

## BOARDING IN 1911

While the present boarder lives in facilities that are of the highest quality and with opportunities to visit cinemas and to go on organized camps, to play a variety of sports, to have access to computing facilities and to go on regular weekend leave, life was not the same for a boarder in 1911.

In 1911 all boarders resided on the top floor of what is now School House and were under the direct supervision of two Resident Masters. School House had been totally re-built after the destruction caused by Cyclone Leonta in 1903 and it was the proud boast of the School that the toilets had been up-dated and that large plunge and shower baths had been installed. Prior to Leonta the boarders had to use outside facilities. However, there was no hot water as electricity was first introduced in 1927. Before 1897, when incandescent gas was introduced, the only form of lighting in the boarding house was candles.

It is interesting to note what boarders had to bring with them in the way of clothing. A formal boys' uniform was first introduced in 1938. The list included the following:

1 Cloth or Serge Suit	12 Handkerchiefs	4 Sheets
6 Washing Suits [two white]	3 Singlets	3 Pillow Slips
6 Shirts [two linen]	2 Pairs of Boots	Brush and Comb
5 Pairs of Socks	1 Pair of Slippers	Tooth Brush and Powder
3 Pyjama Suits	1 Pairs of Sand-shoes	1 Soiled Linen Bag
6 Linen Collars	4 Bath Towels	Tie

The School provided blankets and a pillow. It can be assumed that the "Washing Suits" would be either slacks or shorts. Two pair of whites would have been used for Cricket.

A week day for a boarder was a long one. They were woken by a 6:30am bell: this was followed by a forty-five minute prep session with breakfast at 8:00am Classes took place between 9:30am and 4:00pm with sport coaching between 4:00pm and 6:00pm. The main meal for boarders was at lunch-time so the evening meal was light. Day students were encouraged, for a small fee, to have the lunch meal with boarders. Prep in the evening took place from 7:15pm and 8:45pm and everyone was in bed by 9:00pm.

On Saturdays there was no school work. Boarders were allowed to visit town until 11:00am and the afternoons were devoted to Cricket, Tennis or Football. In 1911 the football codes were Soccer and Rugby League. Sport was compulsory for all the boarders. On Saturday evenings there were games or general reading and this usually took place at the Headmaster's house. On infrequent occasions there would either be a dance or a concert. The archives show that the Boarder Concerts were a fun night and well attended by the day members of the School community.

On Sundays the boarders had to attend church. This was a compulsory activity. Boarders being boarders would make every attempt not to get to church and there are many tales of boarders enjoying the delights of Queens' Gardens instead of attending church. The then Headmaster, P.F. Rowland, was aware of this and would often question the boys as to the sermon of the day. On Sunday afternoons the boarders were allowed to go for walks or visit friends who lived in the vicinity. One favourite activity was to climb Castle Hill and chase the goats that lived on the hill. Tea on a Sunday evening was traditionally spent sitting around a table with the Headmaster who would regale them with stories or read extracts from books. Mr Rowland, who had a great love for literature, would on Friday evenings have Shakespearean readings with the senior boys while the younger boys were encouraged to read Walter Scott, Dumas, Victor Hugo and R.L. Stevenson.



*Dormitories*

The School year was much longer in 1911. There were two long breaks only: about eight weeks at Christmas and three in Midwinter. There were two short breaks only, of about two or three days only at Easter and Michaelmas [Michaelmas was a legacy of the English School system celebrating a Christian holiday in September]. The reason for these short breaks was because boarders were not able to travel home and thus it was better that they stay at the School. There is evidence to show that many boarders who lived in remote western areas did not travel home even at the Midwinter break.

While boarding life in 2011 can be seen to be very different to that of 1911 there are some common elements. Boarding life develops a bond amongst the boys and girls and friendships that last over a life-time. There are also some traditions that evolve over the years that never change. One such example is the "Ghost Hole", a legendary tale that has been part of boarding folk-lore for over a hundred years. There are few boarders who have passed through the portals of the School who could not relate the story of the "Ghost Hole". Boarding is best summed up by Colin Bingham [1913-1916] in his autobiography *The Beckoning Horizon*. Bingham who became a famous World War II war correspondent and later editor of the Sydney Morning Herald devotes a full chapter to his life as a boarder at the School. In the chapter he says life was not easy for the boarders: meals were not wholesome, cold showers in the morning were not an inviting prospect to face and yet, in spite of this, and other factors it was a wonderful experience. It would be nice to think that, in 2011, the same attitude prevails.

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