My Days at Hamilton Primary School
1960-1963

Trevor C. Sorensen

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Preface

In the last few years I have been amusing my children with stories and anecdotes from my life, especially from my youth. They love these tales and have urged me to write my memoirs so that these stories are not lost when I pass on. I helped put together my father's memoirs after his death (published in 1998 in the book *In The Service Of My Lord* by Vivian C. Sorensen) and came to realize what a worthwhile project that was. As long as that book exists, the memory of him and his accomplishments will not be forgotten, even after those who knew him personally have gone to their reward. He led a fascinating life and the book makes wonderful reading, as has been expressed to me many times. I have also led a very interesting and unique life and have had many incredible experiences, so I decided in 2009, at the age of 58, while in good health and with most of my memories still intact, it would be a good time to start writing these memoirs. The first chapter I completed was on my experiences at Newcastle Boys High School 1964-1969. This was sent out starting in December 2009 to many of my old schoolmates from NBHS. I then completed the chapter on my rocketry club experiences in Australia in the 1960s. This was published in serial form in an online astronautics journal in 2013 (http://www.opsjournal.org). The next chapter completed followed my days at Hamilton Primary School, contained in this document.

Although this is only a chapter in my full memoirs, it is a special topic that is of interest to some people. To make it more accessible, I have produced it here as a standalone publication. To improve it as a standalone document, I have added some background information that was taken from other chapters in my full memoirs.

Please forgive any mistakes that I make in these memoirs. I am giving them my best effort. I will also point out that memories of certain events differ between different individuals. I have stated my memory of the events, and where there are discrepancies, I have tried to note them. However, the bottom line is that this is a personal recollection and not meant to be a definitive history.

One advantage of writing memoirs these days versus years ago is the power of personal computers with word processors and the ability to easily add images from digital cameras or to scan from slides, photographs, or ephemera (such as newspapers and books). I have been able to conduct online searches that have uncovered some information and photographs. I insert the best ones to help illustrate the memoirs and to be a crutch so that I don't have to depend on my descriptions alone to portray what they represent.

I especially want to thank my wonderful, beautiful wife, Lori, for all that she has done and continues to do for me.

Trevor Charles Sorensen
Hamilton Primary School Class of 1963

NOTE to Readers

Some background is needed to fully understand this document:

- My father was a missionary for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now named The Community of Christ). Although we had the same origins as the Mormon Church, it is not the Mormon Church and there are major doctrinal differences between the two. The church I attended was on Tudor Street (extended), right on the border with Broadmeadow. It is now a private residence.
- I have two older sisters – Beth, who is a retired nurse in Missouri (moved there from Australia in 1967), and Marvia, who is a lawyer in Newcastle (lives in Valentine, NSW).
- My parents were Australian and I was born in Brisbane in 1951, but when five months old, we moved to Tahiti and then the USA, finally moving to Newcastle in August, 1960. In November 1969, after finishing high school in Newcastle, I moved with my parents to the United States (where I attended the University of Kansas) and eventually settled there, although I did try a couple of times unsuccessfully to move back to Australia. I hold dual Australian and US citizenship.

I welcome comments on these memoirs. Although I have a good memory, it is not infallible and so I may have some things incorrect. I tend to find that I am less accurate in things I observed as compared to things in which I participated.

To my former classmates: Please send me any corrections or amusing stories that I missed. I especially welcome any remembrances you may have of me and our experiences together. Any relevant photos from that time that you can share would be amazing. By contributing your experiences, you can help us achieve that goal.

Editorial notes:

- I have tried to use Australian spelling and expressions where possible (as opposed to American), although I'm sure some Americanisms have slipped through because I have lived in the US since I left high school over 45 years ago. To aid my American readers, I have included an Australian-American Glossary in the appendices. Some of the words in this list are from other chapters and may not appear in this document.
- I have formatted this document in US letter size instead of the more common A4 format used in Australia because I wanted hard copies of my memoirs and it is difficult to find A4 paper and copiers in America . I also did not want to have to reformat the document just for this standalone version, because that is more work (i.e., time) than I can afford.

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Acknowledgements

Several former students of Hamilton Primary School helped me with various aspects of these memoirs. In particular, I would like to thank Doug Saxon [HPS – 1957] for allowing me to use some of the photos and information appearing in his book *Hamilton – Memories of Life & School in the 1950's* (published by the author in 2010) and for his brother, Greg Saxon [HPS – 1962] for sending me a copy of his brother's book and arranging for me to get the photos I needed, as well as reviewing this document.

I would like to thank the following former classmates of mine for reviewing the memoirs and contributing their memories to it, and especially for identifying some of the boys in my class photo.

- Glenn Faulds
- Tom Lawrie (who contributed some photos and extensive memories)
- Brian McCarthy
- Martin Troke
- Thomas Wilson

I would also like to thank Ruthann and John Siebert of Blue Springs, Missouri, for proofreading this document.

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Although I was born in Australia (Brisbane) in June 1951, I was only five months old when we left and I did not return until we moved to Newcastle from America in August, 1960. We moved into an old single-story brick home at 22 Blackall Street, Hamilton, on the corner of Blackall and Percy Streets. Our house was one block from the railway lines and just a few blocks from the nearest schools at Hamilton Central.

Our home at 22 Blackall Street, Hamilton in the 1960s

Because Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons are opposite those of America, which is in the Northern Hemisphere. Our summer started in December and ended in March, so our school year matched the calendar year. We were given six weeks of summer holidays, from early December until mid-January. We also got school holidays for a couple weeks in May and again in August/September.

When we arrived in Newcastle in August 1960, students were in the middle of their school year. I had finished 3rd Grade in Iowa in June, but my parents decided I should enter 3rd Class in Newcastle to give me a transition period to catch up and get in synch with my age group. The nearest school was Hamilton Primary School, located on Tudor Street across from Gregson Park and about five blocks from our house (see photo on next page).

Hamilton Primary School was actually just part of a multi-school complex called Hamilton Central School. Across Dixon Street[1] behind the primary school was the Hamilton Infants' School (which was the school for Kindergarten through 2nd Class). HPS also shared the area with Hamilton Home Science School, where Marvia attended after we arrived. In 1962, they changed the names to Hamilton Public School (Infants' and Primary) and Hamilton Girls' Junior High School. We normally called our school Hamilton Primary School, which is the

[1] Dixon Street is now a Dead End that no longer goes through to Steel Street. That end of the street was taken over by the new Hamilton Public School, joining the old Infants' School area with the former Primary and High School areas.

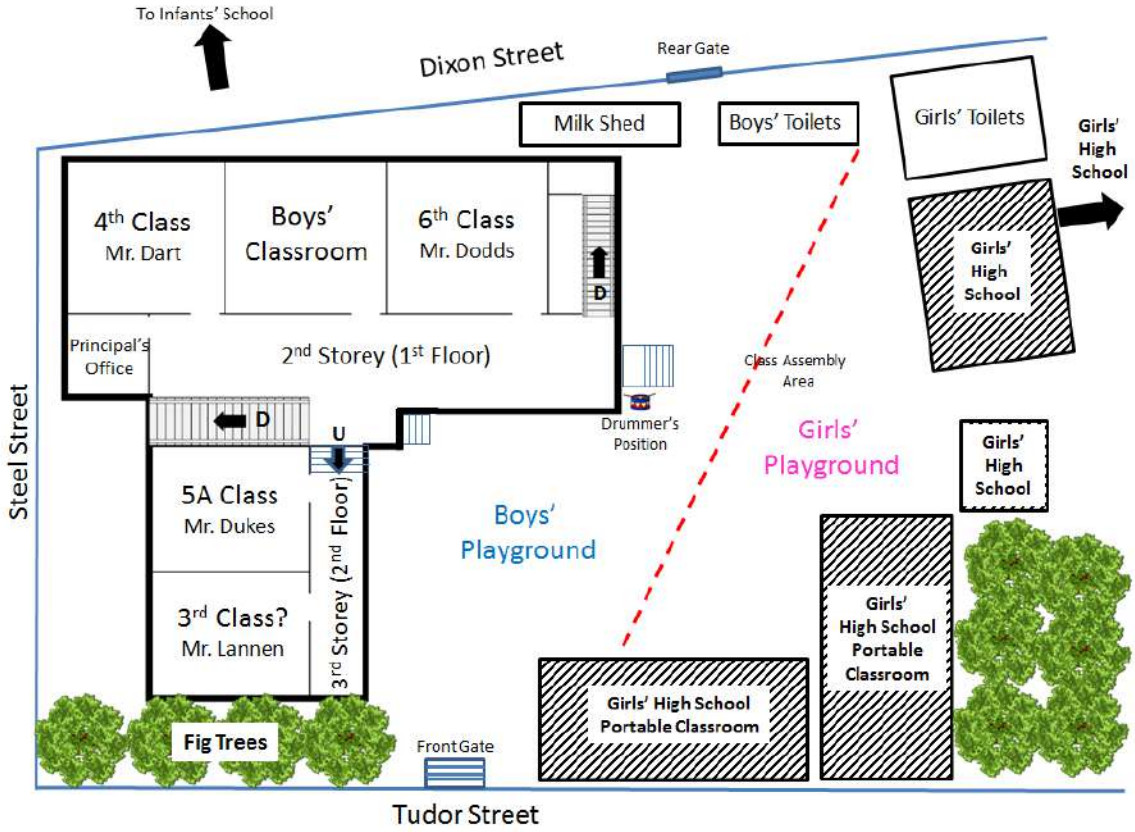
name that can be seen in my class photos. Our School Moto was *Honour Before Honours*. The current Hamilton Public School has a school song (*O Hamilton*), but I do not remember it from my time.

Primary schools consisted of grades (years) 3 through 6. Although the school was co-ed, the classes were not. For each year/grade there was a boys' class and one girls' class, each with about 35-50 students. When there were too many students for one class, they would form a second class or sometimes a second composite class containing students from two grades. At Hamilton Primary School there were about 300-350 students while I was there.

The area of Hamilton where I lived and went to school

We had one large two-storey brick building for our primary school, with the girls on the ground floor and the boys on the top floor. The boys also had the top floor of the adjoining three-storey brick and wooden annex (the high school had their Home Economic classes on the ground floor and the Girls' Primary School had the first floor). The main brick building was completed in 1900, and the brick and wood extension was completed in 1918. This expanded building was basically unchanged since 1918. We had coal-burning fire places for heat in the winter, and large open windows and ceiling fans for warmer weather. The two-storey brick building for the high school (now the Administration Building of Hamilton Public School) was built in 1914. Additional buildings, including a couple wooden portable buildings, were added to the high school sometime after that, but did not affect us directly except for reducing the playground area.

Aerial View of Hamilton Central Schools in 1969 [Newcastle Morning Herald]



Approximate Layout of Hamilton Public School in 1963 showing my classrooms (not to scale)

As mentioned, the girls and boys not only had separate classes on separate floors, but there was even a yellow line drawn across the bitumen playground. The boys had to stay on one side and the girls on the other. We had almost no contact with the girls, and I never got to know any of them. I was at a disadvantage compared to most of the other boys in this regard, since they were in the same classes with the girls until the end of 2nd Class, and then were segregated in 3rd Class, after I arrived. There was a School Captain for the boys and a School Captain for the girls. About the only functions the boys and girls had together was the annual School Fete (used to raise money for the school), the annual Speech Day, when prizes were presented to the students, and Anzac Day memorial services. However, we did sometimes combine for singing and choir (described later).

Trevor in HPS uniform, 1962

We were supposed to wear school uniforms, although it was not universally done, especially in 3rd Class. The uniform consisted of grey shorts, grey long socks (held up by an elastic band garter over which the sock folded at the top), blue shirt, and a blue and grey striped school tie (the school colours were blue and grey). The school badge would be pinned to the tie near the top. In cooler weather we wore a grey jumper (sweater) with a V-neck and the school colours around the neck. I do not believe that we wore blazers – at least I did not have one until I got to high school. Girls wore navy blue tunics with white blouses and the school tie (optional).

From the photo you can see that my hair was short and very well groomed. Up until I was about 14 or 15 I used Brylcreem ("…*a little dab will do ya*") or something similar to slick my hair and hold it in place. This was very common in the early 60s. It made my hair shiny and hard to the touch, but kept it in place even on a windy day.

Similar to my satchel school bag

We did not have elaborate backpacks like most students use today. A few students would carry their books, supplies, and lunch, etc. in a small leather backpack, but most students in primary school used a leather school bag (satchel) as I did, with a strap that would go over one shoulder (I usually wore it diagonally). I would carry my books and lunch in the bag, and I would put all my pens, pencils, compass, and rubbers [Am. - erasers], etc., into a wooden pencil case I also carried in the bag. On Sports days or for special P.E. events I would also put

my athletic clothes in the bag or in a separate carry bag if there was not enough room. In high school I used a brown port (hard cardboard with a handle and latches) to carry my stuff, but that was not as common in primary school.

At recess (also called "play lunch" or "playtime") each day we were given a third-pint of milk in a bottle for us to drink (free of charge) from the Milk Shed next to the main school building. Boys were designated to do this job. The milk was delivered cold and kept reasonably cold by covering with wet sugar bags. The bottles were sealed with a silver or red aluminium cap, which could be removed easily by pressing in the centre with your thumb, which lifted up the edge allowing it to be peeled off. The milk was pasteurised and not homogenised (which was still fairly rare in those days), so the cream would separate and float to the top of the bottle. Before we opened the bottle, we had to shake it really well to mix the cream with the milk. To avoid the possibility of swallowing glass from a chipped recycled bottle, we were supposed to examine the bottle for damage and were usually issued straws for drinking. Sometimes we would not use the provided straws, but would instead use a flavoured straw that we bought in the store across the street. They came in two flavours – chocolate and strawberry. Drinking through them would flavour the milk, and each straw lasted for two bottles of milk. After we drank the milk we returned the bottles to the empty crates at the Milk Shed.

School Milk Bottle

Next to the Milk Shed (and separated by a passageway that led to the back gate onto Dixon Street) was another small building that contained the boys' toilets. There was another small building closer to the high school that had the toilets for the girls (both primary and high school). The playground dividing line started between these two buildings.

There was no cafeteria or Tuck Shop at the school (although there might have been at the high school, but that was off limits to us). I usually ate a packed lunch, consisting of a sandwich (cheddar cheese, peanut butter with homemade blackberry jam, egg salad, corned beef with pickles or chutney, and Vegemite were my favourites), fruit, biscuit, etc. My mother usually made my lunch for me. She would cut the crusts off the white bread sandwiches and made two diagonal cuts, so I had quarters to eat. There were also a couple of stores just across the street where we could buy our lunches. One was a fish and chips shop, where for a shilling you could get some delicious pieces of fried fish and hot chips wrapped up in butcher's paper inside newspaper. Malt vinegar could be sprinkled on if desired. We ate out of one end, while holding the bundled packet that kept the food warm (yummy!). Another store sold a wonderful "salad roll" which consisted of a long fresh, warm roll with butter, cheddar cheese, onion, cucumber, lettuce, tomato, etc. on it. During the cold winters, hot meat pies, sausage rolls, hot dogs, or pasties were favourites.

We had a very small playground – the paved area between our school and the high school (see figure). In fact, in 1944 the school Headmaster claimed that the school had "*probably the smallest playground in Australia, if not the British Empire*." [Newcastle Morning Herald, 8/6/44]. That small area was divided in two with half each for the boys and girls.

During recess and lunch we usually played some favourite games. One was handball, where we took turns hitting a tennis ball up against the brick wall with our hands, scoring

points based on bounces or out of bounds. We also played playground cricket, with a wicket drawn in chalk on the brick wall and had a "base" that we had to run around to get a run. We used a cricket bat and a tennis ball. Unfortunately, we lost our share of tennis balls that were hit out of the school grounds and onto busy Tudor Street (automatic 'out').

Another game was marbles, where each boy would bring a bag of marbles and some would be put in a chalk circle drawn on the ground. We would then take turns flicking with our thumbs a "cue" marble (called a "tor" or "bonger") into the circle, trying to knock one or more of the marbles there out of the circle, which the boy would then be able to keep. We lost our turn when we failed to exit any marbles. However, I was not allowed to play marbles "for keeps," only for fun (where marbles were returned to the original owners at the end) because my parents considered it gambling, since marbles cost money.

