

FROM THE ARCHIVES

1912

For the final From the Archives each year the main aim is to write about Speech Day and the school year one hundred years ago. Material is usually sourced from the School magazine of the year in question. The task this year has been made difficult because, for the first time since the magazine was first published in 1897, there was no Headmaster's report and very little reporting of events and sporting fixtures at the School.

What is known is that Speech Day took place on the morning of Thursday, 12 December 1912. The Governor of Queensland, Sir William MacGregor, was unable to attend and sent his apologies. While there is no record of the Headmaster's report the magazine does outline the various performances given by students. These performances were a reflection of the nature of the curriculum at that time. The first performance was a solo in Greek and was taken from the *Philoctetus of Sophocles*; this was followed by scenes from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, Moliere's *Le Medicin Malgre Lui* [in French] and a scene from *Coriolanus* [in Latin]. It is interesting to note that R.A. Percy, the School Captain, performed in all the above vignettes.

The magazine does report that the Headmaster, Mr Rowland, was interested in the development of slang in the School. Mr Rowland was renowned in North Queensland for his love of the English language and thus he was, in some respects, concerned by the use of slang in everyday speech. Some of the examples used by Mr Rowland includes "get wet" for get angry, "socked" for caned, "scram and ki-ki" for food, "cady" for hat, "fly-bog" for treacle, "do your bubble" for to clear out, "splosh and dosh" for money, and "petser and bobbydazzler" for very good. Some of the older readers of this article may remember that slang terms such as bobbydazzler, dosh and fly-bog were still in use not that long ago.

The 1912 magazine has very little coverage of sport. There is no mention of any football games during the year and the coverage of cricket was largely concerned with the internal school competition between "Colour teams". The only interschool cricket fixtures were against the Christian Brothers, Mundingburra State School and German Gardens State School [now Belgian Gardens State School]. The School's Athletic Carnival gains good coverage but it is interesting to note how few events there were for girls, i.e. the potato sack race and a 100 yards handicap. The individual girls' race was held for the first time in 1912. There was one more event for girls: the needle and thread race in which a girl had to have a boy partner.

The most outstanding student in 1912 was **Roger Arnold Percy**, a boarder from Charters Towers. Percy had enrolled at the School as a scholarship student in 1907 and he soon made his mark academically and on the playing field. He was Head Prefect in 1911 and 1912 and is the only student in the School's history to have been awarded the Chelmsford Cup [Rugby Prize] on three occasions. Percy matriculated with distinction in French, Latin, Greek and Mechanics and won a scholarship to the University of Queensland where he studied engineering before enlisting as a medic during World War One.



The magazine for 1912 also reports that ten new books were donated to the library during the year, four from a staff member, Clunies Ross, and four by the Chairman of the Trustees, Judge Jameson. Two of the books were Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Adventures of Mark Twain*. Also donated was H.L. Merriman's *Slave of the Lamp*.

On May 17, 1912 a group of past students, encouraged by Mr Rowland, met to form the Old Girls' Union. In some respects this was an exciting move as, up to this stage, the Old Boys' Union, formed in 1901, would not allow past girl students into their union. The inaugural meeting was a success and Letitia Crowder, Grammar's second enrolled girl, was elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Under her energetic leadership there were close to fifty former girl students in the union, each paying a membership fee of two shillings and sixpence. It is interesting to note that the Old Boys' Union refused to acknowledge their Grammar counterparts and it was not until after World War One that the two groups were amalgamated!

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School Archivist