

Geelong College: Reminiscences by Fred Elliott, 2003.

Introduction

My thirty-five years stint at the College was in two parts: 1940 to 1946 as a boarder, and 1963 to 1990 as a staff-member. In addition, when I was training to be a teacher, and also when teaching at Colac High School, I assisted with Exploration Society trips to Rodondo Island, Snowy River gorges, Central Australia, Nullarbor Plains, Federation Peak, Wilsons Promontory, the Grampians and the Otways. Some in the last two areas were combined with students from Colac High School.

From 1953 to 1962 my interests were fully taken up by three Australian Antarctic Division wintering expeditions, which took up almost four years, teaching at GGS at Corio and Timbertop, getting married and starting a family. Margaret and I were not too keen on taking a chance on the local Merrijig school to give a sound base to our girls' education, so accepted an offer of the Housemastership of Warrinn boarding house. The boarding establishment was bulging at the seams in those days. I had 65 sleeping in the old Warrinn and about another dozen or so at 'Lester Square', the College house on the corner of Noble and Talbot streets where Mr Brian Lester, the Senior Maths teacher, lived. The boys lived in a converted army hut. This later became the Woodwork Room with Mr Fred White in charge, then a storage area, during which time it was destroyed by fire.

Junior House had moved to the new Preparatory School. The three senior boarding houses became multi-age grouped, and also participated in the inter-house competition under their own names and colours. Prior to this, there were four sports houses in the Senior School; Calvert, Shannon, Morrison and Warrinn. Now there were six, with the boarding houses becoming sports houses as well. The three day-boy houses were Calvert, Shannon and McArthur (which took over the black colour of the old Warrinn sports house), together with the three boarding houses. These were called, Morrison, which retained its original brown, Warrinn, which assumed gold as its colour, and Mackie, which took on light-blue. (Some say that this was because Mr John Carrington, the Mackie Housemaster, was an old Geelong Grammar School student, but this was always vehemently denied by the Mackie boys). It seemed to be a good idea at the time, but it tended to increase the division between boarders and dayboys. One of the measures taken to overcome this was to ask day-boys to adopt a boarder! The boarding houses tended to dominate the inter-house competition, and eventually the sports houses reverted to being a mix of day-boys and boarders.

Towards the end of 2003, I spent a day at the College photographing and voice recording my thoughts about my time at the College. Unfortunately the wind caused so much noise that parts of the tapes are difficult to understand, hence this two-finger exercise. So much for a preamble. For the rest of this account, I will write about my memories of the subjects shown in the photographs.

Junior House

On 13 February 1940, my father and uncle said goodbye to me at the same spot from which the photograph was taken. I watched them drive off past the front of the dining hall (there was a gravel drive from Talbot Street), then walked down the brick ramp and through the green door into Junior House. I went through the first door on the right into the play-room and sat on a bench-locker seat beside a boy who looked like I felt. 'What's your name?', I asked. 'Hooper', he replied. I had just turned eleven, and I think John was about the same. We weren't too happy.

The housemaster was Mr L J (Frosty) Campbell, the matron, Miss Fraser, and Rev E C. Mclean, the resident house tutor. Also doing duty were Mr Ian Watson, before he went into the Air Force, and Mr George Logie-Smith. One evening a week we went over to the House of Guilds where Mr Donald Webb introduced us to a variety of skills. Rev Frank Rolland would often come in during the weekends, particularly in the evening, and look after us. We would play games like 'Battle Ships and Cruisers'. These evenings were in the study



room, part of which is now the reception room, and were most enjoyable.

As mentioned, Miss Fraser was matron of Junior House when I was there. Ewen McLean once spoke of the vital place of the House Matron in the running of the house. She not only acted as housekeeper, but also as a confidante and a sort of 'super mum'. He told a story of Miss Fraser finding a rather distraught little boy who was obviously in acute need of the toilet. When she remarked on this he replied that he couldn't find it. She summoned an older boys to sort things out, but he soon returned saying that he couldn't find it either and he thought that the little boy must have his underpants on back to front. Also, on the ground floor were the shower room and the boot room. The latter fronted the small quadrangle at the south east end of the Cloister, and the former was between the boot-room and the light well. To those of us whose homes had no reticulated water, no hot water service and no sewerage connection, the showers were a great wonder. Miss Maggie Mc Ouat would come over from Warrinn to help clean the younger fry.