There was a similar game, which my parents had no objection to me playing, and that was bottle caps. This used the metal caps from soft drink bottles. To play this game, we drew a line on the playground in chalk about two feet from the brick wall of a building, then tossed (slid along the ground) a bottle cap from behind the line to the wall. Everyone bet one or more bottle caps (which we each carried in a big plastic bag) for each round. The winner was the boy whose bottle cap was closest to the wall. We used specially modified bottle caps for the toss. They usually had lead in them to weigh them down and prevent them from bouncing far off the wall. However, there was an additional aspect to the game. The winner did not automatically win all the caps that had been bet. He only won as many as he could catch in his hand after balancing them on top of each other on his elbow. This might be a bit hard to explain. Extend your arm out straight in front of you with your palm down. Then bend your elbow all the way so that your hand is close to your shoulder with your palm pointed up. Then stack all the bet bottle caps (not the ones with the lead) one of top of the other on your elbow. You then quickly straighten your arm and attempt to catch the bottle caps in your cupped hand as it comes down. You keep all the ones you caught. I believe the boy who came in second does the same for any that you missed (I'm not really sure about this part). This game entertained us for many, many hours during my primary school days, but was not carried over into high school (nor were marbles).

There was another activity that I enjoyed, although this was usually done indoors. We made a little self-propelled vehicle ("tank") out of an empty cotton thread reel, a matchstick, a rubber band, and some candle wax. We would carve notches in the perimeter of the two round ends of the spool (which became the wheels) for traction. We would put the rubber band around a matchstick, pass it through a piece of candle wax covering the reel hole, then through the centre of the reel, where it would exit and be looped around a short piece of matchstick (see figure). You would then wind the matchstick up as much as the rubber band would take, then put it on the desk or floor and release it. It would unwind and the matchstick would keep touching the ground while the reel rotated and moved along in a jerky fashion. Of course, if you just used one, then it would go in a curve. We also tried to make a small structure to join

Cotton-reel Tank similar to the ones we used to make

two or more reels, but that got tricky to wind them all up.

We were very regimented in primary school. At the end of each recess or lunch period, we had to line up in our classes and to the beat of a drum (a boy in 6th Class was the drummer) we had to march (supposedly in step) in pairs, class by class, into the school. Also, while sitting in class, we were supposed to sit straight with our arms folded on the desk unless we were using our hands for work. Of course we had to raise our arm to ask a question or speak to the teacher.

Ad for School Drum like the one used at HPS

For each of four years (3rd through 6th Class) we took the same subjects, and stayed in the same room with the same teacher for all subjects. The subjects were: Reading, Composition, Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic, Language (called Formal English in 6th Class), and Social Studies. We also learned and sang songs ("Mockingbird Hill" and "Fire in the Galley" are ones I remember), but were not graded on music. We got two report cards a year, each covering a half-year – one in June and one in November. In 3rd Class, where I started late in August, I came 8th out of 43 boys. For the remaining three years, I was always top of the class and finally Dux of the school in 1963. My report cards are shown later with the class descriptions.

In each classroom there were double wooden and wrought iron desks attached to the

Typical classroom similar to ours [School House Museum]

Double Iron Framed Wooden Desk with hole for inkwell

floor. The desks were old and the surfaces had a lot of damage, mostly from graffiti carved in them. We couldn't write on a single piece of paper on the desk, but had to put something underneath it. I usually sat with John Hodgson or Tom Lawrie (as best I can remember). There was a strong emphasis in all the classes on handwriting (i.e., calligraphy). We used pen and blue India ink for writing. In each double desk was a ceramic ink well and grooves in which to lay

Nib ink pen with ceramic inkwell and bottle of India ink

our pens. We had pens with nibs (fountain pens and ball point pens were forbidden). My pens were like the one in the photo, except I usually had a coloured plastic stem with ovoid bubbles in the plastic. The nibs could be replaced when they wore out or broke. To write we had to dip the nib of our pen in the inkwell to cover it with ink. We had blotters to dry the ink periodically so that it would not smear. One of the problems with having young boys handle ink was that we tended to have ink stains on our hands and shirt cuffs (and sometimes shirt and shorts) by the end of the day. Thank goodness the ink would wash out.

Unfortunately, our school was used for adult night school, where adults came in the evening to get credits towards various certifications. Smoking was much more common and acceptable then, so the adults were allowed to smoke in class. They tended to use our inkwells as ash trays. The next day we could tell that our ink wells had been used that way by two facts: the ink was darker than normal and it stank. Our nibs would also sometimes catch some of the ash debris (including cigarette butts) sitting on the bottom of the ink well. By far the worst was cigar ash. That REALLY made the ink stink. When the ink was badly polluted in this way, the teacher would let us change it out for fresh ink.

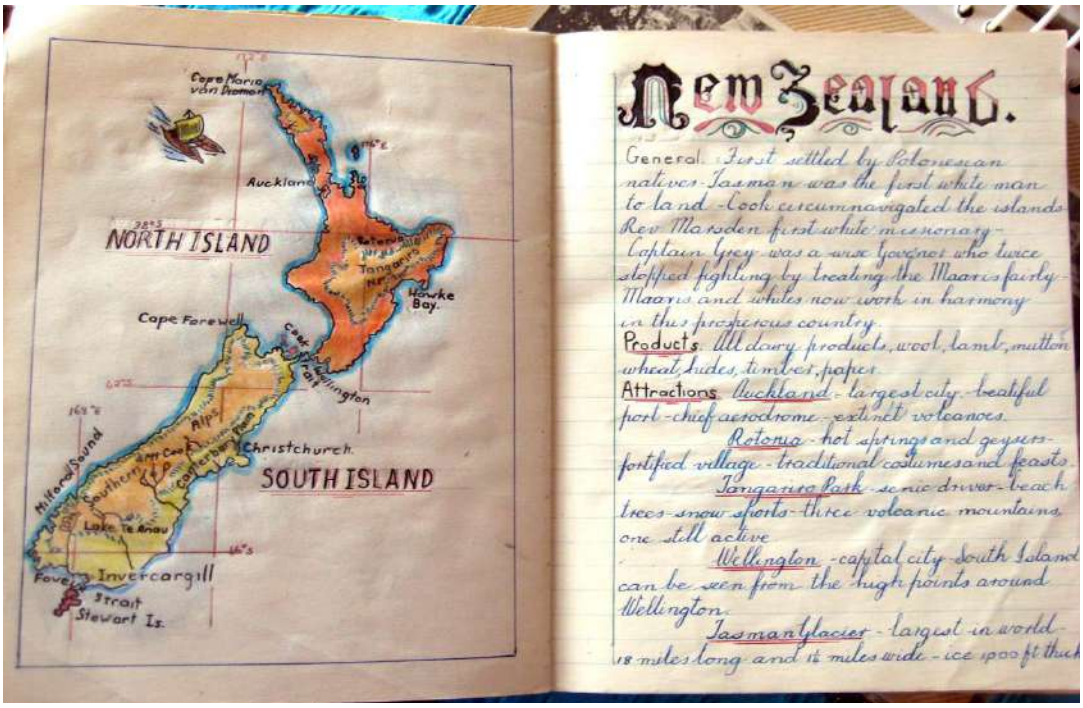
We were trained to write with all letters sloped slightly to the right and parallel to each other. Down strokes had to be heavy, while up strokes light. Besides learning beautiful cursive writing, we also did other calligraphy, learning to do letters in other fonts, such as Old English or Gothic. These were favourites for doing elaborate headings, especially in Social Studies. We had writing booklets that had examples of the letters and horizontal lines for us to write in the letters at the correct height. We had to practice writing the letters over and over again until they satisfied the teacher. This was done especially in 3rd and 4th Class – after that we were expected to have it mastered, but the teachers continued to monitor the quality of our writing.

We had blackboards in the classroom and the teachers used to write on them using chalk of different colours. They also used to have beautiful writing when they wrote on the board. They had some templates for drawing the outline of Australia and Great Britain, and used a compass that had a metal point at the end of one arm and a chalk holder at the other for drawing circles and arcs. They also used a large wooden set square for doing right angles and straight lines on the board.

Besides precise writing, we also had to do maps in Social Studies with precision including the shading. After the map was carefully drawn in ink (we had plastic template outlines to trace the borders of Australia and Great Britain and used tracing paper to copy the outlines of others), we had to colour the states using coloured pencils. However, we could not just colour directly using the pencils. We had to first colour a small piece of blotting paper and then use that paper to colour in the area on the map. This produced a very even colouring with no pencil lines. We were also not allowed to colour past the borders (any infraction had to be erased using our rubbers).

I have included an example from the late 1950s of a student's Social Studies book that was provided courtesy of a former HPS teacher, Loch Unicomb. Unfortunately, with my move from Australia to America in late 1969, all my materials from primary school (other than prizes, report cards, certificates, etc.) were discarded.

We had separate notebooks for each subject. The notebooks had to have a brown paper cover on them that was taped on the inside covers. Our name, class, and subject were



Social Studies book showing example of writing, calligraphy, and map work (shading, etc.).
Although this is not my book, it is very similar to what I produced. [Courtesy Loch Unicomb]

written very neatly on the front. Any textbooks we had also needed to be covered in the same way or with clear plastic covers. I only vaguely remember any of the textbooks we used – just some impressions from a Social Studies book, and a writing (calligraphy) exercise book. We also had a book of poetry, but again, I cannot remember the details.

Friday afternoon was Sports. We got the afternoon off from classes and instead participated in organized sports. The school's rugby league and cricket teams would play at that time, representing the school. Boys who were not on a school team would play various sports, such as soccer, rugby, and cricket, in a large clear area of Gregson Park, which was across the street from the school. My 5th Class teacher, Mr. Dukes, was the rugby league coach and tried hard to get me to play rugby league. However, my parents would not allow me to play because they considered it too rough and I would be too likely to get hurt. This was not too long after I broke my front tooth and my nose playing softball in Iowa and they didn't want to tempt fate. Soccer and cricket were fine.

I really liked cricket and became a big cricket fan, listening to (and later watching on TV) the Test Matches when Australia played other countries in cricket. Richie Benaud, Bill Lawry, and Neil Harvey[1] were active at that time. I would fill out score sheets to record how the members of the team did. Of course, coming from America, I knew nothing about cricket (or rugby league), and had to learn quickly so that I could converse with my classmates, who all seemed to be fans of those sports. I learned how to play cricket and practiced with the team starting in late 1961, working on my game. I was finally good

[1] I was thrilled in early 1963 when my parents bought me a "Neil Harvey" signature cricket bat, which we had treated with linseed oil and on which we had attached a pigskin cover as was the custom.

enough to make the team in 1962, but was a reserve. I only got to play in a few games against other schools and did not do particularly well (I was thrilled if I scored a run before getting out). I was a better bowler and fielder than batter, but was really good at neither. I did try paying wicketkeeper as well, but there were other boys on the team better at that. I also was scared of the balls that kept heading towards me at a very high speed. However, despite me, our team was good and we were the Primary Cricket Premiers in 1962 and the District Cricket Champions for 1963 and I earned Blues (blazer pockets and tags) for our accomplishments. I proudly wore these Blues sewn to my maroon/dark red jacket that I wore in cold weather. That was the last time I played on any school team through the end of high school. I remember Martin Troke, Kris Sazdanoff, John Hodgson, and Brian McCarthy as being some of our best players.

Blues I earned as part of the Hamilton PS Cricket Team

Our cricket team used to practice in Richardson Park in Hamilton North on the corner of Griffiths Road and Chatham St. It was located next to a concrete-lined canal (which was for storm overflow as it was usually almost empty). Richardson Park was a soccer field in the winter and a cricket field in the summer. The field was surrounded by huge Morton Bay fig trees. We used to go over there to practice after school. Although we practiced in Richardson Park, we played at least some of our games in Smith Park, Broadmeadow. We had a large canvas bag that contained all the equipment needed to play (stumps, bails, bats, balls, leg pads, wicketkeeper and batting gloves). It was large and heavy and took at least two of us to carry it from the car (either the Sports Master's or a parent's car) to the field.

Schoolboys playing cricket. We wore shorts and did not wear helmets

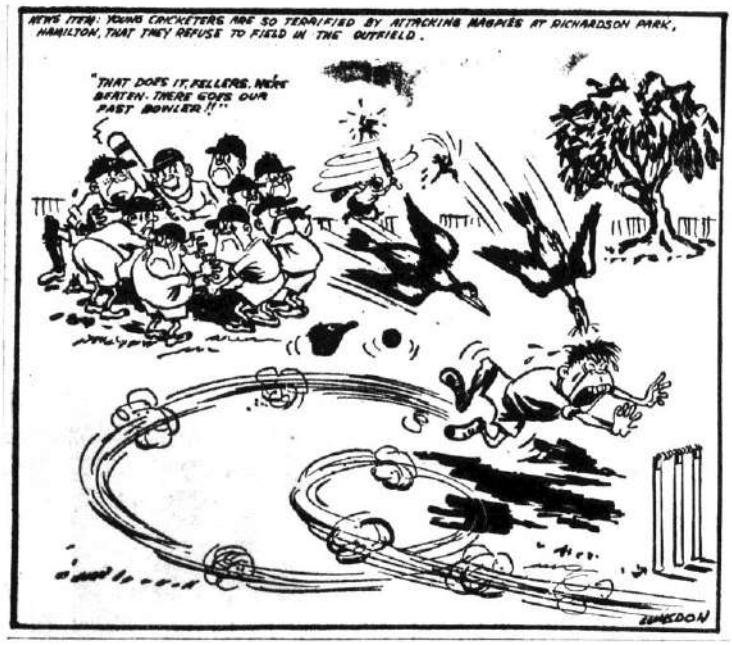
Richardson Park in Hamilton North used for cricket practice and soccer games – note "canal"

Richardson Park with Sports Shelter and Morton Bay Fig Trees

Smith Park, Broadmeadow

There were some fields in that park where we used to play soccer in the winter and cricket in the summer. I remember playing cricket with the school team on those fields. Once when we were playing another school on the northernmost (top right) field I was moved up from reserve and got a turn at bat. I managed to score one or two runs, but only lasted a few minutes. I was a better fielder than batsman.

On more than one occasion we had some problems with magpies, which had nests in the trees at Richardson Park. One day, probably during nesting season, several big magpies attacked us on the field. We had to beat them off with our cricket bats and subsequently avoided playing in outfield, which was too close to their trees. This incident even made the Newcastle Morning Herald and was the subject of a Lumsdon cartoon in that newspaper.



Cartoon from Newcastle Morning Herald, 18 Oct. 1961

Tom Lawrie in his 2010 letter to me, commented on

these magpie attacks we experienced during soccer and cricket practices and matches. In 1964 while he was walking home from NBHS in Waratah:

The short-cut [from NBHS] *across Smith Park, past the showground and Richardson Park and through the Donald St. set of train gates was not a journey to be attempted alone and unarmed during the magpie nesting season. A school port held overhead and a long branch from the Morton Bay fig trees were always mandatory weapons to ward off the enemy who would target solo travellers, swooping from behind and attacking the head – hair, eyes, and ears.*

Gregson Park, across from our school, also had its share of frightening wildlife. It also had some huge Morton Bay fig trees, and at certain times of the year, they were filled, not with magpies, but with flying foxes (fruit bats), thousands of them screeching from those giant trees at night. That could make an evening walk through the park a very scary event.

Besides magpies, we endured other hazards during cricket practice. One time a couple of boys from a higher class, who were known as bullies, came and disrupted our practice when the teacher was not there. This was reported to our teacher/coach, Mr. Dukes, who called those boys out of class to cane them. I remember seeing them afterwards in the hallway, crying and holding their hands under their armpits. They had received the maximum six "cuts" of the cane.

This is a good time to describe caning. When I attended elementary school in Iowa in the 1950s, corporal (physical) punishment was still allowed. The teachers had wooden paddles that they used to whack our[1] backsides (girls as well). In Australia they did not use wooden paddles. Instead they used thin, long rattan canes. However, I do not know of any girls being caned at the time I was in school (if it happened, it was very rare).

