

MEMORIES OF OLD SCHOOL DAYS AT ST FAITH'S

Yeppoon

Memory from Doreen Rand (nee Jackson)

One night a week we were all lined up in Matron's office and given liquor ice powder! If she wasn't looking we would throw it out the window!

We had cold showers, both summer and winter, and in winter the grass on the terrace was like little white sticks with frost.

Other memories are of the mournful and frightening sounds of the curlews at night.

Memories from Ariel Delandells nee Bradley and her sister Florence

During the very early years of the school, the trees surrounding the school were thick with koalas, and the Headmistress had one of the men chop down a tree to catch a koala and then had it chained to a tree in front of the school and the girls had to then feed and look after it!

The school conveyance was a sulky and a horse, but the Head was ignorant as far as riding horses and Ariel Bradley and her sister Florence became the school chauffeurs, a job they really enjoyed being country kids, and driving the Head got them out of school work.

The grounds were thick with passionfruit vines and they weren't allowed to touch them, but touch them they did and every day someone was being punished because no matter what they did the smell was always with them!

Ariel didn't complain about the food but they were always given a piece of fruit before study time and there was always plenty of rich creamy milk except on some occasions when the cows kicked the bucket over and the milk had a bluey colour, a sure sign that the milk had been watered to produce the same amount of milk!

Memories from Audrey McLeish nee Brown

When the chapel was being built, two of the girls struck up a friendship with the young carpenter and one night they padded their beds and took off to the pictures but the Sisters knew something was amiss and soon found a housemaid who told them that they were friendly with the carpenter and most likely had gone to the pictures. Sister Mary and another Sister waited behind the bamboo and when they came down the drive they stepped out and the girls were immediately placed in COVENTRY and were not allowed to speak to any of the girls again. They were housed in the big empty dorm at Carlton House and were taken their meals. Bishop Ash met their parents in Rockhampton, bringing them to Yeppoon to pick up their daughters and the young carpenter was sacked immediately.

Memories from Florence Rees nee Freeman

The original St Faith's building was her grandmother's first home and later a hostel for girls attending schools in Rockhampton, before it was moved to Yeppoon in Bishop Crick's time.

Memories from Edith Wainwright (nee Creed) (during 1920's)

My most vivid memories are of Hunger, Bells and Cold Showers in the winter. Next came stale bread soaked in syrup, and two sardines on burnt toast for breakfast.

We were given one shilling every weekend for pocket money. Threepence was to be put in the plate at church on Sunday, Threepence to be spent on sweets, and sixpence on fruit. We went down to the beach every Saturday afternoon, and did our shopping on the way. We could get six pieces of fruit for our sixpence.

At certain times of the year, stick beetles would come around the lights at night. We used to run them on the desk where the teacher sat in chapel, so ensuring a short evening service.

The school had its own lighting plant, with a very temperamental engine. It frequently stopped and we were plunged into darkness. An urgent call to Adams, the yardman who lived not far away. He would arrive on his bicycle and hopefully get the engine going again.

We washed our hair once a fortnight. Kerosene tins of water were heated on a wood stove. There were white enamel hand basins and we were allotted a few pints of the precious hot water. We were not allowed to wash our hair (or shower either for that matter) if we had our "periods" because it was believed that we could drop dead. Imagine not washing one's hair for three weeks!

RETURN OF THE SCHOOL ROLL

After the close of the School in 1968, a disposal sale of furniture and equipment was held onsite. A family friend of a past pupil, Helen Green, nee Hewitt, purchased a chest of drawers, which he found, much to his surprise, held the School Roll Book. He knew that Helen had been a past pupil and gave the book to her. Helen in turn placed it with the other memorabilia. Luckily it fell into the hands of someone who knew a past pupil, or it could have been lost forever.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CARLTON GIRL – EARLY 1950's

Rise 6am, Summer, 6.30am Winter

Down to games field or the netball court, having stripped your bed.

Return exhausted to make bed, hospital corners obligatory, or start over again. Inspected by Prefects who ruled supreme.

Down the colonnade once more to breakfast – inspected on way to dining room – nails, hair brushed, etc. Eat enormous amount, dash back up to Carlton to clean teeth, then down to Chapel.

Prayer line, shoes inspected (for a period veils were worn to Chapel and were also inspected).

Lessons – huge morning tea, lessons, huge lunch, (dash up colonnade to Carlton for teeth cleaning then back down again), more lessons, huge afternoon tea, dash up and back from Carlton to change for games, and afterwards return to Carlton to shower and change for dinner. Plus, visits to Carlton during the day for speech lessons, music lessons and practices.

Huge dinner, then evening prep. After prep, back up the colonnade for bed.

We should have been deadbeat after prep, but somehow there was life in us still and often precious sleeping time wasted, one way or another.....

BARCALDINE YEARS by June Kirby (nee Hawkins) 1942-1944

At the beginning of 1942 with the threat of a Japanese invasion of Australia of at the very least, air-raids on the coast, the “powers-that-be” in the Church of England made the momentous decision to move St Faith’s further west. Thus we found ourselves in Barcaldine approximately 562klm west of Rockhampton. It was a long train trip, especially for the girls from the coast, and also because the ‘ordinary’ trains would often be shunted onto a side track to allow troop-carrying trains a straight run through. During these long waits I could visualize when sometime in the future someone would examine a rusting bulk on a sideline, and there would be a row of little figures all dressed in full St Faith’s uniforms still sitting upright on those hard railway seats. Fortunately that never happened.

The school was housed in what used to be a Church school for boys, a Masonic Hall, and a house called Carlton House, named after the Carlton House in Yeppoon. There were slit-trenches dug in the sandy soil which were used when the air-raid siren went off and one night all the lights went out and we thought “this is it”, but what really happened was that an American Fying Fortress had made a forced landing just outside of town and all power had been needed for lighting to bring it in. Next day we were taken to view the plane, which didn’t appear to be badly damaged. The most impressive part was the 6’ tall black US soldiers with fixed bayonets guarding it, presumably from the voracious town goats. These same goats did a splendid job of keeping the street trees trimmed of leaves and twigs as far as they could reach while standing on hind legs.

The Speech Night at the end of 1944 was the last at Barcaldine as the school was then returned to Yeppoon for 1945. We also had a farewell dinner for the Sisters of the Sacred Advent who were leaving the school after thirteen years. The most I remember about the farewell dinner is that those of us assigned to make the trifle laced the custard with plenty of sherry – very nice it was too!

Memory from Meg Aspinall (nee Perrers)

At Barcaldine, Norma’s hot water system. During the winter months, an old wood stove with the top missing was placed under the water pipe outside the bathroom complex. Norma tended the fire with the water valve shut off and when she considered it hot enough, released the valve and we were all ready as she cried “GO” and scalding water poured forth! Unhappily, Norma, by the time she ran upstairs and undressed and got to the shower, usually had a “cold” shower! Barcaldine was very cold in winter, and the usually warn bore water was cold also!