Chapter Five

Schooling leaders and followers

Mr Rolland was the first Principal able to introduce somewhat radical educational ideas to the College. He was clearly aware of the great international trends in education in the 1920s, such as the New Education movement and the Dalton Plan, but he also understood, from studying comparisons with major public schools in England and America, during periods of extended leave in 1926 and 1934, that Australian schools were considerably different.

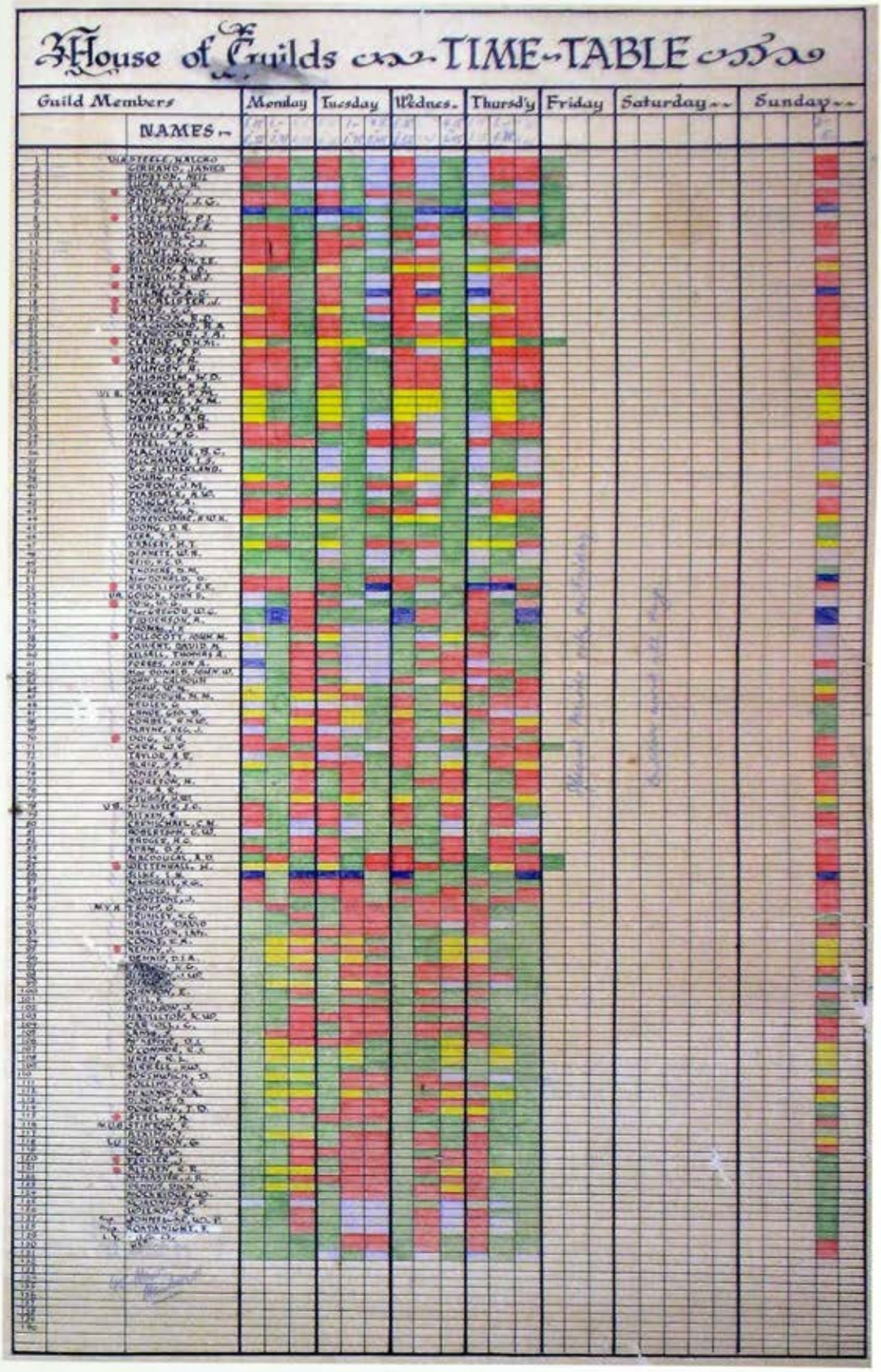
In 1922, Mr Rolland considered the introduction of the Dalton Plan, particularly to address the needs of Middle School boys who appeared to him to need new ways to harness their energy and initiative. He chose instead something based on the Dalton Plan, but 'much less revolutionary – an occasional period when the boys, with a master as advisor only, will undertake in their own way' a special project.[1] The first was an essay, with prize attached, on the topic 'Should India have self-government within the Empire?'

Student activities, excursions and experiences beyond the classroom began to flourish. To link classroom studies with real life, the Tuesday morning lecture series was introduced in 1921. Topics were wonderfully diverse, including citizenship, banking, Egypt, farming, New York, radiography, forestry and Russia, and all contributed to the students' developing understanding of society, politics, commerce and religion – the world beyond football, Latin and algebra. The lectures continued throughout Mr Rolland's era, although not always on Tuesday mornings. Economics lectures were introduced in the early 1930s, made directly relevant in a period of economic depression. Other discussion groups were frequently held, and students were treated to a stream of special visitors ranging from missionaries to the Prime Minister of Australia. All of this contributed to bring the outside world into the school. From 1922, the Wireless Society had a small but devoted following. By 1922, the Debating Society boasted eighty-six members. A Dramatic Society was re-formed in 1923. A Scout Troop was formed in 1927, and a Christian Union – run by the students – was formed in 1930. The Navy League, Philatelic Society and Camera Club were all established in 1931, and a Science Club began in 1933.