Example of thin rattan cane

Example of thick rattan cane

There were two basic types of canes: long and thin or short and thick. The long ones were about three feet long and about 3/8 to ½ inch in diameter, while the short ones were about two feet long and ½ to 5/8 inch in diameter. The recipient had to stand with his arm out straight and hand facing up. The teacher would hold the cane on one end and raise it up to a vertical position (by law they couldn't take it past their shoulder to behind their back, but this was not always followed), then swing it down as quickly as possible so that the far end of the cane hit the extended fingers (or palm) of the boy. The effect was different depending on the type of cane used and the weather. The long canes whistled as they came down and would give a sharp pain when they hit, especially in warmer weather. The short cane came down slower and because of the greater surface area on impact, tended to be more of an aching pain, which was made much worse when the fingers were cold, as in winter. Other than not taking the cane too far back for the swing, there were some other rules that the teachers were supposed to follow. They

[1] I use "our" in a general sense. Actually, I never was on the receiving end of the paddle.

were not allowed to draw blood, and the maximum number of strokes (called "cuts") that they could administer for an offence was six, with a maximum of three cuts per hand. For most offences, the teachers would usually give one or two cuts of the cane. Only the most serious offences resulted in four or more cuts. Each teacher had his own cane, and often when they were on playground duty, they would put it down their trousers leg where it was held in place by their belt. This allowed them to administer punishment on the spot instead of waiting until later. I only ever received the cane in 4th Class, but more about that later. The cane was used much more in primary school than it was in high school, especially in the Senior years. A high school Senior had to do something really terrible to be caned. In doing research for caning, I found out that some canes had a crook or loop at one end, but all of the canes I ever saw used were just straight, as in the example photo. In an appendix are examples of Punishment Books, where canings were recorded. I don't know if our school had any – I don't remember seeing one, but that is to be expected since I was just a student. One offense I remember boys being caned for was if they were caught smoking.

♦ ♦ ♦

Australian War Memorial in Gregson Park, Hamilton

I mentioned Gregson Park across Tudor Street from the school earlier. Not far into the park was a war memorial, which consisted of the statue of an Australian "Digger" soldier in a slouch hat holding a flag standing on top of a column. On the sides of the column were the names of soldiers from the local area who served during World Wars I and II and those that were killed. Every Anzac Day (25th April – the date of the 1915 landing at Gallipoli in Turkey, which is Australia's most famous battle) we would assemble there and hold a memorial ceremony when we would recite a couple of verses from the poem *For The Fallen* by Laurence Binyon ("They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,…"). I

believe at least once we had some soldiers of the Australian Army there at that ceremony and one of them played *The Last Post* on the bugle, although Mr. Dart usually performed that duty on his cornet. It was a very sombre occasion that was all the more meaningful because our headmaster through 5th Class was Mr. Tom D. Colgan, a veteran of the First World War (as described later), lost comrades. [1] Mr. Dart was a veteran of World War II, but I do not know anything about his service.

My Closest Primary School Friends

Here are my best friends from primary school and were the ones that I used to play with outside of school hours.

John Hodgson

John Hodgson - 1963

John was probably my best friend in primary school. He lived on the other side of the railway tracks from my house and was the youngest of five boys (no girls). I really liked his mother, but I often felt sorry for her having five sons and no daughters, especially while most of them were teenagers. They lived in a reasonably nice house (larger and nicer than ours). John's mother was a big tennis enthusiast, so instead of a back yard, they had a tennis court. I used to play John there quite often, and that is really where I learned to play the game. John was my main playmate after school, and often used to come to my house. He participated in the army games that I will describe later. He even came to our Church Children's Camp with me in September, 1961. In fact, one incident from that camp really is seared into my memory. It was the only time I remember losing my temper. There was a large curved palm tree near the road in front of the Dining Hall at Tiona. One evening during the camp after dinner I wanted to see if I could climb the tree. I asked John to give me a leg up so that I could have a head start. He did so, but just as I was moving to a new position, he let me go and I slid down the rough trunk of the tree. I thought he had done that on purpose (although I since think he just thought I had a good start and was letting me go on), and I lost my temper and hit him in the face with my fist. We got into a small fight before it was broken up. However, we later made up and continued to be good mates. John was a good cricket player (batsman) and was on the school team with me, except he was a starter, while I was a reserve. I think John went to Broadmeadow Junior Boys' High School and after I moved from Hamilton to Lambton during my first year at Newcastle Boys' High School, I lost touch with John and cannot remember seeing him again. I have no idea what happened to him, although I did hear in my 2012 trip to Australia that he had been associated with the Wallsend Returned and Services League (RSL) for a while.

Tom Lawrie

Tom lived on Lindsay Street, which was one street over from me (the other side of the Army facility) and we used to do a lot of stuff together. He played soldier with me and we used to ride our bikes together. He was also a good soccer player and I played with him on the Hamilton North Soccer Team, which was coached by his father. Tom had a younger

[1] The last Anzac veteran of Gallipoli, Alec Campbell, died in 2002 at the age of 103, and the last Australian veteran of World War I, John Ross, died in 2009 at the age of 110.

brother Chris, who was just a year behind us. They both went to Boys' High (Tom was one of only seven of us from HPS that went to Boys' High from our year) as did his youngest brother, Tim. Tom came over to my place shortly after we arrived at the request of his father, who was a school teacher, to become friends and help me adjust to being in a new country and school. Tom told me in 2010 about something in primary school that I had forgotten. I learned the facts of life from my dad while the two of us were driving towards Maitland in 1961 when I was ten. It turns out that when I got back, I shared the information I learned with Tom. Thus, I was the one who told him about the facts of life. He had even remembered how I had found out about it. Although Tom and I were very good friends in primary school, we grew apart in high school and although he was always a friend, he was not one of my closest friends in high school. However, we did sit together for some classes in 3rd Form. In high school he became an avid surfer and even during primary school used to go to the beach a lot. I lost track of him after high school, but re-established it in June, 2010. He went to Newcastle University and Teachers College and became a teacher. He was involved in the transition of NBHS to the coeducational Waratah High School and then later to the Callaghan College Waratah Technology Campus. Tom taught mathematics at Jesmond High School for seven years before it became the Senior Campus of the Callaghan High School (Waratah was the Junior Campus). He later got a law degree and attended the College of Law in Sydney. Tom went on surfing trips around the world and even lived in Hawaii (North Shore) for four months. It turns out that his favourite beach is at Booti Booti, right next to Tiona. Tom now lives in Merewether and never married. I was unable to see him during my 2011/12 or 2015 visits.

Tom Lawrie - 1963

<u>Tommy Wilson</u>

Tommy Wilson lived at 23 Blackall Street, which was just one number above ours (22), but was located a few blocks from us on the other side of Tudor Street. I used to play a lot with him, mostly at my house and the parks, although we sometimes played at his house. He also was one of the regulars for going to the Saturday afternoon cinema movies at the Century Theatre in Broadmeadow. After primary school, Tommy went to Tech High and I lost track of him until I ran into his brother Greg at the NBHS Old Boys' Association Dinner at the Newcastle City Hall on 8th August, 2015. Greg was an officer of the OBA and introduced himself to me as Tommy's brother. Thanks to Greg, I was able to get hold of Thomas (no longer 'Tommy') again, although it wasn't until after I had returned to Hawaii. After the HSC he got a traineeship at BHP in the steelworks laboratory. In 1983 he took early retirement when offered prior to the steelworks closing down. Thomas retrained as a science teacher and spent the next 20 odd years teaching junior science and senior Physics. He retired again when he turned 60. His wife, Marion, and he were married in 1972 and have one son, Jeffrey. We finally met up again at a mini-HPS reunion at the 16-Footer Restaurant in December, 2016.

Tommy Wilson 1963

Glenn Faulds

Glenn Faulds was always top of the class up through 3rd Class (when I came 8th shortly after arriving from America). Starting in 4th Class I always came top of the class and Glenn was second. Despite my beating him out as top of the class and in the election for School Captain, we were still good friends. He also played cricket with me, but played for Adamstown Rosebuds Junior Soccer Club. Glenn lived on Teralba Road Broadmeadow, which was not far from me when I was in Hamilton and we used to ride bikes together and were playmates. He was one of the boys who went on to Newcastle Boys' High with me and I describe more about him in that chapter. I lost track of Glenn after high school, but managed to get in contact with him again in 2010. At that time he was the head of the Industrial Arts faculty at Woy Woy High School. I saw him in 2012, but was not able to meet up with him during my 2015 and 2016 trips (although we stayed in contact). At that time he was still at Woy Woy High School.

Glenn Faulds - 1963

Glenn Faulds - 2012

Martin Troke

Martin Troke was another of my close friends the whole time I was in primary school. He lived on Steel Street, almost directly across from the school, and I used to go to his place quite often after school. He sometimes came to my house as well. We used to play soldiers together and he was also on the school cricket team with me (although he was a starter). Martin told me recently that although he is left-handed, at one point in primary school the teacher attempted to get him to write with his right hand (fortunately, that attempt did not last long). Martin applied to go to Newcastle Boys' High School but was not accepted. I was thrilled when my mother opened the envelope I brought home from school and told me that I had been accepted to NBHS. I immediately hopped on my bike and rode over to Steel St., to the house of Martin Troke, whom I was certain would also have been accepted to Boys' High. When I got there I was shocked to find Martin in tears and his father yelling at him. He had failed to make it to NBHS and instead was headed to Broadmeadow Central Junior Boys' High School (Central). He later made it to Newcastle Technical Boys' High School (Tech High). Tech High was not a bad school at all, and was also selective. However, NBHS was pretty much recognized as the best high school in Newcastle. Like with John Hodgson, I lost touch with him when I moved from Hamilton to Lambton during my first year at Boys' High and do not remember seeing him again. I finally tracked him

Martin Troke – 1963

Martin Troke – 2012

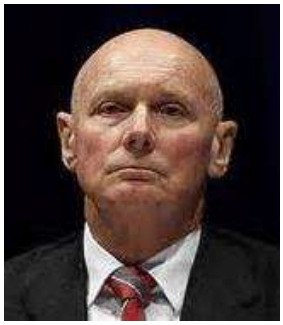
down and recontacted him in May, 2010.[1] I had lunch with Martin in January 2012 during my trip back to Australia. I found out that after high school he went to the BHP steelworks and worked as a clerk for 20 years and then took the redundancy offer. Then he became a grass adjustment technician (lawn maintenance). I saw him again during my 2015 trip (when he, Brian McCarthy and I had lunch at the Surf House restaurant in the Merewether Surf Club) and in Dec. 2016 trips (at the mini-HPS reunion in Belmont). He now resides in Charlestown and has two grown sons.

Brian McCarthy

Brian was a good friend of mine during primary school. We played on the cricket team and Hamilton North soccer team together. Brian was another candidate (along with Glenn Faulds) when I ran for and won the election for School Captain (this is related later in the section on 6th Class). Brian was my Vice Captain. He also was awarded an engraved pen (as a prize for Citizenship). Brian reminded me in 2014 that he was the Smiths Crisps salesman for one year, going around the playground at recess selling bags of Smiths Crisps. Brian was one of the seven of us that went from HPS to NBHS and he stayed there for all six years, although we did not hang out together in high school. I regained contact with Brian in 2011 and unfortunately did not see him during my trip to Australia in 2011/12, but did have lunch with him and Martin Troke during my 2015 visit, and again during my 2016 trip (at the mini-HPS reunion).

Brian McCarthy - 1963

Brian attended the University of Newcastle where he earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree. In 1994 he completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School in Boston. He accepted a job as finance manager for Regional Publishers in 1976. That started his career in media (following in the footsteps of his father, who had worked for the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and NBN Channel 3). Brian took control of Rural Press as CEO in 1994 until the 2007 merger with Fairfax Media. Brian took over as CEO of Fairfax Media in 2008 and retired at the end of 2010. Fairfax Media is one of the largest media giants in Australia that includes hundreds of publications (including *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *Newcastle Herald*), web sites, and radio stations. Since retirement he has continued to contribute professionally as a Non-executive Director of two private company groups. Brian was married for 33 years and had four children, three of whom also pursued media careers.



Brian McCarthy – 2010

[1] I was humbled when I rang him and he didn't remember me, except for a vague familiarity with the name. I thought maybe it was early dementia, but he remembered John, Tom, Glenn, Karl, and many others quite clearly. It appears that I'm not as memorable as I thought!

Other Friends and Boys of Interest

There are a couple other of my closest friends from primary school that I don't have as much to say about and I lost touch with them after leaving primary school. **Doug ("Dougie") Bennett**[1] went to Tech High, while **Karl Toohey** was one of the seven of us that went to Boys' High, although he was only there for about four months before his family moved to Canberra. I know that Karl came to my place in Hamilton, but do not remember if Dougie did. However, Brian McCarthy told me recently the following story about Dougie: *I remember we blew up his letterbox with one of those big double bungers. It was encased within a brick fence, and the front section landed across the road from his house in Beaumont Street. His mother was not impressed with me!*

I completely lost track of Karl after he left Newcastle. Brian McCarthy told me in 2014 that he ran into Dougie Bennett at Blueys Beach on the North Coast. Dougie told him that he was a taxi driver.

Dougie Bennett

Karl Toohey

Douglas Bennett

Mickey Pavlovic

Brian Kirby

I would like to describe some of the other boys in my classes with whom I was not close friends. One of the interesting ones was the other **Douglas Bennett**, the one pictured above with brown curly hair, fair complexion with a few freckles. What made Doug so interesting was that he had one brown eye and one blue eye, which I had never seen in somebody before. It was a bit distracting while talking to him. The only other person I have known with the same eyes was my father-in-law, Ellis Thatcher.

Another boy I remember clearly was **Vladamir "Mickey" Pavlovic**. He had an older brother, Bobby, who went to NBHS after leaving Hamilton Primary. They were from an Eastern European migrant family, and neither boy was popular with their classmates. Mickey was awkward and a bit gawky, and I think did not have the best hygiene. I can't remember the details, but for whatever reason, he was not well liked and was frequently teased. I did have one unpleasant encounter with Bobby when I started at Boys' High, which made me like him even less - he recognized me from HPS and one day came up and shoved his arm in front of my face to show me his ringworms, which of course disgusted me.

Brian Kirby, with red hair and freckles, was another boy that I really liked and although he often acted tough, actually had a good sense of humour and was always nice to me. He was also good at sports.

[1] We had two Doug Bennetts in our class. My friend had blonde hair and we called him "Dougie" while the other had dark curly hair and we called him "Doug".

Mr. Thomas D. Colgan, Headmaster (until 1962)

Mr. Tom D. Colgan
[courtesy Doug Saxon]

When I arrived at Hamilton, the Headmaster was Mr. Tom Colgan. He seemed like a very old man to me, although he was younger than I am now as I am writing this (in 2015). I remember him as being tall (but all the teachers were tall compared to us), thin, wore black glasses, and had nicotine-stained fingers from smoking cigarettes, which he rolled himself. I tried to avoid Mr. Colgan as much as possible, because if you had to see him, it was probably bad news, since he was the one to administer punishment when the teachers did not do it themselves. His office was at the top of the stairs next to the 4th Class room. This actually was fortuitous, since Mr. Dart, who taught 4th Class, was also the Deputy Headmaster, and was very handy if Mr. Colgan needed him. I did not go into the office very often. I know I went there and met Mr. Colgan when I first arrived from America in August, 1960 when my parents and I had a meeting with Mr. Cogan to arrange for my assimilation into the school. It was then that it was decided that although I had finished 3rd Grade in America, it would be best for me to enter 3rd Class to help me catch up with things I had not been taught in America, and to put me in sync with my age group.

After that initial meeting or two, I do not really remember going into the office until I was School Captain in 6th Class, but by then Mr. Colgan was gone. I thought of Mr. Colgan as being stern, but fair. He also used to come by our classes occasionally and observe our lessons, sometimes asking us questions. He also liked to spend time patrolling the playground during recess and lunch. He would use his whistle to maintain control. One quick short whistle "bip" was a warning to the recipient of his attention, two 'bips' caused everyone on the playground to freeze, and three whistles caused play to cease. I believe that he was basically a nice man who cared a lot about the students, but also believed in maintaining good discipline.

At the time I did not know much about Mr. Colgan, other than he was an ANZAC soldier from World War I, and I remember seeing him shed a tear at our Anzac Day memorial service across the street in Gregson Park. I thought he was a veteran of Gallipoli as I knew he was a trooper in a Light Horse Regiment. However, while working on these memoirs, I have been able to delve into his background and discovered his interesting history. Some of this information I obtained from Doug Saxon's book (mentioned in the Acknowledgements), while other information I obtained from various online sources, such as the Australian National Archives (where I viewed Mr. Colgan's Service Record[1]), and St. Patrick's College (where he attended Secondary School).

Tom was born in Beechwood, southern NSW in 1900, and enlisted in the AIF in 1917, lying about his age. After basic training in Australia, he shipped to Egypt as a replacement for the 6th Light Horse Regiment (the Hunter River Lancers), which had fought at Gallipoli a couple years earlier. After doing additional training in Egypt, he was transferred to the 2nd Light Horse Machine Gun Squadron for additional training, and then duty assignment. I believe he was then returned to the 6th Light Horse, and while serving in the Middle East in May, 1918, he was wounded by a gunshot wound to the back and shoulder. He also

[1] An excerpt from his Service Record is shown in the appendices.

