

FROM THE ARCHIVES

1941 - 1942

In his annual report at the end of the academic year in 1942 the Headmaster of All Souls School, **R.L. MILLS**, wrote the following: *"The first nine weeks of the school year were spent at Charters Towers, and the remaining thirty-four weeks at Dalrymple – in the bush. Townsville Grammar School was taken over for other purposes before the school year commenced, and we were pleased to be able to look after a number of their boys until their school was re-established at some other parts of Townsville. Their short period at the school has given us an interest in their future progress, and we trust that their ambitions will be realised."*

Towards the end of 1941, **T.B. WHIGHT [1938-46]**, Headmaster at Grammar, reported an anticipated record enrolment of 115 day students and 100 boarders. Japan's unexpected attack on Pearl Harbour had an immediate effect on these numbers with the cancellation of many of the enrolments. In addition, in January, 1942, the government placed a complete ban on the opening of coastal schools in the north, a decision which led the Trustees to consider, very seriously, whether to abandon the School altogether. Mr Whight, however, was not going to give up his School without a fight and after exploring every avenue that ensured that Townsville Grammar did not pass into oblivion he asked for a special meeting to be held on 30 January, 1942, where he put the following proposals to the Board of Trustees.

The first option was to send the boy students to All Souls, a school which had signified a willingness to take a number of pupils. However, it did not seem possible to evolve a scheme that would permit Grammar to preserve a separate identity. Thornburgh College, Charters Towers, also expressed a willingness to assist, but it was not possible to make satisfactory arrangements. Locally the Australian Native's Association Hall offered possibilities as classrooms at the rental of 25 shillings a week: a number of hotels were examined but none found suitable; and private homes were not interested in accepting boarders. At that meeting it was proposed and carried that the School carry on for the first term providing the ANA Hall was available. In the interim the Diocesan Council of the Church of England offered to board Grammar School pupils in Charters Towers at a reduced rate. At a meeting called for 13 February Mr Whight advised the parents of this proposal but parents were hesitant about committing themselves to such an arrangement.

As a consequence of this meeting the then Chairman of the Board, **Mr ALAN TAIT**, placed an advertisement regretting that it was impossible to open a school in either Townsville or Charters Towers. It looked like the end of the School as an educational institution. This was all to change within two weeks. On Saturday, 28 February, newspapers reported that secondary schools would be permitted to re-open in coastal regions. On 2 March Mr Whight reported to the Trustees that he had found a suitable site for a school and recommended *Rosslea*, a property in the suburb of Hermit Park, owned by a Mr Don McInness. After a week of hard work moving furniture, books and equipment the Grammar School re-opened its doors on 10 March.

To let the public know of the re-opening the Secretary to the Trustees sent paid telegrams to prospective parents but only one reply in five was favourable. On the day the School re-opened thirty-one students answered their names. Until Easter new students appeared on a daily basis and by the start of second term the roll stood at fifty-six consisting of forty-five day students and eleven boarders. Included in these numbers were seven students who had enrolled at All Souls and had returned to the Grammar School.

Among the seven boys who returned, two were the Kelly Brothers. In a recent telephone conversation with **COLIN KELLY [1944]** he recounted his term at All Souls' School. He told me he was only one of seven day students at that school and that he and his brother camped in a tent situated close to the Venus Battery in the Towers. His parents, sugar farmers in the Tully area, were confident that he would be mature enough to attend school as well as fend for himself and his brother. Colin went on to be Head Boy, Dux of the School and winner of the Chelmsford Cup [Rugby Prize] in 1944. As a side issue he also said that the only time he was caned while at school was at All Souls when he was caned for "laughing in class". He was pleased to return to Townsville Grammar!

MR BILL MULLER
School Archivist