Scouts, c1933–4

Since 1920, therefore, Mr Rolland had been deliberately making the curriculum broader so as to teach values and life skills: 'We have thought a good deal of the boy who is not going to the University … outside the regular curriculum we have done a good deal for the boys' wider education which is not recorded in examination results but which is gratefully remembered by many Old Collegians', including the various clubs and activities already established.[2] Mr Rolland's second period of study leave, in 1934, sharpened his focus about the development of a broad, human-focused curriculum for the College. A visit to his friend, the Reverend Kenneth Bickersteth of Felsted School in England, provided considerable inspiration and encouragement to establish the House of Guilds, a step that would underline and develop the special aspect of experiential, manual and vocational learning that he had begun to develop: 'It is the spirit in which the knowledge is acquired that is the most important thing, not the knowledge itself' and 'there is also the training that responsibility can give, the qualities that true sport can foster, the new interests that visitors bring to the school, the broadening of outlook and sympathy caused by College friendships, and so on'.[3]

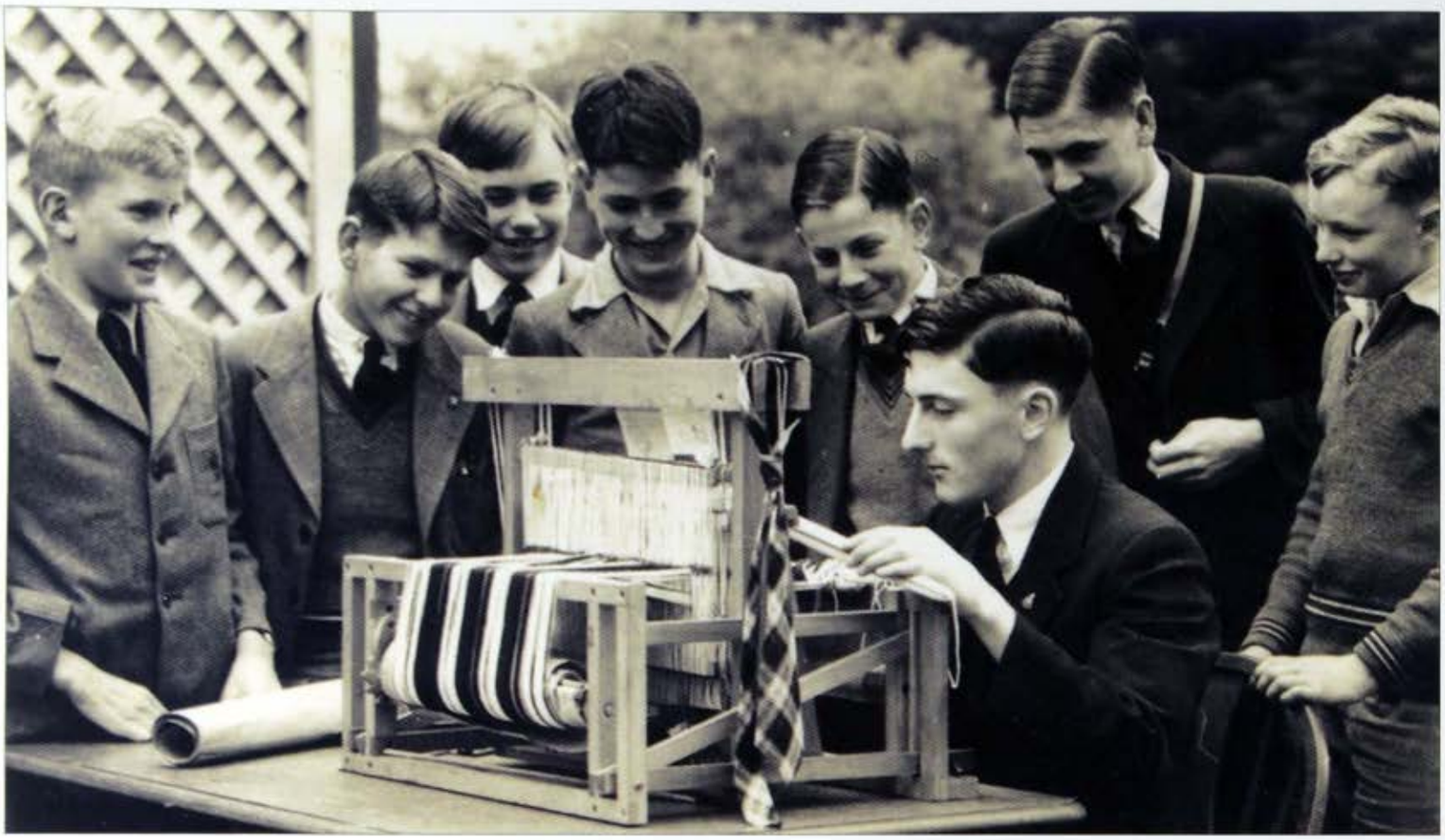
The House of Guilds had a number of aims: the manual education provided by the many new arts and crafts would 'educate for pleasure and leisure', and the discovery of new hobbies by the boys would contribute to the development of their personality, something 'not defined by examination results'. It was thought that some boys would gain more confidence in general and in their school work in particular; and that some activities would teach the value of working together – 'boys are apt to think of team work as something that has to do mainly with sport. They need to learn that the world's work requires cooperation at least as much as competition.' It was also judged that opportunities to appreciate natural beauty would further enrich the boys' personalities and, overall, that the House of Guilds would contribute to one of Mr Rolland's chief aims, 'to make the Geelong College less institutional and more human'.[4]


House of Guilds TIME-TABLE

Guild Members — NAMES

Monday | Tuesday | Wednes. | Thursd'y | Friday | Saturday | Sunday

House of Guilds timetable



Weaving, c1940. Photo: A.N. and D.M. Drury Album

Under the guidance of resident Art Master, John Béchervaise (1935–36, 1945–49), the House of Guilds opened in 1935 for day boys and boarders, offering space for carpentry, printing, stencilling, French polishing, cane basketry, raffia work, soap, clay and stone sculpture, modelling, pottery, wirework, pewter embossing, leatherwork, pottery decoration, papier-mâché, model-making, bookbinding, weaving and fretwork. Existing school clubs moved there, and the Ramblers Club and Photography Club thrived. The new activities were run by elected boy leaders, and operated as a series of six guilds at first: Ramblers, Craft Fellowship, Specialists, Gardeners, Collectors and Artists. Not all parents saw the value of the House of Guilds. Alan Herald's father, for example, instructed Mr Rolland that his son was not to participate in the Radio Club, in the belief that it would 'interfere' with his schoolwork. In his keenness, Alan found a way around this and, with the help of another boy, he 'operated a radio receiver under the staircase in the entrance at the clock tower end of the Morrison Hall'.[5]

Most boys, however, thrived at the House of Guilds under the guidance of teachers such as Mr Béchervaise, George Logie-Smith (1937–58) and Don Webb (1939–76), all of whom were attached to different guilds. Mr Webb was very good at identifying latent talent in young people, especially those who were not academically gifted. For Fred Elliott, the Ramblers Guild sparked a lifelong interest in the environment, exploration and outdoor education. Ken Nall remarks: 'We went on hikes and expeditions here, there and everywhere, to places like Lorne and Cape Otway. There was a cultivation of a true spirit of adventure.'[6]