Australian 6th Light Horse at Jerusalem, 1918

suffered from dysentery and malaria while serving there. I believe he entered Jerusalem with the 6th L.H. In September 1919 he returned to Australia and was discharged.

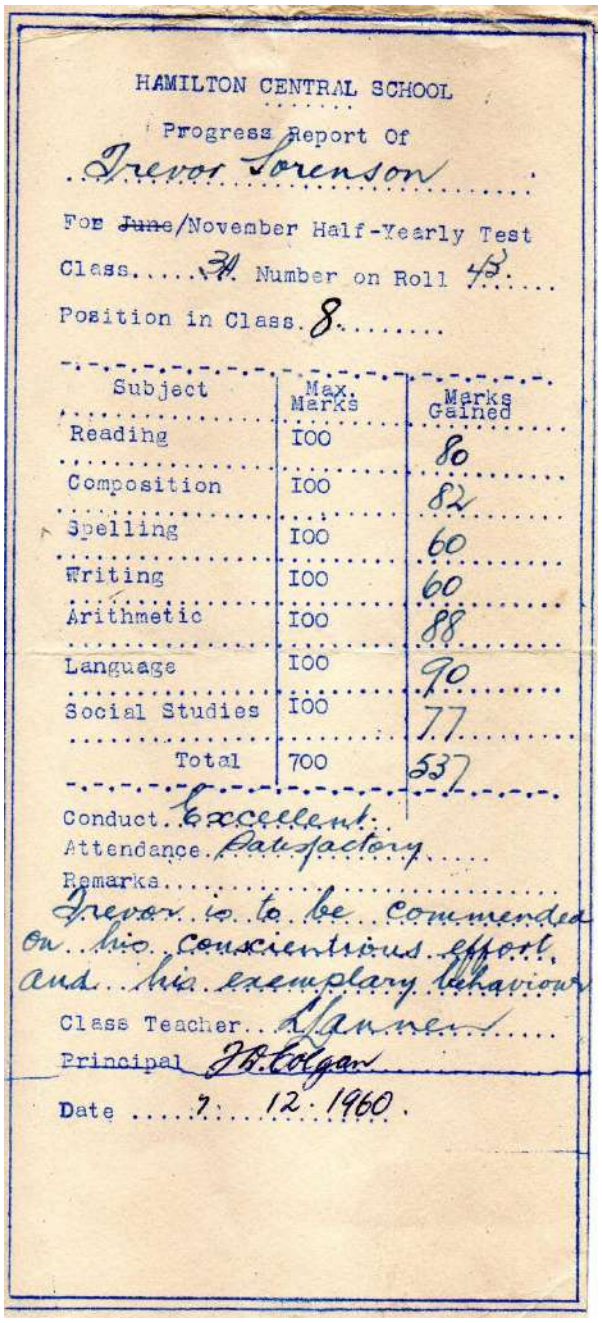
After the war he trained as a teacher at Hereford House in Sydney (where they taught young people who had work experience and were more mature than those coming right out of high school). From there he received his first teaching assignment in May 1921 to a one-teacher bush school at Cooper's Creek, NSW. He went on to have a distinguished teaching career at several different schools in NSW until being appointed as Headmaster of Dudley in 1939 and then Headmaster in Wallsend and Gosford, before taking his appointment as Headmaster of Hamilton Central School in 1954. He retired at the end of the 1962 school year and passed away in 1974. Mr. Bennett replaced him as Headmaster at Hamilton, with Mr. Alan W. Dart as the acting Headmaster.

Teachers

I write about my teachers with my descriptions of each class. However, there are some general comments that can be made. The boys and girls were in separate classes. The boys had all male teachers, and the girls had all female teachers, and apparently they almost never interacted. I did not know any of the women teachers and do not remember them. We did occasionally get student teachers to come teach us, and even a woman or two! Another boys' teacher was Mr. Loch Unicomb, who taught at HPS from 1951 until 1963 (my last year), although I never had a class with him. I do not remember him at all, other than his name, and he doesn't remember me either (even though I was School Captain his last year). Even some of my former classmates also do not remember him [in 2015].

Third Class (1960 – Mr. L. Lannen)

The school year in Australia lasts from late January to early December. I finished 3rd Grade in Boone, Iowa in May, 1960. We then travelled to Australia, arriving in Newcastle in August, 1960. As mentioned earlier, I was put into 3rd Class in the middle of the year. I had about four months to catch up with the differences from what we learned in Iowa and what had been taught in NSW. The biggest difference was in calculations involving money. In America it was straightforward with dollars and cents. In Australia at that time they had pounds, shillings, and pence (including halfpennies, but no longer farthings). we had to learn to add, subtract, multiply and divide in this awkward currency (2 halfpennies = 1 penny [1d], 3 pennies = 1 threepence [3d], 2 threepence = 1 sixpence [6d], 2 sixpence = 1 shilling [1/-], 2 shillings = 1 florin [2/-], 10 florins = 1 pound [£1], 1 pound and 1 shilling = 1 guinea [g]). All of these monetary denominations had a coin except for the Pound and Guinea. There were four monetary notes: 10 shillings, 1 pound, 5 pounds, and 10 pounds. The funny thing is, there was no guinea coin or note. It was virtual money. It was used almost exclusively for advertising and selling expensive items, such as cars, refrigerators, television, etc. This made them look cheaper because the price in guineas was less than the price in pounds.



HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Progress Report Of

Trevor Sorenson

For ~~June~~/November Half-Yearly Test

Class 3A Number on Roll 43

Position in Class 8

Subject	Max. Marks	Marks Gained
Reading	100	80
Composition	100	82
Spelling	100	60
Writing	100	60
Arithmetic	100	88
Language	100	90
Social Studies	100	77
Total	700	537

Conduct Excellent

Attendance Satisfactory

Remarks Trevor is to be commended on his conscientious effort and his exemplary behaviour

Class Teacher L Lannen

Principal H.R. Colgan

Date 7. 12. 1960.

This was one of the hardest things for me to catch up on. The other area that was difficult was the precise writing with pens and ink that was taught, which was nothing like we had in Iowa. I also had to learn Australian Social Studies, which was different. It was a difficult few months for me, but I still managed to come 8th out of 43 boys at the end of the year. My teacher was Mr. Lannen, who was fairly short with thin, fair hair. Unfortunately I don't have a photo of Mr. Lannen since he was not in the Class 3A photo (which was taken before he took over the class and before I arrived). He was a nice teacher and the first male teacher I had ever had. All the teachers in Iowa that I had were women.

I tried very hard to fit in. I attempted to lose my American accent and learn the rules of cricket, soccer, and rugby league, none of which were played in Boone, Iowa at that time. Other than being scared when

I first arrived in class and getting used to the strangeness of it all (including having only boys in the class) along with everything else that was different in my life at that time, I really don't remember too much about that time in 3rd Class – just flashes of completing the difficult writing and arithmetic. One good memory I have is that although I came from a foreign country and had a funny American accent, the boys accepted me readily (it helped that there were several migrant boys in the class) and did not make fun of me (except the usual good-natured kidding), and I soon gained several friends, especially Tom Lawrie, who helped me acclimatize. Since Tom lived very close to me, he would walk with me to and from class, at least at the beginning until I gained confidence.

Class 3A – taken before I arrived

(Quality is poor because it is a scan of a copy of the original print that was provided by Tom Lawrie)

Fourth Class (1961 – Mr. Alan W. D. Dart)

My year in 4th Class is by far the most memorable of all my time in primary school, because it was the most unorthodox of any classes I took in Australia. There was never a dull day. The teacher was Mr. Alan W. Dart,[1] and he was truly a character. He praised me more than any other teacher, much to my embarrassment, yet he was the only teacher who ever caned me. He definitely believed in both the carrot (reward) and stick (punishment) method of teaching. We had another connection with Mr. Dart other than as my teacher. My sister, Beth, did Nurses' Training at the Royal Newcastle Hospital with his daughter, Penny Dart. I remember seeing Mr. and Mrs. Dart at the graduation ceremony at the RNH

[1] In the late 1990s I wanted to contact Mr. Dart if he was still alive, so I did a search of the Newcastle Phone Directory online and found a listing of an A.W. Dart in Hamilton. I wrote a letter and was answered by his son, who was living in Sydney. He stated that his father had passed away in 1978. The listing was kept for his mother, whom I believe had just recently passed away as well.

Nurses' Home in March, 1965 when Beth and Penny completed their basic nurse's training and were able to don their Sister veils. That was the last time that I saw Mr. Dart.

Mr. Dart – 4th Class, 1961

Thanks to the book by Doug Saxon, I can share some of Mr. Dart's background. He was born in Newcastle in 1909 and trained at the Sydney Teachers' College. He was a junior technical teacher and then got his full teaching appointment to Newcastle Central in 1930. He transferred to Moree in 1933 where he remained until the end of 1937. Mr. Dart was a very talented musician, playing almost all the brass instruments of a band plus the piano, piano accordion, and mouth organ, most of which he played in class at one time or another. While in Moree he was the band director of the Moree District Band. He returned to Newcastle Central [Broadmeadow Junior Technical High] in 1938, where he taught until 1951, except for his time in the Army during World War II (Service Number N154015, enlisted in Newcastle). In 1951 he was appointed Deputy Headmaster of Hamilton Central School, where he remained until 1967. He moved then to Heaton Public School in Jesmond, where he retired in 1969. Mr. Dart was a comedian and especially enjoyed being Master of Ceremonies at the School Fetes. According to Doug Saxon's book, Mr. Dart invented hair products including *Dart's Demon Dandruff Destroyer*. Mr. Dart's hair was slicked down. I believe that he used peanut oil. Alan Dart passed away in 1978.

The classroom for 4th Class was in the brick building next to the Headmaster's office. In 4th Class I sat near the back of the class on the far left side of the classroom in a double desk. I sat next to Tom Lawrie.

Mr. Dart was very strict concerning the rules, such as sitting with our arms folded, not speaking without permission, etc. He also was very strict about not making mistakes and very liberal with punishment. I mentioned that he was the only teacher who caned me, and he did that five times (which was less than anyone else in the class received). Incidentally, Mr. Dart favoured the short thick cane, which was terrible, especially in cold weather and caused our fingers to ache for an hour or more after caning.

Once I was caned because the boy in front of me (I think it was Tommy Wilson) turned around to speak to me, but I sat there straight with my arms folded and told him to turn around or Mr. Dart would catch him. Of course, Mr. Dart did catch him, and because he was turned around talking to me, Mr. Dart assumed I was talking back, so we both had to go out in front of the class and get a cut of the cane, even though I had done nothing wrong.

The other four times I was caned were due to mistakes I made in my homework. We dreaded getting our graded homework back from Mr. Dart, because any boys who made a technical mistake in their homework had to be caned. We thus ended up with a queue of about 40 boys lined up around the walls of the classroom waiting their turn to be caned by Mr. Dart. I was usually one of the five or so boys that did not have to be caned. However, even though I made fewer mistakes than any other boy, nobody is perfect, and four times I had to join the line. I can still remember two of the mistakes. In a composition I forgot to capitalize a letter in the title of the composition, and on another occasion I forgot the full stop at the end of a sentence. Mr. Dart used the cane much more than any teacher I knew. We had a wide diversity of intelligence in the boys in the class, so some boys were always

in the caning line, while others, like Glenn Faulds, Brian McCarthy, Tom Lawrie, and myself, were rarely in it.

However, Mr. Dart was also one of the nicest teachers I've had and created a reward system to honour those that did well. He handed out "Lucky Halfpennies" (pronounced "hape'nies"). These consisted of an Australian half-penny coin, through which he drilled a small hole near the top edge, and then looped a piece of plastic "spaghetti" cord.

Lucky Halfpenny – 1951

We received one of these for getting all our homework or class assignment correct or other worthy accomplishments. He bestowed these "medals" in a special ceremony in front of the class. We first had to do the "Dart Handshake", which involved putting your hand out in a regular handshake, but then curling your forefinger in tight and holding it in place with your thumb, such that only the three bottom fingers protruded. The joints of the curled forefinger made an arrow or "dart" shape pointed towards you. You would then shake with Mr. Dart with both of you using this handshake. With his left hand he would hold the medal to his forehead, close his eyes, and utter a high-pitched incantation of strange sounds. Sometimes he would flick the medal into the air and catch it before he handed it back. We would put the medal onto a key ring on a chain that we carried with us (looped to our belt and put into a pocket). If we got too many Lucky Halfpennies we could trade 12 of them in for a Lucky Sixpence, and a Lucky Sixpence and 12 more Lucky Halfpennies for a Lucky Shilling. I even received a Lucky Florin, which was equivalent to two Lucky Shillings or 48 Lucky Halfpennies. There was a competition amongst us to see who could earn the most medals (I won!). At the end of the year we could turn in the medals for their equivalent value in coins. However, I did keep a couple of Lucky Halfpennies as souvenirs. One is from my birth year – 1951 (pictured).

The Dart Hand Shake

Mr. Dart reminded me of a clown – heavy set, round jovial face – and would not have taken much makeup to be one. He loved "clowning around". He used to play the piano we had in our classroom (we learned and sang songs) and when playing he sometimes also used his nose. He used to play the cornet at school functions such as Speech Day, School Fetes, and Anzac Day. He sometimes would play a tune or make weird sounds with the cornet mouthpiece in the classroom – sounded a bit like a kazoo. Mr. Dart was the Music Director for the school and conducted the school choir (with boys and girls).

Mr. Dart wore a baggy pin-striped suit with lots of pockets, and he used to keep marvellous things in those pockets. He would often reach in and surprise us with something new and strange. One thing that he always carried was a jeweller's kit, including an eyepiece magnifying glass. I remember him several times using that and his tools to repair or examine something. Mr. Dart was also the First Aid teacher. He carried a little bottle of

watered down Dettol when he was in the playground. If we fell over and grazed ourselves, we went to him and he would put some of the Dettol on it (it stung!) and maybe a bandaid. He also had tweezers to extract splinters (using his jeweller's eyepiece).

I can honestly say that I was the Teacher's Pet. I usually came first in all the tests and was very well-behaved (partly because I was shy and also because I was still conscious of my American accent), and Mr. Dart used to praise me in front of the class and also in the two semi-annual report cards to my parents. This caused me no end of embarrassment, especially with my classmates.

There was one incident[1] I vividly remember from 4th Class that I have debated whether or not to include, but have decided to, because of it was so unusual and memorable. I mentioned that I sat near the back of the classroom on the leftmost row. At the double desk in front of me was the largest boy in the class, [name withheld], who was at least a year older than the rest of us because he had been held back (not the brightest lad). One day when Mr. Dart was out of the room, he turned around and said "Look at this." I looked down and he had pulled open his elastic-band grey shorts and pulled out his large erect penis. I was shocked, not just because he was exposing himself, but because his penis was so huge (at least to my mind then). This was before I entered puberty and also before my dad shocked me with the facts of life later that year. At that time I had no idea that a penis could become erect, so I thought it was an abnormality and I really felt sorry for this boy, having to put up with such a large penis. My small penis was much less inconvenient. From that time on I regarded the boy with pity for his abnormality, but also tended to avoid him because of his strange behaviour.