To the left of the green door a passage gave access to the Principal's study, the Bursar's office and the General office and Book Room. That was the administration area apart from Mr. A T (Spud) Tait's office, first on the right inside the 1867 entrance, where the administration of justice often got to the seat of the trouble. 'There is a Divinity which shapes our ends, Rough hew them how you will.' The administration area was not big by today's standards, but it must be remembered that the total teaching staff numbered only twenty-four at the most. Of that number, four - Rolland, Tail, Lambie and Henderson - were Military Cross winners in the Great War.

The door at the far end of the passage led to the boot-room and the Cloister, and, halfway down on the right, to the bathroom. At the head of the passage the staircase led to the dormitories, rooms for resident staff, and the linen-room.

The four dormitories, 1, 2, 3 & 4 were a bit strange for the newcomer to begin with, but it was there that we learned to be part of a community. Conversely, our beds were about the only place in the whole school that we could call our own; where we had time to think and dream. The dormitories could be riotous affairs too, especially when George Logie-Smith was on duty. He was a great favourite and didn't seem to mind being involved in a bit of rough and tumble. He also told bloodcurdling stories just before lights out. Ewen Mclean was also a good pre-lights-out storyteller.

We were well looked after with our beds being made for us by the domestic staff, the hospital across the driveway looking after our health and, most importantly, the dining hall was very handy. Junior House ate in the small dining hall that had its own entrance. The area from which the photo is taken was also the congregation point for all borders before each meal. If the meal was late, particularly the evening meal, the mob became a bit restive. I remember one time when, after an industrial dispute caused a long delay, Mr Tait said for grace, 'For what we ARE about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful.'

The little raised garden on the right of the ramp down to the green door was our playground where we played imaginary wars with our Dinky-Toy tanks and soldiers. The line on the bricks was the old ramp level leading to the gravel driveway. One weekend a real Bren gun carrier came careering down the driveway. Some young Old Boys were on manoeuvres in the area, and were showing off. And while on things military, Junior House was asked to ambush the College Cadet Corps as they marched up Deviation Road. We hid on the bank above the road and threw large crackers at the cadets. The umpire said we wiped them out!

During the latter part of the thirties Rev Frank Rolland commissioned Cumbrae Stewart to make a series of pastel pictures of the College. These were on general display around the school. I had one above my bed in Dorm 1, and it was a constant source of pleasure and inspiration for me. Almost sixty years later I met a relation of Cumbrae Stewart in Hobart, and was delighted to be shown many more pieces of that excellent artist's work.

Saturday walks to Devils Pool, generally with Ewen McLean, were appreciated. It must be remembered that the Barwon ran through open country between the Shannon Avenue bridge and Queens Park in those days. Queens Road was a dirt track called 'The Goat Track'. We would sometimes take food down in sugar bags and make a day of it. And finally; an experiment in dorm 4 to see whether flatus collected in a milk bottle was inflammable. It wasn't!

The House of Guilds

On the site occupied by the tennis courts stood the House of Guilds (HOG) and the Maintenance Department. The latter consisted of only Mr Percy Carter (a Boer War veteran) and one other. Mr Carter conducted carpentry lessons as one of the 'Extras' available to students out of school hours. The House of Guilds was also an 'Extra' with a membership fee. This meant that access was limited to members only until the fee was abolished in Peter Thwaites's era. (I think).



As mentioned before, Don Webb used to take Junior House boys into the HOG. I seem to remember these were evening affairs and a pleasant break from prep. Soap carving was one of the skills taught. I imagine the soap was obtained from the wool scouring factories at Marnock Vale. The old HOG was something of a 'Wonderhouse' with large framed travel posters on the walls, Pacific island weapons and dress, Winchester rifles from the Boxer rebellion (courtesy 'China' Morrison), bottled snakes and insects, butterflies in glass cases, several display cases of shells, and much more. There