Music also enjoyed a meteoric rise in popularity during the late 1930s. Roy Shepherd was appointed as the school's first Music Director in 1936. His efforts with the Music Club, Glee Club and the development of a good Preparatory School choir gave Music a solid foundation, to the delight of Mr Rolland, who sought to make it an 'active and virile instead of lazy and passive' activity.[7] Plans for a House of Music were drawn up in 1936, in further fulfilment of Mr Rolland's aims to provide a better balance and less academic focus, thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor who provided half the necessary funds. The somewhat unexpected rise of the popularity of Music at the College was largely due to the appointment of Mr Logie-Smith as Music Teacher. A talented musician, he was also a charismatic young man and an enthusiastic sportsman. Undoubtedly, this latter characteristic helped to give Music such ready acceptance among both sporting and non-sporting boys in a school where sport was becoming dominant. Geoff Neilson remembers an occasion when Mr Rolland said to a group of students: '"Boys, there is one genius in this school, and you must take advantage of the fact that he is here, and that's Mr George Logie-Smith". He was very well liked and very popular.'[8] Consequently, the Glee Club attracted a huge following, and large choruses of boys participated in the school musicals. Mr Logie-Smith's annual Gilbert and Sullivan productions, beginning in 1938 with *Trial by Jury*, soon became the stuff of legend, and attained status in the school magazine with pages, not merely paragraphs, devoted to the reports. Mr Logie-Smith directed choirs and the orchestra and encouraged students' love of music, which many took gratefully into their adult lives. Other teachers were also integral to the popularity of the production, including Mr Carrington, J.H. Campbell and Mr Webb – all those people 'helped make that such an enormously rewarding experience. I remember *The Mikado*, which was in 1941 – we did absolutely everything – made the costumes, wigs, scenery, and the whole school was involved.'[9]

The curriculum began to catch up, too, with the notions of New Education and what was happening outside the classroom. Teachers began to devise 'more living methods of teaching'.[10] Geography, for example, came alive through the application of teacher and Old Collegian Bert Keith, who developed an integrated curriculum for all the Geography students in the school. The year's work culminated in a huge display titled 'Man's World', which showed experiential learning at its best, linking Geography with English, History, French, Mathematics and Scripture. Among other things, it taught 'in what ways our city of Geelong serves Australia; where petrol comes from and by what stages; why each member of your family pays twenty shillings a year to keep the price of sugar up to fourpence a pound; why cricket matches are more often interrupted by rain in England than in Australia and how Italy would benefit by the acquisition of a tropical territory'.[11] Geography excursions, and excursions for other subjects, became integral to the curriculum.

The value of hikes and exploration was also given credibility, particularly when the Ramblers Guild became the Exploration Society. Apart from the sheer pleasure of physical adventure, they were upheld as encouraging fine moral fibre and teaching skills of self-reliance, teamwork and appreciation of the Australian countryside. Mr Rolland enthused at Speech Night in 1936:

> The mental activity required in organising these expeditions to places where no men live, places where boys must depend on themselves entirely, is a fine training in fore-thought and self-help, quite apart from the activity of the body, and the team virtues that are called out on the journeys themselves … across untrodden peaks and unexplored valleys reveal to a boy the very soul of his country.[12]

Above: Sewing, c1947

Below: Stamp collecting. Photos: Bechervaise Album

Model aeroplanes, c1947

Teamwork and competitiveness were also boosted by the introduction of the House system. Such a system at the College followed the pattern introduced at other APS schools, as early as 1914 at Geelong Grammar and Melbourne Grammar, and 1917 at Scotch College. Mr Rolland credits Mr MacRoberts with the idea, which in 1920 divided students into four Houses: Morrison, Shannon, Warrinn and Barwon. Initially the system applied to Cricket Teams and the Cadet Corps, and was a deliberate tactic to foster a stronger competitive spirit.[13] By 1921, an Inter-House Cup was awarded for the House with the highest aggregate score for competition in cricket, football, tennis, swimming, running, rowing and class work. A separate Cadet House competition gave points for inspection, physical training, squad drill and a march-past.[14]

The sudden decline in the school's sporting performances during the William Bayly and Walter Price years, compared to the ebullient Norman Morrison years, must have been a rude shock, and one that contributed to poor morale. By the 1930s, as Ken Nall recalls, College boys had well and truly 'learned to lose'.[15] After thirteen Football Premierships in sixteen years from 1892 to 1907, the first APS Football Premiership wins did not come until 1925 and 1927 (and again in 1932, although this victory was shared evenly with three other schools). Old Collegians, despite acknowledging that the APS football trophy was the most keenly sought, congratulate themselves nevertheless on having provided the Geelong Football Club (both in the VFL and AFL) with dozens of outstanding players. Edward 'Cargi' Greeves, who in 1925 won the first Brownlow Medal, had played in the College's 1st

XVIII in 1920, 1921 and 1922, and so became a school hero. College cricketers won the Victorian Schools' Association Premiership five times under Norman Morrison, but after that 'a win was a matter of astonishment'.[16] There were several outstanding players, including Cargi Greeves, who batted finely in the 1920s, and Lindsay Hassett, who played in every 1st XI from 1927 to 1932, but the College would not win an APS Cricket title until 1946. Hassett's later fame as a member of the Australian Test Cricket Team, however, boosted school sporting pride during the depression years, when it was most needed. Rowing, too, suffered on the more demanding APS stage. Until 1936, the year of the first APS Rowing Premiership, College crews reached the finals on only three occasions.