We also had to memorize poems in 4th Class. For many years I remembered two short poems I learned there, but I have now forgotten one of them. The one I do remember is *Half Day Holiday*[2] (author unknown) which went like this:

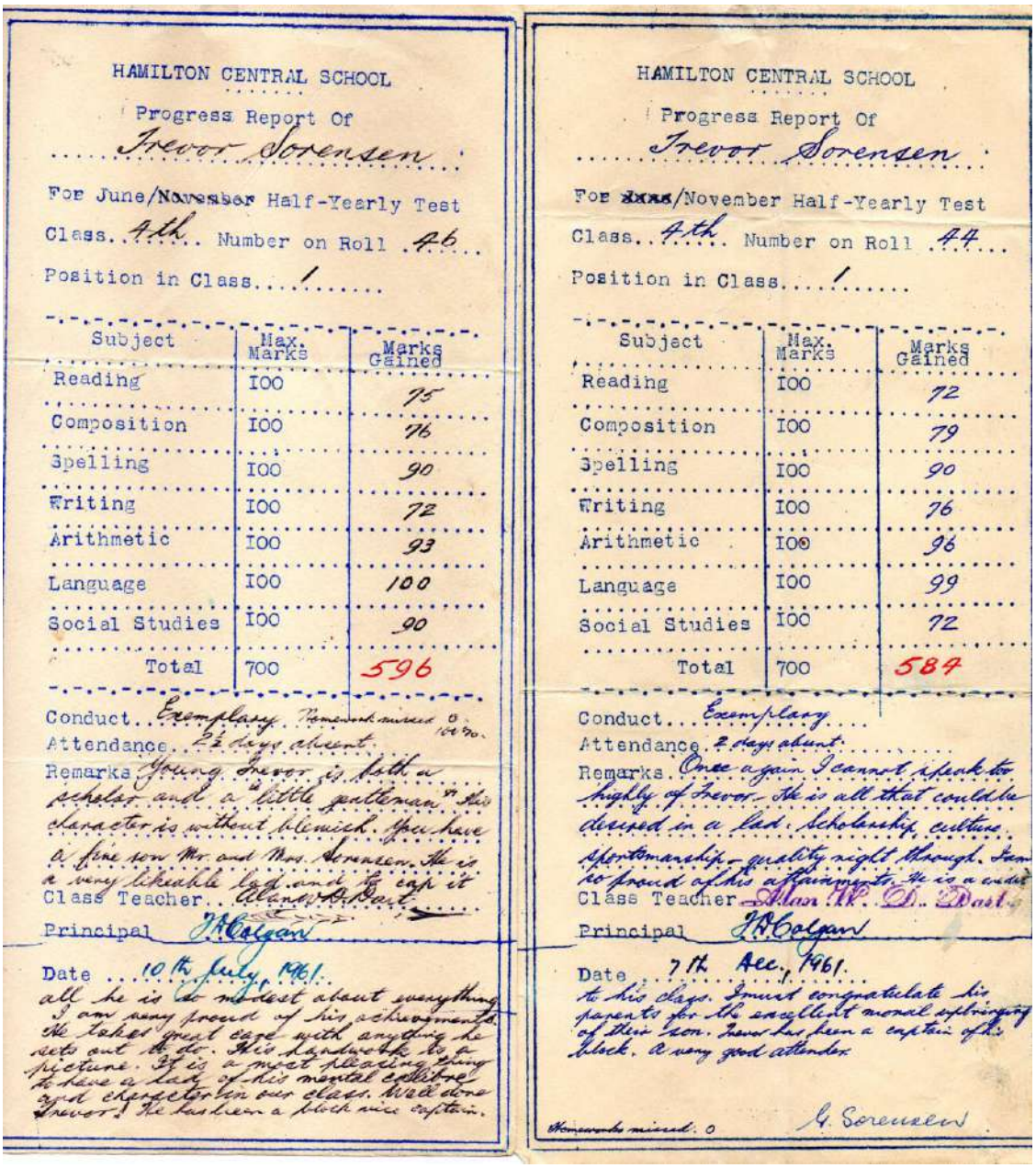
Half day holiday, what shall we do?
Visit the museum, go to the zoo?
Call at the library and get a new book,
Then off to the gardens to find a quiet nook?
A splash in the ocean or a run on the sand,
Or a climb up the hilltop to see something grand?
Brother, oh brother, how the time moves on,
We're so busy planning that the holiday's gone!

Mr. Dart was the Deputy Headmaster to Mr. Colgan and took over as Acting Headmaster in 1963 after Mr. Colgan left.

I have mixed feelings about Mr. Dart and 4th Class. Being top of the class, winning the most Lucky Halfpennies, and receiving praise from the teacher were all positive experiences, as was the fact that I learned a lot, especially in Social Studies (although this was my worst subject in that class). I liked his reward system, which fostered competition, and was innovative and entertaining. He was also a fun, talented, and fascinating teacher. However, it was not right to cane boys for making mistakes in homework and schoolwork.

[1] This incident has been confirmed by a former classmate – I did not imagine it.
[2] In Australia it was common to have half-day public holidays as well as full-day holidays. Bank holidays were usually half days.

He was the only teacher who ever caned me. I think that caning was sometimes justified as a form of punishment for severe infractions or as a deterrent (which it was for me), but he used it much too often and for trivial offences. Vale Mr. Dart!



HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Progress Report Of

Trevor Sorensen

For June/~~November~~ Half-Yearly Test

Class 4th Number on Roll 46

Position in Class 1

Subject	Max. Marks	Marks Gained
Reading	100	75
Composition	100	76
Spelling	100	90
Writing	100	72
Arithmetic	100	93
Language	100	100
Social Studies	100	90
Total	700	596

Conduct Exemplary Homework missed 0 100%

Attendance 2½ days absent.

Remarks Young Trevor is both a scholar and a "little gentleman." His character is without blemish. You have a fine son Mr. and Mrs. Sorensen. He is a very likeable lad and to cap it

Class Teacher Alan W. D. Dart

Principal J.A. Colgan

Date 10th July, 1961.

all he is so modest about everything. I am very proud of his achievements. He takes great care with anything he sets out to do. His handwork is a picture. It is a most pleasing thing to have a lad of his mental calibre and character in our class. Well done Trevor! He has been a block vice captain.

HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Progress Report Of

Trevor Sorensen

For ~~June~~/November Half-Yearly Test

Class 4th Number on Roll 44

Position in Class 1

Subject	Max. Marks	Marks Gained
Reading	100	72
Composition	100	79
Spelling	100	90
Writing	100	76
Arithmetic	100	96
Language	100	99
Social Studies	100	72
Total	700	584

Conduct Exemplary

Attendance 2 days absent.

Remarks Once again I cannot speak too highly of Trevor. He is all that could be desired in a lad. Scholarship, culture, sportsmanship – quality right through. I am so proud of his attainments. He is a credit

Class Teacher Alan W. D. Dart

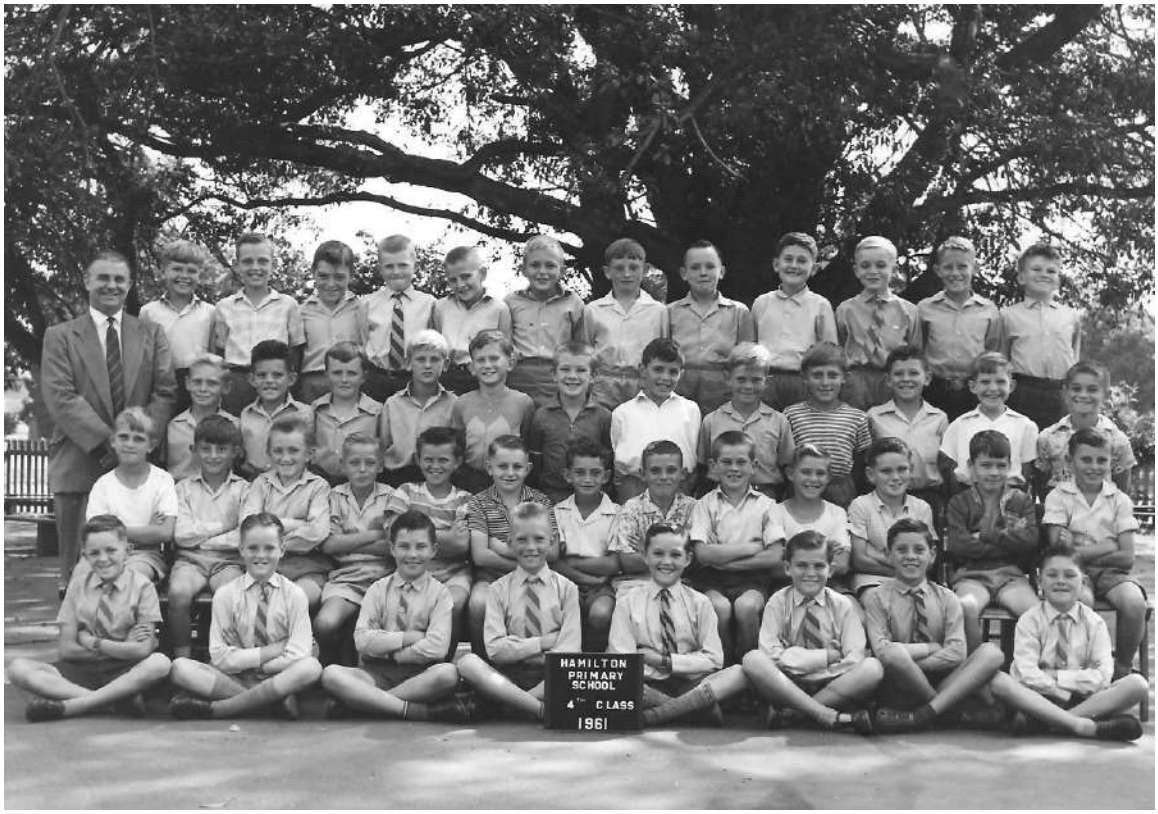
Principal J.A. Colgan

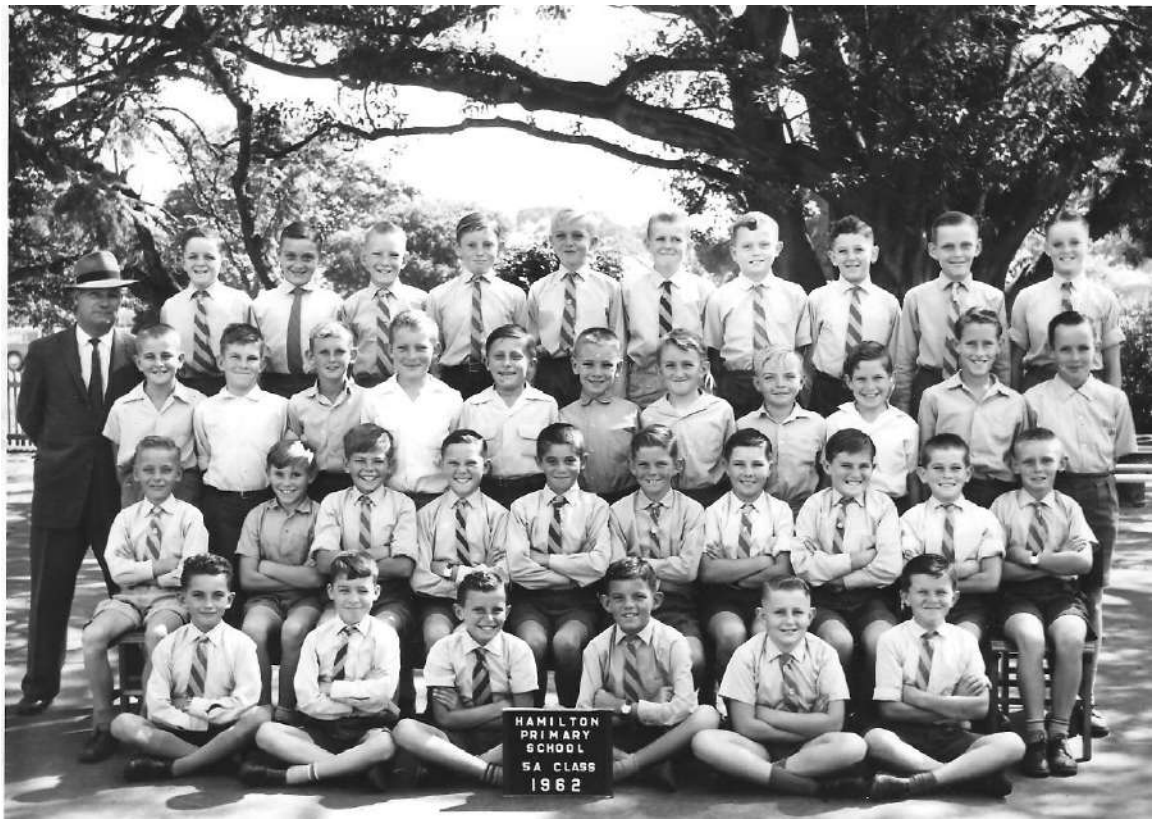
Date 7th Dec., 1961.

to his class. I must congratulate his parents for the excellent moral upbringing of their son. Trevor has been a captain of his block. A very good attender.

Homeworks missed: 0

G. Sorensen


HAMILTON
PRIMARY
SCHOOL
4TH CLASS
1961


HAMILTON
PRIMARY
SCHOOL
5A CLASS
1962

Fifth Class (1962 – Mr. Jack Dukes)

The classroom for my 5th Class was back in the wooden and brick extension building next to the classroom of my 3rd Class. I guess they had the odd-numbered classes in the extension and the even-numbered classes in the main brick building (the classroom for my 6th Class was there as well as my 4th Class). One advantage of the location of this class was that it was above the kitchens of the girls' high school, which was on the ground floor. They would bake cakes or bread just before playtime or lunch, which smelled really good and made us hungry, but also made it difficult to concentrate on our lessons.

Mr. Dukes – 5th Class, 1962

My 5th Class teacher, Mr. Dukes, was also a character. He was mostly bald and when outside used to wear a hat all the time. He was our Sports Master and the coach of the cricket and rugby league teams. He was a good teacher, but his true love was sports. I came first in the class during 5th Class as well, and in my two report cards (half-yearly and yearly) he also praised me. I would like to quote from the report cards, because it summarizes his opinion of me and also shows his love of sports. From the half-yearly: *Trevor is just as good a lad as Mr. Dart says he is or better…Some weakness in Writing, but Trevor is giving them a lot of attention too. If only he played* [rugby] *football!* and in my Yearly report card: *Everything very good. Needs plenty of Sports. He is a bit clumsy, but improving…*

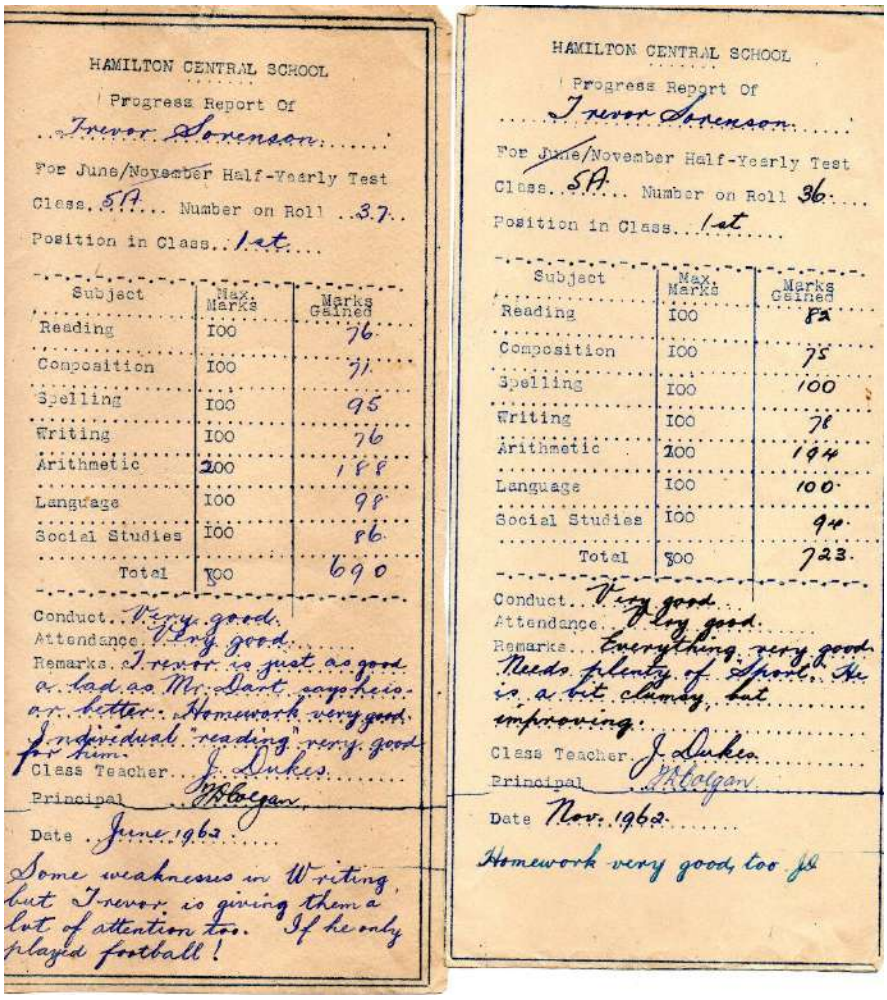
On the first day of 5th Class, Mr. Dukes got our attention, and fear, by threatening to send letters to our parents and other punishments if we did not behave or perform. It was during 5th Class that the incident I reported earlier about the two bullies who interrupted our cricket practice were caned – by Mr. Dukes. I remember he used to carry his cane (his "waddy") in his trouser leg when on playground duty so that he could administer punishment on the spot if necessary.