were also pictures taken on Ramblers Guild hikes to the Prom, the Otways, Bass Strait islands and so on, which whetted the appetite of this eleven year old. The Ramblers Guild store held rucksacks, tents, blackened billies and frying pans, all imbued with the smoky smell of countless campfires. When John Bechervaise arrived back in 1945 - after an extended one year's leave which began in 1936 - the Ramblers Guild was revitalised, and soon was re-titled by the rather grander name, The Geelong College Exploration Society. John had been impressed by the school and university exploration societies in the UK, but some of us thought Ramblers Guild less pretentious. However, the Exploration Society was open to past students and adult members of the College community. This turned out to be very satisfactory for me. Before leaving the College I had gone on two hikes only. The first was a month in Tasmania, and the second, the first attempt at Rodondo in August 1946. With the new arrangement I was able to help with a variety of trips: The Rodondo exploration in early 1947, first Central Australian trip, Snowy River Gorges, Federation Peak, Nullarbor Caves, and the Prom come to mind. When I was teaching at Colac, I ran a couple of combined College-Colac High hikes in the Otways and the Grampians. I've rambled a bit there. Back to the story of the HOG.

The House of Guilds was run by the students under the Warden, who was a staff member. John Bechervaise was the first Warden, but went to England in 1936. Mr Donald Webb took over in 1939 following the untimely death of Mr Rob Radcliffe, who followed Bechervaise. Webb left in 1943, and in 1944, Mr Syd Westbrook took charge. It was not a happy year due, a great deal I am afraid, to a lack of support from the students, of whom I was one.

The year 1945 began with no Warden, and Mr Rolland insisted that the HOG must remain open, and that the senior students, who had been so unhelpful to Westbrook, should run the place. This was in addition to their normal school duties. Fortunately, Robert Waterhouse was not beginning his medical studies at Melbourne for several months after term began, and took charge. Meanwhile, Rolland was trying to persuade Bechervaise to return from England: he had been given leave for a year only. His wife, Lorna, brought baby Elizabeth out to Australia to meet her grandparents in 1939, but could not return to England because of the war. John was teaching at St Georges, Harpendon (a Quaker co-educational school). His arrival back was greeted with much relief by us. A personal reflection here, if I may.

As mentioned before, the HOG was run by the Warden and students. As the name suggests, there were a series of 'Guilds', each under the wing of a senior boy. Second in Charge was the Sub-Warden, a senior student and chairman of the Council of Guilds which met every Friday. The Warden also attended. The Council meetings were conducted formally. The minute books make interesting reading. In 1945, I and Murdoch Finlay were joint Sub-Wardens, and, in the absence of a Warden, took over the office. One day I was seated at the desk, idly flicking blowflies off the ceiling with a length of model aeroplane elastic. The

thought occurred to me that this was a pretty good life, and that being an art teacher instead of an architect, as I intended to be, was worth looking into. So I did, and became one.

While on the matter of Art & Architecture, the art studio, or 'Studio No 1' as John called it, was built soon after his return. Previously, Art was held in a classroom in the Cloister. The new studio was attached to the east wall of the Maintenance Workshop, which was later incorporated as a second art area. It has the distinction of being the only purpose-built Art room ever built at the College.

Later, when the House of Guilds area was used for tennis courts, and Warrinn boarders had moved over to Mossiel, Art was moved to the old Warrinn boarding house dormitories 7, 8 and 9. Dorm 10 was transferred to the New Prep site for use by the Kindergarten. For once, there was ample space for several painting classes, and a History of Art room. The only problem was the distance from the main school, which meant that almost a quarter of each period was lost in transit. But the building had a pleasant feeling about it. I had been in it as a boy and also Housemaster, so it held a few memories. In one classroom had once been the bed of David Ross, who arrived one night to find a doll, belonging to my Libby, tucked up in it. Rossy was not amused, but the rest of the troops were. Later, Libby was an art student there. Of somewhat less cheerful remembrance was a certain well-notched pole (I think it had once been a verandah post). Old Warrinnites will remember this as 'The Quoiting Pole', on the notches of which were rubbed the backsides (quoits) of boys who had offended the social code of the tribe. I once illuminated an art class on this piece of history, and they were aghast that such a thing could have happened. How times change! On another occasion some Old Boys turned up to have a look at the old place. They were particularly interested in some marks on the floor in Dorm 9. They found them, and told me the story of someone starting a fire there to demonstrate that gelignite, or some other explosive, would burn without exploding. When the floor caught fire they smothered the flames with kapok pillows, which in turn caught fire. These were piled into the single master's bath, which was soon overflowing with expanding wet kapok. I cannot remember what the outcome was. The last Art Room move was, of course, to its present site.