The performance of the College in APS competition would have been a great disappointment for Norman Morrison, had he lived to see it. This, however, appears to have been the price that the College paid for longer-term security in an increasingly competitive education market, now made up of government and non-government secondary schools. The College's relatively small size compared to its APS rivals, until after World War II, also shrank the pool of boys from which coaches selected the elite teams. The difference was not so great at the beginning of the APS period, in 1908 when, for example, Melbourne Grammar had only little more than twice the enrolments of the College. But in the following two decades, the College's enrolments first dropped before improving in the 1920s, while during the same period Melbourne Grammar nearly tripled in size to more than 1,100 students. Scotch College doubled to 1,300 students in the same period.[17]

Mr Rolland had, anyway, some misgivings about the emphasis on sport: 'Joy is too much in the victory, not enough in the game'. He also believed that compulsory sport was ridiculous, especially when such a narrow choice of games was offered.[18] A most profound point on the topic was made during the 1920s when he awarded 'sportsman of the year' to Don Cochrane (1926), who had polio. The message hit home for some: 'Don spent his life in a wheelchair or on crutches, but never missed an important game and at all times was a most enthusiastic supporter and entered into everything within his capacity'.[19] The Principal was, of course, able to pay genuine tribute to the students' great sportsmanship when it was deserving:

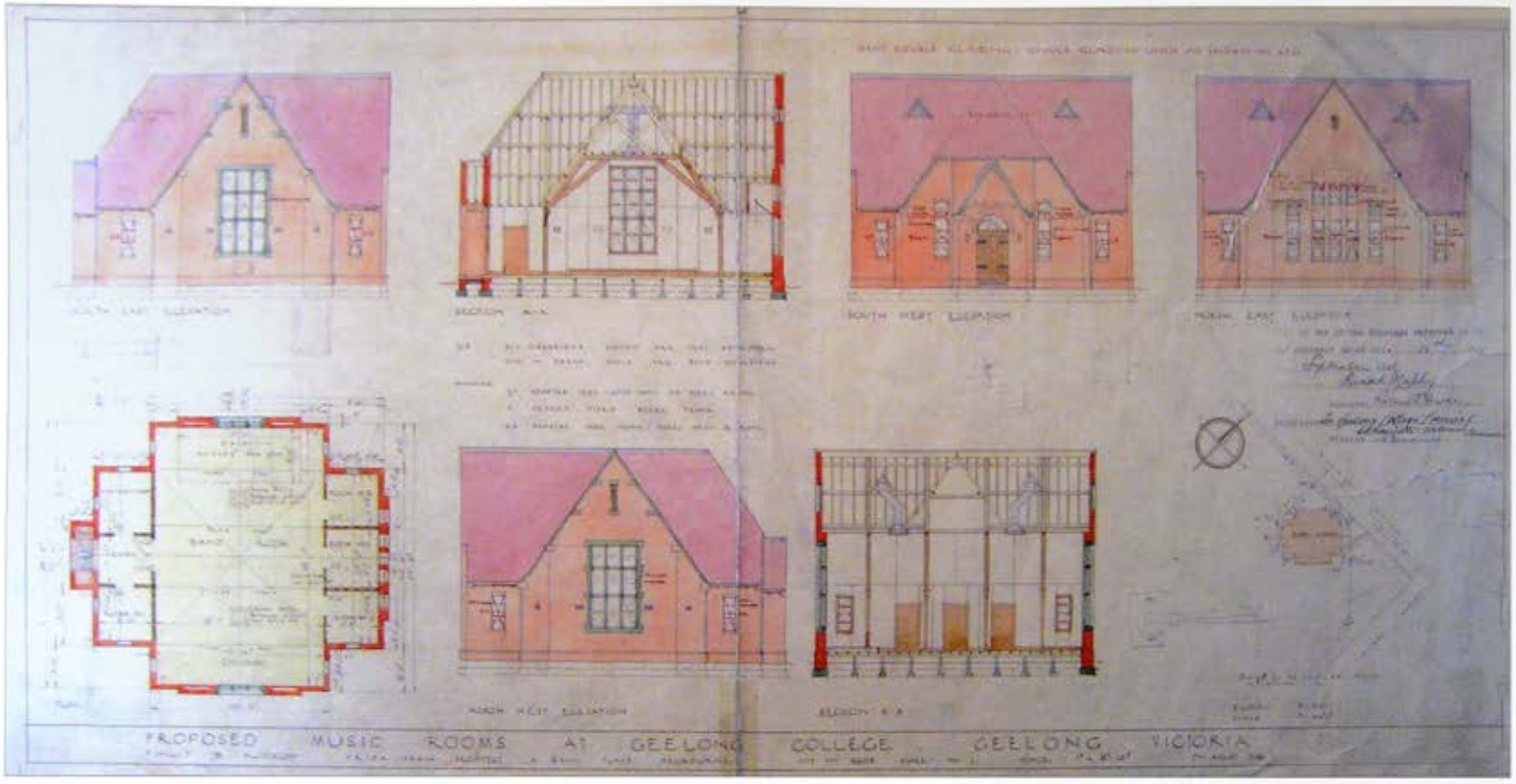
> The manner in which the College has been able to compete at all on level terms with the huge Melbourne schools is the most extraordinary feature of public school sport. The fact that we have such ample playing fields at our very doors has certainly something to do with our success, but another reason, I think, lies in the pluck of the boys themselves, and I congratulate them on the sportsmanlike spirit in which they have fought out every contest.[20]

As the school grew bigger during the 1940s, and thus more likely to win, sporting competition became the essence of the school's identity for most students: 'We were tribal'.[21] During rowing and football competitions with Geelong Grammar, there was quite 'an absurd sense of rivalry'.[22]

Despite Mr Rolland's emphasis on the development of students' moral tone and well-roundedness, he did not lose sight of the need to improve the school's academic performance. As well as those students for whom the Intermediate exams were the highest possible level to which aspiration could be made, a small group every year attempted the Leaving Certificate to qualify for university entry and join fellow Old Collegians, as they mostly did, at Ormond College. Although enrolments grew considerably during the 1920s, academic performances at Leaving level did not until 1929.

Above: Bert Keith

Below: George Logie-Smith by Robert Ingpen. Reproduced with permission from Robert Ingpen


PROPOSED MUSIC ROOMS AT GEELONG COLLEGE GEELONG VICTORIA

To raise the academic bar, Mr Rolland set some modest aims within a generally realistic expectation of what could be achieved, given that the school was open to all and that its clientele had a diverse range of aspirations for their sons. At Speech Night in 1926, not long after his return from study leave overseas, he succinctly stated that if scholarship at the College was to improve, 'we must give our masters smaller classes, we must give our boys adequate reference libraries, and we must as a school keep our eyes on life as well as on examination results'.[23] Accordingly, by 1928, the average class size was reduced to twenty-six, German was reintroduced, and Intermediate exam results improved enormously. In 1929, during the planning of the new dining hall, it was decided to convert part of the old dining hall to a library – a facility essential to the strengthening of academic outcomes.