Mr. Dukes emphasised calligraphy – beautiful, perfect writing as I mentioned earlier. His favourite teaching method for most subjects was to have us fill in the blank spaces on duplicate work sheets stacked en masse in the classroom cupboard. When we finished a Maths or English work sheet, we marked it from the master answer sheet then proceeded to the next sheet in order of difficulty. If, however, we failed to reach the passing percentage, then we changed topics or subject sheets and returned to do the failed sheet the next day until we "passed muster" as Mr. Dukes used to say. This "self-teaching" method was unorthodox, but effective. It even allowed him to be out of the room for extended periods (such as when dealing with sports matters) while the learning in the classroom continued without the need of a substitute teacher.

Mr. Dukes had us all selling various flavoured instant puddings. He supplied us with the boxes of puddings and we gave him the money from their sale. There was a competition to sell the most. I assume it was to raise money for the school, but I don't remember the reason, just the competition. I actually quite liked the puddings – butterscotch was my favourite. My parents bought quite a few as did some of the people at church, but I don't think I won the competition.

During 5th Class is the only time I remember sharing a class with the girls. They would come to our classroom for a combined singing class, and we boys had to move over to the

left half of the room to make room for the girls. This meant that we had to share a seat with the boy next to us while the girls occupied the seats on the opposite side of the room.



HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Progress Report Of

Trevor Sorenson

For June/November Half-Yearly Test

Class 5A Number on Roll 37

Position in Class 1st

Subject	Max. Marks	Marks Gained
Reading	100	76
Composition	100	71
Spelling	100	95
Writing	100	76
Arithmetic	200	188
Language	100	98
Social Studies	100	86
Total	700	690

Conduct Very good.

Attendance Very good.

Remarks. Trevor is just as good a lad as Mr. Dart says he is or better. Homework very good. Individual "reading" very good for him.

Class Teacher J. Dukes

Principal W Keegan

Date June 1962

Some weakness in Writing, but Trevor is giving them a lot of attention too. If he only played football!

HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Progress Report Of

Trevor Sorenson

For June/November Half-Yearly Test

Class 5A Number on Roll 36

Position in Class 1st

Subject	Max. Marks	Marks Gained
Reading	100	82
Composition	100	75
Spelling	100	100
Writing	100	78
Arithmetic	200	194
Language	100	100
Social Studies	100	94
Total	800	723

Conduct Very good

Attendance Very good

Remarks Everything very good. Needs plenty of Sport. He is a bit clumsy, but improving.

Class Teacher J. Dukes

Principal W Keegan

Date Nov. 1962

Homework very good, too JS

Sixth Class (1963 – Mr. L. Bruce Dodds)

Sixth Class and its teacher, Mr. Bruce Dodds, were my favourites during primary school. Mr. Dodds was handsome and had the James Bond (Sean Connery) look. He was pretty easy-going and was very nice. I don't remember much of the class periods, except for him teaching us songs. We performed as a choir at some school functions. Songs I remember singing were *Fire Down Below* (sea shanty) and *Mockingbird Hill*. I also remember that Mr. Dodds was more lenient on us when it came to writing. He did not make use nib pens and ink. We were also allowed to use fountain pens (with which it was very difficult to do heavy downstrokes and light upstrokes – they were all the same thickness), although not biros (ball-point pens). Mr. Dodds was a heavy smoker and had nicotine-stained fingers from his cigarettes, which he rolled himself and thus had no filters.

The most significant event of that year was that I was elected the Boys School Captain by the boys of the school. There were three of us that were nominated to be Captain – myself, Glenn Faulds, and Brian McCarthy. Before the election we were given the opportunity to make a brief speech about why we should be Captain and what we would do in that role. We took turns going up to the top of the brick and concrete steps leading into the school and giving a brief speech before the assembled boys of all the classes in the school. I had written out my speech beforehand and memorized it. The other two boys referred to notes during their speeches. To my great surprise I was elected Captain of the school. I knew that both of the other boys nominated were popular and were good at sports – cricket, soccer, and rugby league. However, a couple of the boys in my class told me they voted for me because I was the only candidate who spoke without notes and that impressed them. I received a special Captain badge to go under my school badge and at the end of the year I also received an engraved commemorative fountain pen. Brian McCarthy was elected Vice Captain and helped me during the year.

Mr. Dodds – 6th Class, 1963

Fountain Pen received for being School Captain, 1963

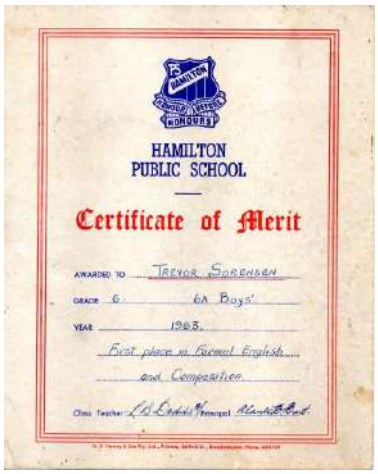
One event that happened during 6th Class was brought to my remembrance by Tom Lawrie in 2010. Mr. Dodds formed an athletic group from our 6th Class, which was to perform a series of runs, jumps, cartwheels, and somersaults on mats and involved a springboard and a vaulting horse as part of Education Week. I was not part of the group because I had other duties as School Captain. Tom wrote me that one morning he arrived at school and discovered the athletic team in the playground with Mr. Dodds practising somersaults with the springboard and vaulting horse. Tom had not realized that the practice had been moved from the afternoon to the morning, and after changing into his P.E. clothes, joined the line of boys waiting to run at the vaulting horse and somersaulting over it with the help of Mr. Dodds. Because he was late for the practice, Tom did not have a chance to do the usual warm-up. I'll again let him tell the rest in his own words:

When my turn came I sprang from the springboard and my left hand slipped off the side of the vinyl-topped horse, jettisoning me into the asphalt of the playground before Mr. Dodds, who was standing adjacent to the horse, could assist me. My left arm broke my fall and also itself, snapping between the shoulder and elbow. Mr. Dodds had to drive me to the hospital (RNH) where my parents soon arrived and the bone was set and plastered. That afternoon I remember some of the team coming around to commiserate with me at home, but mostly I remember feeling guilty that I would be letting the team down and also that I had put Mr. Dodds in a precarious position by being seriously injured at school while

under his care. I should never have attempted the exercise without warming up and knew it.

Former Hamilton R.S.L. Hall in January, 2012

At the end of the year we held our annual Speech Day in the RSL hall a few blocks down on Tudor Street towards Beaumont Street (the main street of Hamilton). This was the day that the Headmaster and local dignitaries gave speeches and handed out prizes to the students. The boys and girls classes were combined for Speech Day. Books were given to the dux, second, and third places in each class, and certificates were given to those coming first in various subjects (at least in 6th Class), because I still have the Certificate of Merit I received for coming first in Formal English and Composition (I received others, but that's the only one I still have). Those of us receiving books were able to choose them at Ell's Bookstore in downtown Newcastle and they were then paid for by the school and presented to us on Speech Day. I received a book for being Dux (1st in 6th Class). Brian McCarthy received an engraved pen as a Citizenship Prize. I had also received prize books for being first in 4th Class and first in 5th Class in previous years. The book I received for being dux of 5th Class was on Nature. I left it in our house in Lambton when we moved to America, and my nephew Michael Thompson found it and used it while he was in school. My sister Marvia gave it back to me many years later, after it had completed its usefulness for the second time.



HAMILTON
PUBLIC SCHOOL

Certificate of Merit

AWARDED TO Trevor Sorensen
GRADE 6 6A Boys'
YEAR 1963.
First place in Formal English and Composition

For another special event in July 1963 that was also held in the RSL Hall, I was up on the stage with the faculty, dignitaries, and also the Girls' School Captain. This event was being covered by the local television station (NBN Channel 3). When I was sitting on my chair on the stage I got reprimanded by one of the teachers because I was talking to one of my friends down in the audience while we were waiting for the ceremonies to begin. I had to give a speech, for which I was very nervous, but it went well and I received many compliments afterwards.

I also had to represent the school at other events, such as British Commonwealth Day (24th May) where I was the MC for the ceremony, which was also on the TV news. I also read a poem at the Anzac Day memorial service.

It was during 6th Class that we all took an I.Q. test given by the Department of Education. The results of this test were used to help them decide to which high school we would be assigned. We were not told the results of the test, but our parents were. My parents would not tell me, but said it was high. Many years later I was told by my mother and confirmed by my sisters (who were told at the time) that my I.Q. was measured at 144. This result,

along with my grades in 6th Class (where I was dux) ensured that I was placed in the top class (1A) of the top high school (Newcastle Boys' High) in the Newcastle area.

In 2016 I had re-established contact with Mr. Dodds, who was in his 80's, through a friend I had met in 2015 and was also a HPS pupil before me. I sent Mr. Dodds a copy of these Primary School memoirs in late 2016 and was told he enjoyed reading them. I did not visit him when I was there in late 2016 because I did not know his health and did not want to impose myself. Unfortunately, he passed away in early 2017.

Hamilton Primary School 6th Class – 1963.

Boys accepted by Newcastle Boys' High School are circled and printed in red.

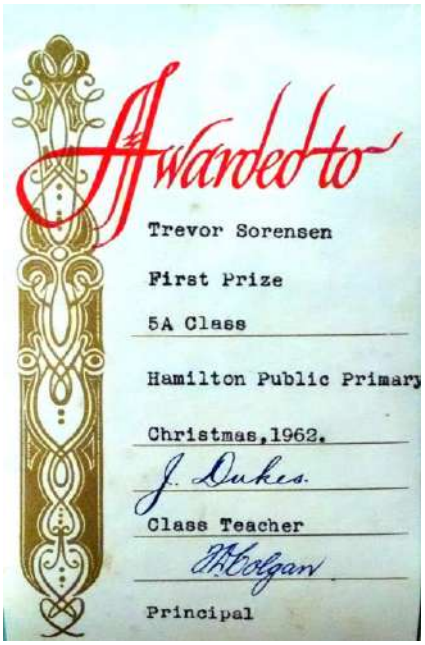
Back Row: Tom Lawrie,Paul Mitten, Glenn Brookes, Paul Manning?, Paul Edden, Chris Greaves, Vladamir "Mickey" Pavlovic, Trevor Sorensen, unknown,, unknown

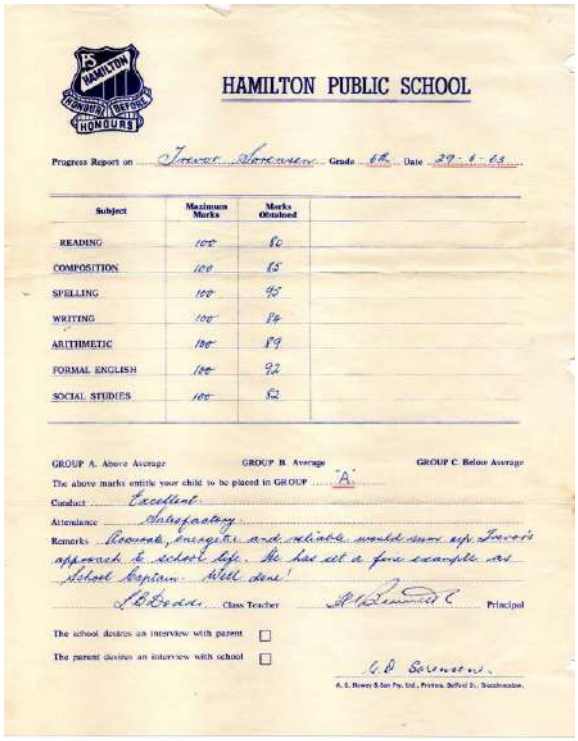
3rd Row: Greg Lane, Douglas Bennett, Daryl Hughes, Martin Troke, unknown, Geoff Clinton, unknown, Phillip Graham, John Hodgson, Kevin Sylvester?, Lester Groves?

2nd Row: Douglas E. Bennett, Colin Hull?, Terry Smith, Karl Toohey, unknown, Carl Martin/Leopold?, David Hale, Paul Hazelford, Glenn Faulds, Kris Sazdanoff

1st Row: Terry Haywood, unknown, unknown, Brian McCarthy, Thomas Wilson, Geoff Williams/Phillip Rothman?, unknown, Martin Rothwell/Colin?

NOTE: Where there is a "?" the identity given is uncertain – if there is a discrepancy between identifications, both are noted separated by a "/"


Awarded to
Trevor Sorensen
First Prize
5A Class
Hamilton Public Primary
Christmas, 1962.
J. Dukes.
Class Teacher
J.R. Colgan
Principal


HAMILTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

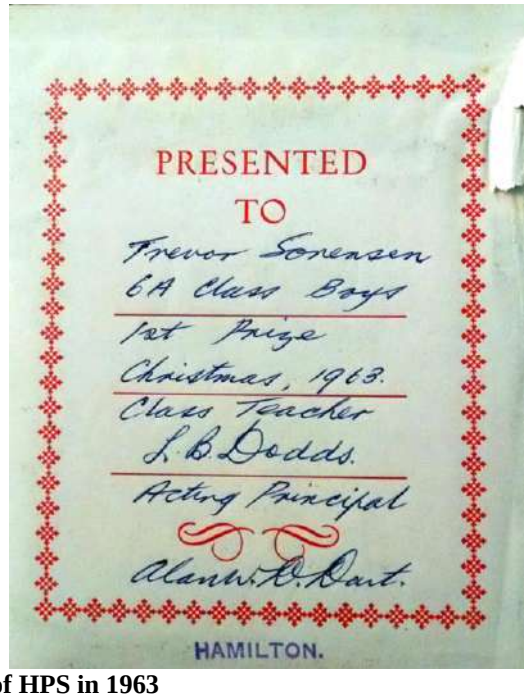
Progress Report on Trevor Sorensen Grade 6A Date 29-6-63

Subject	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
READING	100	80
COMPOSITION	100	65
SPELLING	100	95
WRITING	100	84
ARITHMETIC	100	89
FORMAL ENGLISH	100	92
SOCIAL STUDIES	100	82

GROUP A. Above Average GROUP B. Average GROUP C. Below Average
The above marks entitle your child to be placed in GROUP "A"
Conduct Excellent
Attendance Satisfactory
Remarks Reserved, energetic and reliable would sum up Trevor's approach to school life. He has set a fine example as School Captain. Well done!
L.B. Dodds Class Teacher A.J. Lemmon Principal
The school desires an interview with parent ☐
The parent desires an interview with school ☐
G.D. Sorensen

My half-yearly report card for 6th Class. Note new format.

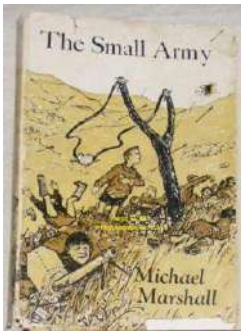
WARD LOCK'S
JUNIOR
PICTORIAL
ENCYCLOPAEDIA
OF
SCIENCE


PRESENTED
TO
Trevor Sorensen
6A Class Boys
1st Prize
Christmas, 1963.
Class Teacher
L.B. Dodds.
Acting Principal
Alan W.L. Dart.
HAMILTON.

Prize for Dux of HPS in 1963

The Small Army

While in primary school I borrowed a book,[1] *The Small Army* by Michael Marshall, from the library. It was a non-fictional account of a group of boys from the Channel Island of Guernsey evacuated to England during World War II who built their own weapons to resist an anticipated invasion by the Germans (of course, which never happened, although Guernsey was occupied by the Germans after the boys were evacuated). I was fascinated with the variety of weapons they made, such as hand grenades, small cannons/guns, rocket launcher, etc., and even an armoured car using bicycle parts. Of course it was a good thing they were never faced an actual invasion. The only casualties the Germans would have suffered would have been from falling over from laughing so hard. Anyway, being immortal pre-teenage boys, we decided to have our own little war using weapons we made like those in the book. My friends and I divided into two groups and started building the weapons. We managed to build and test several, some of which I'll describe, but fortunately we never finished all our weapons and thus never had our "war". Based on the lethality of some of the weapons, it's a good thing.



One of the first weapons we made was a rocket launcher (bazooka). We took a metal pipe about two inches in diameter and about two feet long. We then made a plywood shield through which the pipe fit. Near the top left of the shield was a hole for viewing. This was the blast shield for the rocket launcher. We test fired it using a large skyrocket. I held the launcher on my shoulder and my friend lit the fuse of the skyrocket and shoved it nose first into the back of the tube. When the rocket ignited it blasted out of the tube and went about 20 or 30 feet before hitting and then running along the ground. It was then that we discovered the effect of gravity acting on a missile fired horizontally (a valuable physics lesson for later in my academic career). The best part of the test was that after the rocket had gone about 100 feet, it exploded into its fireworks pattern, which would have been spectacular if it occurred in the midst of our opponents.