John Bechervaise left at the end of 1949, and Don Webb returned from working at the Salvation Army Boys' home at Bayswater. Whereas John had the restless energy and breadth of endeavour of the Renaissance man, Don was more introspective and meticulous. They both were superb lecturers, especially on the subject of Art. For me, they complemented each other and their friendship was greatly valued by me for the rest of their lives. Don was the son of Salvation Army officers, and was brought up in the poorer areas of London where his parents supplied succour to the poor and destitute. I remember someone asking him what sport he played in the weekends in England, and him replying that his weekend occupation was going around with his father salvaging human wrecks on the Thames Embankment. He was a fine trombonist, but had little time to play. (One of his sons, Peter, became oboeist in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.) During the war years, shortages of equipment and supplies hampered the running of the House of Guilds, particularly when scenery and props were needed for the Glee Club productions. At times, such as when eighty suits of armour were required for 'Princess Ida', the HOG would be closed for private work until all was ready for the performance. I can clearly remember when I was eleven, Don instructing me how to paint part of the ruined chapel for the second act scenery of the Pirates of Penzance.

In those days morning assembly was a formal affair in the Morrison Hall. Staff members often took the opportunity to give notice of impending events, changes of planned events, and so on. The birth of a child often saw the new father applauded when he entered the Hall. Don had designed a gondola for the production of 'The Gondoliers', but was having difficulty in obtaining the wheels necessary for it to glide on and off the stage. At the same time Mrs. Webb had given birth to their first-born, Roger, so when Don stood up in assembly and asked if anyone knew of where he could obtain some perambulator wheels, a great roar of acclamation greeted him.

Perhaps, another Webb story. The air raid trenches somehow or other fell under Don's jurisdiction. Being covered and conveniently situated they provided the local underworld with a fairly safe area of operation, although Don's inspections brought things to the light of day. One day, Don stood up in assembly and announced, 'Some filthy lad has been piddling in the trenches'. PANDEMONIUM!

Don also had a rare talent of spotting artistic talent. After I retired, I was visiting a surgeon prior to an operation in 1996. We were checking suitable dates and I remarked that a certain date was not suitable because I was giving a talk to Geelong Rotary (I think). He inquired about the subject, and I said that it was the House of Guilds at Geelong College. 'I know that place', he said, and I realised who he was. In the upper art room were murals of HOG activities with the name, Tony Read, on them. He was delighted to

know they were still in existence. Don Webb recognized that this young lad from the Riverina had above average talent, and arranged for him to enter RMIT Art Dept at the age of fifteen. Tony completed his Diploma, but then decided to become a medical doctor, so attended Taylor's College where he matriculated, and then completed his university medical course. When I met him he was (I think) General Surgeon at Heidelberg Hospital. He has since died. His paintings were destroyed in the fire that destroyed the old Woodwork Room.

Robert Ingpen, Bill Salmon and the world renowned sculptor Clem Meadmore were also encouraged by Don. He is probably best known in Victorian Art circles for his work in the formation of the Victorian Country Galleries Association. Working closely with the Premier, Rupert Hamer, he brought all Victorian galleries - with the exception of Hamilton - into a co-operative partnership.

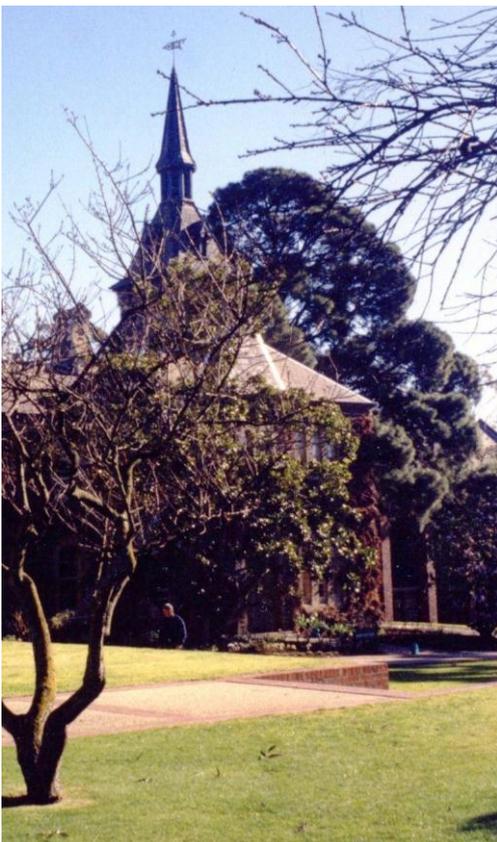
Later, the dormitory hut next door at Lester Square was turned into a proper Woodwork Room, thus bringing all the Art/Craft teaching into one area. This happy state of affairs was brought to an end by the old House of Guilds succumbing to decay and gravity. It was demolished in 1979 (I think). It had served its purpose well. One of its attractions, particularly for boarders, was simply that it was a domestic house, and a relief from the institutional style of buildings in which we spent most of our time.

