

FROM THE ARCHIVES

By the time this Newsletter is received many in the School community will have seen the latest School production "*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*." Although I write this archival report well before the Production, I am confident that the 2007 musical will be a success and rival the excellent musicals Grammar has presented since the early 1980's.

There has always been a tradition of theatre at the Grammar School. In the post World War Two period leading to the early 1980's, School productions consisted of concert evenings usually combining musical pieces and short plays. During the first fifty years of Grammar's existence (1888 to 1938) theatre was also an integral part of School life but the productions were usually excerpts from plays written either by Shakespeare, Marlowe or Moliere and they were usually presented as part of the Speech Day activities. Headmaster P.F. Rowland was particularly keen on this form of entertainment.

While I can find no evidence that the School presented a musical in those early years it can be confidently asserted that music was an important part of School life. A study of some of the time-tables still in existence shows that the entire School community was time-tabled for Music last lesson on a Friday. These sessions were usually led by the Headmaster and consisted of singing School songs usually written by either members of the staff or one of the students. There is no evidence to show that there was a teaching of Instrumental Music during that Friday period.

Hodges, Miller and Rowland, our first three Headmasters, were educated either at Oxford or Cambridge University and then taught at some of the more elite private schools in England. They also taught at a time when schoolmasters were encouraged to travel to the colonies and to spread the British way of life. Part of this ethos was that students at independent schools were a cut above the rest and were expected to become leaders in society. Part of this education process is reflected in the songs the students were taught. Townsville Grammar was no exception and a study of the songs sung at the Friday afternoon Music session is a good example of this process.

Numerous examples of the type of song sung can be used but the following examples may be suffice to show the reader the underlying philosophy behind the Music classes. In Rowland's song *The Grammar School For Ever* written during World War One he encourages the students by writing:

"So here's hurrah for the T.G.S.
Its life no war can sever
As long as we sing God Save the King
And the Grammar School for ever!"

And in *Play The Game* the students sing:

"Play life's hardships straight and well,
When the soft temptations come
Smite them hard and hit them home;
Play the game!"

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