In 1934, the staff seriously considered whether or not the College should apply to be an A-class school, and thus no longer subject to external examinations, but it was decided against, as it was felt that such a move could unfairly handicap some boys, and that, overall, it was a greater advantage to have external examinations. Many other APS schools felt differently about this: A-class status was perceived to be more attractive to parents and thus an aid to boosting enrolments. Modern new subjects were introduced: Physical Education (PE) in 1939, which Mr Rolland had been keen to offer since 1934, and Social Studies in 1945. Mr Apps (1939) was the talented new PE Teacher, a graduate of the first PE diploma course established in Australia, at the University of Melbourne in 1937. It was he who advocated the inclusion of his subject in the core curriculum, making it an enjoyable blend of physiological instruction and social games, rather than the previously endured daily mechanical exercises known as Physical Culture.[24]

There were many other key teachers, some long serving, who had a considerable influence on students during the 1930s and 1940s. Sam Bickford (1946–71) taught English and 'was the first person who *really* encouraged me to read. He was at pains to suggest better ways of writing and marked your essays in such a way that you learnt a lot from his marking'.[25] While the quality of some of the teaching varied, 'the warmth of the teaching was something that you really felt – you believed that a number of the teachers were truly interested in your welfare', reflects Ken Nall.[26] Old Collegians from many different eras agree with this. Those students with academic talent also acknowledge the encouragement and support that the teachers gave them as having been especially important to enable them to reach any level of academic consequence.

Teachers worked very hard, barely with a spare period each week. Mr Keith, as a non-resident teacher, taught every day and took study one night a week, as well as weekend boarding house duty about once a month, which encompassed both days of the weekend from breakfast to 10 pm. Then there was sport supervision. Whether because of conditions in general or something more specific, Mr Keith records that he would have resigned at the end of 1927 except for the fact that he had committed himself to having a house built.[27] During the depression, teachers were lucky to have jobs. They knew that employees in other organisations volunteered to have pay cuts, so were fortunate when none came about at the College, although the matter was seriously discussed by Council. Instead, there were no pay increments for years.

By the late 1930s, there was some improvement in academic results and 1937 was, in Mr Rolland's opinion, the best year since he began. Exhibition winners Howard Steel (1937), with three (in Mathematics II, Mathematics III and Physics), and Ronald Doig (1938) obtained two of the first three places in Victoria for the Senior Government scholarships. Performances in

Opposite page

Above: The House of Music architectural drawings, August 1936

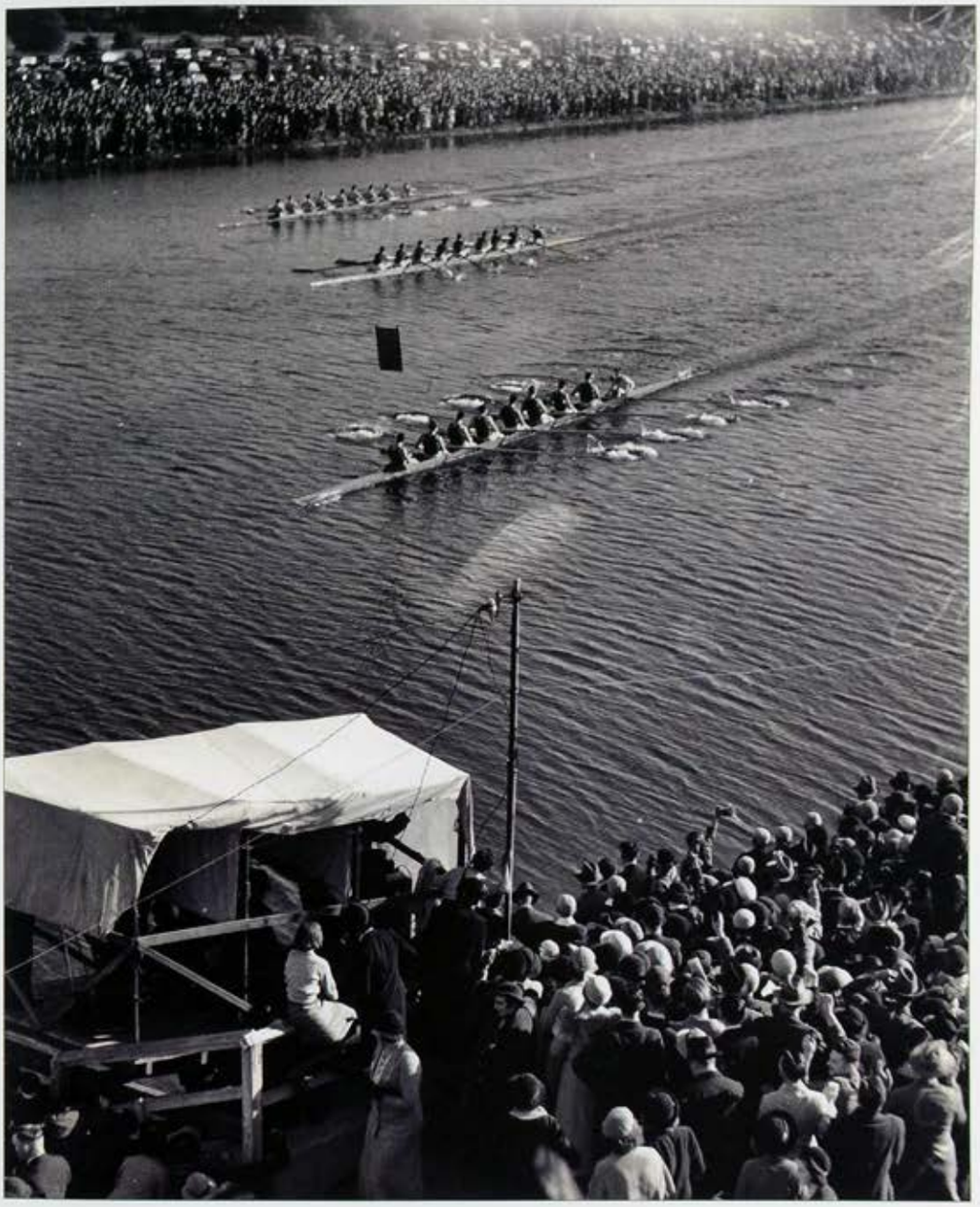
Below: *The Mikado* cast, with George Logie-Smith centre, 1941