On the day when I finally vacated the old HOG office, in which I had made that fortunate decision to become an art teacher some thirty-four years previously, I made an embossed leather belt (which I still have) so that I could boast that I had the last article made in the old HOG. However, for many years after I had a recurring dream that I went over to the deserted building and found it full of boys who refused to leave when I told them that the HOG was closed.

Tennis courts took its place and the studio became a tennis pavilion. The woodwork room became a storeroom until destroyed by fire.

The Head's Garden

The photograph shows the Principal's residence and Morrison Hall behind. When I began in 1940, the spot from which it was taken was on the gravel drive leading from Talbot Street to the Senior School Dining Hall. The driveway to the Head's house entered from Talbot Street as well, but halfway down towards Aphrasia Street.



The Rollands had no family, and lived in the rather gracious building and surroundings shown in the picture. The spacious lawns were 'out of bounds' except for special occasions, such as Speech Day. The Rolland years are well covered in Bert Keith's biography, and need little further addition by me here. He was a greatly admired man whose whimsical stories were greeted with much amusement. Perhaps I might quote one. Mrs. Rolland was a regal looking lady; much like Queen Mary in dress and bearing. She became ill, and at lunch in the Dining Hall, where Mr Rolland sat with the prefects, one of them asked how Mrs. Rolland's illness was progressing. He replied that he thought she must be feeling somewhat better, for he had seen her sliding down the banisters that morning.

When I arrived back at the College in 1963, the weather vane atop the tower was in a bad state, almost rusted away, and stuck in one direction. When the time arrived for the tower to be refurbished, I was asked to design an appropriate replacement vane. The original one was designed around the initials GM, standing for George Morrison, and the replacement was similar to it. However, there was not enough money to repair the shaft and bearings of the vane, so a suitable pseudo-wind direction was selected. It may be observed that it always points in a westerly direction, whence comes the most prevailing wind (so it is right reasonably frequently), but it also signifies the departure direction of the good

Dr George Morrison.

Ancient cypress trees not only shaded the Speech Day lawn, but also provided refuge for countless cicadas. One year the cicadas' strident song almost drowned out the proceedings. And, while on the subject of Speech Days, the Buttons possibly have the unique distinction of both father, Rev Button, and son, Senator John Button, giving a Speech Day address. I was at both, although they must have been around about forty years apart.

The Old Prep School

The picture shows the north wall facing Aphrasia Street. The main entrance can be seen halfway down the wall. The wrought iron gates that opened onto Aphrasia Street are now at the College chapel. On the left of the entrance hall was the Masters' Common Room. Next door to this was the sports changing room. I cannot remember if L J Campbell had an office: perhaps not, seeing that he lived in Junior House. The extent of the original building can be gauged by noting the band of cream bricks two thirds of the way up the walls and the decorative window openings, also in cream brick. In 1940, I



went into Upper IVA, the equivalent of Grade 7 in state schools. The other two classes were Upper IVB (Grade 6) and one other, the name of which I cannot recall, but I suppose equivalent to Grade 5. Mr Ewen McLean was form master of Upper IVB, and L J C form master of Upper IVA. I think that Mr Ian Watson was form master of the other class, but he left to join the RAAF as a navigator during the year. He was studying his navigation whilst at the College, and I recollect his Geometry class going out on the Prep oval for some mysterious navigational exercise. He was something of a hero, of course. He also had the kindly habit of making plenty of noise when the young gentlemen were making a riot at night, thus giving them time to be 'sound asleep' by the time he arrived. His nickname, 'Perp', was a contraction of the geometrical term, 'perpendicular'. I have strayed a little here, but seeing I am in Junior House, the warning cry, or hoarse whisper, on the sighting of authority during the above mentioned riotous occasions was, 'Crack!'

