

From the Archives

At Speech Night, November 2005, the Principal announced that the School would undertake the refurbishment of the School swimming pool. It is anticipated that this refurbishment will cost approximately \$500,000.

The concept of a pool at Grammar was first initiated by Maurie Blank, Headmaster from 1948 to 1965. Supported by the Board of Trustees Mr Blank resurrected, in 1960, the School Public War Memorial Building Fund. This Fund, which had been in place from 1946 to 1948, had raised sufficient money to develop the three existing School ovals and build the War Memorial Gates. The idea of building a pool at Grammar at that time was a courageous one as the School finances were in a precarious state. There was also very little financial support from governments during that period.

The first meeting of the Pool Committee took place on 29 June, 1960 and it was decided to build a pool 82 feet, 6 inches by 36 feet and ranging in depth from 3 feet, 6 inches to 8 feet, 3 inches. The estimated cost was £5000 for the pool and £500 each for a fence and changing rooms and toilets. It was felt at the time that the entire cost would be £10000 and it was hoped that a government subsidy would lower the amount to be raised to £8000.

Fund raising started in earnest in 1961 and was undertaken by various School bodies ranging from a Ladies' Committee and Past Grammarians to the students themselves. By the end of 1961 £1925 had been collected, most of the money raised coming from a street stall, Melbourne Cup Party, the Tuck Shop and a play night undertaken by the students. The enthusiasm displayed by the various interested parties set the tone for the next few years and when the pool was officially opened on April 23, 1966 the entire project was free of debt. As a result of the monies raised the original pool length was doubled in length to 50 metres and the concrete stands on the side added to the project.

The final cost of the project was just over £16,000 with the money derived from a variety of sources. Most of the money came from the Ladies' Committee, the Parents' Association, donations from teachers and the students who raised £916 through a bottle drive. The Trustees of the J.S. Love Estate presented £4000 and F.H. Brazier, Deputy Chairman of the School Trustees, who was responsible for the specifications and supervision of the project, donated his entire fee back to the project. The State Government provided a subsidy to cover the gap in costs. In many respects, it was a wonderful team effort that gave the School a worthwhile asset.

Further work was done at the pool with the arrival of Headmaster Alan Morwood in 1976. His first project was to provide the roofing over the seating and to build the shed that still stands next to the pool. In June 1985 the Trustees agreed to spend \$32,400 to re-tile the pool. The old dressing room/toilet block was dismantled in 1988 and the Centenary Gymnasium built adjacent to the pool provided up-to-date changing facilities.

The refurbishment of the pool in 2006 is the next step in up-grading what has been a great asset to the School. The fund-raising venture initiated in 1960 proved so successful that the Trustees and the then Headmaster, Mr Len Daniels, decided to introduce Project Phoenix in 1968. This Project will be discussed in a future From the Archives issue.

Notes:

The J.S. Love Estate had no connection to the Grammar School. It was a fund administered by a local firm of Accountants and money was donated to worthwhile projects in the Townsville area. The £4000 donated was most generous. A plaque recognizing the generous donation is attached to the Centenary Gymnasium.

It is interesting to note that when the pool was first planned it was to be 82 feet, 6 inches in length. Mr Blank must have been aware at that time that distances in Australia would soon be in metres as the then proposed length is just over 25 metres.

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