

## REFLECTIONS OF P.F. ROWLAND

Writing in the Townsville Bulletin of January 1, 1933 Mr P.F. Rowland, a frequent contributor to that paper, reminisced on his twenty-eight years as Headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School. Mr Rowland said that to accept the offer of the position as the Headmaster in late 1904 required something of a gambling temperament. The School had been devastated by Cyclone Leonta in 1903 and the debt incurred to re-build the School was a drain on finances. To further complicate matters every staff member had resigned so when Mr Rowland took over the position he had no teaching staff to support him. The annual salary offered to Mr Rowland at the time was £380 plus allowances and board fees, out of which two Masters were to be boarded gratuitously. It must be remembered that at the turn of the twentieth century Headmasters of boarding schools were expected to provide food and other facilities for the students. In return, the boarding fees were paid to the Headmaster.

Mr Rowland added that he would never forget his first day at School. There were 39 pupils and two teachers, one to teach science and mathematics and the other to look after sport and physical education. It was left to Mr Rowland to teach the classics, languages and English. Numbers rose during the year to 46 and by the start of 1906 attendance was 56 with about two-fifths of the students being boarders. It is, perhaps, to Mr Rowland's credit that he was able to attract many competent staff to the School. As he noted in the article there was no rail connection to the south in those years and the climatic disadvantages of Townsville was exaggerated by southerners.

It is interesting to note that three of our most decorated and famous past teachers in the first decade of the twentieth century all came from South Australia. **W.N. JOLLY** was a university blue in Cricket, Rowing and Australian Rules at the University of Adelaide. He also represented that State at Australian Rules. While teaching at Grammar he was elected as the first Rhodes Scholar from South Australia. He read Forestry at Oxford University and found time to play Cricket for Oxford and Worcestershire. He was later to become the first Professor of Forestry at the University of Adelaide. School Magazines of the time show that Norman Jolly was a brilliant wicket-keeper and a batsman of some ability.

**R. ROBINSON** was a colleague of Jolly at the University of Adelaide and followed Jolly to Oxford when he was elected as the second Rhodes Scholar for South Australia. Like Jolly, he read Forestry at the University and also played Cricket for that University. Robinson remained in England and was later to become the father of the Forestry Industry in that country. He was awarded an OBE in 1918, knighted in 1931 and made Baron of Kildear Forest and Adelaide in the Commonwealth of Australia in 1947.

**MORTON MOYES** was the third teacher from Adelaide to make the journey north. A talented cricketer he was the South Australian Broad and High Jump Champion. While at Grammar he won the Queensland Long Jump trophy and represented the State at the National Titles. A student of Douglas Mawson while at the University of Adelaide, Moyes took a deep interest in Mawson's ideas and from 1911 joined him on various expeditions to the Antarctica. He was to spend much of his life as a meteorological expert in the Antarctica and is mentioned in Sir Ernest Shackleton's biography as having taken part in Shackleton's legendary rescue of some of his team. Morton Moyes was the brother of Johnny Moyes, Australian cricketer and renowned cricket commentator on the ABC.

It should be noted that not all the teachers who came from the south were so capable. Mr Rowland recounts in some detail about a teacher who did not turn up on the first day of the school year. He was to be found totally inebriated in his hotel room sporting a very expensive watch. He had spent the allowance given to him to re-locate on a variety of wasteful products. Mr Rowland recalls how he was put back on the ship he had arrived in. Mr Rowland also writes about a teacher who looked the part and had been highly recommended. In fact, he had been a primary teacher in the colonies and could not cope with a secondary education. He said that he had been a science teacher and this turned out to be a disaster as he one of his pupils was **LAWRENCE WACKETT**, later knighted for his services for airline design in this country.

The photograph is the first known coloured photograph of the School. There is no known date but would have been taken before 1903 as the damage caused to School House is not evident. Note the size of the Headmaster's house to the left of the photograph. The downstairs section contained the boarders' dining room and laundry as well as the sick bay.

The open area at the back is now the Sports' Reserve but at that time the land belonged to the Grammar School.



North Townsville, showing Grammar School buildings and grounds in the foreground.

**MR BILL MULLER**  
School Archivist