A toilet block and shelter shed ran down on the west side of the asphalt square outside the classrooms. I remember that the seat lockers in the shelter shed contained boxing gloves, put there, I imagine, so that arguments could be settled manfully, but without too much damage. Beyond that was the Prep Oval which had a fair slope on it, but a good turf wicket.

Altogether, I think that the Prep was fortunate in its situation when I was there. It had its own patch away from 'THE BIG SCHOOL', but was still part of it. Moving up from the primary to secondary school was not a big deal. We knew a lot of the boys up there through Glee Club, debating, House of Guilds etc, and they were generally like big brothers. In form masters I went from L J Campbell to J H Campbell. Also, it was a small school with only twenty-four teachers on the staff. Interestingly, four were Military Cross winners from WW1. I have often wondered how they put up with us after what they had been through. Permit me another aside.

One of the four was Mr Roy Lamble who was Dux of the College in 1900. He taught at the College from 1903 to 1915, and again from 1928 (the year I was born) until 1947. In 1954, I was at the ANARE store at the Tottenham RAAF base, packing up sledge boxes for the 1955 year down south. I was surprised to hear the familiar voice, and there was Roy Lamble. I asked him what he was doing there, and he said, 'I came to see you Freddy'. (I think he actually came to see John Bechervaise who was not there that day.) When I asked him how he got past the guard at the gate he just smiled. I didn't know what to do with him so introduced him to the Chief Storeman, Mr. George Smith, who told me to put him on to my job and I could get on with something else. George was a very good judge of character, and had no hesitation in

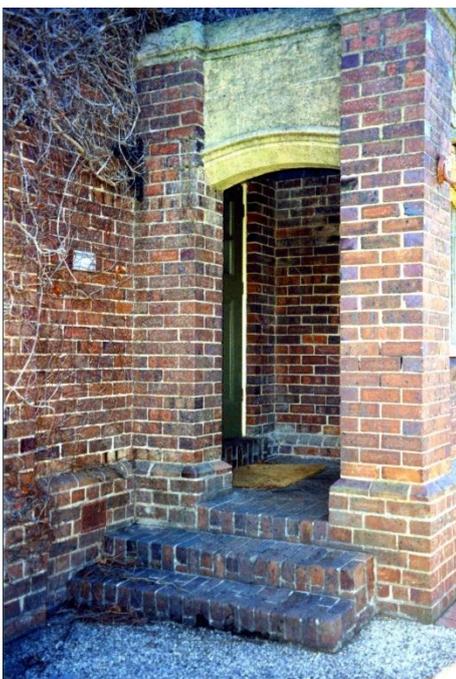
asking Roy to take on a job in which there was no room for error. Roy had a wonderful day. That was the last time I saw him.

L J Campbell was commonly called 'Frosty'. He had a habit of attracting one's attention by several loud 'Pstts'. I recalled that Gibson (a confirmed smoker), having been given permission to leave class to go to the toilets, seemed to be taking a good while to return to the fold. L J's 'Pst!, Pst!' was followed by the command to one of the class, 'Go out and see if Gibson needs a hand!'

In those days a sweet young thing was called 'a bit of fluff'. Also, the term 'to fluff' meant to fart quietly but odoriferously. It generally caused a stir in the class. L J countered such a stir with, 'Pst! Pst! Don't lose your heads over a little bit of fluff!' Looking back, it was good advice. Whilst on the subject of L J and his nickname 'Frosty'; one lad in Junior House had the temerity to sing as he walked past L J: 'Here we go gathering nuts in May on a cold and Frosty morning.' Retribution, in the form of a good cuff on the ear was swift indeed.