Another weapon we made and tested was a hand grenade. We took an empty plastic detergent bottle and filled it mostly full of small stones. We place a large firecracker ("Penny Bunger") in the top of the bottle and while I held it, my friend lit the fuse. We did this on Percy Street, which ran alongside my house and past the back of the Australian Army facility ("drill hall"). We were standing next to the large wooden fence of the Army facility. After my friend lit the fuse, I threw the bottle over the fence into the facility grounds. There was then a satisfying BANG followed by the sound of the stones hitting the wooden fence. Luckily the explosion was weak enough that it did not damage or penetrate the fence. The test was a complete success! Fortunately the Army facility was unoccupied at the time. It was mainly used by the Citizen Military Forces[2] (CMF) or Army Reserve mostly on weekends and an occasional evening.

We also built an armoured car, which was really just a large go-cart made of plywood and with tricycle wheels. The last thing I remember making was a fort made of wood in my backyard.

[1] In 2015 I located copies of this 1957 book available from English booksellers, but with a price of >$150.
[2] Equivalent of the American Army National Guard.

As I stated, we intended to have a fun battle between the two sides of my friends once we had enough weapons built, but luckily we started high school and I moved from Hamilton to Lambton before the war could start. However, we did have fun making and testing the weapons, culminated by firing our rocket launcher against the fort.

Soccer (1963-1964)

By far the most popular winter sport in Newcastle in those days was rugby league. Less popular were the other forms of football: rugby union (second most popular), soccer, and Australian Rules Football. Rugby league was also very big at Hamilton Primary School and most of the boys played. We learned how to play it during physical education periods (usually held in Gregson Park). I really enjoyed rugby league, but my parents would not let me play it competitively because they were afraid of my being injured, especially because I seemed to be clumsy and injury prone. However, I was allowed to play soccer. Although our school had a varsity rugby league team, they did not have a varsity soccer team. Some of my friends, including Tom Lawrie and Brian McCarthy, were members of the Hamilton North Junior Soccer Club, and so in 1963 I joined and played a couple seasons. Tom's father, a teacher at another school, was our coach. The club colours were pink and green. Our uniform consisted of white shorts, a pink shirt with a diagonal green stripe, black number on the back, and pink and green striped long socks. It was hideous! We used to joke that half our goals were scored because our uniform sickened our opponents, who had to look away as we approached with the ball.

HNJSC U/11 Team – 1962
Taken just before I joined the team. The uniforms and most players were the same. Tom Lawrie is to the right of the goalkeeper holding the ball

I had the number "6" and usually played Left Halfback, although sometimes I would also play Left Fullback (defender). The soccer balls in those days were just brown leather – they had not introduced the black and white or coloured balls yet, at least at the school level. Our home field was Richardson Park (see earlier figure), where we also held our practice a couple times a week after school. One day before practice I was playing around in the canal that ran next to the park and as I climbed up out of it, I reached

Canal where I cut my finger

with my right hand to grasp the ground above me. I sliced the outside of my right pinkie finger on a piece of broken bottle. It bled a lot (although I did not get any medical help and thus no stitches). I still have the scar although it has faded with time.

At half-time we had oranges to eat and there was also water to drink. I do not remember any of my family watching my games, but my parents probably did watch them when they could. Usually, though, I would ride my bike over to Richardson Park where we either played or got a ride to the opponent's field. The team won the U/11 5th Division in 1962 (before I joined the team) and was promoted to 1st Division in 1963, when I played. We did not fare as well while I was on the team. I also played in 1964 until after we moved to Lambton, when it was just too far to go to practice and games. I still have a pennant, a small trophy (U/12), and a cup (U/13) that I was presented with by the club. We had our final awards ceremony and party in the recreation hall in Smith Park, Broadmeadow.

Participation Cup - HNJSC, 1964

Biking, Movies, and Miscellanea

Shortly after we arrived in Hamilton my parents bought me a used bicycle ("push bike") with up-turned handlebars, pedal brakes (no gears), and a battery-powered light (lantern). It was okay to not have gears while I lived in Hamilton because the area was flat with no hills and few overpasses (I only remember one at the Broadmeadow Railway Station where Lambton Road crossed over the train tracks, which I avoided anyway because of the traffic). Once we moved to Lambton, where our house was on top of a hill, I regretted the lack of gears. Also, having pedal brakes instead of hand brakes was almost the death of me after we moved to Lambton as I relate in the High School chapter. But that is jumping ahead. I loved riding the bike both alone and with my friends all around Hamilton and Broadmeadow. Although I used to walk to school because it was so close, I used to ride my bike to the parks, where we held our cricket and soccer practices and games, and to my friends' houses. After I started high school, I also rode my bike with Glenn Faulds to Boys' High in Waratah, which was about 2-3 miles away.

Century Theatre at Nineways, Broadmeadow – 1961. Note next to Milk Bar at left is a fruit/veggie stand and next to it around the corner was the pie cart. At the far right is a telephone booth. [NMH]

One day John Hodgson and I were riding our bikes in Broadmeadow and came to a park where we saw a man who was throwing boomerangs. They were not just the standard curved boomerangs, but boomerangs with different shapes, like "X" and "Y". He was an expert and no matter which boomerang he threw or how hard, it would come right back to his hand. We were fascinated and watched for a while, then eventually spoke with him. It

turns out that he made all the boomerangs himself. It was a hobby for him, but I believe he also sold some.

I did have a close shave on the bike while living in Hamilton. One day I was turning from the road running parallel to the railway tracks onto Lindsay Street headed to Tom Lawrie's house (the intersection near the "RR Tracks" label near the upper left corner of the image showing the area in Hamilton where I lived). I was coming too fast around the corner and came very close to being hit by a car coming down Lindsay Street towards the tracks. They had to brake heavily while I swerved and nearly fell off my bike. Of course they blew their horn and yelled at me. I thanked the Lord for my survival.

One of my favourite activities while living in Hamilton was to go to the cinema. A few blocks from where I lived was a large intersection in Broadmeadow called the "Nine Ways" because nine different streets intersected there. Located at the Nine Ways was a large movie theatre called the Century Theatre. Different seating in the theatre had different ticket prices. In 1963, moving from the screen back, the Front Stalls were 3/6, the Back Stalls were 4/6, the Dress Circle (front balcony) was 5/6, and the Lounge (back balcony) was 6/6. Several of my friends, including all of the ones I listed earlier as my friends, used to go there almost every Saturday afternoon to watch the matinee. The cost of admission I believe was 1/6 (one shilling and sixpence or equivalent to about 15c) for all seating. The movies we saw were fairly recent and they often would have a double feature. Whether one film or two, they were always preceded by cartoons and a newsreel. I saw there such great films such as *Swiss Family Robinson, Under Ten Flags, The 300 Spartans, Mysterious Island, Mister Roberts, Sink the Bismarck,* etc [1] . At Intermission[2] we would usually go outside to a small shop next to the theatre and buy ice blocks. These were six-inch long blocks of flavoured (orange, grape, cherry, etc.) ice in a wax-paper bag that cost two-pence (2d or two pennies) although I think they raised the price to threepence (3d) later on. We would then suck on these ice blocks after intermission – it would usually last through most of the second half or second movie, whichever the case may be. Occasionally if I had more money or at movies in other theatres, I would buy a drink, popcorn, or a choc-top ice cream (this was a large ice cream cone containing a scoop of hard vanilla ice cream coated with hard chocolate). The theatres used to have workers with a tray of drinks, choc-tops, popcorn, or lollies walk through the theatre while the movie was playing, so that you could buy something without missing any of the movie. Some boys would throw the tops of the orange drinks like Frisbees through the light from the projector,

Choc-top Ice Cream Cone

Australian Coca-Cola Yo-yo

[1] I kept a record of every movie that I saw from 1960 until 1980. This list is in the Appendices.

[2] Long films in those days all had intermissions, or the intermission would be between the films of a double feature.

which brought an angry usher to tell them to stop or be thrown out. The theatre used to have a raffle at intermission and the prizes consisted of refreshments or a ticket for the next week. They also had intermission shows like the Coca-Cola yo-yo demonstration team. Speaking of yo-yos, that was a craze that occurred while I was in primary school, every kid had to have a yo-yo and do tricks with them (like "Walk the Dog" and "Around the World"). The best yo-yos were the Coca-Cola ones, which cost more, but worth it. I had one, but left it behind in Australia in 1969.

One of my favourite events each year was at the Newcastle Show held at the Newcastle Showgrounds in Broadmeadow north of the train tracks near my house in Hamilton. I used to go there with several of my schoolmates or sometimes with one or both sisters. We would go on the rides, like the Octopus, Ferris Wheel, Bump'em Cars, roller coaster, etc. I also would buy lots of lollies (candy) which I would take home with me, the contents of which would last me for weeks (or at least days). Of course in those days I was skinny, very active, and growing, so was able to eat large quantities of sugary things (including lollies, ice cream, cream buns, vanilla slices, etc.) with no ill effects other than cavities in my teeth.

On 12th November, 1963 just as I was finishing primary school, an F-86 Sabre fighter jet of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) crashed into a house in Waratah, not too far from Newcastle Boys' High School. The pilot lost power and could not reach a runway or the ocean and bailed out safely (I don't think he was injured). His jet then plummeted down and crashed into the rear of a house owned by an elderly widow. Fortunately, she had just left through the front of the house to go to a neighbour's house for a cup of tea when the jet crashed into her house, which was demolished. I believe she was knocked down and suffered some bruises and scrapes, but was basically uninjured. There was another crash of an RAAF jet while I was in primary school – it crashed into houses on Glebe Road, The Junction. I don't remember the details of that one.

RAAF Sabre Fighter Jet

Epilogue

After I started high school in 1964, I never returned to Hamilton Primary School. I never went back and visited my former teachers – I had moved on to a new part of my life and did not look back. It also did not help that in 1964 we moved several miles away to Lambton. I now regret that I did not go back and visit. I'm sure the teachers would have liked to see me again (at least I hope). After completing the Higher School Certificate in 1969, I moved to America to attend university. By the time I returned at the end of 1975, my old school was no more. To quote from Doug Saxon's book:

At the end of 1973 the Girls' High School students were transferred to the new High School in Lambton and the old primary building became vacant and the primary students moved to the former Girls' High building. The portable wooden classrooms in the playground were removed. In 1974 it had been planned to convert half the wing [the 1900 building] into a library and demolish the other half. Before this could be done the school was attacked by an arsonist who caused considerable damage. Consequently the entire building was demolished and the site cleared.

From the Newcastle Sun, December 1974:

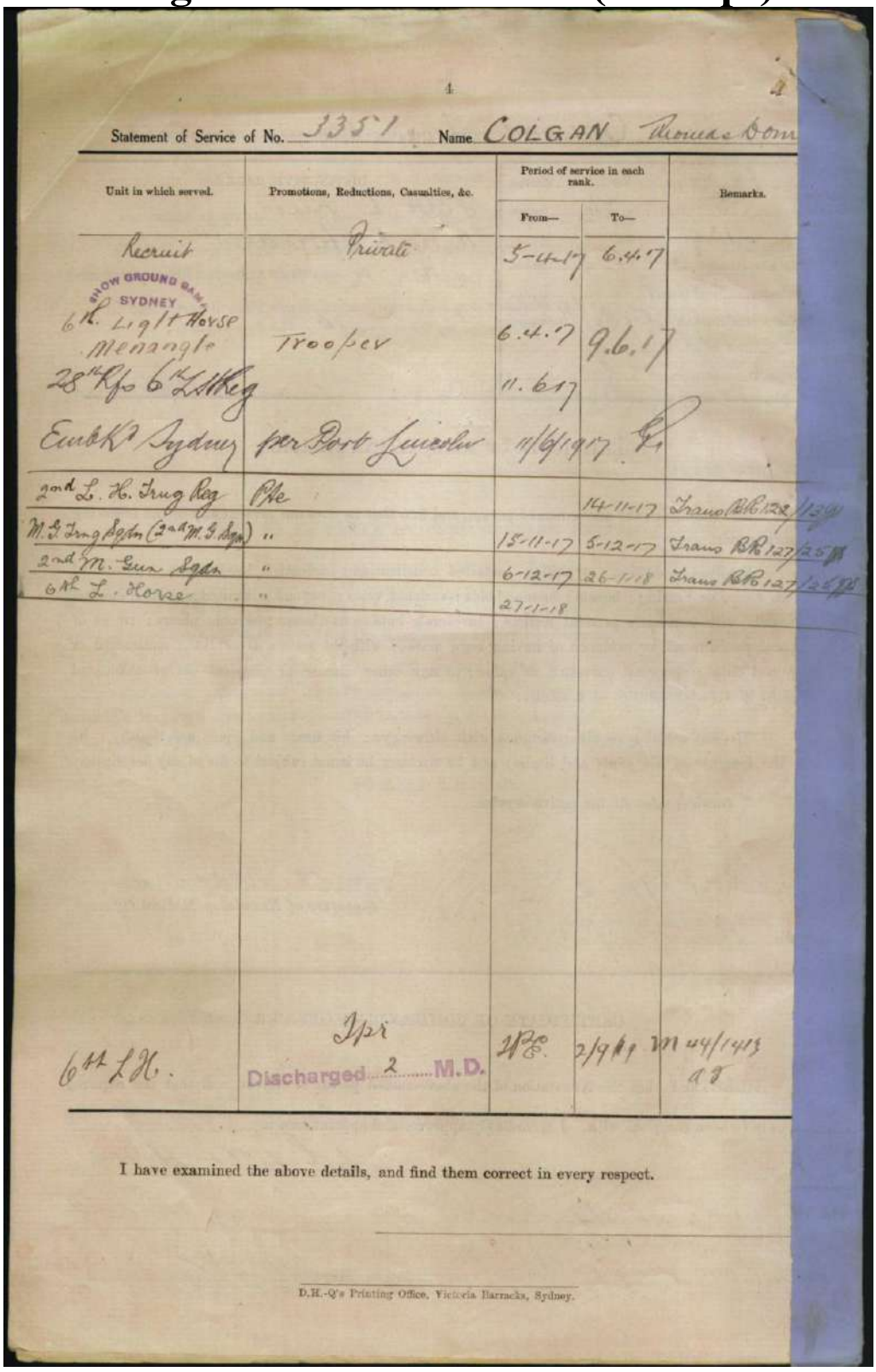
'A detective told Newcastle District Court today that a man set fire to two buildings after he broke into them and could find nothing suitable to steal. The court was told that Robin Mark Perrin, 29, labourer of Carrington had previous convictions for arson, attempted arson and deliberately lighting a bushfire. Perrin pleaded guilty to charges of having set fire to the offices of Islington Baptist Church between October 20 and 24 and having maliciously set fire to Hamilton Public School, Tudor Street, on October 28. Detective-Sgt Goldman said that Perrin went to the grounds of the school in Hamilton on the night of October 28 to break in and steal property. After gaining entry through an unlocked window he searched for property to steal and was unable to find anything suitable. He then set fire to papers in a room and left the school. He said damage was estimated at $32300. Judge Melville remanded Perrin to Darlinghurst Criminal Court on January 31 and ordered that he remain in custody.'

Finally, during my trip back to Australia at the end of July 2015, I visited Hamilton Public School, gave a talk to some of the 6th Year students, and had a tour of the facility. It was sad that nothing remained of the old Hamilton Primary School.

