

## 120 YEARS OF BOARDING AT GRAMMAR #2

In researching for information for the recent booklet on *One Hundred and Twenty Years of Boarding* at the School I discovered that there were three initial boarder enrolments on 16 April, 1888. Two of the three enrolments were brothers from Ravenswood, **H. TRENFIELD** and **K. TRENFIELD**. I was unable to find very little information on these early enrolments as the records for that time are rather sketchy. Fortunately, however, the Townsville Bulletin was kind enough to do a story on the publication of the booklet and consequently I received a phone call from a lady who told me that H. Trenfield was her father and that K. Trenfield was her uncle. She also told me that she had some information in the family records outlining the years the two boys had at the School.

Fortunately the lady in question, Mrs Audrey Stanley, lives locally and I was able to interview her as well as note some of the newspaper articles she had in her possession. These articles related to the first two Speech Nights held at the Grammar School. It was a most fascinating interview and we spent close to two hours talking about not only her father's life but also his happy years at the School. Mrs Stanley also told me that her father was fifty-nine years of age when she was born.

Herbert Trenfield was fourteen years of age and his brother Kylie was twelve years of age when they enrolled. The boys were two of fourteen children in the family and they were the only two to enrol at Grammar. The rest of the family received their education at the Ravenswood Primary School. Both boys were placed in the Lower School class. As the numbers were small in 1888 there were only two classes: they were Lower School and Upper School. Both classrooms were on the bottom floor of what is now School House and there was one dormitory upstairs, a facility shared by all the boarders.

Herbert Trenfield achieved academic success in his first year. For topping Lower School in French and Latin he was awarded a book in French called *The Mountain* by an author named Micheld. He also topped the class in Mathematics and his prize was a book on the *Discoveries of the XIX Century*. According to Mrs Stanley the Headmaster in 1888 was keen on the teaching of languages and all the students had to learn Latin, French and German. The reason for this was that the Germans were to the north in New Guinea and the French were to the east in French New Caledonia. The introduction of Science was to come when Mr Hodges arrived as Headmaster in 1889.

A reading of Kim Allen's History of the School shows that there was very little sport played at the School in 1888. In fact he states that the first Athletics' Carnival was held in 1891 but in the records shown to me by Mrs Stanley the School held a carnival in Queens Park in 1888 where a variety of events took place. Herbert Trenfield won the Lower School Long Jump while his brother Kylie was the winner of the 120 Yards Lower School Handicap. Mr Hodges introduced Cricket in 1889 and that game soon became the most important sport in the School. For some years the School team, bolstered by staff members, was the dominant team in the town. Football [soccer] was only introduced in 1898.

Herbert Trenfield told his daughter on many occasions that life in the boarding school was not an easy one. The food was, at times, barely adequate and that there was no hot water for a bath. Candles were the only form of light so the boarders had to go to bed early and rise early so that they could do their study. The two Headmasters, Mr Upward and Mr Hodges, were both strict disciplinarians and insisted on many hours of concentrated study. There were few activities on the weekend except Cricket during the season or going to church on a Sunday. She also said that the two boys never returned home for the vacations due to the problems of travel and would spend their time at the School under the care of the Headmaster.

Both boys were unexpectedly withdrawn from the School in July 1890 and made to return to Ravenswood where they were employed in their father's businesses. Mr Trenfield was the owner of the John Bull Gold Mine in Ravenswood and also owned the local butcher shop, Trenfield and Sidley. To stock their butcher shop the Trenfield family also owned properties in the Ravenswood area. Kylie went to work on one of these properties and was tragically killed in a riding accident, aged twenty-five, while Herbert trained as a butcher and spent the rest of his life in the meat industry. He died in 1955 aged eight-two years of age.

Mrs Stanley told me that her father was extremely proud of being a Grammarian and would often boast that he was one of the first three boarders ever to enrol at the School. Her greatest regret is that her father was never allowed to complete his Sydney University Junior and Senior Examinations as she believed that he had the academic ability to do well at the tertiary level. As archivist I would like to thank Mrs Stanley for her input and her contribution to the growing knowledge of the School's interesting history.

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