Warrinn Boarding House

When I was a boarder, I was most fortunate to spend four years in Warrinn under the wonderful housemastership of J H Campbell. Someone asked J H whether he had a good mob of boys that year. He replied that he didn't really know, but he would let the inquirer know in five years time. He took the long view! The length of stay with J H was due to me being one of a group of boarders who slept out at private homes, because wartime pressures on boarding space was so great. We left after study and came back in time for breakfast. Newell (Paddy) Barrett and I were at the Hawkes' house on the corner of Noble Street and Shannon Avenue. My brother Bill had been there for a couple of years with Daryl Rowley, so I was in familiar territory. The end of the European war saw Mr Tom Hawkes repatriated from a German P O W camp, so we moved on to the Higgins's, whose big house and grounds stretched between Shannon Avenue and Claremont Avenue. The final move in 1945 was to the Misses Scott's house on the corner of Aphrasia and Pleasant Streets. In 1946, Bruce Eastwood and I stayed with Mrs.Dance in Miles Street. As an aside: I later boarded at the Scott's when I was at the Gordon Art School, and during that time Jean became engaged to, and later married Dick Colvin, OGC 1918-22. Years later when I was Housemaster of Warrinn, their youngest son, Andrew, was there, and giving me a bit of cheek, so I told him I'd tell his mother. A bystander said to Andrew, 'Does he know your Mum? To which he replied, 'Know her? He used to live with her'.



As Housemaster of Warrinn boarding house, I had a group of some seventy-odd 14 to 18 year olds who led a rather nomadic existence. Their classes were in the main school, their day rooms at the 'Old Prep' and dormitories over at Warrinn or at Lester Square, an ex-army hut behind Mr.Brian Lester's house on the corner of Noble and Talbot Streets which later became the Woodwork room. There were some changes to the Old Prep, but I thought the building looked as dreary as ever with the heavy verandahs sloping down to the asphalt quadrangle. It has since developed into a quadrangle with the addition of two extra classrooms on the south side. But it had an interesting hot water service to liven things up. The hot water had a habit of syphoning back up the cold water pipes; thus steam issued from the tap at the gully-trap, and there was the chance one might get a hot flush in the toilets. I think that some of the cans secreted in the cisterns contained rather warmer beer than was expected. All in all, it was not a satisfactory set-up, and I was relieved when Mossgiel became available after Junior House moved to the New Prep. Warrinn House was still split, not by a muddy cow paddock, but by Noble Street. This caused some anxiety, especially on winter evenings when the rush to the Dining Hall coincided with the traffic peak. To quote from the Cottage Pie song:

'Oh, Warrinn it is found in two places
With Noble Street running between.
When the pubs shut you've the choice of being flattened by
A hot-rod or a big limousine'.

Warrinn was called 'The Cottage' because it was used to house the single masters who once lived in a cottage in Prospect Road. It was always looked upon as being different to the more institutionalized Mackie and Senior houses. The inmates called themselves 'The Bally Hooligans', after another housemaster described them as such, and 'Elliott's Nest of Unteachables in my time. The latter was, of course, a pun on a popular film/TV show about the Chicago gangster era, 'Elliott Ness and the Untouchables'. J H ruled with a sort of 'benign dictatorship' giving rise to a feeling of freedom not experienced in the other houses. But woe-betide he who took advantage of the system and was silly enough to be caught. The first offence earned a rebuke, but repeated maleficence brought on 'The Blackfellows' Act', which did away with all rights. But, for most boys, it was a cheerful place. To quote from the song again:

'You've seen it: we live there.

The Council says 'Tut Tut',

We must do something in a few years time,

Perhaps we could put them in an Army hut.

But, meanwhile, we'll paint it, that should hold it up,

And the old lead floor can rattle to the roar

Of the rowdy Cottage throng,

For they're just little rays of sunshine,

And mighty fine sunbeams they are.'

Or Again

'If I had the wings of a Pegasus far, far from Warrinn I would fly,

But, if I happened to come down in Morrison I straightway would lay me down and die.'

It is interesting to note that John Duigan, the playwright, film producer and actor began his career as the villain in the one act, 'The Man in the Bowler Hat', in one of the Cottage Pies. His Uncle John had also starred about twenty years before him.

Rankin Field

Rankin Field was called the Prep Oval in the forties. Actually, it also covers the site of the miniature rifle range and part of the vacant land called 'The Cow Paddock' where 'kick to kick' took place. I also remember giving my daughters their first driving lesson on it during holidays. It was a handy spot for all sorts of things. For instance, the air-raid trenches were sited more or less where the swimming pool now stands.