Appendix A
Glossary: Australian – American Translations

Australian	American
bonnet (car)	hood
boot (car)	trunk
bubbler	drinking or water fountain
budgerigar/budgie	parakeet
bush	forest/scrub land
chips	French Fries
dinner	main meal of the day
fag	cigarette
footpath	sidewalk
full stop	period (punctuation)
jumper	sweater
lift	elevator
lolly/lollies	candy
lounge room	living room
manual (car gearbox)	standard (car transmission)
nappy	diaper
potato crisps	potato chips
rubber	eraser
serviette	napkin
shout	treat
skite	brag
supper	evening snack
sweets	dessert; candy
swimmers	swimming trunks; swimsuit
tea	dinner (evening meal)
torch	flashlight
tucker	food
tuck shop	canteen
waddy	stick, cane
windscreen	windshield

Appendix B
Colgan's Service Record (Excerpt)



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Statement of Service of No. 3351 Name COLGAN Thomas Dom

Unit in which served.	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Period of service in each rank. From—	To—	Remarks.
Recruit	Private	5-4-17	6.4.17	
SHOW GROUND GAMES SYDNEY				
6th Light Horse Menangle	Trooper	6.4.17	9.6.17	
28th Rfs 6th L Stk Reg		11.6.17		
Embk Sydney	per Port Lincoln	11/6/1917		
2nd L. H. Trng Reg	Pte		14-11-17	Trans BR 122/1391
M.G. Trng Sqdn (2nd M.G. Sqdn)	"	15-11-17	5-12-17	Trans BR 127/25
2nd M. Gun Sqdn	"	6-12-17	26-1-18	Trans BR 127/25
6th L. Horse	"	27-1-18		
6th L.H.	Ipr Discharged 2 M.D.	2 P.E.	2/9/19	M 44/1413

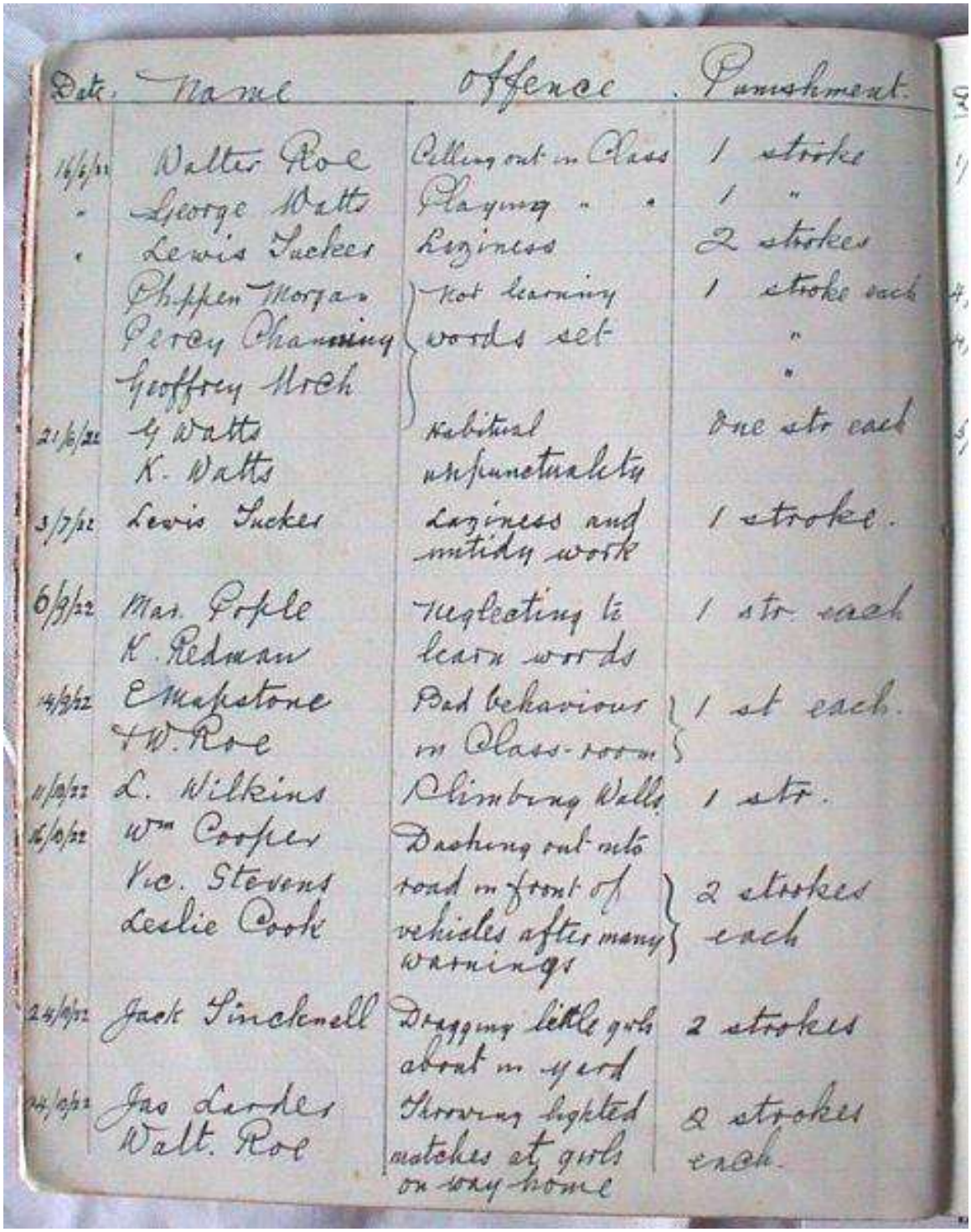
I have examined the above details, and find them correct in every respect.

D.H.-Q's Printing Office, Victoria Barracks, Sydney.

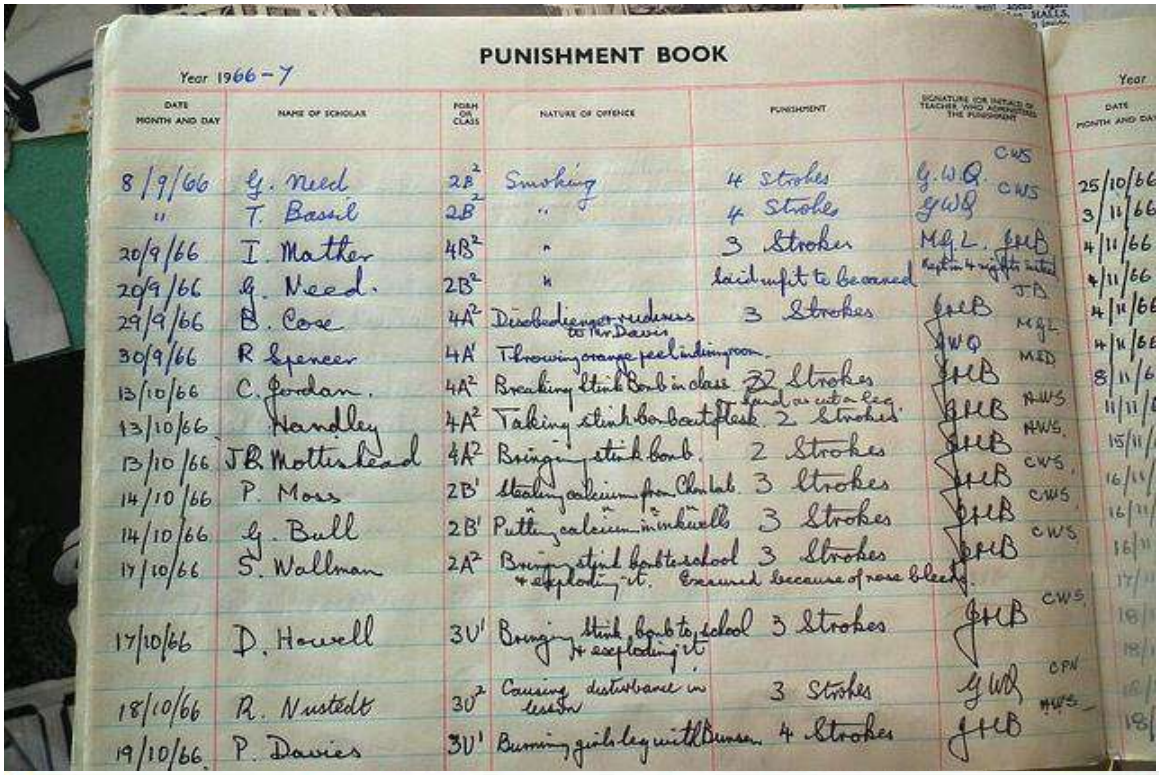
Appendix C
Movies I Saw While in Primary School

TITLE	COMMENTS
1960	
Bridge on the River Kwai (1957)	
Swiss Family Robinson	
The Alamo	
Sink the Bismarck	
Pepe	
G.I. Blues	
1961	
Under Ten Flags (1960)	
Mister Roberts (1955)	
Barabas	
The Guns of Navarone	Saw with Dad
All Hands on Deck	Saw with Dad
El Cid	
Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea	
The Parent Trap	
Mysterious Island	
The Absent-Minded Professor	
101 Dalmations	
Blue Hawaii	
1962	
Lawrence of Arabia	
Hatari	
Three Stooges in Orbit	
Zotz!	
The 300 Spartans	
Five Weeks in a Balloon	
1963	
The Great Escape	
55 Days at Peking	
Cleopatra	
It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World	
Bikini Beach	
Lord of the Flies	
Summer Magic	
The Sword in the Stone	
Kings of the Sun	
Summer Holiday	
PT 109	Saw the day after President Kennedy was assassinated
Jason and the Argonauts	

Appendix D
Examples of School Punishment Books (Not HPS)



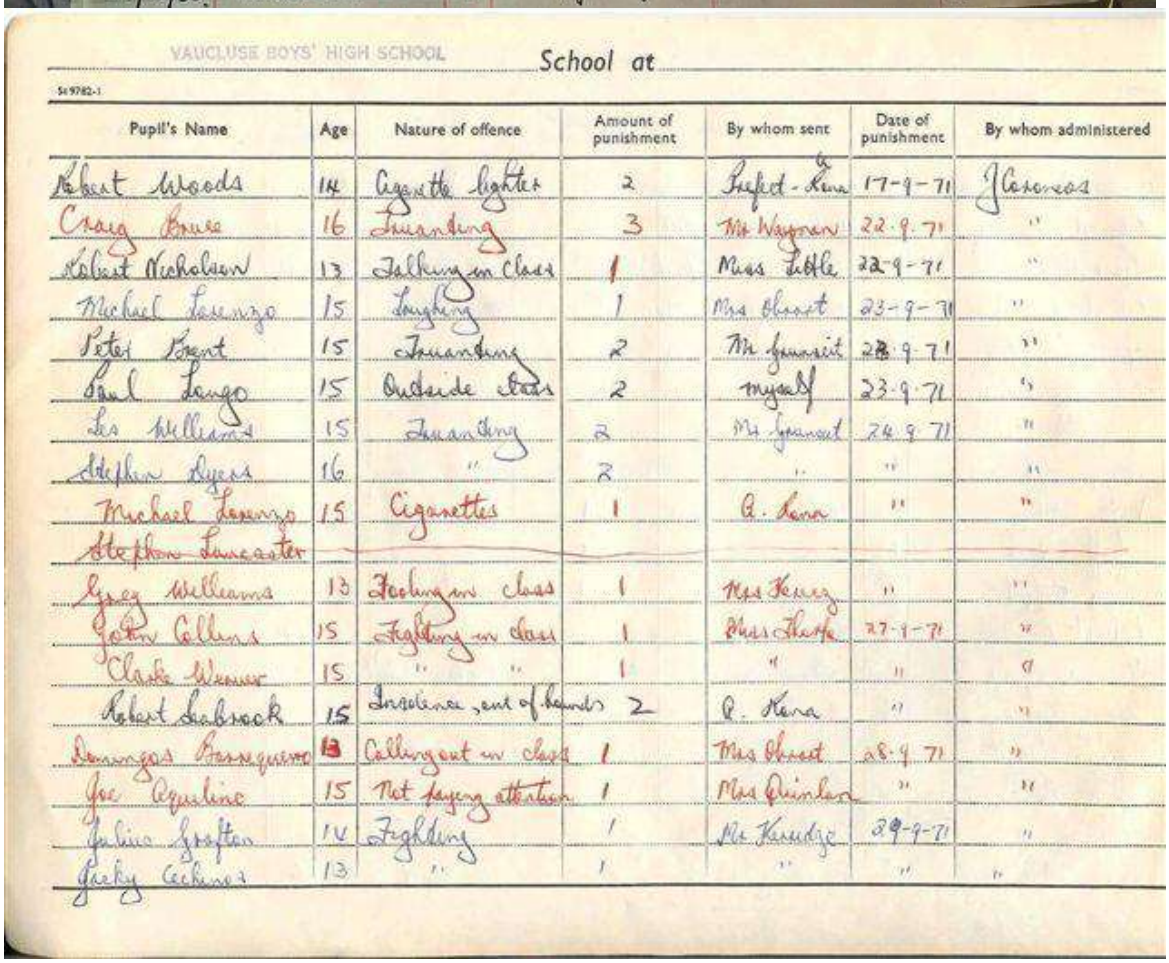
Date.	Name	Offence	Punishment.
16/6/22	Walter Roe	Calling out in Class	1 stroke
"	George Watts	Playing " "	1 "
"	Lewis Tucker	Laziness	2 strokes
	Phippen Morgan	Not learning words set	1 stroke each
	Percy Channing		"
	Geoffrey Mock		"
21/6/22	G Watts	Habitual unpunctuality	One str each
	K. Watts		
3/7/22	Lewis Tucker	Laziness and untidy work	1 stroke.
6/7/22	Mas. Popple	Neglecting to learn words	1 str. each
	K. Redman		
14/7/22	C Mapstone	Bad behaviour in Class-room	1 st each.
	W. Roe		
11/9/22	L. Wilkins	Climbing Walls	1 str.
6/9/22	Wm Cooper	Dashing out into road in front of vehicles after many warnings	2 strokes each
	Vic. Stevens		
	Leslie Cook		
24/9/22	Jack Sinclnell	Dragging little girls about in yard	2 strokes
28/9/22	Jas Leeks	Throwing lighted matches at girls on way home	2 strokes each.
	Walt. Roe		



PUNISHMENT BOOK

Year 1966 – 7

DATE MONTH AND DAY	NAME OF SCHOLAR	FORM OR CLASS	NATURE OF OFFENCE	PUNISHMENT	SIGNATURE (OR INITIALS) OF TEACHER WHO ADMINISTERS THE PUNISHMENT	DATE MONTH AND DAY
8/9/66	G. Need	2B²	Smoking	4 Strokes	G.W.Q. CWS	25/10/66
"	T. Bassil	2B²	"	4 Strokes	GWQ CWS	3/11/66
20/9/66	I. Mather	4B²	"	3 Strokes	MGL. JHB	4/11/66
20/9/66	G. Need.	2B²	"	Said unfit to be caned	Kept in 4 nights instead JB	4/11/66
29/9/66	B. Cose	4A²	Disobedience & rudeness to Mr Davis	3 Strokes	JHB MGL	4/11/66
30/9/66	R Spencer	4A¹	Throwing orange peel in dining room.		GWQ MED	4/11/66
13/10/66	C. Jordan.	4A²	Breaking stink bomb in class	2 Strokes	JHB	8/11/6
13/10/66	Handley	4A²	Taking stink bomb out of flask	Sand as cut on leg. 2 Strokes	JHB HWS	11/11/
13/10/66	J.B. Mottishead	4A²	Bringing stink bomb.	2 Strokes	JHB HWS.	15/11/
14/10/66	P. Moss	2B¹	Stealing calcium from Chem lab.	3 Strokes	JHB CWS.	16/11/
14/10/66	G. Bull	2B¹	Putting calcium in inkwells	3 Strokes	JHB CWS.	16/11/
17/10/66	S. Wallman	2A²	Bringing stink bomb to school & exploding it.	3 Strokes Excused because of nose bleeds.	JHB CWS	16/11
17/10/66	D. Howell	3U¹	Bringing stink bomb to school & exploding it	3 Strokes	JHB CWS.	17/11
18/10/66	R. Nustedt	3U²	Causing disturbance in lesson	3 Strokes	GWQ CPN	18/
19/10/66	P. Davies	3U¹	Burning girls leg with Bunsen	4 Strokes	JHB HWS	18/



VAUCLUSE BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL School at

S1 9782-1

Pupil's Name	Age	Nature of offence	Amount of punishment	By whom sent	Date of punishment	By whom administered
Robert Woods	14	Cigarette lighter	2	Prefect - Q. Rona	17-9-71	J Coroneos
Craig Bruce	16	Truanting	3	Mr Waynan	22.9.71	"
Robert Nicholson	13	Talking in Class	1	Miss Little	22-9-71	"
Michael Lorenzo	15	Laughing	1	Mrs Obrart	23-9-71	"
Peter Brent	15	Truanting	2	Mr Grunseit	23.9.71	"
Paul Longo	15	Outside class	2	myself	23.9.71	"
Les Williams	15	Truanting	2	Mr Grunseit	24.9.71	"
Stephen Dyers	16	"	2	"	"	"
Michael Lorenzo	15	Cigarettes	1	Q. Rona	"	"
Stephen Lancaster						
Greg Williams	13	Fooling in class	1	Mrs Kerez	"	"
John Collins	15	Fighting in class	1	Miss Thorpe	27-9-71	"
Clarke Weaver	15	" "	1	"	"	"
Robert Seabrook	15	Insolence, out of hands	2	Q. Rona	"	"
Domingos Barrequero	13	Calling out in class	1	Mrs Obrart	28.9.71	"
Joe Aquilino	15	Not paying attention	1	Mrs Quinlan	"	"
Julius Grafton	14	Fighting	1	Mr Kerridge	29-9-71	"
Jacky Cechinos	13	"	1	"	"	"