

From the Archives

On the weekend of 11-13 August the School will be celebrating the **Grammar At Home Weekend**. On the Friday evening the School will host the Black and Gold Ball and on the Saturday the Past Grammarians' Association will celebrate their annual Reunion Dinner. There will also be tours of the School on that day and a variety of sporting fixtures. It is perhaps opportune in this archival report to write something about the history of Past Grammarian Associations.

The **Old Boys' Union** was constituted on 23 November, 1901 under the guidance of the then Headmaster, F.T. Miller. Mr Miller was inspired to form the group when the senior boy in that year, A.C. Fewtrell, speaking at the House Supper reminded those present that, "though year by year the ranks of the old boys grow larger, still not many of them are able to be present as could be wished, their avocations in the world taking them from Townsville, some to business centres, some to South Africa to fight the battle of the Empire." It is interesting to note that Fewtrell became one of our most prominent past students rising to the rank of the Lieutenant Colonel in the legendary World War One Mining Corps and winning a DSO and OBE [Military] for his bravery.

The Old Boys' Union became a prominent body in town and formed their own club in a house in Sturt Street. The club included a billiard room and all the comforts associated with a prominent body. The Old Boys dominated the local cricket competition winning the premiership on a regular basis. "Old Girls" were allowed to join but were not prominent in the body. In 1912 the Headmaster, P.F. Rowland, decided to form a separate body to be called the **Old Girls' Union**. Under the leadership of the second girl student enrolled at the School, Letitia Crowder, the union formed with forty-eight members.

Both associations folded during the First World War and were not revived until 1926. The cricket team was once again resurrected and played in the Saturday competition until the outbreak of World War Two. The team never achieved the same success as before World War One. The two associations functioned as separate entities until 1960 when the then Headmaster, Mr Maurie Blank, concerned by the decline of interest in the two associations, called a meeting of former pupils to discuss his concerns. Those present at the meeting decided on an amalgamation and the **Townsville Past Grammarians' Association** was formed. This body is still in existence and now has close to three thousand past students on the database.

The Past Grammarians Associations in one form or another, has been a great supporter of the School. In the period before World War One the Old Boys' Union was the prime mover behind the School magazines sponsoring many of the issues. A reading of these magazines shows that most of the material in the magazines related to the activities of past students. Annual Balls and Dinners were held to raise money for the School. The Old Boys' Union was very generous in their support to the School after Cyclone Leonta. It is interesting to note that the Annual Dinner was always held in the same week as the Townsville Turf Club's Annual meeting. This allowed many past students from the country to attend. The Old Girls' Union was always prominent at School functions and on sports' day. It must be remembered that sports' day at that time was a notable social function in Townsville.

Since 1960 the Past Grammarians' Association has confined its activities largely to an annual reunion and to providing finance for a variety of projects in the School. There is an Old Boys' Rugby Union Club [currently fielding three teams] and a Brisbane group who meet once a year for a social get together. The Association provides monies for a variety of annual academic prizes and in recent years, under the guidance of Mr Fairley, money has been donated for the re-furbishing of the School Honour Boards, a Memorial, situated in the Quadrangle, to Past Grammarians killed in conflict around the world and a new flag pole for the Middle School.

Some snippets from the June 1905 School Magazine suggest that students don't change over the years.

Question: 'What is the commonest compound of chlorine and where is it found?'.

Answer: 'Common salt. It is found on the dinner table.'

Sheep are *bread* in Southern Queensland.

Calcutta is noted for coal – the black coal of Calcutta.

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