When I arrived back in 1963, the area was also used as a hockey field. I believe that hockey at the College began under the care of Mr Richard Mackie, the Housemaster of Morrison Boarding House. The competition among the local schools was keenly contested. The Old Collegians' Hockey Club played in the local competition as well. Initially, the hockey field at College was not up to standard, but over the years it was improved, finally resulting in the present splendid multi-purpose area. And here is a cautionary tale for all young and enthusiastic staff members: Mr. Sam Bickford, the Sports master, asked me to help him out, if I wasn't doing anything special that night, by attending the Geelong Schools' Hockey Association annual meeting. I came back from the meeting as president of the association! I had nothing to do with College hockey at the time, and I'd sat silently in the corner all night, but it still happened. I was reminded of the story about Billy Hughes coming on a dazed young member of parliament whose maiden speech had earned him a verbal drubbing from Eddy Ward. Hughes remarked, 'Son, you look like an artificially inseminated cow. You just don't know how it happened.' As president I felt obliged to help with the hockey, and soon had added Master-in-Charge of Hockey to my list of jobs.

While on the subject of Rankin Field, Stuart's uncle, Teddy Rankin, used to put the wet footballs in the forks of the large elm tree which stands in front of the Rolland Sports Centre. It was called, 'Teddy's Tree'. And, one last story of the Rankin Field. When it was still a cricket ground, I was looking at a game when a lad (he must have been almost ten-years old), who had come in from the street remarked how lucky the players were, because all his life he had wanted to play on turf.

The Hospital.

The site of the hospital is now occupied by the library, which once was located where the inner staff room now (at the time of writing) is. One could go on playing this 'once was where' game for ages! When the library was built, the hospital went upstairs into the vacated domestic staff quarters, now the site of the archives. I am reminded of that part in the Epilogue of *Brideshead Revisited* in which Ryder soliloquizes that the builders of Brideshead did not know that their work would be put to uses which were never intended.



With well over two-hundred boys living on the College grounds, the hospital and dispensary was an important part of the scheme of things. 'Plagues' of chicken pox, measles, mumps, influenza, or the ubiquitous 'dogs disease' would sometimes fill the hospital. At the time of great 'plagues', parts of the boarding houses would be annexed to cater for the infirm, and extra staff brought in. In the male world of the College the arrival of a new hospital Matron caused much speculation. A sympathetic ear, especially one which could be persuaded that one's condition precluded one from Cadet parade, or athletic Standards, or some such occupation, was greatly prized. Indeed, the arrival of a new Matron often saw a rise in the number of boys with petty ailments attending the dispensary. My late wife, Margaret, who was a Matron at Geelong Grammar School, went through this assessment process. She told of the one honest boy who, when asked what was wrong with him replied, 'Nothing. I just wanted to see what you were like'. I, and my family, lived in the hospital during part of the summer of 1962-63. Our flat at Warrinn House was not ready for us when we arrived from Timbertop, so we were hospitalised pro tem. One day I noticed a large number of cricketers on the Mackie oval, and went over to investigate. It was a cricket camp organised by Mr Eddy Davies, and starring the famous West Indian fast bowler, Wes Hall. Hall was an impressive man, with a wonderful personality. He asked Eddy if there were any batsmen who might handle a bit of pace bowling. There were two: Ian Redpath (he had recently left the College) and a young Paul Sheahan. Hall was impressed by their ability. Sheahan was the first boy's name I learnt on my return to the College. When I retired in 1990, he had been my Principal and good friend for five years.

The House of Music. (HOM)

The College was a singing school in my student days there. When there was a favourite hymn in morning assembly, the sound that filled the old Morrison Hall was almost palpable. The senior maths teacher, Mr E B Lester, had a fine baritone voice and conducted hymn practices as well as community singing. The school choir led the singing. There were three choirs in the school: the Male Choir, the Junior Choir, and the College Choir. As well, the Glee Club members practiced three times a week for most of the year - sopranos and altos one night, tenors and basses another night and combined practices on Saturday. Once the music had been learnt, the stage work was tackled. The Glee Club involved around about ninety boys, and the G & S performances became a feature of Geelong life. The Geelong Theatre was filled for four nights: that is almost four thousand people.

George Logie Smith was indefatigable, for he took classes during the day as well as private students before and after school, conducted the College Orchestra, coached sporting teams, conducted the Geelong Orchestra and Gama Choir, was choirmaster at St Davids, and, at one time, ran a choir in Ballarat. In music class we sang and listened to classical music on records. George's deep knowledge of music has given many of his pupils a lifetime of pleasure. I know that I am indebted to him for this.