Football Team champions, 1927. Back row: R. Gough, J.R. Adam, R.J. Whiting, J.H. Bromell, R.G. Greeves, P. MacPherson, A.J. Coto, M.S. Lamb; Middle row: D.A. Ingpen, E.E. Matheson, A.E. Bumpstead (Vice Captain), A.H. Mc Gregor (Captain), W.M. Lamb, R. B. Reid, J.A. McKenzie; Seated: A.W. Currie, D.C. D'Helin, N. Palmer

Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, British History and French (in that order) were the strongest subjects at Matriculation level. Physics was especially outstanding, and 55 per cent of the Honours marks awarded to Matriculation students from the mid-1930s to mid-1940s were in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics alone.[28]

Mr Rolland had been deeply anxious during the 1930s about the likelihood of another war. He did his best to prepare students and parents for what was to come. He underlined the necessity of moral and religious training to enable boys to deal with the rising forces of Nazism and Communism. He asked parents to encourage their sons to join the Cadet Corps, as one avenue of practical preparation. In 1938, he arranged a weekend conference, where boys from all over Victoria under the age of 21 visited the College to discuss the responsibility of youth to democracy and service to the country. He explained that, while pacifism is all very well, a greater evil would be wrought on the world in the loss of democracy if citizens did not volunteer to fight: 'More things, and more important things, than national boundaries are being threatened. Truth is in chains, where science once was free. Might has again obtained a prestige which is quietly perverting our boys' sense of value. We are once again catching sight of the damnable face of religious persecution', and schools, he insisted, had an added responsibility now to develop men able to rise to the occasion, whatever happened, 'for both war and peace demand good leaders and good followers'.[29]

Mr Rolland also had retirement on his mind throughout the 1930s and suggested a finishing date of 1934. Council instead took his second option, of a further three years as Principal. The previous contracts had been for five-year periods. Those next three years would be especially demanding. He was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria during 1937 and 1938, and Chairman of the Headmasters' Conference of Australia from 1936 to 1939. The latter's members felt inspired by his gift of thoughtful oratory at their meetings, such as this in 1936: 'The power that a Headmaster has is not a little terrifying. What he decides, what he plans, what he builds, whom he chooses, everything he does, everything he is, affects the joyousness of his school.'[30] The polio epidemic in 1937 saw



Schools, he insisted, had an added responsibility now to develop men able to rise to the occasion, whatever happened, 'for both war and peace demand good leaders and good followers'.

The Geelong College in 1936 winning the Head of the River

Physical Education class, 1939

students banned from visiting Melbourne, and boarders had their winter holidays cancelled and instead attended special camps at Queenscliff or Anglesea.[31] In 1938, the College lost loyal English and History Teacher of thirty-four years and Vice Principal, Mr MacRoberts, when he retired. Although a reserved and stern man, he was respected for his war service, admired for his expert coaching of the Cricket and Athletics Teams, and set high standards of behaviour with a deep love of the school at heart.[32] The death of long-serving Council Chairman, Mr Hamilton-Calvert, in 1939, was another blow. In the same year, Mr Rolland again proposed his retirement but Council persuaded him to change his mind. By the end of the year – also the conclusion of his appointment as Chairman of the Headmasters' Conference – he was exhausted. Partly for a rest and partly to undertake some self-imposed unofficial war work, he took Term 2 off in 1940.[33] Throughout the war, he continued to raise the question of the appointment of a new Principal, but the matter was continually put off.

Wartime brought new difficulties. World War II wreaked far more havoc on staffing than did World War I. Anxiously, after 'Tam' Henderson (1929–63) and Vic Profitt (1925–63) decided to do war work instead of teach, Mr Rolland called the staff together to discourage enlistment, pointing out 'the importance of their work and the need for skilled teachers to "pass on the torch" to the next generation'.[34] Harry Dunkley (1935–39, 1948–70) also enlisted, as did Ian Watson (1939–76) from the Preparatory School, George Martin (1941–65), the Bursar, and Mr Saleh, Rowing Coach. Some domestic staff left, too, but boarders helped with boarding house chores. The seriousness of wartime was succinctly expressed at those morning assemblies when Mr Rolland read out names of any recently killed Old Collegians. This affected everyone, including the Principal, who confided in Mr Darling: 'I have been quite busy for one and have got a bit run down and emotional. I wonder if I am

The overcrowded boarding houses, with 255 boarders in 1945, forced the proclamation of a new policy: that country boys from Presbyterian homes be given the first preference.

going to be man enough to be a man and not a mere frustration of tears, if these maddening farewells to splendid youth, this apparent sheer wastage is to go on month after month.'[35]

Students and staff at the College, as at schools all over Australia, did whatever they could for the war effort. Junior boarders, supervised by Matron, knitted a huge quilt, and the domestic and office staff knitted goods continuously for the Australian Comforts Fund. Teachers of Mathematics and Science conducted classes for reservists in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Money was raised in any way possible for the Red Cross and for war savings certificates. The House of Guilds made do, continuing to function despite shortages of a wide range of materials. By holding events such as ping-pong tournaments, boys raised money to purchase materials to make hospital furniture for the Red Cross.[36] By 1941, the work of the Cadet Corps was hampered, with little equipment being available. The cancellation of APS Football and Athletics Premiership fixtures in 1940 was borne resolutely. However, events such as the Combined Cadet Corps display at the Caulfield Racecourse, with other cadets from schools all over Victoria, boosted morale. An Air Training Corps was formed in 1942, and proved popular among those boys keen to join the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). For most boys, the Cadet Corps was a popular wartime activity, as Fred Elliott reflects: 'It had a meaning; the war was the one thing we all were prepared for in our minds. It was there in front of us, between us and our future.'[37]

Enrolments continued to increase during the war, but the shortage of building materials curtailed physical expansion. A new brick Kindergarten at the Preparatory School had to wait, so the timber one was extended. A timely bequest of £3,000 in 1944 from the late Mr MacRoberts funded new classrooms at the Junior School and Senior School. The overcrowded boarding houses, with 255 boarders in 1945, forced the proclamation of a new policy: that country boys from Presbyterian homes be given the first preference.[38]

