

GLADYS ROBERTS & ALAN DODD

On 8 September, 1887 the Department of Public Instruction wrote to the School setting out the regulations that would underpin the running of the School. In the area of curriculum the School was to follow the traditions of the Greater Public Schools of England. This meant that students had to study English, Latin, Greek, French and German with German and Greek being optional in the Upper School. Other subjects for consideration were History, Geography, Bookkeeping, Mathematics, the elements of Natural and Physical Sciences and Drawing. In addition a laboratory had to be provided in which practical chemistry could be taught to advanced students. With subject choices such as the above it is surprising that many of our students from the first twenty-five years of the School's history went on to become renowned doctors and scientists.

Two past students who became renowned for their scientific research and work were **Gladys Roberts [1902-1905]** and **Alan Dodd [1910-1911]**. The Australian Museum in Canberra recently contacted the School about Gladys whose work as an illustrator with the Institute of Tropical Medicine [now the Anton Breinl Centre] was invaluable to the Institute. A curator at the Australian Museum is currently writing a paper on the work of Gladys including the illustrations she drew using the Leitz Wetzlar dissecting light monocular microscope. The dissections Gladys was able to perform, includes investigations into "roundworms in cattle" and "roundworms in humans". Gladys was an artist of considerable skill and her coloured illustrations were invaluable to the Institute of Tropical Medicine when seeking funding and sponsorship. Gladys worked at the Institute from 1910-1930.

In his Speech Day Report of 1905 Mr Rowland, the Headmaster, stated: "It is with sincere regret too, that the School will say goodbye to Miss Gladys Roberts, whose refining influence has only been second to that of Miss Hartley, and whose work showed a freshness and originality that was often lacking in the work of those who beat her in the examinations." Gladys was awarded the Australian History and Geography Prize [second] in 1903 and in 1905 she was awarded the English Essay Prize. In 1905 she played the role of Audrey in Shakespeare's "As You Like it" which led Mr Rowland to report: "Miss Roberts, very successfully got up, gave a clever and amusing sketch... being the great success of the evening." In the same year she played the role of Elise in the French play "L'Avare".



"As You Like It", April 15, 1905
 Left to Right
 Sitting on ground: J.F. Walsh (Corin), L. Uhr (Touchstone), V.R. Wilson (William).
 Back Row: L.C. Abree (Orlando), Miss G. Roberts (Audrey), Miss M. Bates (Celia),
 Miss E. Hartley (Blowhard), F. Kingsford (Jacques).



Alan Parkhurst Dodd was a boarder from Kuranda. He was the third son of the legendary Frederick Dodd who is still known in Australia as the "Butterfly Man of Kuranda". Very little is known about Alan in the two years he spent at Grammar but for the fact that he would roam Castle Hill on weekends looking for insects and butterflies. He left school a month before turning sixteen and started work as an assistant entomologist at the Bureau of Sugar Experimentation at Gordonvale. Within two years he had published, on average, eight papers a year and, in particular, on scelionid wasps. He enlisted in the AIF in 1916 and served as a medical orderly with the 15th Field Ambulance on the Western Front.

After peace was declared in November 1918 Dodd took leave and worked at the British Museum Natural History section for three months. On his return to Australia he went back to Gordonvale to his previous position. In 1921 he joined the Commonwealth Prickly Pear Board and began research into the cactoblastis moth which he hoped would destroy the prickly pear infestation in Queensland. With the aid of researchers in South America he introduced the cactoblastis moth into Queensland with immediate success. By the early 1930s close to sixty-five million acres of prickly pears had been brought under control. In 1939 he published the book *The Biological Campaign against Prickly Pear* and he was awarded an MBE [Member of the British Empire] in recognition of his work.

In 1939 the Prickly Pear Board was wound up and Dodd was appointed the first director of the biological section within the Queensland Lands Department. Dodd retired in 1962 and on his retirement was awarded an OBE [Order of the British Empire]. Retirement enabled Dodd to pursue his familial love of lepidoptera. He undertook many collecting expeditions into New Guinea, among them a sixteen day patrol into wild country that was filmed by Fox-Movietone. On his return to Queensland he would arrange the rarest and most spectacular butterflies in display cases. These displays can be found today, in association with those of his father, at the Queensland Museum.

While the above two past students were successful in the world of scientific research there were other students from the 1890s who were also successful in the world of science and medicine. **William Sprott Boyd [1889-1896]** was a boarder from Ripple Creek in the Herbert River area. After a stellar career at school where he passed the Sydney University Senior Examinations with seven high distinctions he went on to study geology at that university winning the University Medal in science as well as the prestigious Barker Scholarship. This prize, first awarded in 1853, is awarded to the best honours student in Pure or Applied mathematics. Boyd later moved to the United States where he worked as a geologist before becoming the Vice-President of one of the largest mining companies in the world. A generous past student he donated money for annual Speech Day Prizes.

Two past students who did well in the field of medicine were **John McKelvey [1894-1898]** and **Ronald Henderson [1889-1904]**. Henderson, a boarder from the Ingham district, studied medicine in Edinburgh and Dunedin before returning to Australia. He served in World War One being Mentioned in Despatches and he was awarded the Military Cross. He died from wounds received during that conflict. John McKelvey passed the Sydney University Senior Examinations with high distinction before studying medicine in Sydney. He was to become a prominent surgeon as well as lecturing at Sydney University. He was later knighted for his services to medicine. As with Boyd, McKelvey had a great love of the School and also donated a generous amount of money for annual Speech Day Prizes. All of the students mentioned above were to become Dux of the School and to be prize winners at the University of Sydney Junior and Senior Examinations.

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