my choices were aimed at that and, as I learned early in the piece, just what was required to pass my exams (a most deplorable trait) my recollections of BSHS are of a really enjoyable time in my life. The companionship was wonderful and as I look back on what I learned, it seems a shame that one cannot go back and say a simple “thank you” to those teachers who persevered with us. I have been an eclectic lover of English, Maths, Geography, History and Art ever since. Though higher maths smacks of witchcraft (sorry Darrell).

The tram ride to school. A penny from Ashgrove, a penny to Dutton Park and a fight over who should ride in the driver’s compartment at the back. Then the big meet-up at corner of Queen and George to catch the tram. What price gender apartheid then.

My most vivid memory of Stumpy Russell was of him proving, on the blackboard, that  $1=0$  and then turning to the class and asking “any more tricks boys”? Billy Beckman’s chemistry class. I’m sure he must have gone home at night and stuck pins in look-alike dolls. We must have been real pains. My most recurrent memory is of Billy Beckman (patron of the Thick Hide Club) saying “you’ve got a thick hide son, get out!” Who could forget (if you were there) about the ever decreasing space around Billy as he stood in front of his desk.

Mem’ries.... Light the corner of my mind. Having reminisced about the times and what we put those poor teachers through, whatever possessed me to spend the last 35 years of my working life lecturing at Curtin University I don’t know. But in the “do you remember” stakes, do you remember?... Prefects do not need to associate themselves with this:

Room 19 and its ceiling with its spitballs with little strings to which were attached small paper men. Arriving late for first assembly and hiding around corner until we could surreptitiously join the classes moving in to the building. Lines or detention for those arriving late. Johnny Hunt taking morning parade and his immortal “that boy down there in the blue shirt, see me after!” And who was the English teacher, I only remember him as Twala, courtesy of King Solomon’s Mines, whose small Morris was lifted and deposited between two bollards in the car park. Of course, Harry Atwell whose technique was to sit beside you on your seat take your knee in his hand and crush it until you remembered the answer. And very effective it was too. Threepence for the opportunity every Friday to watch some students bash the bedickens out of each other in the gym boxing ring. The gym where I was first introduced to the delights of Gilbert & Sullivan *HMS Pinafore* and do I remember correctly, Alan Nicholls playing Dick Dead Eye. Bidy Russell (did she have a first name?) and her car, the biggest tank with the smallest rear window in all the world.

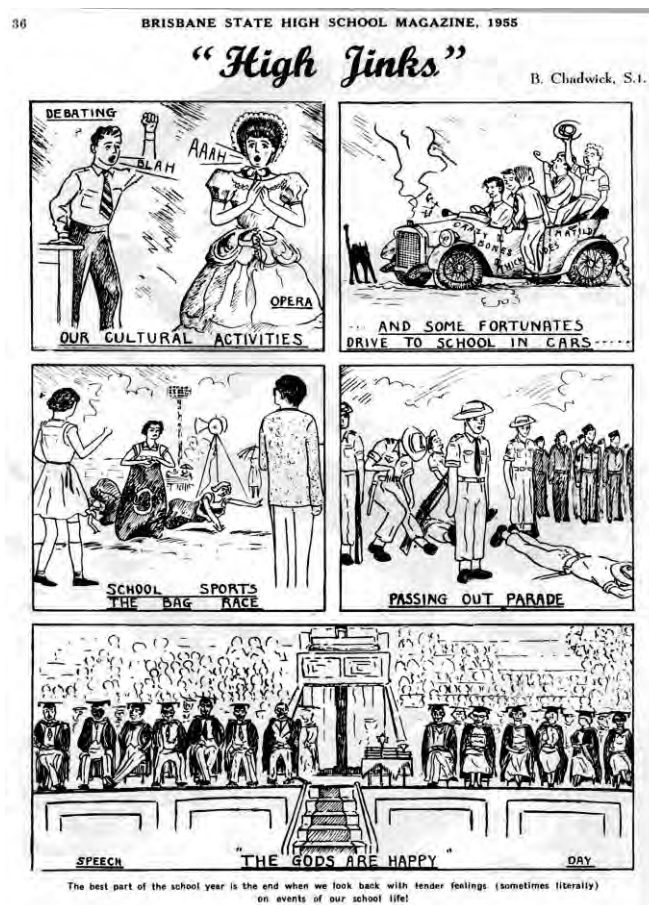
As in the “Chaddie” (Barrie Chadwick) sketches of Seniors 1955, we were the old car owners, I had a 1928 Standard, Herb Bonney won the beauty stakes with his French De Lage (circa 1929) and Bill Adamson’s 1927 Chevrolet (pictured in “High Jinks”) was the subject of a lunch hour complete repaint in red, yellow and blue just before the 1955 GPS sports.

I fulfilled my dream of becoming an architect and joined the firm of Cook & Kerrison located in the Bank of New South Wales Building (corner Queen and George). *Déjà vu* where I met up with Barrie Chadwick. Had an architectural education at QTC and Queensland University along

with Barrie, Bob Gardner, and Michael Bryce. I must pay tribute to “Chaddie” here. We started work at the same office, he six weeks before me and was ensconced in the main office before I arrived, whence I was shot off to the secondary office which allowed me a great deal of site work. As Barrie was doing mainly filing and general dogsbody then, he quite rightly complained, which resulted in us being exchanged. Just in time for me to meet the new girl at the office and as we were married two years later and still are, many thanks Barrie. Spent ten and half years at C&K and on to Bligh Jessup Bretnall and Partners for some four years, working with Bob Gardner and meeting with Geoff Burchill (in his engineering hat) along the way.