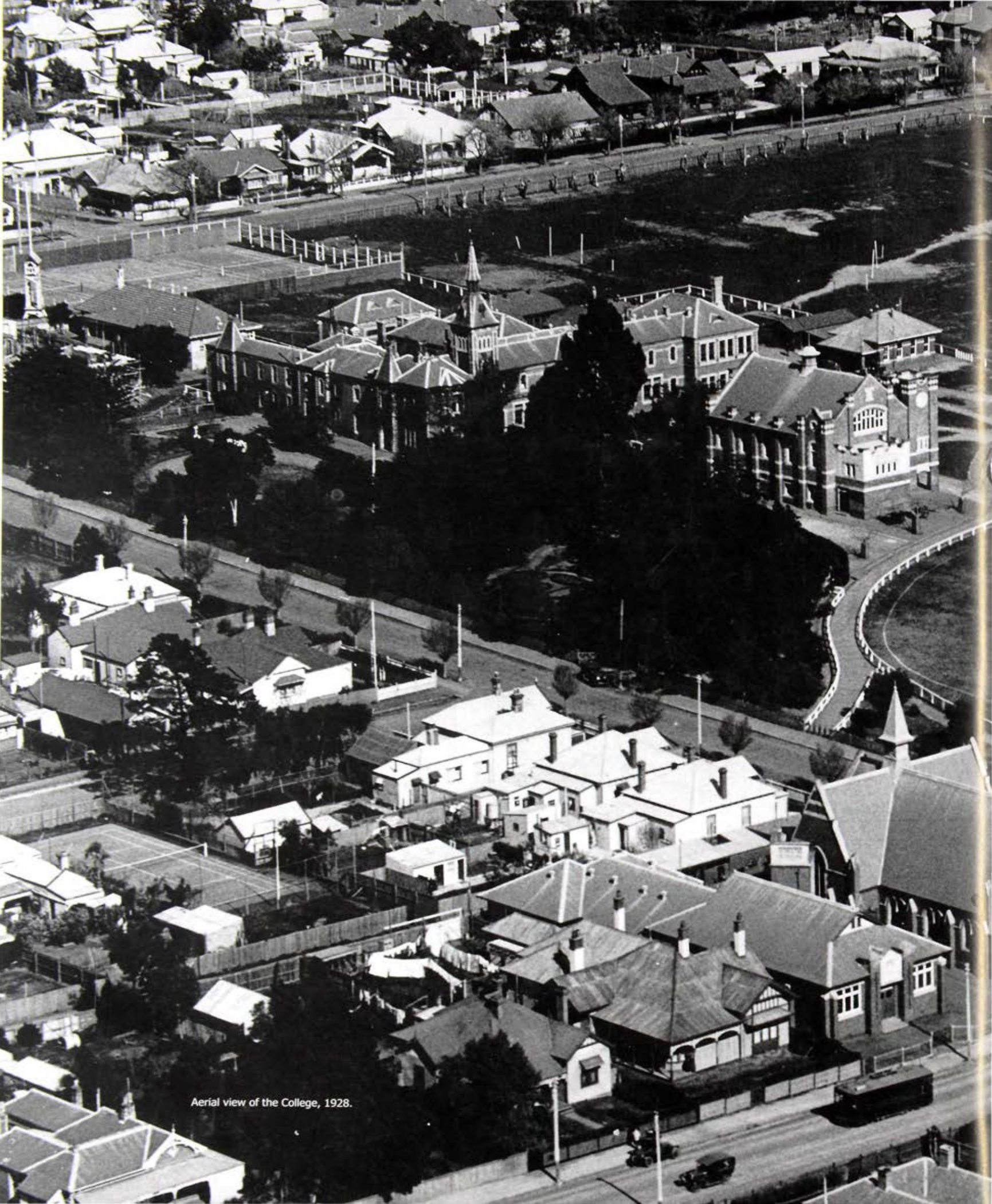
New boarders arrived from around the world during World War II and did their best to settle in. Some of the new enrolments were from families north of the 'Brisbane Line' in Queensland and from Hong Kong, who were evacuated as the Japanese moved further south in 1941 and 1942. Others came from England, such as Don Lawler, who arrived in 1940 with his mother and siblings after his father joined the Royal Air Force. 'As the war gathered momentum, new students would arrive in Junior House with little fuss or explanation. Some had lost one or both parents, some had escaped from Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, or China and some suffered in silence as the school routine rolled over the awful bouts of home sickness that was really more common with all the boys than anyone admitted.'[39] To make room for these children, Mr Rolland found beds for other boarders in homes outside the College. Most students had a father, brother or other relative in the armed forces. By the end of the war, there were as many boarders as there were day boys.

As the war progressed, more and more leavers joined the armed forces instead of obtaining work or pursuing a university degree, with the exception of those who won places in reserved courses such as Medicine. Mr Rolland tried to counsel parents against allowing boys to leave school early to secure a job or enlist, reminding them that the most beneficial years for boys at Public Schools usually occurred after the age of 16.[40] In fact, Mr Rolland used most of his wartime Speech Night addresses to emphasise the added importance that a good education would have during the rebuilding of nations when the war ceased. He pleaded for Australians to foster a new regard for education, and for the profession of teaching, as a top priority: 'There is … some hope that we in Australia may