By now had a wife and three children whom I unceremoniously uprooted and took to Western Australia in order to lecture in architecture at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT), which eventually became Curtin University. Met up with a former Cook & Kerrison architect then working at WAIT..... BSHS and architecture being some sort of closed circle.

The last ten years of my working life were spent heavily involved with Curtin’s tertiary education programme in South East Asia having previously lived two years in Kuala Lumpur founding and heading an architecture school for Curtin in conjunction with a Malaysian Partner. The last involves a whole night’s story telling but for anyone who has worked with a Malaysian Chinese multi-millionaire in Malaysia it is sufficient to say it involved too many scotch (large) nights and lots of tears. Would do it all again if I had to.



The sketch Neil refers to in his story.

## *Glenise (Govey) Williamson*<sup>3</sup>

My years at Brisbane State High were among the best and most memorable of my life, providing me with the stability I craved. As an only child of a restless father, my early schooling was fragmented. I attended thirteen schools in nine years – sometimes for a few weeks, sometimes for a few months, including a time when I was eight when I had no schooling at all as my father had purchased a caravan in order to tour the east coast of Australia. Nonetheless I was a happy child, content with my own company.

I think as far back as I can remember I loved to sing. My grandmother took me to the Cremorne Theatre when I was three years old, where I saw Peggy Mortimer and I was entranced. It was only a week or so later that I started giving concerts to the family while standing on the tank-stand in the backyard. I persuaded my mother to let me audition for the Peter's Pals – a radio show which gave performances on a Thursday evening and was broadcast on 4BH on Saturday morning. I was accepted and remained with them until the age of fourteen. It was then that my mother decided I should study classical music and she found me a wonderful Hungarian tutor, Joseph Halmos, who taught the *bel canto* method. It was his idea to enter me in the ABC Vocal and Concerto competition (Queensland section) which I was fortunate to win. Joseph organised a scholarship for me in Milan but my goal was always Pharmacy and so I refused it.

But back to Brisbane State High – it made all I have achieved possible. My mother had decided I needed more stability in my life and put her foot down, resulting in our settling in Clayfield. After eighteen months at Ascot State School and finishing the Scholarship, I was thrilled to be accepted at State High. From my first day I loved everything about the school – the atmosphere, the discipline, and the care. It was immediate satisfaction and I knew I would achieve my goal. I felt challenged to do my best in every way possible (not always successful I'm afraid). Highlights of those years for me were inter-school debating and singing the role of Josephine in *HMS Pinafore*. The teachers were amazing and I remember them all with fondness especially Lucy Cribb, Eunice Hanger, Harry Atwell, Vera Arnell, Nesta Brown, and, of course Don Barrett, who made Latin so exciting with his games and newspapers all in Latin. I thank them all for their patience and care.

Yes – I became a pharmacist and while doing my apprenticeship, met a dashing young industrial chemist – Don Williamson. We became engaged and with his encouragement, we purchased my first pharmacy at The Gap. Neither of us had any money and didn't want parental interference so went to the ANZ at Nundah – Don with his spreadsheets. He persuaded the bank manager to give us the money, using our youth and determination as collateral!! We never looked back. Eighteen months later we were married when the pharmacy was sufficiently established to allow us to afford a locum. On our way home from our honeymoon Don broke the news that he had joined a company called Monsanto. He had a meteoric rise through the ranks, resulting in becoming a director but this entailed many interstate moves. I loved working and found part-time work as a pharmacist wherever we were, only handing in my registration at the end of 2013.

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<sup>3</sup> Glenise Govey was Vice-Captain of the Girls in 1955.

I have been blessed with a wonderful husband, two lovely children, Andrew and Jane, and five happy grandchildren. I owe it all to Brisbane State High and the solid grounding it gave me – the determination *to always strive to do my best.*



**Always striving to do her best: *Above: Glen* singing her little heart out, aged eleven, and *below: middle of Debating Team* 1955.**



DEBATING TEAM

Back: D. MrConnell, K. Warner, P. Alfredson, A. Nickols, M. Littmann, G. Van Pypen, B. Chadwick,  
Front: D. Marshall, I. Thomas, P. Heathwood, G. Govey, L. Green, J. Rohl, J. Foley.

## *The Day That Inspired Our Stories*

60<sup>th</sup> Reunion, Sofitel Hotel Brisbane 15 April 2015



**Glen (Govey) Williamson speaking at the reunion. She was a lynchpin for the event. Listening: Neil Shiners, Ian Kelk, Cec Gleeson, Geoff Burchill, Bill Adamson.**



**Bev (Chadwick) Sherry, Don Barrett (Latin teacher), Joan (Cook) Jennings. Don was the only teacher at the reunion.**



**Vera Lukursky and Glen Williamson. Vera's career was as a doctor (anaesthetist); she regretted being unable to write her story.**



***Left side:*** Pam (Wendt) Raeside, Geraldine (Woolley) Morris, Alan Fien. ***Right side:*** John Raeside, Beverley (Davie) Galtos, Don and Ann Matthews.



**The other table.** ***Left side:*** Michael Bryce, Glen Williamson, Vera Lukursky, Helen Thies. ***Right side:*** Bev Sherry, Gay Stevens, Tric & Don Marshall, Neil Shinnars.