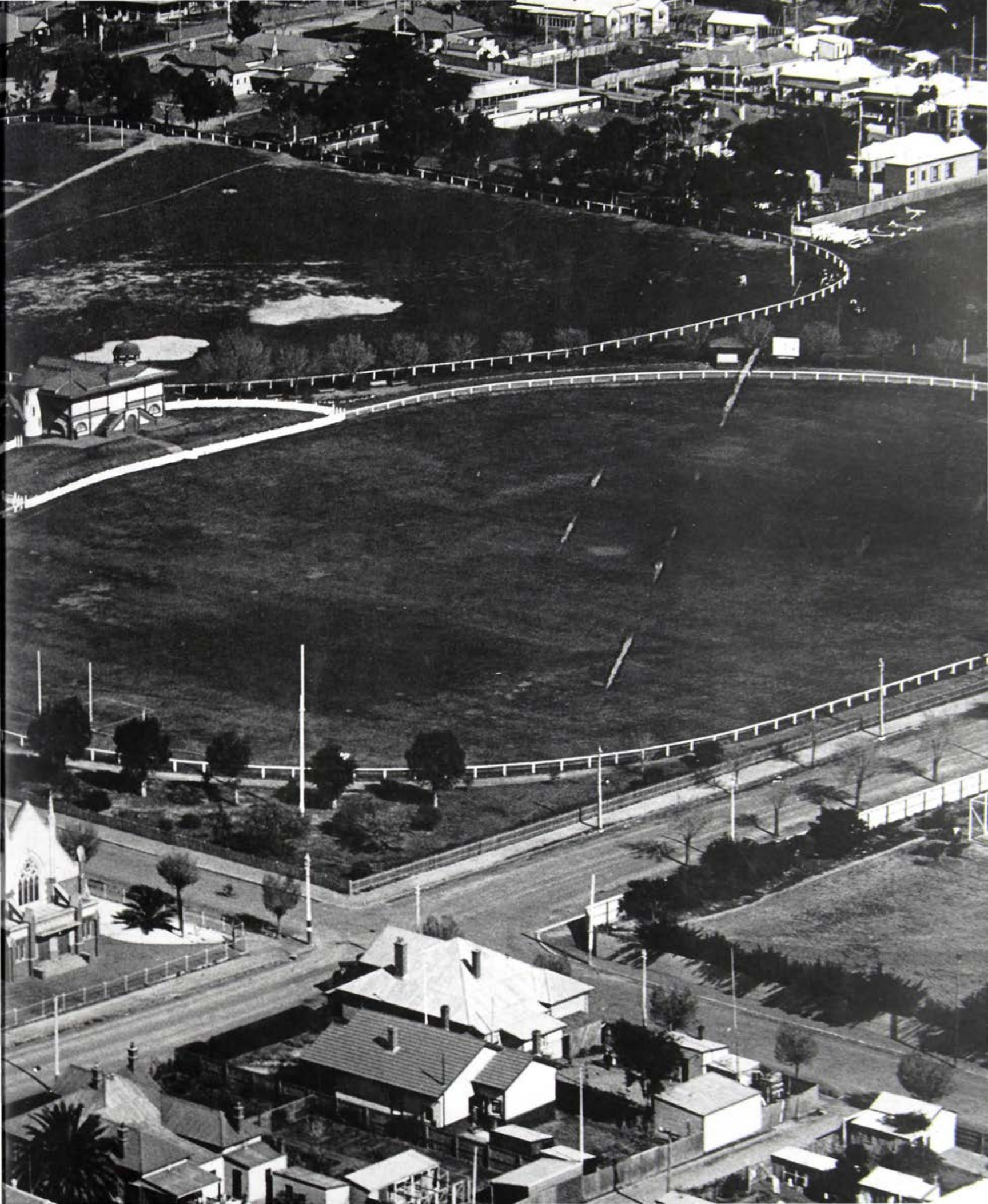
Exam results, 1921–29

Year	Intermediate Passes	Leaving Passes
1921	8	1
1922	12	4
1923	11	3
1924	13	2
1925	24	4
1926	11	8
1927	12	7
1928	25	9
1929	42	18

Source: *Pegasus*



Aerial view of the College, 1928.



Participation in a first team was enough for most College boys, especially in rowing, which had dominated the College's sporting identity since Norman Morrison's time.

yet come to think of education as a spiritual thing, and teaching as a sacred calling, and to see in genuine education a hope of restoring to Western civilization its lost dignity and purpose, and of giving back to its soul'.[41]

Discipline at the College also suffered during the war, especially as Mr Rolland aged. 'In the years when the war was at its darkest', recalls Geoff Neilson, 'a group of senior boarders, called the "Press Gang" wrought unbelievable damage to the temperaments of junior boys (particularly day boys) and of others whose interests centred in academic achievements rather than sport, by terrible acts of bullying. No move from the top came to wipe out the iniquity.'[42] Bill Rogers remembers the formidable initiation ceremonies, carried out by the senior students. New boys, 'in one of the rooms downstairs off the main quadrangle ... had to climb up on three tables and stand on a chair and sing', while the others shook the tables.[43] Other initiation tests took the form of quizzes about the school's history and traditions.

Despite his wish to retire, Mr Rolland has been criticised for his slackening attitude to school discipline, and some teachers left either in frustration or from having been 'virtually run out of the College by unruly classes'.[44] Former students suggest that Mr Rolland's grip on the school became more tenuous in his last years as Principal, and his loss of memory was noticeable. 'It was not unknown for him to turn up at a class and to have forgotten his books or forgotten where he had to be. He was beginning to lose the thread of things.'[45] At the end of 1943, he commented to Mr Darling: 'I have no energy to persuade anyone anything'.[46] The end of his incumbency, however, finished in high spirits with the conclusion of World War II and some success in APS sporting endeavour. Although the school Athletics Team was unable to compete at the 1944 APS sports, because of an outbreak of scarlet fever, the immense prestige attached to sporting prowess was, at last, justified by winning the Head of the River in 1944, and the football in 1945. It was a huge boost to wartime morale. Despite few APS wins up until this time, participation in a first team was enough for most College boys, especially in rowing, which had dominated the College's sporting identity since Norman Morrison's time. Sport, more than any other aspect of school life, remained 'a passport to power'.[47]

Council turned its thoughts in 1944, reluctantly, to the subject of Mr Rolland's successor. Without advertising, it nominated eminent Old Collegian Brigadier John Rogers (1913), also a Council member (1943–51). The son of a clergyman, Mr Rogers had been Dux of the College, won the Military Cross during his war service and, with a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree, became head chemist at the Vacuum Oil Company. During World War II, he was Director of Military Intelligence and greatly admired for this work by Old Collegians. It became apparent that he was most unlikely to accept the position, should it be offered. After the war, he chose to remain on College Council, but returned to the Vacuum Oil Company as a Director and later, Chairman.[48] The position of Principal was advertised and thirty-seven applications were received. Four were interviewed: military men Colonel K.W.R. Glasgow of Wellington and Wing-Commander C.E.S. Gordon of Melbourne, teacher Paul Radford of Scotch College, and Dr Martyn Arnold Buntine, who was selected to be the College's sixth Principal.[49]

Mr Rolland was at last able to retire, at the end of 1945. Tributes to him focused on his fine qualities as an orator, a statesman-like leader, a friend, a man with an educational vision and one who led by example. Mr Darling said: 'by the example of his mind and soul

he has kept before us all the true ideal of a headmaster, as of a man ever responsible before God for the souls of the boys committed to his charge'.[50] For others, Mr Rolland remained a somewhat enigmatic figure: 'I can't say that any of us ever fully understood Frank Rolland. He was an amazing man, almost like quicksilver – you could never really grasp him.'[51] After he retired, Mr Rolland was awarded with an honorary Doctor of Divinity (DD) by the University of Edinburgh, and was further honoured when he became the first clergyman in Australia to receive a knighthood.